

5 charts on affiliate marketing: Marketers face mixed priorities

Article

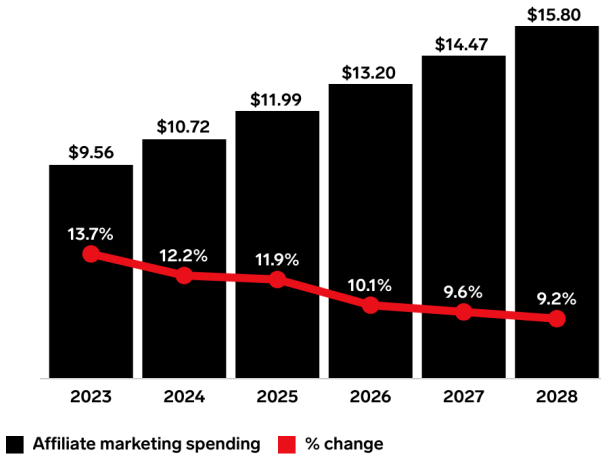


Affiliate [marketing](#) is now a \$10 billion industry, and marketers recognize its effectiveness. Yet many aren't prioritizing affiliate marketing spend, due to difficulty with attribution or classifying it as [social media](#) spend. Here are five charts demonstrating the state of affiliate marketing.

1. Affiliate spend will exceed \$10 billion

US Affiliate Marketing Spending Will Exceed \$10 Billion for the First Time in 2024

billions in US affiliate marketing spending and % change, 2023-2028



Note: commissions paid by a site or app based on agreements in which published content from another site or app drives traffic to it in exchange for a share of the sales stemming from that traffic

Source: EMARKETER Forecast, Aug 2024

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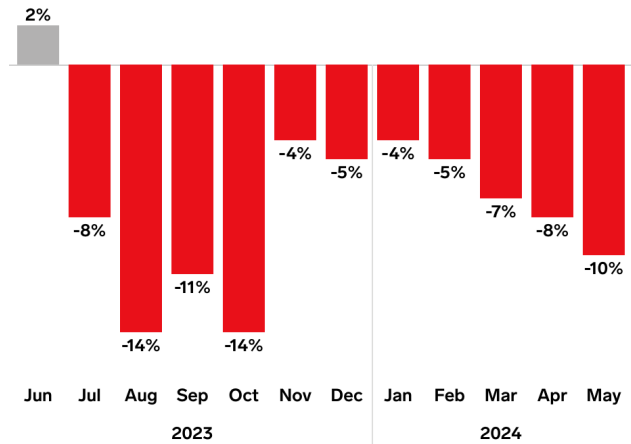
US affiliate marketing spend's double-digit growth will continue through 2026, when it will hit \$13.20 billion, per our August 2025 forecast.

Affiliate marketing spend has risen with [retail ecommerce sales](#). Its growth is outpacing US retail ecommerce sales growth, though ecommerce has less room to grow, having reached 16.1% penetration of total retail sales.

2. But advertisers' affiliate marketing gross revenues are shrinking

Advertisers' Affiliate Gross Revenue Growth Was Negative for 11 Months Straight

% change in US retail affiliate marketing gross revenues YoY, June 2023-May 2024



Note: data represents activity among about 700 advertisers across 10 categories on the Partnerize network; broader industry metrics may vary
Source: Partnerize, "U.S. Retail Affiliate Marketing Sales Index," May 31, 2024

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Despite increased spend, US advertisers' affiliate gross revenues have declined, according to Partnerize. Consumers' deal-seeking behaviors and hesitation to buy have contributed to this decline, as noted in our "[Affiliate Marketing 2024](#)" report.

To encourage conversation, affiliate marketing can tap into deal-seeking behaviors by offering exclusive discounts.

3. Affiliate is one of the most effective marketing channels

Marketing Channels That Are Effective/Highly Effective According to Marketers Worldwide, Jan 2024

% of respondents



Note: n=650

Source: Forrester Consulting, "Marketers Clearly Have Diverse Objectives In Today's Digital Environment" commissioned by Awin, Jan 31, 2024

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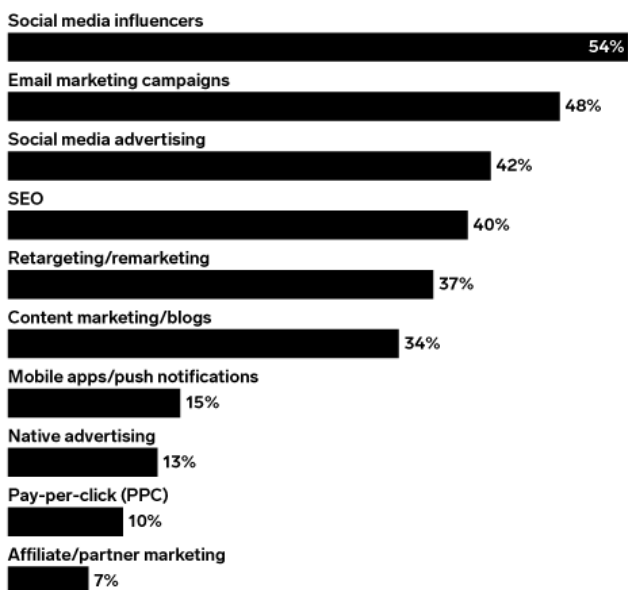
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Affiliate and partner marketing is the third most effective channel after content marketing and pay-per-click, according to marketers worldwide, per a Forrester Consulting survey commissioned by Awin. Affiliate ranked high due to its value in engaging audiences and aligning with performance-based strategies.

4. Yet affiliate was not a top priority for marketing budgets in 2024

Allocation of Marketing Budget Toward Select Marketing Channels According to Marketers Worldwide, Jan 2024

% of respondents



Note: n=650; top 3 responses

Source: Forrester Consulting, "Marketers Clearly Have Diverse Objectives In Today's Digital Environment" commissioned by Awin, Jan 31, 2024

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Just 7% of marketers worldwide consider affiliate marketing a top budget priority, according to the Forrester Consulting survey. Marketers recognize affiliate's effectiveness but still are not budgeting for it.

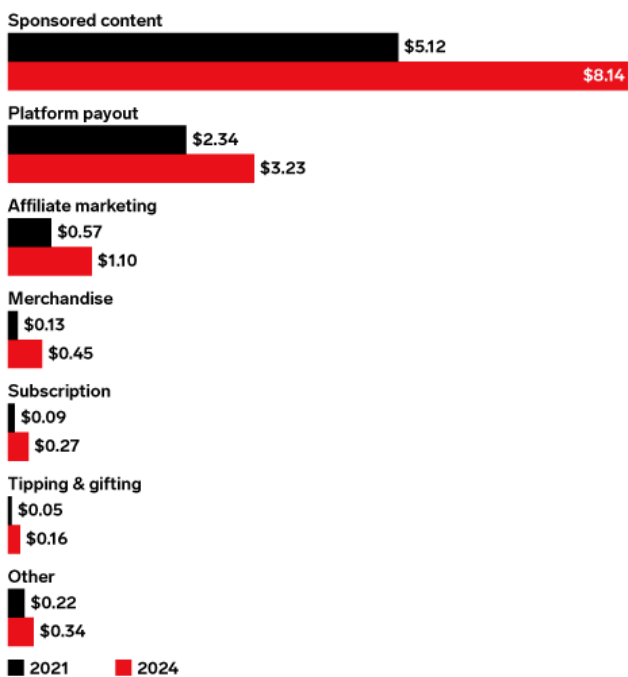
One reason may be how challenging affiliate attribution can be when consumers don't buy directly from partner links. Affiliate marketing can be clearly attributed when a purchase is made immediately, but consumers often follow less direct [paths to purchase](#).

Affiliate partnerships may also occur through influencers, resulting in marketers allocating it as social media budget, rather than as affiliate and partner marketing budget.

5. Affiliate is increasingly important for creator income

Creators Make the Most Money From Brand Deals, but Their Earnings Breakdown Is Changing

billions in US social media creator revenues, by stream, 2021 & 2024



Note: revenues generated by US-based creators via each stream on social media; excludes revenues generated on traditional media properties; includes video platforms with primarily user-generated content (e.g., Twitch, YouTube)
Source: EMARKETER Forecast, March 2024

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Sponsored content is by far the biggest contributor to [creator](#) incomes in the US at \$8.14 billion in 2024, per EMARKETER data. But affiliate revenues are on the rise, having nearly doubled between 2021 and 2024.

TikTok Shop has been a major contributor to boosting affiliate revenues for creators, as noted in our “[Creator Economy Revenues Forecast 2024](#)” report. TikTok Shop is one way marketers can reach [nano-influencers](#) with engaged audiences near the point of purchase.

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