

How content publishers can leverage affiliate commerce

Article



Affiliate commerce isn't new for many publishers, nor is it for marketers. But more content publishers are entering the affiliate space, creating new opportunities for performance marketers to reach high-quality audiences through high-quality content. Meanwhile, the affiliate model itself is evolving. Some affiliate networks now offer marketers more ways to attribute sales to multiple publisher touchpoints along the path to purchase.

Traditionally, the types of publishers in the affiliate channel have been coupon, cash-back, loyalty, price comparison, and review sites. But that's changed as more high-quality content publishers—such as traditional publisher brands under Meredith Corporation, Hearst Corporation, and Condé Nast, and digital media publishers like BuzzFeed and Vox Media—have entered the space. Influencers have also been active in the affiliate channel in recent years. In effect, the affiliate channel now offers marketers considerably more premium and engaging content partners than what was historically available.

“The affiliate space has evolved well beyond transactional campaigns with a rewards type of partner. Now, you have the weight of these editorial brands reviewing products,” said David A. Yovanno, CEO at affiliate network Impact.

Most of the publishers we interviewed for our “Publishers and Commerce 2021” report said the majority of their ecommerce revenues come from affiliate partnerships—meaning commissions earned on conversions or clicks they drive to a brand or retailer through affiliate links placed in content on their sites or other channels, like their social media accounts and email newsletters.

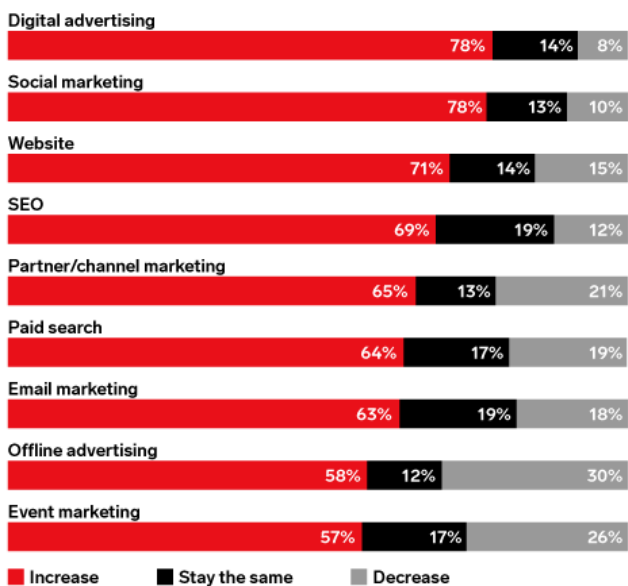
Marketer perception of the affiliate, or partner, marketing channel may be changing as the types of publishers in the channel diversify.

“Now that it's shown that content can be a material component of the revenue build, the affiliate channel is in a position to take its rightful seat at the CMO's table. It's been perceived as a coupon and cash-back channel, but it's not that anymore,” said Matt Gilbert, CEO of affiliate network Partnerize.

In a May 2020 survey by Gartner, 65% of B2C marketing executives worldwide expected to increase spending in affiliate, or partner, marketing in 2021, while just 21% planned to decrease it.

Change in Marketing Spending in 2021 According to B2C Marketing Executives Worldwide, by Channel, May 2020

% of respondents



Note: n=167 B2C marketers; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; excludes "don't know" responses

Source: Gartner, "CMO Spend Survey 2020," Sep 11, 2020

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Even if content publishers may not be the biggest source of retail conversions in the affiliate channel, they're certainly a high-quality one. For advertisers seeking brand-safe, transparent partners, reputable publishers deliver exposure and qualified customers from among their audiences.

In fact, on average, UK affiliate marketers ranked content as the most valuable affiliate model after rewards sites—7.41 on a 10-point scale—in a January 2021 survey by the Internet Advertising Bureau UK (IAB UK).

To learn more about how content publishers are growing ecommerce monetization in the affiliate channel, Insider Intelligence subscribers can read our recent report:

Report by Audrey Schomer Apr 09, 2021

Publishers and Commerce 2021

