Acceleration PARTNERS®

CHECKLIST

GROWTH WITHOUT THE GUESSWORK

THE AFFILIATE GROWTH CHECKLIST FOR AMBITIOUS BRANDS

A practical guide to building the right partner mix, investing with confidence, and scaling efficiently.

WHY IT MATTERS

HOW AMBITIOUS BRANDS BUILD AFFILIATE INTO THEIR MOST POWERFUL ACQUISITION CHANNEL

When you're competing against larger, more established players, every channel has to earn its place. Budget, team size, and market position all shape how decisions get made. But the brands that get the right support don't just manage those constraints, they build affiliate into one of their most efficient and profitable acquisition channels.

As the strategic partner ambitious brands trust, Acceleration Partners gives lean teams the data, clarity, and strategic guidance to invest with confidence, prove affiliate's value internally, and grow what's working, without wasted spend or guesswork.

> **This checklist will help you identify what's incremental, where to invest next, and how to scale efficiently.**

GET THE CHECKLIST →

01 QUICK WINS: BUILD THE RIGHT PARTNER MIX

> We help ambitious brands scale efficiently by building and optimizing a smarter, more diverse partner mix. Our experts ensure you're unlocking value from partners that align with your goals.

Complete a Partner Incrementality Audit

As channels multiply and budgets tighten, ambitious brands need clarity on which partnerships are driving growth, where spend is being wasted, and where to invest with confidence. Regular partner reviews free budget for the partnerships driving the most value.

- [ ] Run a partner audit to flag partners that capture existing demand without adding meaningful incremental value, and reallocate that spend to incremental partners.
- [ ] Identify overlapping or cannibalizing partners and consolidate where redundant.
- [ ] Set a recurring cadence to review partner performance against your incrementality goals.

Diversify Your Partner Mix

Increasing brand awareness in competitive markets rests on a fundamental truth: a diverse partner mix is essential for sustained growth.

- [ ] Run a gap analysis against competitors and look-alike programs to identify new partner opportunities.
- [ ] Test high-growth partner categories:
    - **Content Partnerships:** Collaborate with publishers gaining the most citations in your vertical in AI search overviews and LLMs to improve discoverability and brand awareness.
    - **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.
    - **Comparison Shopping Services (CSS):** Complement CPC initiatives while boosting visibility within Google Shopping.

02 SCALE EFFICIENTLY: GROW WHAT'S WORKING

We think about pricing, packaging, and promotions when scaling your partnership program. Our experts know how to tailor your campaigns to build visibility, trust, and conversions in saturated markets.

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.
- [ ] Identify new opportunities, such as fresh placement types or newly added sites, where your brand isn't live yet.

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 brand loyalty.

- [ ] Position your products as "affordable indulgences."
- [ ] Offer product bundles and tiered cashback rates to increase average order value.
- [ ] Highlight affordability and value messaging in partner assets and creatives.
- [ ] Gamify repeat purchases with exclusive rewards at purchase milestones.

Get Creative

Equipping partners with the right tools and fresh ideas can help your brand stand out in saturated markets.

- [ ] 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.

03 GO BEYOND: ACT ON AI-DRIVEN DISCOVERY

In this new discovery era, visibility is increasingly driven by the trusted third-party signals AI systems surface. The brands that will be best positioned as AI-mediated discovery matures are those building publisher relationships and citation authority now.

See the System

As AI-driven discovery matures, ambitious brands need clarity on where they appear in AI-generated answers.

- [ ] Map your active affiliate publishers against citation data to identify coverage gaps.
- [ ] Identify specific topic areas where your brand is underrepresented.
- [ ] Spot new publishers appearing in citation data who aren't yet in your program.

Shape the System

Actively influence the publishers and narratives driving AI answers about your category.

- [ ] Brief publishers on content gaps and brand positioning.
- [ ] Use citation data to identify dominant narratives (e.g., pricing, quality, value).
- [ ] Address negative or missing narratives through targeted content updates.

Rewire Incentives

When AI recommends without a click, traditional performance measurement misses the influence entirely.

- [ ] Recognize publishers contributing to visibility and recommendation.
- [ ] Build the case for hybrid compensation models where influence is present, but clicks aren't.

BOGNER BREAKS THROUGH

76% REVENUE GROWTH IN THE U.S. LUXURY MARKET

BOGNER, a global luxury sportswear brand, needed to grow brand awareness and acquire high-value customers in the U.S. without compromising its premium positioning. Competing against larger, more established players in a saturated market, the brand needed a partner strategy built around brand fit, not just volume.

With the right partner strategy and data-driven technology, BOGNER built affiliate into one of their most efficient acquisition channels and firmly established itself in the U.S. luxury market.

THE RESULTS

+76%

REVENUE GROWTH

+163%

TRAFFIC GROWTH

+8%

INCREASE IN AVERAGE ORDER VALUE

VYOND REVERSED DECLINING AFFILIATE REVENUE

AND ACHIEVED 23% GROWTH

Vyond, a leading animation software company, was struggling to achieve its growth objectives after three consecutive years of declining affiliate revenue. The brand turned to Acceleration Partners and impact.com to revitalize its program and rebuild it around a smarter, more diversified partner mix.

A standout move was the introduction of Fidel, a financial API specializing in card-linked offers for business credit cards. Unlike traditional providers focused on consumer brands, Fidel's ability to target small businesses and solo entrepreneurs aligned perfectly with Vyond's core audience.

Together, they uncovered a fresh, profitable revenue stream without significant upfront investment, reversing three years of decline and achieving 23% year-over-year revenue growth.

THE RESULTS

+23%

YEAR-OVER-YEAR REVENUE GROWTH

22.5%

OF TOTAL PROGRAM REVENUE FROM ONE NEW PARTNER

3 yrs

OF DECLINING REVENUE REVERSED

READY TO BUILD AFFILIATE INTO ONE OF YOUR MOST EFFICIENT AND SCALABLE ACQUISITION CHANNELS?

GET IN TOUCH →