

Cassandra S.: We believe there is value in every type of performance partner, and that it really shouldn't be a question of if we partner with a certain type of publisher, but more so, how we can best utilize them to drive the KPIs that our advertisers are most concerned about.

Lennox Powell: I am Lennox Powell, host of Outperform, a podcast about people and companies who are outperforming in business and in life, what they're doing, challenges they've faced, and what they've learned along the way. I talk to and spotlight Acceleration Partners team members, industry partners, and clients about topics ranging from affiliate marketing, publisher development, and global performance marketing, to work life integration, remote work, and company culture.

It used to be that when companies thought about affiliate marketing, they'd immediately think of coupon, cash back loyalty, and deal sites. Or, perhaps, they think of mommy bloggers, who would blog about a coupon they came across for diapers or cute baby clothes. Well, those sights and publishers are still active player within the affiliate world. There are quite a few new exciting arrivals into the space. So many, in fact, that we decided to spotlight a few publishers each quarter, sharing who they are, what they do, and what sets them apart in the affiliate space. There's no one better to do that, than members of our publisher development team, here at Acceleration Partners.

Alison Chew: Hi, and welcome to Outperform. I'm Alison Chew, and I'm with my college Cassandra Scarbeck. I'll let Cass introduce herself, but I am the director of Partners and Insights, here at Acceleration Partners, which essentially means, that I work with a team of ridiculously smart and talented people. We act as a centralized resource for our client services team. We focus on bringing both new and interesting partnership opportunities, as well as data and insights to support strategic initiatives, in order to help reach the goals of our clients.

Cassandra S.: Hey everyone. I'm Cassandra Scarbeck. I'm the publisher development manager, here, at Acceleration Partners. I work with Alison on the Partners and Insights team. I love my job, because I not only get to work with her, but I also get to interact with our awesome client services team every day, and really help support them, by finding and connecting them to performance partners that can help meet the goals of the advertisers we support. What this means is, that I'm having a lot of conversations, interacting with a lot of really cool partners, doing some pretty interesting things, on a regular basis. It's a lot of fun. It's really quite rewarding.

Alison Chew: Today, we're spotlighting some publishers, also known as affiliates, that we think are adding a lot of value to advertisers affiliate programs. We'll review who they are, what they're doing, and most importantly, what sets them apart. Cass, who are you excited to talk about first, today?

Cassandra S.: The first publisher that we're shining a spotlight on today, is a technology partner from the UK, called [Increasingly 00:03:05]. Increasingly has been getting a ton of recognition in the performance marketing space. In fact, they just recently exhibited at Retail Week Live as one of the hot retail tech startups of 2018, and they won runner up for best retail tech of 2018, beating out hundreds of entries. It's a really pretty impressive accomplishment for them.

Who are they? Increasingly is an exciting technology partner, and their co-founder and CEO, [Siri Sharma 00:03:38], he is a brilliant entrepreneur, with an engineering background. He actually happens to be one of the nicest men in the affiliate industry, that I've come across. That's always a bonus. What Increasingly is doing, is helping retail advertisers increase their shoppers basket sizes an average of 12%. They're driving truly incremental revenue for merchants, and what's really amazing, is they're doing this all on a risk free, pay-for-performance basis. It's super exciting to be able to talk about them, today.

So, Alison, if you are a merchant listening to this podcast, you're probably thinking, "Whoa, this sounds amazing. How can this be? How do they do this?" Am I right?

Alison Chew: You're right. What they are doing is really something unique. I'd love to tell our listeners when they're doing it.

Cassandra S.: Awesome, so, here's the scoop. Surely everyone listening to this podcast has heard of the e-tail giant called Amazon. Most of us, at one point or another, have gone on their site and made a purchase, or, at the very least, they've poked around on the site, and maybe found an item they were interested in ... saw some other product recommendations below that item, and more than likely, added one to their cart. I know I'm guilty of this, and I can be impulsive at times, especially on Amazon. How about you?

Alison Chew: I'm gonna plead the fifth on that.

Cassandra S.: Okay.

Alison Chew: I'm ashamed to admit my Amazon spending habits.

Cassandra S.: Well.

Alison Chew: We'll just move on.

Cassandra S.: Sounds good. Increasingly used this, and really set out to fill a void in the industry, and help other advertisers benefit from the same kind of technology that Amazon uses on their site, to really help upsell and cross sell to their own customers. They were really thinking, "Wouldn't it be great if other retailers could leverage the same technology, using machine learning and artificial intelligence to measure shopper behavior and intent, in order to create product bundles and recommendations that are not only relevant to their shoppers, and they also enhance those shopper's experiences, but it's really also good for the advertiser, because they can factor in things like profit margins, and stock levels of products." So, it's an incredible, incredible technology.

For example, let's say a shopper puts a pair of jeans in their basket. Increasingly's technology can then suggest a cute top, a pair of shoes, maybe a belt and some earrings to go with it, all in the shoppers size, and they're only gonna show them items that are actually in stock, which is nice, too. Then, they can select products with the highest profit margins, rather than ... or offering up discounted items, if that's what the advertiser is choosing to focus on. They can really tailor the product bundles according to whatever those advertisers KPIs are.

Increasingly really understands that not every retailer has a development team with the technology expertise, to be able to create this kind of solution for their own website. So, what's awesome with Increasingly is, that advertisers won't need to spend all the time and money investing in the technology on the back end, to be able to get up and running quickly. They can really get launched very quickly through their existing affiliate program, which is great.

What sets them apart? Whenever I speak to our client services teams about what our advertisers goals are, nearly every single person that I talk to says they're looking for partners to help drive significant revenue growth. What makes Increasingly unique, is that they set out to solve a problem that we hear repeatedly in the performance marketing space, and that is finding a way to drive incremental revenue for advertisers. They will work with advertisers on a strictly paid-for-performance basis, which means that there's essentially no risk to the advertiser to partner with them. Advertisers can use this technology on their product pages, in their check out pages, and even in their order confirmation emails, to help maximize their sales.

Alison Chew: That is so cool. What they're doing is really, really something unique. I'm excited to watch them grow in 2018 and beyond.

Cassandra S.: Yeah, totally.

Alison Chew: We're seeing more and more publishers using machine learning and artificial intelligence. I know there are some pretty big buzz words that people are hearing, not only in the affiliate and performance marketing world, but all over. I don't see that slowing down anytime soon.

Another trend that we spotted last year, that is continuing into 2018 is the rise of the mass media publisher. They are rapidly joining the affiliate world, and monetizing their own line editorial content with affiliate links, which is super exciting for us. They're so many mass media publishers to spotlight, I really had a hard time choosing just one. When I was making my list I thought of Hearst, who just acquired Rodale. You have Conde Nast. You have Meredith, New York Times, that acquired the Wire Cutter, [Zeph 00:08:51] Davis, and so, so many more. Before I spotlight one mass media publisher, I'll talk to you about why the group is so special.

Who are mass media publishers? They're basically traditional print publishers, and they're the oldest publishers around. They've been entering the affiliate space over the past several years, and other forms of revenue, like print subscriptions, are on the decline. As they move to create more and more rich, authentic, native content online, it only makes sense that they would want to monetize it. Plus, when you add in there the rise of ad blockers, and some might say, direct display buys are on the decline, adding in affiliate links within that content, not only makes sense, but it's also paying off in the tune of significant revenue for them.

Cassandra S.: Interesting. Alison, what would you say really sets them apart from other types of publishers that we work with?

Alison Chew: I would say reach, eyeballs, via their website, mobile, email, as well as the quality of content being produced. Not to mention, their ability to reach specific niche or targeted audience. Those things really make them unique, and partnerships are highly sought after. It's funny, because often times, when you and I, when we talk to new affiliates that are just entering the performance marketing world, it could take them years to build up the type of audience that their mass media publishers have. It's already there for them, because they have such an established following that was with them through print, and now has come online.

In addition, more advertisers want true partnerships through the affiliate space, and they really get excited about working with these high quality publications and their editorial teams, to produce rich and engaging content.

Cassandra S.: Awesome. You had said it was kind of hard for you to pick just one mass media partner to really spotlight today, but I am curious, out of the ones that you mentioned, is there one in particular that you're super excited about currently?

Alison Chew: I would have to say Conde Nast. Conde Nast has so many great brands, that span a ton of verticals. Brands including Allure, GQ, Conde Nast Traveler, which is one of my favorites, Epicurious, Wired, Self, Teen Vogue, Brides, and so many more that they're my favorite because they entered into the affiliate scene, let's see, in late probably 2016 via relationship with a button, and few select partnerships. Over the past year and a half, have expanded their partnerships across so many more brands, and across several affiliate networks, that it's really exciting to see them grow. With them, the opportunities are truly endless, and our diverse mix of clients, we can practically create partnerships with all of them. They are super exciting, and definitely one to watch.

Cassandra S.: Yeah. Alison, this is great. We hear from our client services team all of the time, that our advertisers want more quality content, because it really lends credibility to have an outside source injecting their own perspective on a product, or a service. They can really do that in their own voice, in a way that speaks to their audience, so, it's no surprise that we're seeing more and more interest with our advertisers with these types of partners.

Another great thing about content, that I was thinking about as you were talking, is that it can be repurposed by advertisers if they choose to, on occasion. And, it continues to live online in the interwebs, really indefinitely, so, they can continue getting exposure long after it's published.

Alison Chew: Absolutely.

Cassandra S.: I have one more partner that I wanted to spotlight today, and share with you. That is RevLifter. For those of you that have not heard of RevLifter, they are another exciting technology partner coming out of the UK. Honestly, I don't know what they're drinking across the pond, but they're serving up some pretty cool technology offerings in the UK, these days, so, cheers to them over there.

RevLifter, what are they doing? Oftentimes, we hear that advertisers are not interested in working with "coupon partners", or that they don't always feel that they're driving value, or incremental sales through the affiliate channel. We actually held a webinar for our team with RevLifter, back on Valentine's Day. The theme of the webinar fit perfectly into the holiday, as RevLifter's goal is to really help advertisers fall in love with coupons again.

Of course at AP, or Acceleration Partners, we believe there's value in every type of performance partner, and that it really shouldn't be a question of if we partner with a certain type of publisher, but more so, how we can best utilize them to drive the KPIs that our advertisers are most concerned about. The challenge can be, sometimes, in keeping consumers from abandoning their shopping carts, and making sure that the offers that they see are actually relevant and timely to them. This is where RevLifter took their inspiration, and what makes them so exciting.

What they did is analyze the consumer and e-commerce landscape to look for ways to drive incremental values for advertisers. They came up with this technology that allows them to create personalized deals tailored to the individual shopper, always keeping the goals of the advertiser in mind. What this does, is gives online retailers absolute control over the delivery of the promotions that are being served up. So, what sets RevLifter apart? The ability to leverage their technology and machine learning, and artificial intelligence, to create customized offer pages that really present themselves as being completely on brand for each advertiser, so it looks and feel just like the rest of the advertiser's site, is one of the ways that they really set themselves apart.

The offers are totally data driven. They're personalized in real time. What's super cool is that no two people will ever see the exact same offers on the site at the same time. This is a benefit for the advertiser, because the offers are more relevant. They convert at a higher basis. They also help increase average order value, and sales. The other interesting thing about RevLifter, is they can identify whether a shopper is a new customer, or someone that's previously purchased on the site. They can tailor offers specifically to that type of customer.

Here's an example. If they know someone is a new shopper, they can provide a richer, new customer discount. If they're a loyal shopper, and someone that's been on the website before, they can show an offer to incentivize that customer to increase the basket size. RevLifter is so slick, they can even look at the geography of the shopper, and analyze the current weather in

the area, to provide offers on products that actually fit their geography and climate. For example, if someone is living in a warm climate, they are not going to be shown offers for cold weather gear, and vice versa, if someone is in the throes of winter ... as in Chicago, where it always feels like winter for nine months ... we won't necessarily be shown sun dresses or sandals, unless, maybe, it's Spring Break time, when everybody's flying south to escape the cold.

Their solutions are really innovative. They work across all device types. They deliver this, all, with a turn-key solution for every advertiser. They can help manage this process for them. What's also great about this technology, is that it's offered to advertisers, once again, strictly on a pay-for-performance basis through the affiliate channel, so, there's no risk involved with this process. They have fast integration with their retail sites, because there's no coding, or any modifications needed for their online stores.

They can also do things like A/B testing, and use their deals intelligence to feature offers based on performance data, and engagement. If they see something that's been performing really well, they can serve that up more frequently. They just get smarter as they add more data to their database. Best of all, just like with Increasingly, they don't need to spend a lot of time or money on development, to be able to plug this technology in, and get up and running right away to start driving incremental revenue. Again, another super interesting, out of the box partner, that we're very excited to be able to talk about, and looking forward to seeing what they do in 2018.

Alison Chew: Awesome, thanks Cass. Yeah, RevLifter, they're another great opportunity, and I'm excited to watch them grow in 2018. Unfortunately, we are out of time for today. There are so many impressive publishers out there, who are proving to be valuable partners to brands, in a variety of industries and verticals. We plan to spotlight them every quarter on our Outperform podcast. So, stay tuned.

Cassandra S.: Yep, and we're also going to be sure to include links and information about these publishers in our show notes for this episode. In the mean time, if you have any questions about publishers and partnering with them, please reach out to us through the Acceleration Partners website. Until next time, keep outperforming.