

# THE AFFILIATE RECKONING: EVOLVE OR EXPIRE

TURNING PARTNERSHIPS INTO ENGINES OF DISCOVERY,  
INFLUENCE, AND INCREMENTAL REVENUE.



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# When affiliate growth slows, it's not because the channel has stopped working - it's because the strategy needs to evolve.



Through our work with top global brands, we know what drives results and what stalls them. Breaking through growth plateaus takes more than a checklist; it requires a partner with the expertise, strategy, and technology to transform complexity into measurable growth.

With Acceleration Partners, you gain a tailored strategy that turns partnerships into engines of discovery, influence, and incremental revenue. Here are our recommendations for evolving, scaling, and adapting your program to unlock next-level growth in the AI era.

# 01 QUICK WINS

We help brands break through plateaus by building and optimizing a smarter, more diverse partner mix. Our deep bench of experts and global reach ensure you're unlocking value from partners that align with your goals.

## RETHINK YOUR PARTNER MIX

Reaching consumers and finding success in our changing economic climate rests on a fundamental truth: expanding beyond traditional partners is essential for sustained growth.

- ☐ Run a gap analysis against competitors and look-a-like programs to identify new partner opportunities.
- ☐ Test high-growth partner categories:
  - ☐ **BUY NOW, PAY LATER (BNPL)**  
Collaborate with BNPL partners to offer financial flexibility and make purchases more accessible for budget-conscious shoppers.
  - ☐ **CARD-LINKED OFFERS (CLO)**  
Run hyper-targeted campaigns that reach the right consumer with the right offer.
  - ☐ **CTV & STREAMING PARTNERSHIPS**  
Leverage performance-based CTV to tap into new, engaged audiences.
  - ☐ **CREATOR PARTNERSHIPS**  
Prioritize micro and mid-tier creators for strong engagement at lower costs and incentivize them with hybrid compensation models.
  - ☐ **CSS PARTNERSHIPS**  
Complement CPC initiatives while boosting visibility within Google Shopping.
  - ☐ **CONTENT PARTNERSHIPS**  
Collaborate with publishers gaining the most citations in your vertical in AI search overviews and LLMs to improve discoverability.

## **OPTIMIZE WHAT YOU ALREADY OWN**

Your current partnerships hold untapped potential. Unlock growth through tailored activation and optimization strategies.

- ☐ Monitor competitors' rates on loyalty and cashback sites and adjust your rates and promotional messaging to break through.
- ☐ Set up a regular partner newsletter (weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly) to share updates, promotional calendars, and product news.
- ☐ Collaborate with partners to learn what's working for competitors and test fresh approaches.
- ☐ Apply tiered commission structures tied to incrementality (e.g., higher payout for new-to-file or subscription orders) to maximize output without new recruitment.
- ☐ Host a partnerships day with top partners to strengthen relationships and position your brand for beta testing initiatives.
- ☐ Identify new opportunities, such as fresh placement types or newly added sites, where your brand isn't yet live.
- ☐ For subscriptions, consider providing a discount for an annual membership purchase.

## 02 SCALE FAST

We think about pricing, packaging and promotions when scaling your partnership program. Our experts know how to tailor your campaigns for maximum impact.

### ☒ REACH BUDGET-CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS

With tighter budgets, consumers are seeking affordability without compromising quality. Positioning products as innovative, accessible choices can drive higher conversions and loyalty.

- ☐ Position your products as "affordable indulgences."
- ☐ Offer product bundles to increase AOVs.
- ☐ Highlight affordability and value messaging in partner assets and creatives.
- ☐ Incentivize higher-order values with tiered cashback.
- ☐ Gamify repeat purchases with exclusive rewards at purchase milestones.
- ☐ Move excess inventory via exclusive discounts with deal and loyalty partners.

### ☒ CAPTURE CONSUMERS WITH URGENCY

Well-timed discounts, delivery deadlines, and surprise sales can drive conversions when it matters most.

- ☐ Implement progressive discount promotions that increase urgency during key seasonal shopping events.
- ☐ Use limited-time language to create a sense of urgency (e.g., "Ends Soon").
- ☐ Push delivery urgency with "Get it by Christmas" messaging in December.
- ☐ Plan "lever pull" sale extensions, surprising consumers with bonus shopping days to push priority products.

## 03 GO BEYOND

We are purpose-built to handle complex, high-touch programs and custom strategies. From partner recruitment to campaign innovation to market-specific guidance.

### **LEVERAGE AI**

AI is transforming the way consumers discover and evaluate products. Future-proof your program by ensuring your content and product data is AI-ready.

- ☐ Collaborate with partners to optimize content formats (Q&A, lists, comparisons) to increase AI visibility.
- ☐ Refine product data feeds with rich metadata, including price, availability, category, images, descriptions, reviews, and shipping info.
- ☐ Implement unique tracking codes on product links shared with publishers or early AI integrations (e.g., links embedded in an AI generated list).

### **ADAPT FOR AI-DRIVEN COMMERCE**

OpenAI enabling shopping in ChatGPT marks a step-change in how people research, discover, and buy products. AI-driven commerce depends on credible, trusted content, and affiliates don't just support this ecosystem, they power it.

- ☐ Double down on content-led partnerships to power discovery.
- ☐ Ensure brand differentiators (quality, fulfilment, availability) are visible.

## **GET CREATIVE**

Equipping partners with the right tools and fresh ideas can help your brand stand out and scale smarter.

- ☐ Build a partner toolkit with pre-approved messaging and creative assets to streamline your communication.
- ☐ Highlight unique value propositions to partners beyond price.
- ☐ Test campaigns focused on exclusivity or special offers.
- ☐ A/B test messaging with partners and optimize based on the findings.

## **EXPAND INTO UNTAPPED MARKETS**

Expanding into new regions opens your brand to new audiences, but a successful expansion requires careful planning, on-the-ground expertise, and localized marketing strategies tailored to each region.

- ☐ Create country-specific landing pages in the local language.
- ☐ Release localized product feeds with top-performing SKUs and translated product descriptions.
- ☐ Align promotional events with regional tentpole campaigns by repurposing existing offers to maximize their impact.
- ☐ Conduct market research and identify target audiences for each country.
- ☐ Localize content and partner promotions for each market.



# THE CHECKLIST IN ACTION



See how smart  
brands evolved ➡➡



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# VYOND REVERSED THREE YEARS OF DECLINING AFFILIATE REVENUE AND ACHIEVED 23% REVENUE GROWTH WITH ACCELERATION PARTNERS.

Vyond was struggling to achieve its growth objectives after three consecutive years of declining affiliate revenue. The brand turned to AP to revitalize its affiliate program.

AP built a data-driven, B2B partnership model that reduced reliance on coupon publishers and unlocked a profitable new revenue stream, positioning Vyond for long-term, scalable success.

## THE CHECKLIST IN ACTION

### RETHINK YOUR PARTNER MIX

- ✓ Gap Analysis: We uncovered new partnership opportunities beyond coupon publishers.
- ✓ Card-Linked Offers (CLOs): We identified CLOs as a high-growth category and introduced Fidel, a financial API for small business CLOs, as the ideal partner.

## RESULTS

Fidel Contribution:  
**22.5%**  
of total partnership revenue

Revenue Growth:  
**+23.7%**  
YoY

# FROM IN-HOUSE MANAGEMENT TO ACCELERATION PARTNERS: RETAIL BRAND DRIVES 40% REVENUE GROWTH.

A UK-based retail brand was struggling to meet customer acquisition targets and expand into new markets with its small in-house team. To scale effectively, they partnered with Acceleration Partners to diversify their affiliate program and uncover new growth opportunities.

## THE CHECKLIST IN ACTION

### RETHINK YOUR PARTNER MIX

- ✓ Leveraging APVision, our proprietary AI-powered platform, we identified high-value partner categories across content, loyalty, and commerce media.

### OPTIMIZE WHAT YOU ALREADY OWN

- ✓ Optimized current partnerships through competitor insights and exclusive offers.

### EXPAND INTO UNTAPPED MARKETS

- ✓ Expanded affiliate program into Germany.

## RESULTS

Revenue Growth:  
**+40%**

ROAS:  
**+24%**



# **READY TO BREAK THROUGH THE PLATEAU?**

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