

8 Steps to a Remarkable Affiliate Program

When done correctly, affiliate marketing can be a powerful way to reach new customers and grow your business.

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But what goes into creating a successful affiliate program?

In this eBook, we'll explore what affiliate program management entails and offer a step-by-step guide to launching your own remarkable affiliate program. We'll also share some examples of brands we work with that are currently thriving with robust affiliate programs.

By the end of this eBook, you should have a clear understanding of what it takes to create a successful affiliate program for your business.

How to Create an Affiliate Program in 8 Simple Steps

Creating an affiliate program might seem like a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be. Follow these eight simple steps to launch and optimize your own program for maximum profitability.

1. Establish Your Affiliate Program Goals

The first step to creating a successful affiliate program is understanding what your goals are. What do you want to achieve with your affiliate program?

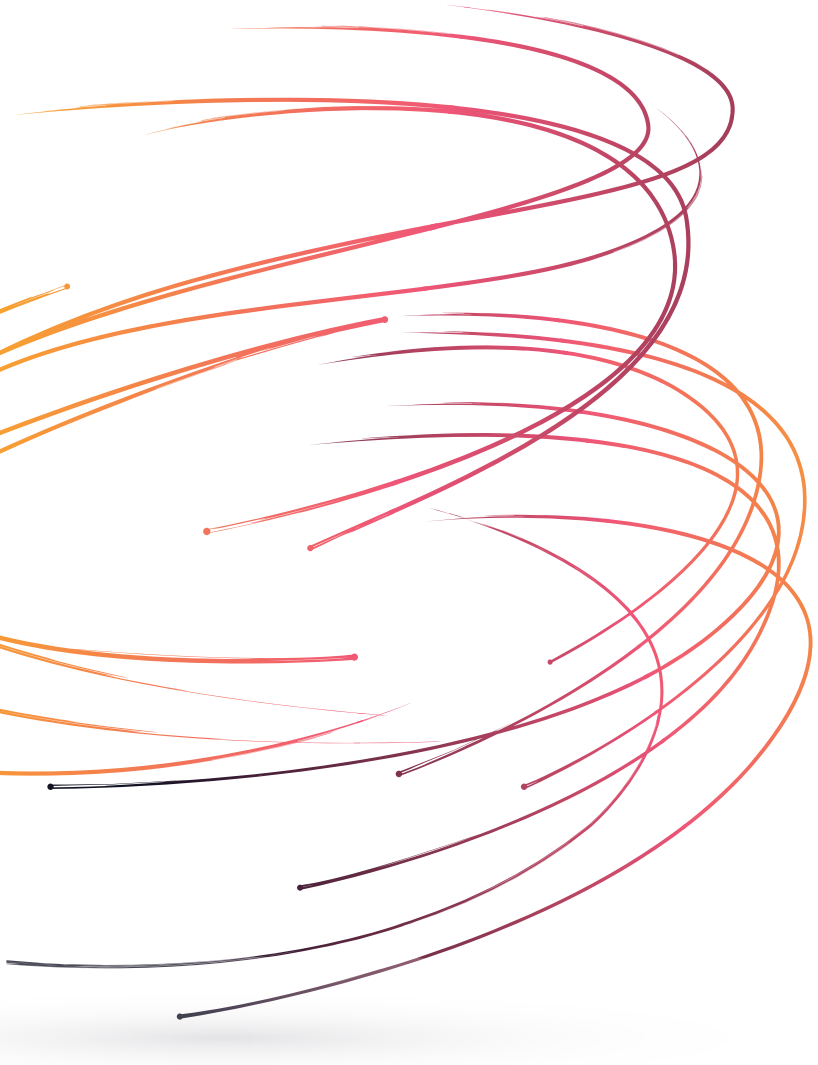
Your goals will dictate the rest of the decisions you make about your affiliate program, so it's important that you take the time to think about what you want to achieve.

Some common goals for affiliate programs include:

- Generating more sales at a higher average order value (AOV)
- Increasing brand awareness on networks and platforms
- Driving traffic to new offers and collections
- Acquiring new-to-file customers
- Engaging existing customers with exclusive deals
- Building relationships with influencers
- Creating high-quality, low-cost publisher content

One brand that has used affiliate program goal-setting effectively is Playboy. WITHIN helped Playboy identify average order value as a primary metric based on their campaign goal: increase profitable revenue without compromising on customer quality. By using a 3-tiered threshold offer that gave customers discounts for spending a certain amount per order, Playboy was able to achieve a 30% increase in Average Order Value (AOV).

2. Conduct a Competitor Audit



A competitor audit will help you understand what other brands are doing in the affiliate space and how you can differentiate your program.

To start, create a list of your competitors' affiliate programs. Then, visit each program's website and take note of the offers they're running, the type of content they're featuring, and the creative that they're promoting.

Additionally, you can observe the types of publishers and affiliate networks that they're working with to determine potential commission structures. This information will help you understand what's working well for other brands and what you can do to make your program even better.

3. Choose an Affiliate Network That Fits Your Needs

Choosing an affiliate network that suits your marketing budget, aligns with your campaign goals, and addresses your target audience is pivotal to getting the most out of your affiliate program.

There are a few different types of affiliate networks, each with its own benefits. You'll need to choose the network that best fits your needs.

The three most common types of affiliate networks are:

Pay-per-sale (PPS) networks pay affiliates a commission for every sale they generate. This is the most common type of affiliate network.

Pay-per-lead (PPL) networks pay affiliates a commission for every lead they generate. This is less common than pay-per-sale but can be more profitable for affiliates who are good at generating leads.

Pay-per-click (PPC) networks pay affiliates a commission for every click they generate. This is the least common type of affiliate network but can be very profitable for affiliates who generate a lot of traffic.

Notable affiliate networks such as ShareASale, impact.com, CJ Affiliate, and Rakuten offer options for brands to use combinations of these commission structures.

impact

No matter your preferred network type, each specific network offers unique perks. For example, impact.com has a partnership discovery tool that can be used to pinpoint premium publishers for effective placement opportunities. WITHIN helped Corkcicle leverage impact.com's network capabilities to identify high-performing partners, demonstrate conversions across channels, and analyze partner insights to further hone affiliate program strategies.

4. Construct a Commission Structure

Your commission structure will be one of the most important factors in determining the success of your affiliate program.

There are a few types of commission structures you can choose from, each with its own benefits:

Flat rate:

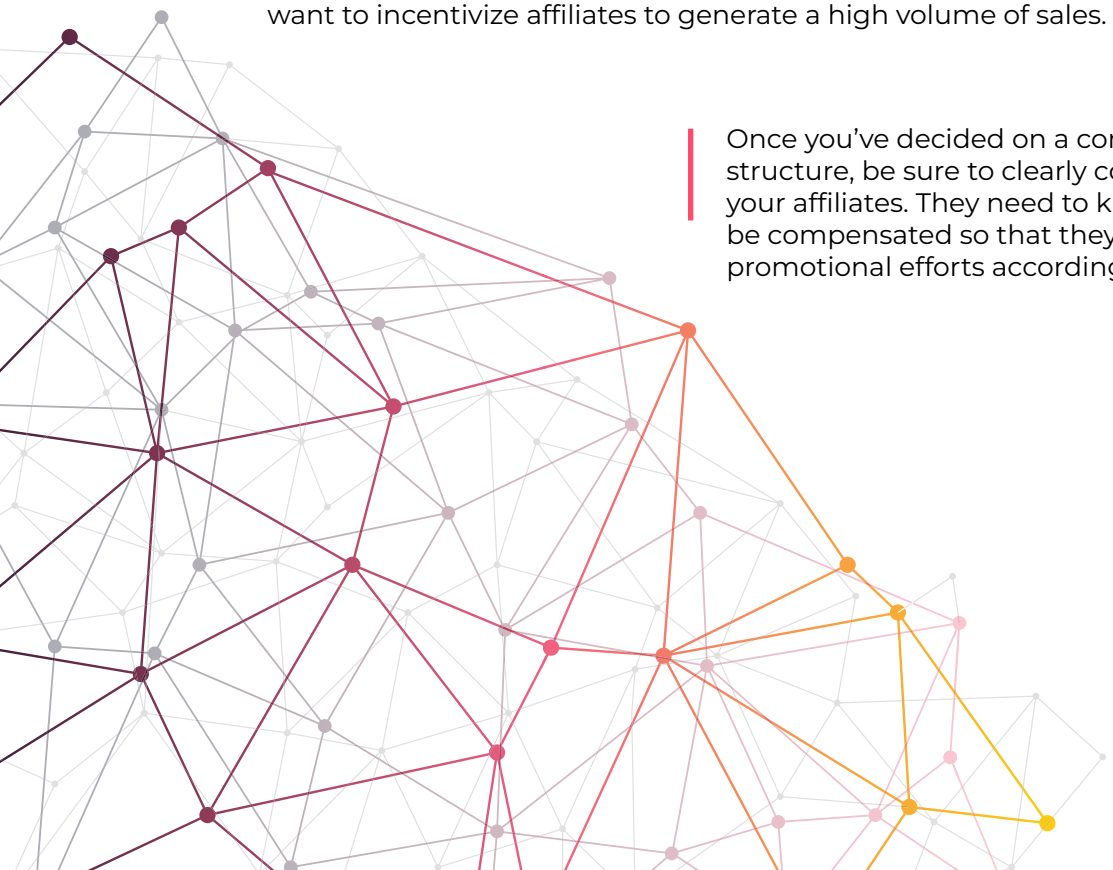
A flat rate is a set commission that doesn't vary based on the sale amount. This type of commission is effective for campaigns where you want to incentivize affiliates to generate as many sales as possible.

Percentage of sale:

A percentage-of-sale commission varies based on the amount of the sale. This type of commission is best for campaigns where you want to incentivize affiliates to generate high-value sales.

Tiered:

A tiered commission structure allows you to offer different commissions for different levels of performance. This type of commission is best for campaigns where you want to incentivize affiliates to generate a high volume of sales.



Once you've decided on a commission structure, be sure to clearly communicate it to your affiliates. They need to know how they'll be compensated so that they can tailor their promotional efforts accordingly.

5. Onboard Key Publishers to Your Program

Now that you have selected your network and commission structure, it's time to onboard central publishers who will act as mediums for purchasing decisions. This is a critical step because it will affect the potential ROI and reputation of your affiliate program.

Top publishers include:

honey
RetailMeNot inc.
Rakuten
Cartera
MOTHERLY
meredith
BuzzFeed
SHOPSTYLE
SKIMLINKS
rewardStyle

There are a few things to keep in mind when recruiting publishers:

- Make sure they align with your brand values.
- Look for publishers with a loyal following over those with a large following.
- Choose publishers who are active on channels related to your own content.
- Select publishers who have experience with your type of product or service.

Once you've found a few publishrs that meet your criteria, reach out to them and introduce yourself. Let them know what you're looking for and why you think they would be a good fit for your program.

Recruiting publishers may seem like a lot of work, but it's worth it to find partners that are a good fit for your brand. By taking the time to onboard key publishers, you'll set your affiliate program up for success.

6. Build a Promo and Reporting Calendar

The next step is to build a Promo and Reporting Calendar. This will help you keep track of your affiliate program's performance and ensure that you're meeting your goals.

Start by creating a list of all the promotions and reports that you want to include in your calendar. Then, add the details for each promotion or report, including the date, time, and type of content.

Finally, create a schedule for when you'll publish each piece of content. This will help you stay on track and ensure that your affiliate program is running smoothly.

Your calendar should include timely performance reports, promotions and deals you will run, product or collection launches, and details on the types of content you want from publishers/networks.

Here are some examples of promotions and reports that you might want to include in your calendar:

- Contest and giveaway opportunities
- Quarterly performance reviews
- Promotions and discounts
- New product launches
- Blog posts and articles
- Social media content

7. Create Affiliate Program Assets

Now that you've chosen an affiliate network, it's time to create some assets for your affiliate program.

Assets are the tools and resources that you'll give to your affiliates to help them promote your brand. Building creative, offers, brand pages, and publisher offers in the network's asset library are all a part of creating affiliate program assets.

Affiliate assets will be the foundation for your program and provide affiliates with the information and resources they need to promote your brand image consistently.

Some examples of affiliate assets include:

- **Banners and ads**
- **Landing pages**
- **Links and tracking codes**
- **Emails and newsletter templates**
- **Contest and giveaway rules**
- **Swipe files**

Creating affiliate assets can be time consuming, but it's important to do it right. Your affiliates will be promoting your brand, so you want to make sure that they have everything they need to do it effectively.

CORKCICLE.

WITHIN's work with Corkcicle displayed the effectiveness of an affiliate content strategy that served assets at all stages of the customer journey. By optimizing Corkcicle's affiliate program, WITHIN drove a 178% increase in QoQ affiliate channel growth with a 20% increase in overall ROAS.

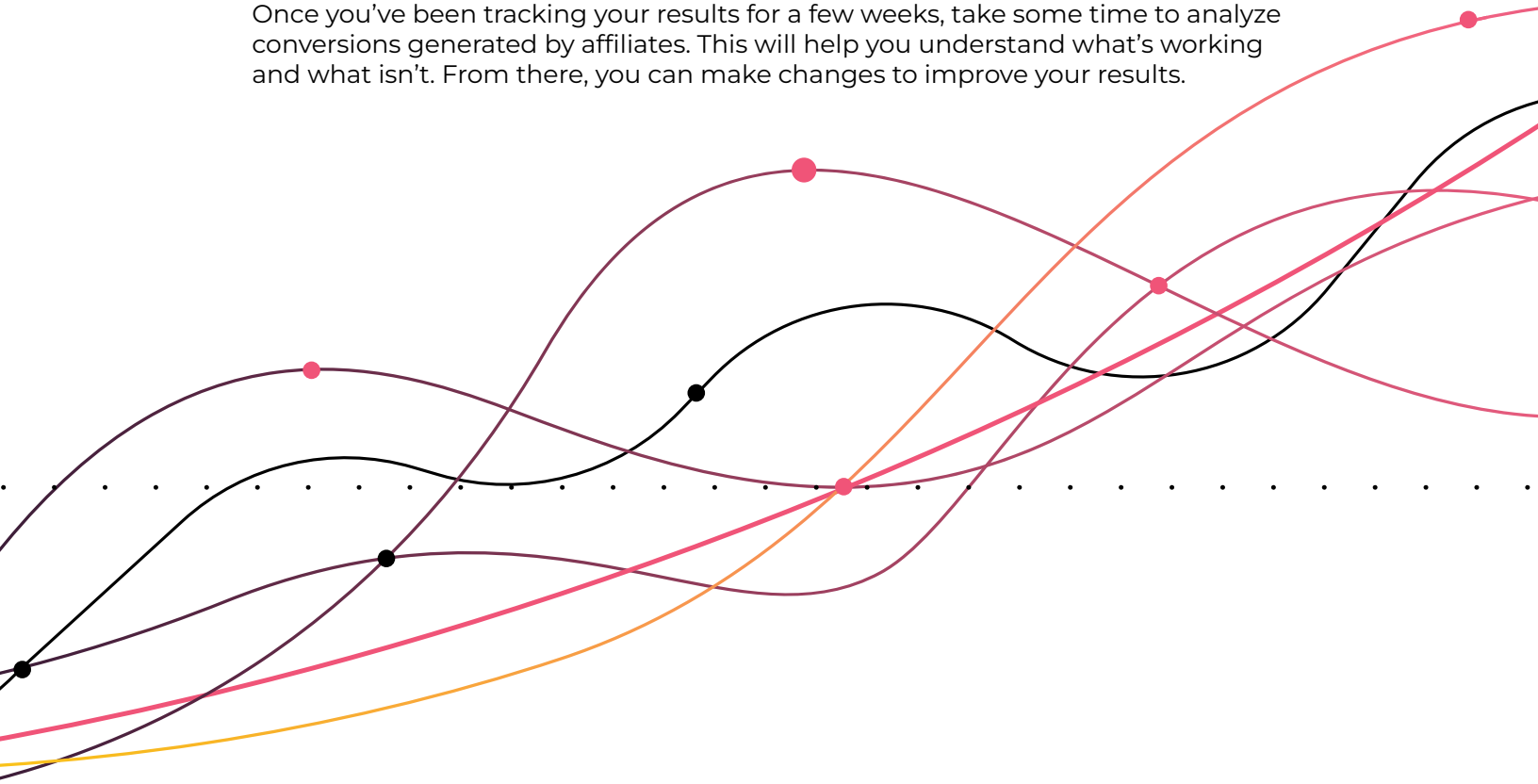
8. Launch, Measure, and Optimize Results

The final step is to measure your results.

Now that you've launched your affiliate program, it's important to track your progress and measure your results. This will help you determine what's working well and what needs to be improved.

Review your initial goals and metrics to make sure that your program has met established KPIs (sales, traffic, conversion rate, average order value, etc.).

Once you've been tracking your results for a few weeks, take some time to analyze conversions generated by affiliates. This will help you understand what's working and what isn't. From there, you can make changes to improve your results.



Are you ready to set up a winning affiliate program? **Talk to us** at WITHIN to find out how we help brands like Playboy and Corkcicle maximize their affiliate effectiveness.

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