



## CASE STUDY



# How a Millennial-Focused Rewards App Grew New Members by 1430% in Six Months With Affiliate Marketing

## THE CHALLENGE

An innovative, millennial-focused rewards app with an established affiliate program sought to maximize its potential in a scalable, efficient, cost-effective way. They needed an experienced program management agency that could offer greater bandwidth, resources, and higher-level expertise and chose Acceleration Partners (AP).

The client challenged their AP account team to substantially expand and diversify their current affiliate program in a six-month period. They also wanted to:

- Work with affiliate partners who would drive quality leads for their app
- Ensure their gross CPA stayed under \$10 (including partner and network fees)
- Modify their program payout structure, moving from payment on top-of-funnel app registrations to paying partners on new linked members (customers linking their credit or debit card information within their app)

## SETTING EXPECTATIONS

The AP team had forthcoming and transparent conversations with the client about potential consequences that could arise when trying to achieve these growth goals in a limited timeframe, including the risk of adding lower-quality partners into the program.

To try and balance achieving the client's goals while maintaining quality in the program, the AP team recommended:

- Gradually moving existing affiliate partners to a commission structure that paid on linked user conversions
- Scaling the program by recruiting and activating new partners and paying only on bottom-of-funnel conversions (linked members)
- Reviewing the client's internal reporting for additional metrics (outside of existing tracking) to monitor bottom-of-funnel conversion rates.

*“An essential part of our client service philosophy is to establish realistic expectations with our clients, especially when their goals are both audacious and time sensitive. To ensure we were moving forward with strategies that would offer the greatest likelihood of achieving our client's goals within the time they wanted, while also protecting their affiliate program and their brand, meant carefully weighing the opportunities and potential rewards with the risks – and do whatever was possible to mitigate low-quality performance within the program.”*

**AP Senior Account Manager**

## PARTNER PERFORMANCE

In addition to optimizing and educating the client's existing partners and gradually moving them toward a commission structure that paid them on new linked members, the AP team also proceeded with recruiting new affiliate partners into their program and helping them optimize their promotions.

One such affiliate group recruited into their program was mobile network partners. Although these partners had the ability to scale rapidly and drive a lot of app downloads and registrations (which the client was not paying commissions on), the AP account team and the client's affiliate technology platform partner discovered that the high number of clicks these partners were driving were potentially impacting the client's internal attribution. What's more is the activity some of the sub-affiliates within these mobile network partners were engaging in was questionable and raising flags.

*"Some of these partners were delivering an enormously high volume of clicks. After careful analysis, we determined this activity was caused by a few sub-affiliates within these mobile networks who were purchasing via programmatic DSPs. This type of traffic naturally results in higher clicks. While not nefarious in and of itself, this is a perfect example of why it's crucial to have sophisticated and effective fraud monitoring systems and processes in place to ensure that these sources are not committing click attribution fraud."*

**AP Senior Account Manager**

## OUR APPROACH

The AP team performed a fraud analysis to determine average click to conversion time for these sources. In their investigation, they identified a small subset of partners that had questionable click attribution activity. The account team immediately paused the accounts of these sub-sources and reversed their commissions.

The team also ensured consistent fraud monitoring and updated internal processes to include:

- Daily caps for network partners
- Spot checking for click spikes
- Pausing sources exceeding daily allowances

## THE RESULT

The client's affiliate program realized significant growth in a short period of time, with high-value partners driving quality volume. Happy with the performance of their program, the client increased the allocation of marketing budget going toward affiliate.

**1430%**

increase in new app members

**10%**

over conversion goal

**17%**

below CPA goal

**15%**

projected over 12-month  
linked member goal

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