

## CASE STUDY



# How AP Saved Client \$560,000 Through Strategic Program Changes

## THE CHALLENGE

Prior to working with Acceleration Partners (AP), Client X hadn't previously worked with an affiliate program management agency. Client X sought to change their external attribution model from Last Click to Last to Cart and were unsure about making that transition. After researching potential agencies, they selected AP based on our reputation for helping merchants successfully structure their programs with the Last to Cart model. Based on initial projections, the AP team expected to save Client X approximately \$185,000 through these strategic changes.

## A THREE-WEEK PLATFORM MIGRATION

Like any smart company, Client X wanted to be cost-conscious and strategic with their affiliate marketing spend while also ensuring that they only paid for incremental sales in their program. Our team examined their existing affiliate network technology platform (Network X) and commission structure. We found that Network X offered no alternative payment attributions aside from Last Click. In addition, Client X's existing commission structure did not complement the brand's incremental sales goals.

Because AP has established relationships and deep experience with all major affiliate networks and platforms, our team was able to guide Client X through a review of technology platforms from an agnostic perspective. Client X ultimately chose Impact.com, which would easily accommodate the program's Last to Cart attribution model. Our team also recommended that Client X adjust their commission structures for coupon, deal and content affiliates.

Client X wanted their transition to a new technology platform and attribution model to be as thoughtful and budget conscious as possible. As such, they kept part of their program and select content and loyalty affiliates on Network X's affiliate platform. To make it possible for Network X to properly commission these affiliates based on Client X's new Last to Cart model, Impact.com set up a "post-back" feature. This feature tracks when a link from Network X is clicked so those affiliates responsible for driving them could be properly compensated.

The multi-step approach that the AP team took to partially migrate Client X's affiliate program and their affiliates over to the new technology platform made it possible to see how each transition stage (technology platform migration, commission changes, moving from Last Click to Last to Cart) affected their program's performance. This allowed the team to take a step back and make adjustments as they went through the process.

As a result of the changes in program structure, Client X was able to integrate all their channels (affiliate, paid marketing, organic search, email, etc.) through one technology platform. Their Last to Cart attribution model and payment platform not only monitors affiliate activity, but also shows how affiliates' activity performs and assists with Client X's other channels. This allows for the client and the AP team to see where the affiliates enter the sales process and pay them only if they are Last to Cart across all channels.

While migrating a program and its affiliates to a new platform can be complex and take many months, the AP team was able to accomplish it in just three weeks following platform selection.

## EMBRACING RELATIONSHIPS TO MITIGATE CHALLENGES

A short-term challenge arose in a significant drop of coupon affiliates from Client X's program, which the AP team anticipated. Many coupon affiliates prefer a Last Click model because they are able to benefit from consumers leaving the merchant's site and finding a coupon before checking out. In a Last to Cart model, coupon affiliates lose that advantage.

To counteract this, the AP team had productive 1:1 conversations with the top coupon affiliates in Client X's program, transparently sharing the client's goals and our commitment to finding creative, mutually beneficial ways to work together under this new attribution model.

While a number of coupon affiliates dropped off, Client X saw a rise in new, high-performing content affiliates joining their program – including travel bloggers – which provided an opportunity to reach new customers.

## THE RESULT

The AP team was able to save Client X far more than projected in just 11 months; and, after one year, the program saw strong YoY growth.

**\$560K**

Cost Savings

**3-Week**

Platform Migration

# Attribution Model Change

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