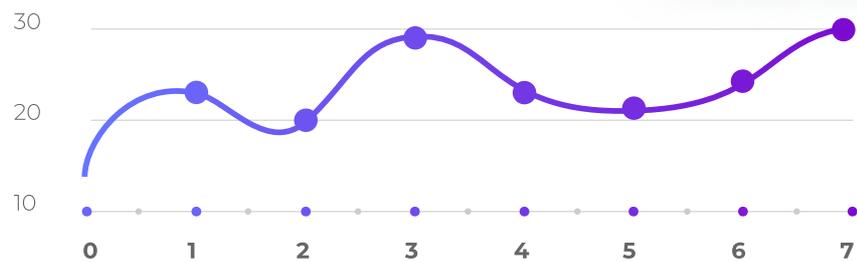


GUIDE ON PARTNER PROGRAM CREATION IN 2021

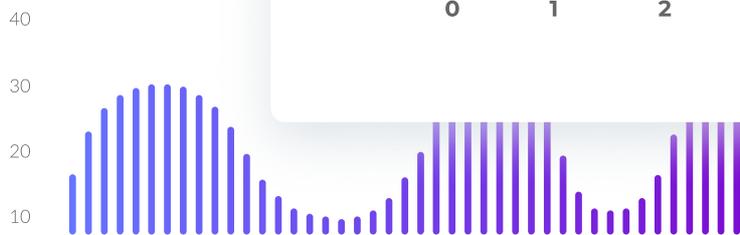
Follower Growth



RPA (Revenue per Action)



RPC (Revenue per Click)



30

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Your Guide to Successful Partner Program

Since you downloaded this guide, we presume you are thinking about launching a partner program to grow your business and expand your business partnerships' list.

Good call! Partner programs can significantly boost your business without having your full attention put into product promotion. However, it has some pitfalls you need to be aware of should you want to succeed in these efforts.

To help you start your partner program, we created this guide that will walk you through all aspects of partner marketing. It draws attention to the business side of the matter, such as the typical payment schemes, the top ways of product promotion, advice on partners recruiting, and provision of tech maintenance to manage the program itself and all partners' relations.



First things first, let's figure out where you are now in your partner marketing journey. Are you a total beginner, or have you already been there for a while?

If you fall into the first category, we highlight the basics of partner marketing, its state in 2021, and perspectives in the guide's first part. In contrast, the second part focuses on concrete advice on setting a program and working with partners.

I hope you will find the guide helpful, and after reading it, you will already be halfway to success.

Contact us if you have any industry or technology-specific questions. We will be happy to help!

Stanislau Litvinou
CEO at Affise

Affise is a partnership marketing platform for brands, advertisers and agencies to automate and scale their partner relations via all possible performance marketing channels: traditional affiliates, influencers, networks and agencies. The synergy of technology and the long standing experience allows Affise's clients to make partnerships manageable and revenue predictable marketing channel.

To learn more, visit affise.com.

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Part 1. Partner Marketing 101

Partner Marketing: How It Works, Key Players

Partner marketing is about the possibility for a business to promote a product with the help of affiliates (publishers) and optimize the marketing budget by paying only for the final result.

The basic partner marketing model involves **three compulsory parties**: a product owner, a promoter, and a customer.



In the traditional model, partner marketing will look like the following example: person A has a flower shop, person B has a blog about hand-made decorations. Person B can recommend buying flowers via a link to the shop of person A. Thus a customer buys flowers from person A, and a person B gets a commission from the sale.

In 2020 partner marketing looks more complicated. The goal can be presented not only by sales but also by variety of other actions, like impressions, clicks, registrations, installs, etc. Depending on the agreement, a publisher is paid upon reaching one of the goals.

Let's have a closer look who is involved in partner marketing:

Product owner

You will find many names for this role in the partner marketing life cycle. In traditional partner marketing, a product owner is often referred to as a vendor or merchant. It can be an individual entrepreneur, a small or mid-size company, or a large enterprise with a product or a service to sell. By product, we mean either goods or services, both online and offline. In digital marketing, a product owner is also known as an advertiser. In 2021 in this role we see a lot of brands from different industries from eCommerce to SaaS products that want to boost their growth.

Partner

Also known as a publisher or an affiliate. Partner is responsible for promoting a product, presenting it in the most appealing way to the target audience so that people would like to purchase it. Should an affiliate succeed in selling a merchant product, he or she will receive a commission from the sale.

Consumer

The one who purchases a product, an end-user of the promoted products. Not all consumers even realize that they buy from affiliates. Affiliates are very good at hiding this fact and promoting a product in a very native way, employing recommendations, story-telling, and other content types.

Some affiliates disclose the presence of affiliate links to be fair and develop loyalty around their audience. However, this can deter customers who are not aware of partner marketing business schemes. They might think that in this way they pay more and go directly to a product's webpage. As a matter of fact, affiliate commissions are deducted from the product price. Buying from affiliates never ends up in a higher price.

The important players in partner marketing are **affiliate networks (ad networks) or agencies** that consolidate offers from numerous advertisers and publishers from different niches and regions. They serve as an intermediate between advertisers and publishers, matching advertisers with publishers that fit their profile.

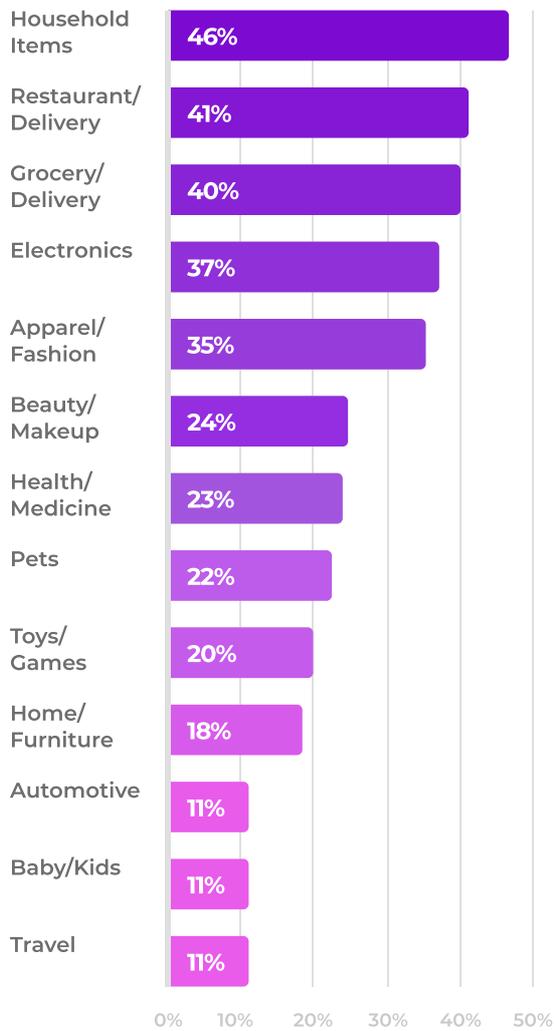
In 2021 with all the complexity of actors, some typical market players may interchange and convey two roles at the same time. You may find it confusing at the start, but do not let it mislead you. Keep in mind the basic model that there is also a player who promotes somebody's product and receives a commission.

20
IN 21

PLAYERS MAY INTERCHARGE
AND CONVEY TWO ROLES
AT THE SAME TIME

Types of Partnerships

Most searched online Coupon Categories as May of 2020



Source - Coupon Follow ©Statista 2020

Deals and Coupons

Deal and coupons websites are aggregators of various discounts that are kept together to create the experience of a discounted eCommerce platform. It is a convenient marketplace of different offers where customers can compare products, companies, and prices.

Though some people may think that coupons are the forgotten past and could have been effective only in the 1990ies, the real situation with deals and coupons is different. They won't die as long as people dig for discounts. You might be surprised but **93.75% of American adults used coupons in 2019**. Also, the data shows that **60%** of consumers are more likely to shop from a new brand if it has a discount coupon on offer. Furthermore, **92%** of shoppers in the United States who search for deals or offers before making an online purchase. Thus, coupons can be a part of a marketing strategy for new products on the market.

To have the overview of the industries for which coupons work the best, you can have a look at the recent overview from May 2020 that shows the most searched categories during the coronavirus pandemic. While the coronavirus pandemic will be over once, the online shopping habits remain in customer behaviour.

Loyalty partnership

Loyalty partners come in many forms but generally, they aim to involve websites, apps, or companies to **stimulate potential consumers with a reward in anticipation** of the desired action, which can be a sign up for emails, signing up for a trial offer, but most typically a product sale.

Also, one brand allows its customers to exchange loyalty program bonus points for products of another brand in a loyalty partnership. Loyalty programs enable elite brands not to spoil their image by offering cashback or frequent sales. In fact, it's a way to give severe discounts without actually adding any money.



Frequency

The more frequent a customer purchases a product or uses a service, the more rewards a customer receives.



Volume

The more a customer buys goods or services, the greater is the reward that a customer receives.



Advocate

Loyal customers that support and promote the brand. The reward is often in the form of extended bonuses.

Influencer marketing

Previously known as promotion on social media solely from celebrities has shifted to bloggers and opinion leaders.

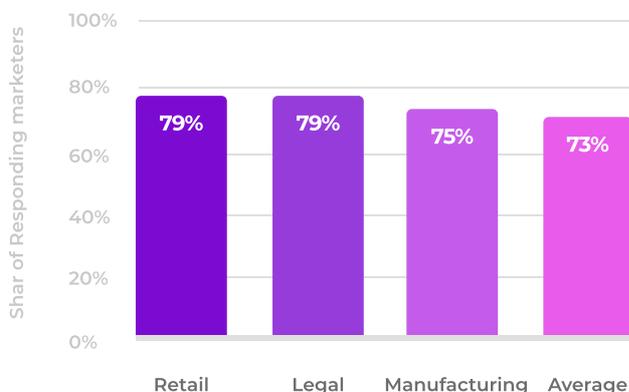
The key in this model are people that have an influence in certain subjects and are followed by a great number of followers that share their opinion and listen to their views. In this way, influencers have rather a high impact on the mass audience, making it easier for companies to get their product or service promoted to thousands or millions of people. In addition, since influencers act as opinion leaders, companies get much closer to the target audience, which, in turn, feels the urge to keep closer to the opinion leader, their lifestyle, and, consequently, to the companies. Working with influencers brands have high chances to increase brand awareness and sales.

Influencer marketing udage rate in the United States from 2019 to 2022



Source - eMarketer ©Statista 2020

Share of marketers from selected industries that increased spending on influencer marketing worldwide in 2020



Source - eMarketer ©Statista 2020

Paid-per-post

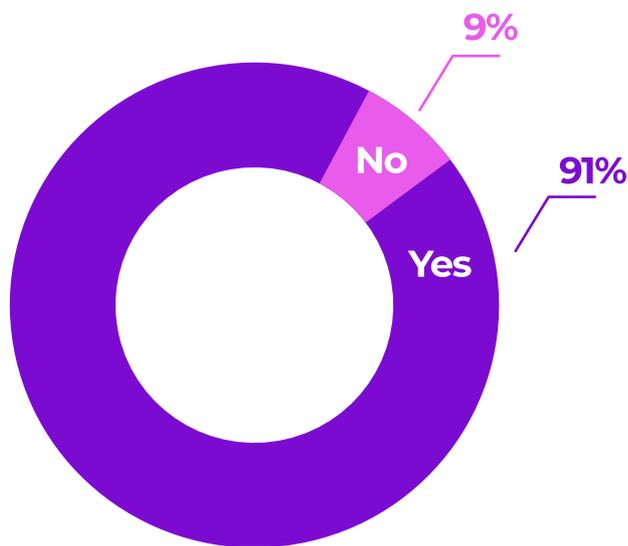
Also sometimes referred to as “À la carte” pricing, this pricing model compensates the influencer based on the number of posts he or she creates for a brand. It can be in the form of a blog post, a tweet, an Instagram photo, or a Youtube video.

Brand Ambassadors

A brand ambassador is someone who is paid to not only talk positively about the brand but to embody the brand they are endorsing. Brands always train their ambassadors on their products and services and their company mission and values. Because of this, ambassadors have inside knowledge and become dedicated brand experts. Brands and their ambassadors always have long-term partnerships.

As you can see influencer marketing usage is steadily growing from year to year. Only throughout 2020 several industries increased spending on influencer marketing worldwide by at least 70%.

Use of content marketing in organizations worldwide as of June 2019



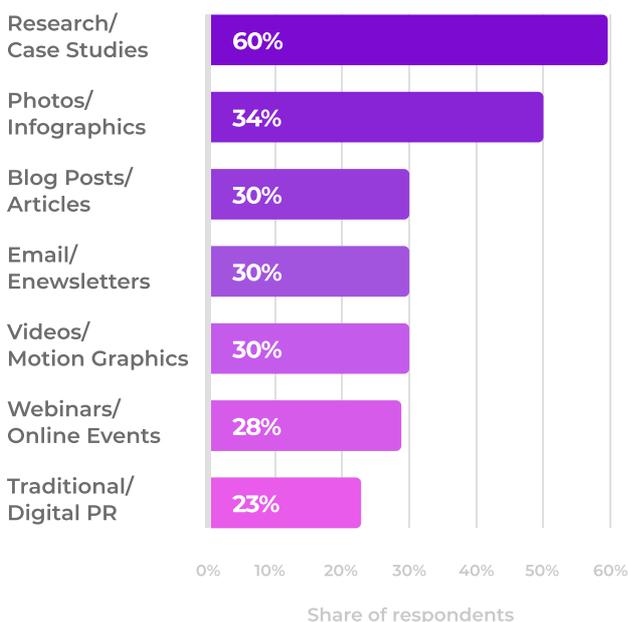
Source - SEMrush ©Statista 2020

Content marketing partnership

Content partnerships offer a variety of forms for companies to cooperate. While the most famous content form is a blog article, content marketing embraces also videos and podcasts, interviews, case studies, in-depth white-papers, infographics, different on-site quizzes, and games.

While content partnership fits into the promotion strategy of any product, it is particularly a great fit for native advertising of more sophisticated products that have a longer conversion cycle and require more information about the product, particularly its characteristics, instructions on how to use, independent reviews etc.

Content marketing types trusted by target audiences according to marketing professionals worldwide as May of 2019



Source - Ascend2 (and Research Partners) ©Statista 2020

Co-creation

Both brands can work together on content creation and share it on their respective platforms. Joint process of content preparation with mentioning each other products can help both parties gain new markets' attention.

Link Sharing

A different strategy, when one brand works on content creation, and another brand distributes it within their channels. For example, link from a relevant article at their blog post.

Link exchange is an effective way to build a connection between non-competitive brands while also boosting SEO of your website.

Affiliate marketing

The most common partner marketing method is probably affiliation. Affiliate marketing is a promotion model where affiliates or publishers promote your product or service on their website in return for a commission. Due to its measurability and accurate ROI calculation this type of partnership perfectly fits the partner marketing matrix.



Partner program

A brand can launch its own partner program, where he would set his ad campaigns, recruit affiliates, specify rules and policies, configure payouts and conduct all communication with affiliates/publishers.



Networks

An affiliate network serves as an intermediary between brands and partners. It offers brands access to publishers participating in the network. For advertisers it is an easy way to find and join partner programs.



Agencies

Brand can work with a marketing agency that manages the portfolio of publishers and all ad campaigns operations behind it, such as ad banners and referral links.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a way to increase brand awareness by financially supporting an event, person, or product. The most common place where you could see sponsorships are various sports events.

Awareness

Awareness is the most general usage of sponsorship. Link your product to a mass event to maximize your brand's reach for existing and new consumers.

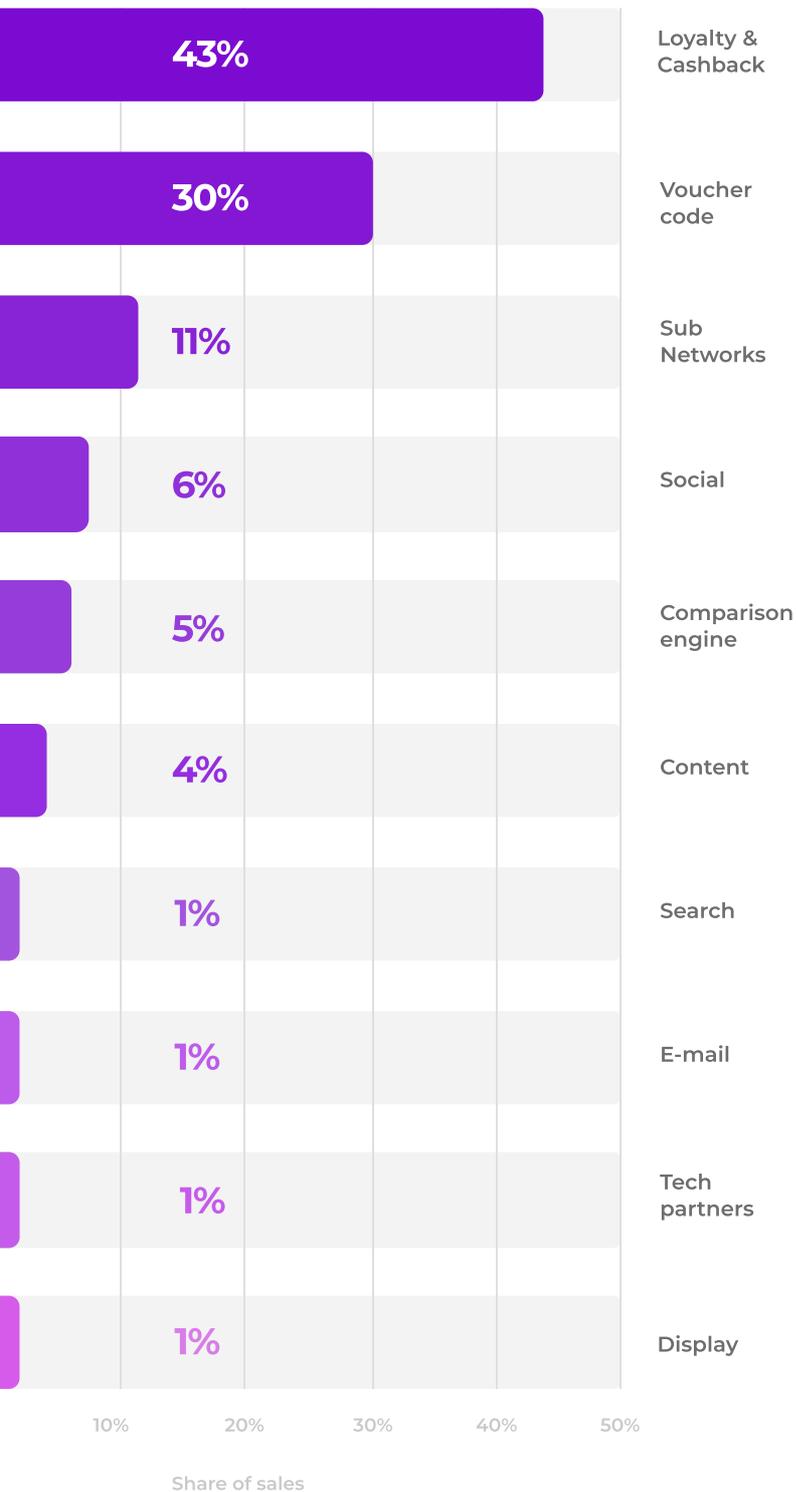
Association

It's a more profound connection of the brand with an event or a person to create a close association in the consumers' eyes.

Consumer Understanding

Sponsorships can help educate consumers about what a product has to offer. For example, a brand might sponsor an event that, among other things, showcases a product's capabilities.

Distribution of affiliate marketing sales in the United States in 2018, by publisher type



Source - Awinq ©Statista 2020

Why do so many product owners consider partner marketing in 2021?

> Marketing efficiency

Great way to multiply marketing efforts, involve more channels of promotion and partners (affiliates) that will generate your product's sales through their online platforms.

> Competitiveness of digital advertising

According to the data collected by WARC, almost \$560 billion was spent globally on digital advertising in 2018; and the forecasts project an increase by at least 13% by 2022. It is challenging to stay competitive in online advertising by managing marketing solely in-house.

> Division of responsibilities

A brand can fully focus on improving a product and development of supplementary products, while others actively promote it. You can compare this scheme with partial outsourcing of marketing activities where all parties are interested in driving results.

› Smart marketing budget distribution

Brands don't waste money in vain. In partner marketing you pay for tangible results, for sales or other agreed actions.

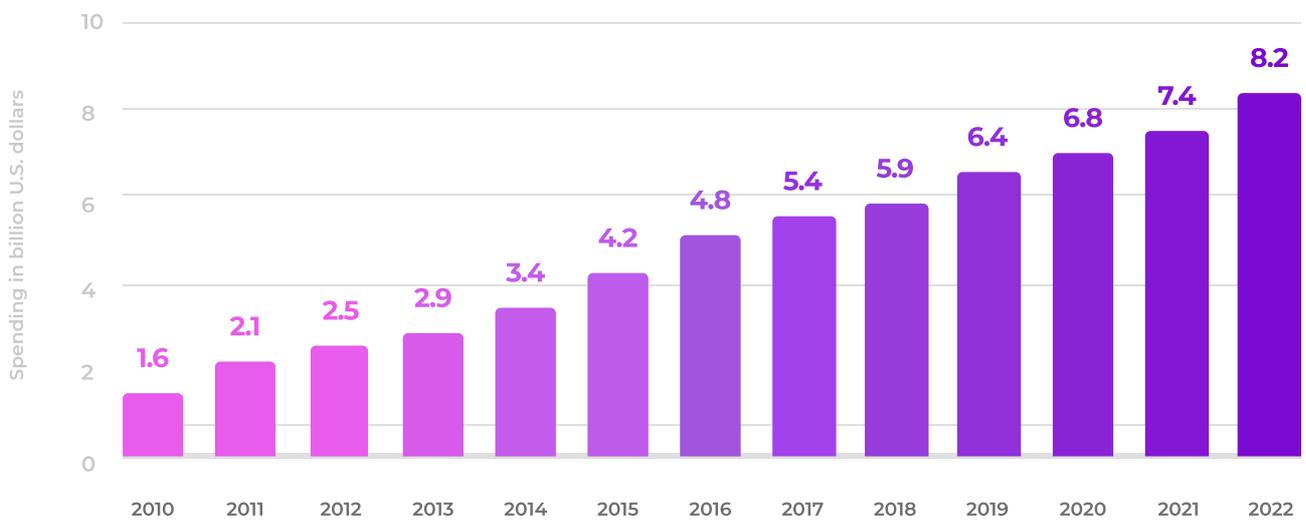
› Promotion through a partner program fits any business

Not only big brands can actively use it as a part of their promotion. Owners of smaller and relatively new products can easily integrate it into their marketing strategy.

You can see from the picture the steady growth of affiliate marketing spendings, which proves it to be a popular promotion channel.

It wouldn't have grown that much if it was not for the results it gives. More and more industries start working with affiliates by launching partner programs. In the following chapters we will talk about aspects of a partner program creation.

Affiliate marketing spending in the United States from 2010 to 2022 (in billion U.S. dollars)



Source - Forester Research; Rakuten; Business Insider ©Statista 2020

Part 2. Planning an Effective Partner Marketing Strategy

Setting Partner Program Goals



Sales growth

A natural goal of any business is to make money. **By increasing the market reach and a number of business partners** companies acquire new customers, and as a result sell more.

One of the most common reasons behind starting a partner program is an increase in the amount of sales. From this perspective, the results of the partner marketing are easy to evaluate as they are estimated in the amount of new customers, returned customers and the total revenue.



Users retention & Traffic quality increase

If you want to increase your customers LTV, you focus on retaining current users and ensuring quality traffic on your website. Here, partner marketing is a way to **narrow down to a particular niche** that is a natural fit for your product.

No wonder people say that half the battle is knowing your buyers' persona. Understanding your target audience helps to focus marketing efforts on reaching the exact group of buyers instead of mass advertising that may include similar but not exactly your product audience.



Brand awareness increase

Partner marketing can be a solution when you want to increase your brand awareness, activate new channels of promotion, discover new markets and make a strong image inside users' minds. You are very likely to find partners for the niches or promotion channels you didn't cover before.

Brand awareness campaigns are great in introducing a product in the most native way, especially if you work with influencers. Thus, partner marketing is a good fit when you want to **improve a brand's recognition** relatively fast.

While brand awareness campaigns have been always considered the most difficult when it comes to measuring the results, partner marketing is a game changer. All partner marketing relations are managed with in-house solutions or at designated SaaS platforms that will provide you with analytical reports on the amount of impressions and view through rate.



Optimize marketing budget and increase ROI

Everyone is interested in the most effective promotion and nobody wants to overpay. In particular cases when a company is on a tight budget and/ or wants to cut marketing expenses, a partner program is **a way to reduce spending** as the model allows you to pay only for final actions. In this way brands see the direct result of your partnership campaigns that you pay for.



Partner diversification

The more partners you make, the less is the risk of not having a sufficient amount of sales. It is as simple as that.

Diversifying the portfolio of partners is not solely about the amount of partners and potential amount of sales they can make, it is also about diversifying the channels of promotion and discovering news ones. It is about finding new content and a way of promotion. If for some reason one of the channels doesn't drive an expected amount of sales, you are secured by other sources. In this way you cover more channels and niches, you are present throughout desktop and mobile web, and in app.



Opportunity to measure marketing results

Besides all possibilities that partner programs present, it is also a great opportunity to **keep all your partners under one roof** and measure their results. It may be a case that a company has been successfully working with agencies or different independent contributors and while the overall results were satisfying, the brand was lacking accurate reports on the performance.

Managing a partner program on a reliable platform provides new opportunities. A brand can become a true owner of all promotional activities done on their behalf. With the help of a partner program brand can manage every single partner and analyse their performance.

With the help of **a partner program** brand can manage every single partner and analyse their performance

Examples of possible partner program goals

 <p>Increase leads or sales from a specific partnership channel by X%</p>	 <p>Increase leads or sales in a specific GEO by X%</p>
 <p>Generate a minimum of X amount of revenue with the partner program in a given period of time</p>	 <p>Acquire at least X new customers/qualified leads through the partnership in a given period of time</p>
 <p>Increase website visitors by X%</p>	 <p>Increase social media engagement and amount of followers by X%</p>

When starting a partner program you obviously don't pursue one single goal, so do not take the above mentioned goals as a "choose the one that suits you the most" list. You will relate to different goals as it is about your strategic product promotion. Treat this list of the goals as a check-list of what you can and need to achieve. Choose the goals that are the most relevant for you at the moment and from that you will have a list of requirements of what you need in your partner program. Often particular features are a defining moment when you are choosing a platform for managing a partner program.

Setting Partner Program Policy & Rules

A partner program policy is a binding agreement between you and your new affiliates. Properly drafted, this documentation controls the rules, responsibilities, and dispute resolution mechanisms that both parties must follow. The partner program policy serves to restrict shady promotion methods, marketing channels, and payment issues and help recruit affiliates.

If you decide to draft your partner program policy and rules by yourself, we recommend to address the following subjects:

- When and how you pay affiliates;
- What promotional methods or marketing channels are restricted;
- What physical products or affiliate product categories (discounted, low-priced, etc.) are excluded from your program;
- Other cases when affiliate action will be banned.

Determining remuneration schemes in partner marketing

There are different payment schemes in partner marketing. We will walk you through the basic payment schemes and give reasons for and against them, depending on a case of usage.

Pay per click

Pay per click is a payment scheme under which you pay affiliates based on the number of clicks they generate for your product.

PPC is particularly popular among bloggers or affiliates with high traffic websites. It works for them the best as, first, they don't need to sell anything; second, their goal is only to bring users to a product's page. And by clicks, they can fairly measure it.

PPC's drawback is a probability of fake clicks – a fraudulent method of inflating the number of clicks through unethical ways like 'bot clicks' or merely a large group of low-paid workforce repeatedly clicking on ads. Luckily nowadays, there are plenty of solutions to identify this kind of fraud. And once proven that clicks are fake, for example, an unrealistic amount of clicks is coming from the same ID, an advertiser has all ground to refuse to pay for this traffic.

Pay per mile

"Pay per mile" means paying terms for one thousand impressions with advertising materials, commonly ad banners. Because the significant half of impressions don't reach a final conversion (sale), this payment model doesn't work for all ad campaigns. It is most suitable for brand campaigns where advertisers want to evaluate the number of people acquainted with the brand.

Pay per acquisition

Also known as CPA - "cost per action" scheme. Under this payment scheme, an advertiser pays a publisher only for the result. That's why it has remained one of the most popular payment schemes for the last few years. Advertisers pay to its affiliate upon a particular action, sale, lead, install, or registration among the most common. The commission that affiliates receive is up to the program vendor. The CPA-based pricing type mostly suits product owners, companies, and big brands who want to promote their products.

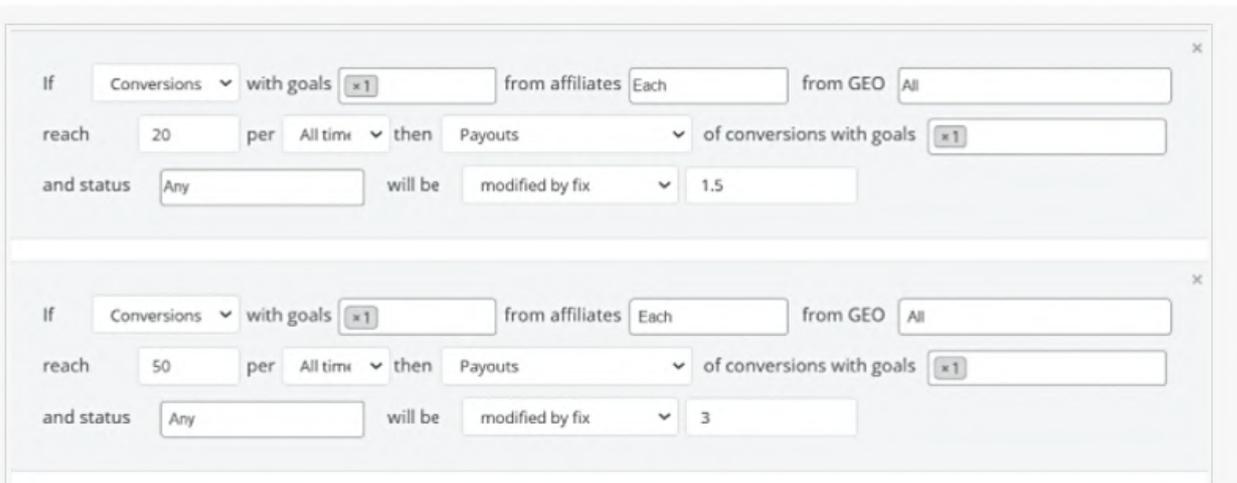
This scheme under CPA is beneficial for both sides. Affiliates can make more money, as the commission is usually higher than in PPC.

For advertisers, it is a more reliable scheme, as they pay for particular results.

One more reason why so many marketers prefer the CPA payment scheme is its resistance to **fraudulent patterns**. CPM or even CPI (click per install) plans are more volatile when it comes to fraud spikes. Additionally, to paying your partners based on one of the schemes mentioned above, you can also motivate them with a tiered (incentive-based) **commission structure**. Let us explain what it means.

To motivate partners to drive more conversions, brands and agencies from different industries award their partners with various bonuses for achieving specific performance goals. These special offers aim to increase partners' loyalty and encourage their progress.

Commission tiers allow you to calculate the earned commission plus performance bonuses automatically. In your system, you set a specific rule under which rewards will be applied to your partners' commission. You do that, and you forget about manual calculations of bonuses.



Payment Thresholds, Frequency, and Methods

Apart from payment schemes that you program remunerate affiliates, you also need to clearly articulate payments threshold, frequency, and methods.

Threshold

Many merchants set a **minimum limit that affiliates need to reach for the commissions** to be qualified for payment.

For example, a company has a \$10 minimum threshold for affiliates to get paid. As soon as affiliates drive needed for the commission amount of actions, they get paid. If not, then the payment is rolled over to the following month, and it continues before they reach the minimum threshold.

Most merchants prefer to set a threshold as it significantly optimizes the payment processes; they don't need to make bank transfers of several dollars each time. Also, it ensures higher profits as even a small threshold will motivate affiliates to promote a product actively. When applying a minimum threshold, you need to think of a reasonable sum of money. A threshold of \$200 can be unduly high if the product's price is relatively low. While a threshold of \$10-20 will always be applicable.

Frequency

You can choose a frequency to pay your affiliates with: daily, weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly pay periods.

To avoid tracking issues and fees it is more recommended to choose bi-weekly or monthly payments. However, often similar programs can offer daily or weekly payments, which may make you reconsider your strategy.

Methods

The most preferred method of payment is a **direct deposit**. Gift cards are sometimes in demand, but they should not be the only ones available. To avoid any complications in payments, try to provide a wide range of payment systems like PayPal, Payoneer, MasterCard, Visa, WebMoney, UnionPay, Nettleer, Perfect Money, Skrill, bitcoin, etc.



Creating Marketing Collateral

It's essential to offer your affiliates clear and qualitative marketing collateral

When offering marketing collateral, you create a database of content that publishers can use for ad campaigns, such as samples of ad banners, articles, promotional emails, etc. Make it clear which tone and usage of the logo are acceptable.

By doing so, you're making it easier for them to promote your affiliate product. And what is more important, you ensure that your affiliates will use the most useful promotion materials.

For example, you found out that banner ads with your product outperform text links in conversion rate. Consequently, you mention it in your collateral material to help your affiliates understand what performs better.

Even before applying to an affiliate program, typically, affiliates are looking for collateral or creative materials. They want to see what they will work with. So, it's crucial to offer them as many useful and incisive data as possible.

-  Ad banners
-  Articles
-  Emails
-  Ad copy
-  Logo usage
-  Brand guide
-  Landing pages
-  Branded content
-  Product catalogues

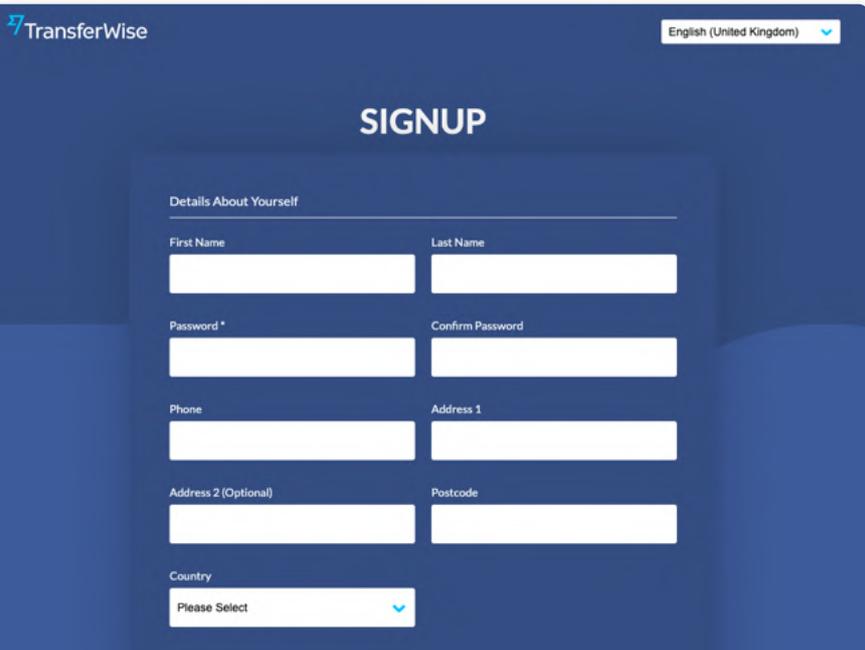
Ensuring Brand Safety

It goes without saying that all the advertisers want their brands protected, and want to be identified alongside the content that compliments their brands. With all digital touchpoints on the way to potential consumers protecting the brand image has become a real challenge.

High standards for partners

When you create a higher entry barrier for potential partners, you increase the chances to distinguish low-quality applicants from those relevant to you.

That is why, customising partner sign-up processes can help you get higher quality publishers. Request more sophisticated information from potential partners, such as the description of the affiliate's website, categories of content, website traffic per month, description of promotional methods, and more. Make sure you also add a CAPTCHA field to filter low-quality applications.



Customising partner sign-up processes can help you get **higher quality publishers**

Example taken from transferwise.com

The image shows a registration form with the following sections and fields:

- Website Details**
 - Website URL:
 - Description:
 - How did you hear about our program?:
- Publisher Specific Details**
 - Email:
 - Username (Note: Visible in tracking link) *:
 - Company Name (Optional):
 - Are you UK VAT registered?:
 - VAT No (Optional) **:
 - Are you a TransferWise customer?:
 - Have you used the 'invite a friend' program?:
 - Which currency would you like to be paid in?:

Example taken from transferwise.com

Request **more sophisticated information** from potential partners

Know your partners

As you want your brand to be well-presented, you should monitor to whom you delegate your digital activities. As a rule, 10-20% of your affiliates drive 70-90% of traffic to your offers. You are likely to know them well compared to the rest 80-90% of affiliates. And it is highly recommended that you know all your partners to ensure that your brand is represented suitably.

Do the appropriate research for both new applicants and current partners, check out their websites, ask around the affiliate community at forums, request referrals, and so on. This effort will minimize the chances that your affiliates' actions will damage your brand.

Partners as brand representatives

All your partners are brand representatives, like it or not. If you want them to represent the product properly, you need to put more efforts into their education, and provide them with all the necessary materials so they know your Terms and Conditions and maintain your brand message across the channel.

Let them know what you expect from them, what they are and aren't allowed to do, what is your target audience and so on. Make sure they understand which means they can use to promote your brand, what keywords they should bid on, what type of content is prohibited, and what happens when violations take place.

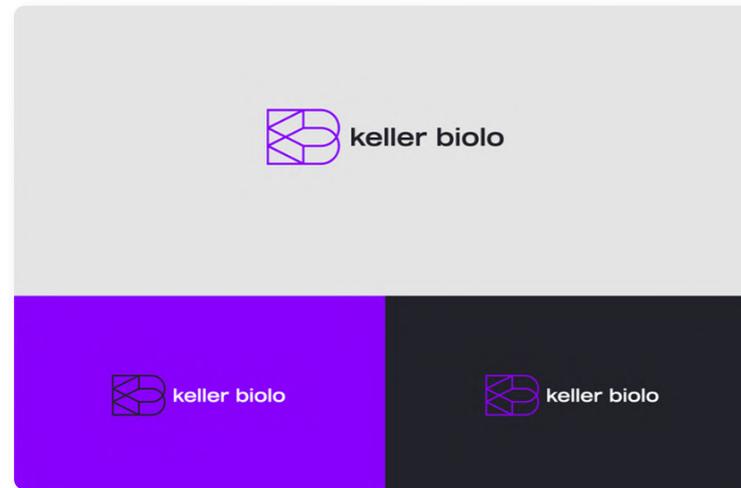
Create brand guidelines

Brand guidelines are a set of rules that outline how each element of the brand should be used. You can't overestimate its essence when it comes to ensuring that your brand message and creatives are aligned with your audience. These guidelines should always be used by your affiliates when any element of your brand is being communicated in advertising campaigns.

Here are the basic points you should include into your brand guidelines:

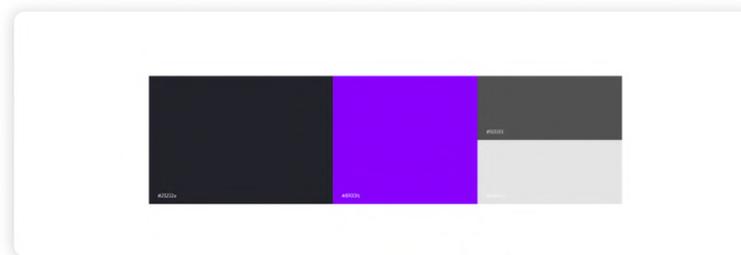
- > Overview of the brand's history, its core values, mission, vision and product's selling points;
- > Possible logo usage in all versions and colour variations;
- > Directions of creatives with examples that reflect your brand message and values;
- > Preferred writing style with examples of messages that describe your brand personality.

For example, possible logo usage



Example taken from kellerbiolo.com.br

For example, possible color usage



Example taken from kellerbiolo.com.br

Brand typography

Example taken from kellerbiolo.com.br

Shapiro

55 Middle Wide

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Rotunda

Light

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Regular

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Bold

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Black

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Part 3. Starting a Partner Program from Scratch

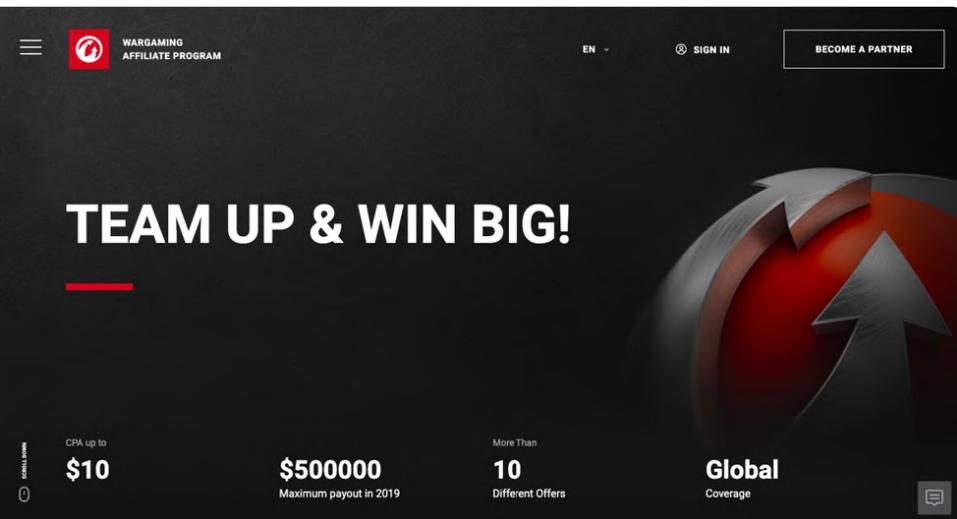
Recruiting Affiliates

Okay, you're convinced in the power of partner marketing to skyrocket your business and you are ready to try it. "But where do I find these publishers?" you may think. And this chapter will give you an answer. We prepared the list of actions, people, online and offline communities which will help you to recruit affiliates into your program.

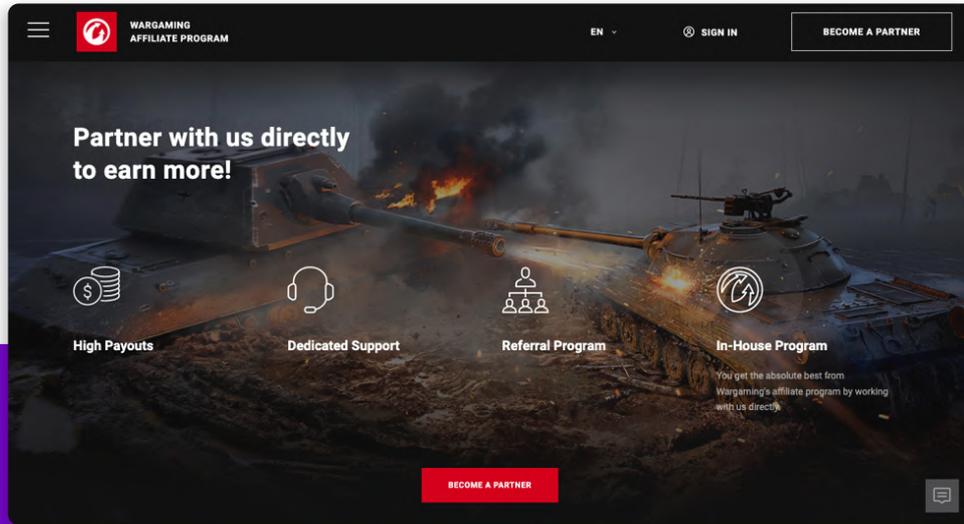
Landing page

Each business has a face, the same as a person. In digital terms, it is a profile presented by a landing page. Simple as it may sound, it is not something to neglect when creating a partner program. A landing page is a primary source of information users would turn to check information and raise any possible questions.

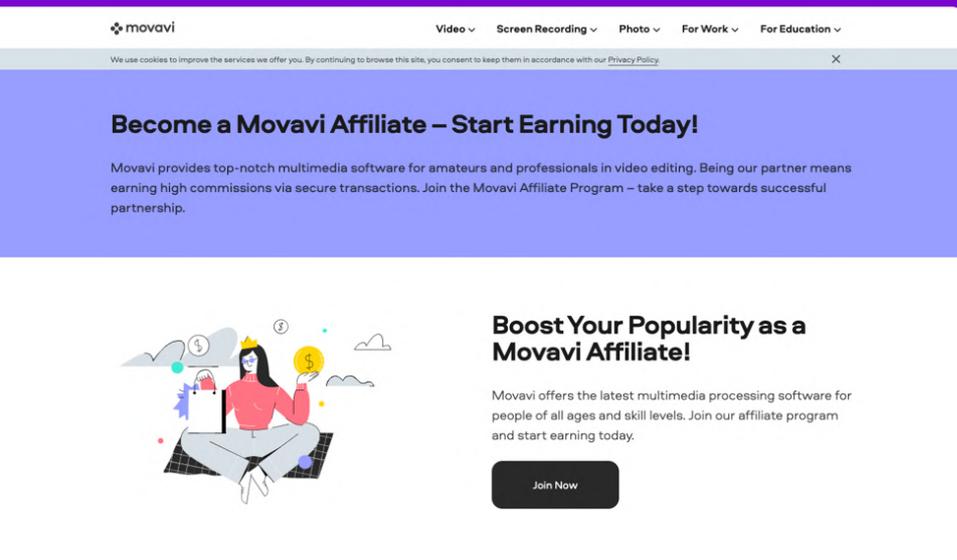
Further, when you promote your partner program online, you can link directly to the landing page sending all traffic this way. Some users even search directly for partner programs of companies they like or can potentially promote.



Example from Wargaming



Example from Wargaming



Example from Movavi

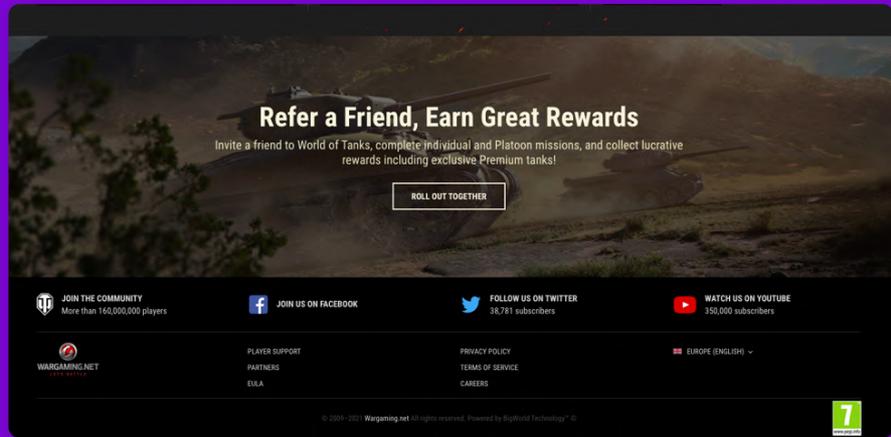
Include a link to your partner program on your website

You can just insert it in your website footer. Affiliates tend to look there first as this is the typical place to link to your partner program landing page. Create clear terms for your program. In terms of finding affiliates, this one goes without saying – try to offer clear and easy to understand commission structure and payout options.

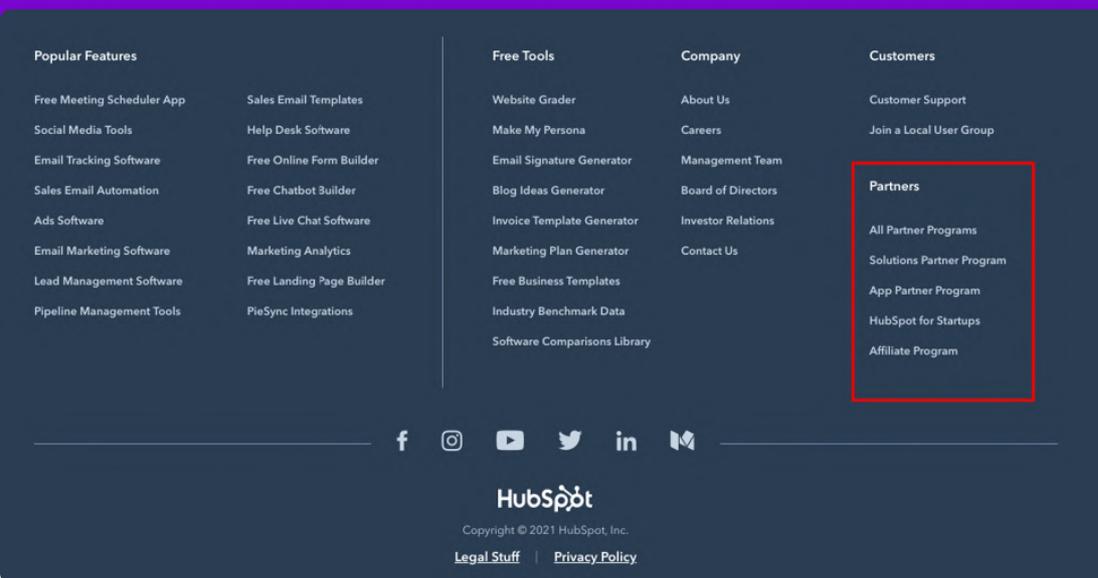


Example from Transferwise

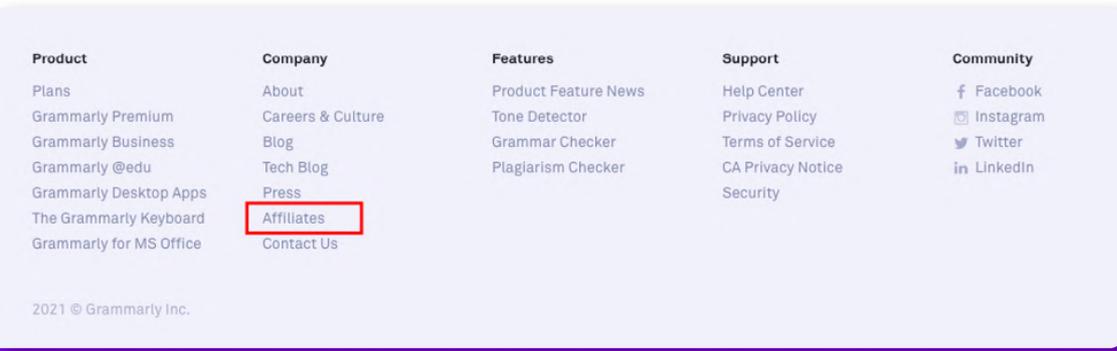
Website footer is the typical place to link to your partner program landing page



Example from Wargaming



Example from Hubspot



Example from Grammarly

Existing customers

Your best affiliates can come from people who have purchased from you, so don't forget about email marketing. Definitely, run an email series for your customers to encourage them to earn money by recommending your products to their friends and family. **Referral marketing** is a great way to attract new clients.

Email signature

Include a short description with a link in your signature and tell people from your email list you have a partner program.

Industry-related forums

Go to **affiliate marketing forums or communities** that discuss the products or where people are looking for an answer to the product (solution you may have). You can find affiliates there after telling them what your product can do for them. You can list and promote your partner program there and communicate with existing and potential partners.



Dedicated solutions

Today you can also fasten the process of partner recruitment with the help of dedicated solutions that bring together various media partners and advertisers, such as **Affise reach**. The platform offers a list of the verified media partners (marketing agencies, affiliate networks and publishers) that you can rely on.

Affise Reach Partnerships made easier

Global place with 500+ brands and networks built to expand your partnerships and accelerate business growth

Join as Brand

Join as Traffic Partner

5000

Users joined Affise Reach as brands and partners

180+

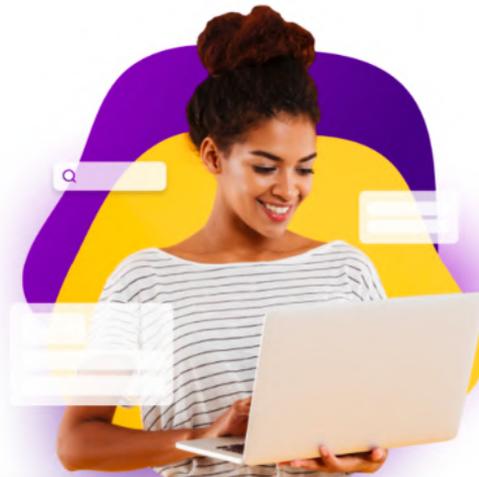
GEOs coverage

15

Verticals partners operate in

+28%

Average profit growth driven by new partnerships



Influencers/bloggers outreach

Invite influencers and niche bloggers to review your products. Google your major keywords – see if there are bloggers or info sites that promote related products showing up in Google results.

Try to build a long term relationship – don't just pitch your partner program. Have them test your products for free first, then introduce them to your partner program and offer them to publish comprehensive reviews.

Conferences

Take part in specialized exhibitions and **affiliate conferences**, where you can meet your potential affiliates. During the year, affiliate conferences are held in different parts of the world. Affiliates attend these conferences to exchange experiences and news in a certain industry, gain knowledge about new tools and promotion technologies, as well as to find new partners.

Print publications

You can recruit affiliates by advertising your product in professional print media that are related to your industry. This method is ideal for those whose business is associated with a narrow audience. With the help of advertising in professional magazines, you can easily find partners, who will offer your goods to your target audience and earn a certain commission rate with each sale.



Social media marketing

You can join niche-related groups on social media to find potential affiliates. Take the time to get to know them, show them your expertise. When it's appropriate, let them know about your partner program. The more enthusiastic you are about the program, the more they will want to join to earn money. If we are talking about Facebook groups, don't hesitate to contact page administrators.

Online ads

Another way to find new affiliates is to advertise the program and its benefits. You can use Facebook, Twitter, or even Google Ads to market the program. This works very well if you have a good product funnel, offer excellent commissions, and a wide range of products for your niche.

Word-of-mouth

People like to talk, so if you do a good job taking care of your affiliates and offer a great product, then super affiliates will notice you and talk about you. Plus, when they start promoting your products, other people in their circle will notice and join too.



Affiliate networks

Another great way to find affiliates is to list your products in affiliate networks such as Shareasale, Clickbank or JvZoo. Affiliate marketers who are looking for a product to promote often go there to search for them. Make sure you offer a great program and a lucrative affiliate commission. Include tools to make promotion easy. These could include articles, graphics, banners, etc.

Managing Partner Program. What to consider

Managing a partner program is a complex business process that starts with basic but essential things such as communication with your partners and spreads to billing and payouts. But in between you will find a great deal of operational processes that you need to take care of.

Communication with partners

Regular communication with business partners is crucial if you focus on establishing strategic, long-term business relations.

By all possible means, you need to emphasize the advantages of working with you, as your partners are likely to be approached by other brands with no less tempting solutions. And communication is a way to do that as you show your partners that you care about their results, that you are not solely driven by revenue. You inform them about any news, changes, bonuses, new offers - in this way they feel that they can rely on you. Because even if they miss something, you will remind them about it.

The secret of effective communication lies in audience segmentation.

You might want to persuade a partner to join your partner program, which is easier to achieve by personalizing a value proposition in a separate message. If you want to share industry trends, recent research, or updates, you may use a more generic approach.

And when it comes to communication channels, the advice is pretty obvious but important: to be present in all modern communication tools. It will be a partner preference to a particular messenger that will decide on the platform. You can utilize all possible communication ways

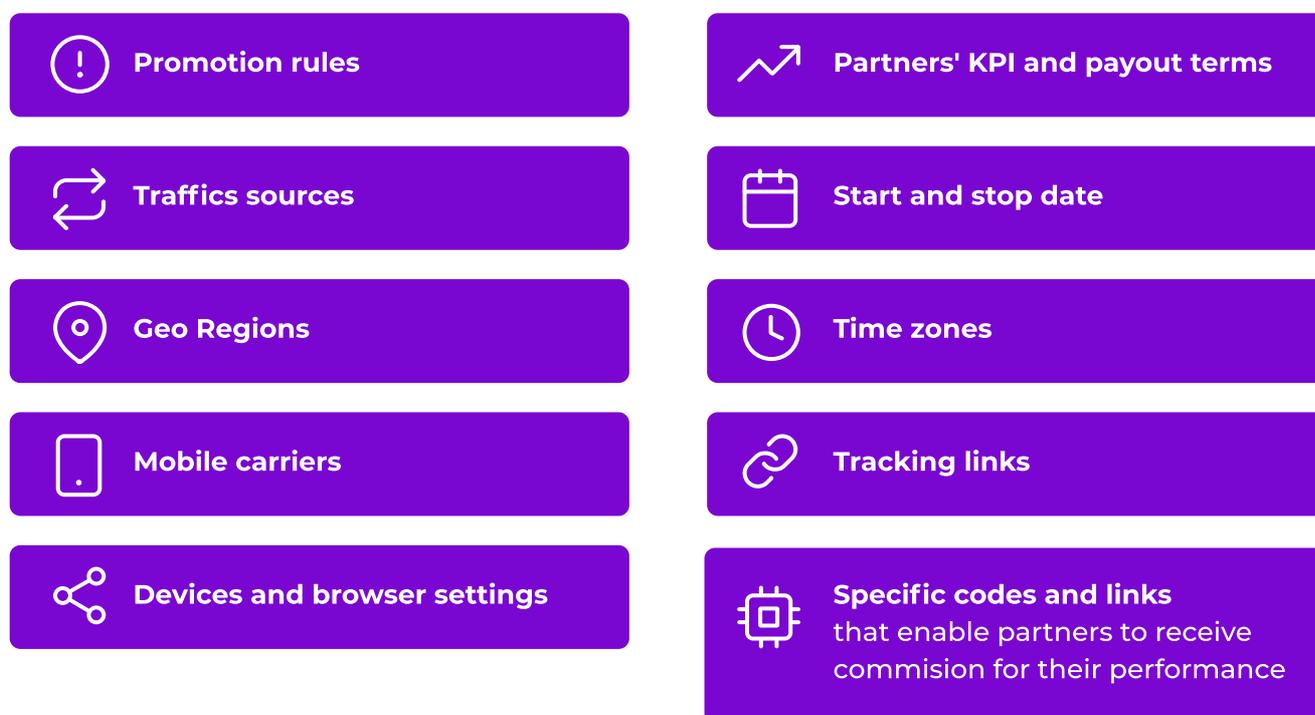
- **Messengers** Telegram, Facebook, Skype chat, etc.
- **Collaboration software** Slack, Jira, Basecamp, Clubhouse, Trello, Asana, etc.
- **By email** both correspondence and email newsletter
- **Through CRM auto-responses**
- **Communities** on social media and forums
- **On program pages**, through program tickets
- **Blogs**

Offers management

In terms of partner marketing, an offer is a product or service that a brand wants to promote with the help of various partners. An offer can take many forms, it can be an URL leading to a website, a promo code from an email, radio program or metro advertisement, or it can be a coupon for a discount. But the most common types of offers are promotion on the web and in apps, leading to a product or service landing page.

Once your partners are enrolled in your partner program they have access to your offers, what means they can start promoting them.

Creating an offer means providing a holistic description for partners with all relevant information:



You can find a thorough explanation in the [guide](#) on offers setup.

Analyze campaigns performance

Running ad campaigns could be challenging sometimes, but in the end it is an extremely rewarding process. Especially once the campaign is successfully completed. However, to achieve bigger results you need to analyze the campaigns. And you need to do it not only at the end of the campaign cycle, but also at some point during the period when a campaign is running.

Checking your performance at intervals can help to spot any possible weak points, conclude which settings work better and adjust them for better final performance before the campaign is over. By analyzing the data you can accordingly optimize ad campaigns.

Data analyzes may sound complicated for beginners, but with the intuitive and customizable statistics sections the performance of ad campaigns is easy to read.

Thus, the core here is to choose a strong tracking solution with a detailed statistics section, to allow:



Overview of the campaign's overall performance



Extract, analyze and organize large amounts of data in a form that is beneficial for an organization



Customize your dashboards for an intuitive overview of important for your metrics



View detailed statistics in various slices and for a particular time frame



Break down results by channel and partner type



Contrast various ad format with their click-through rates



Prevent fraud by defining the time between a user's click and a conversion



Count potential revenue

Payouts

Billing and payments are other important features that you need to consider. As in the end of the day, or the accounting period, you obviously need to pay your partners. Seamless payouts are the core of trust in business relations.

Your system should automatically count payouts generated from conversions that must be billed to partners. The goal is to find a reliable platform that will allow you to bill different partners depending on the payout structure.

A partner platform should allow you to make payouts based on different payout types:

-  **RPA**
Revenue per Action
-  **RPS**
Revenue per Sale
-  **RPA + RPS**
Revenue per Action +
Revenue per Sale

-  **RPC**
Revenue per Click
-  **RPM**
Revenue per Impression

SaaS partner marketing platforms facilitate this process by providing a ready-made billing solution and direct integration with leading payment services that guarantee instant payouts to your partners.

Starting a Partner Program: 2 Scenarios

The decision to create a partner program imposes additional responsibilities and expenses for the services you need to run a partner program. Depending on a chosen solution, you will need to either conduct a thorough analysis of the existing solutions or devote a considerable amount of time to business analysis and software development from scratch.

There are two possible solutions to run a partner program:



Use a SaaS partner marketing platform



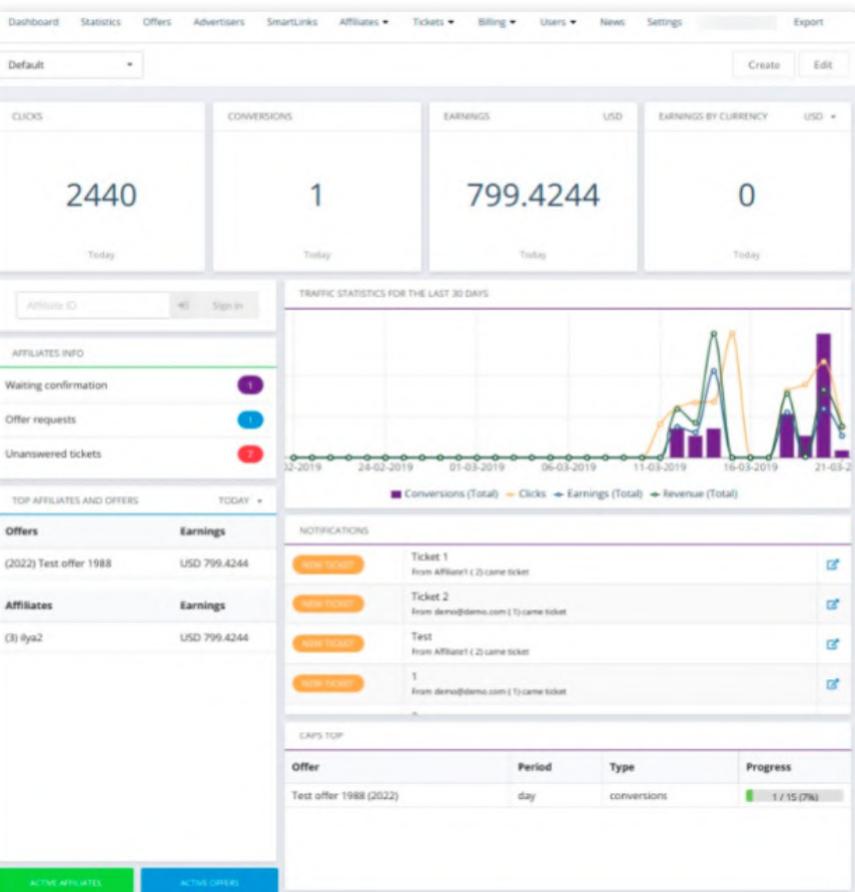
Develop an in-house solution from scratch

Below you will find a closer examination of each solution with recommendations on how to choose and get started, useful information on price, and extra advice based on our expertise.

Scenario 1: Using SaaS Partner Platform

Contrary to some misperceptions, creating your partner program on a separate platform doesn't imply being responsible for the technology. Absolutely not. What advertisers need to do is to choose a partner management platform, in a similar way, they choose a partner network.

Affiliate tracking and management platform are dedicated to partner programs software, which means that they are built with all needed functionality in mind. Once you get a subscription, you create your program in a similar way you do it on the network. With the main difference that now you are the owner of the program, and you have access to all data on ad campaigns.



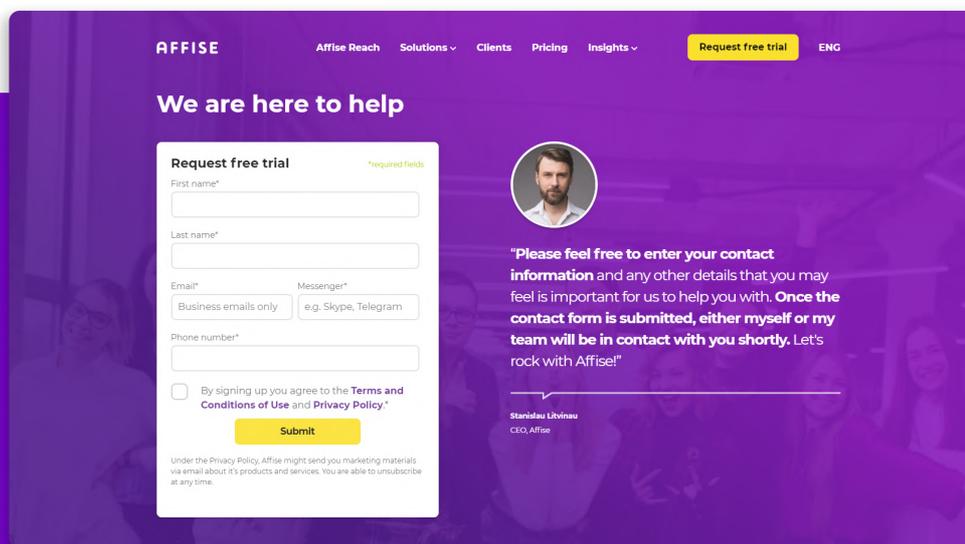
With the main difference, that **now you are the owner of the program**, and you have access to all data on ad campaigns.

From this standpoint, advertisers win in terms of transparency and access to broader analytics, what is a bottom line in ad campaigns optimization. Quite often, advertisers move to create their programs after doing advertising for a while or even using the services of affiliate networks. Also, new advertisers who already expect a huge volume of affiliates and ad campaigns consider launching their campaigns at the SaaS platform straight away.

Step-by-step guide how to start with a partner marketing platform?

01

You **sign up** on the website of the chosen SaaS partner platform provider.



02

Sales or product representatives contact you to learn more about your program and help you set an account.

03

Usually, partner platforms offer a **free trial during which you can decide** whether the platform goes with your program and meets our expectations. Depending on a platform trial period can vary from 7 to 30 days.

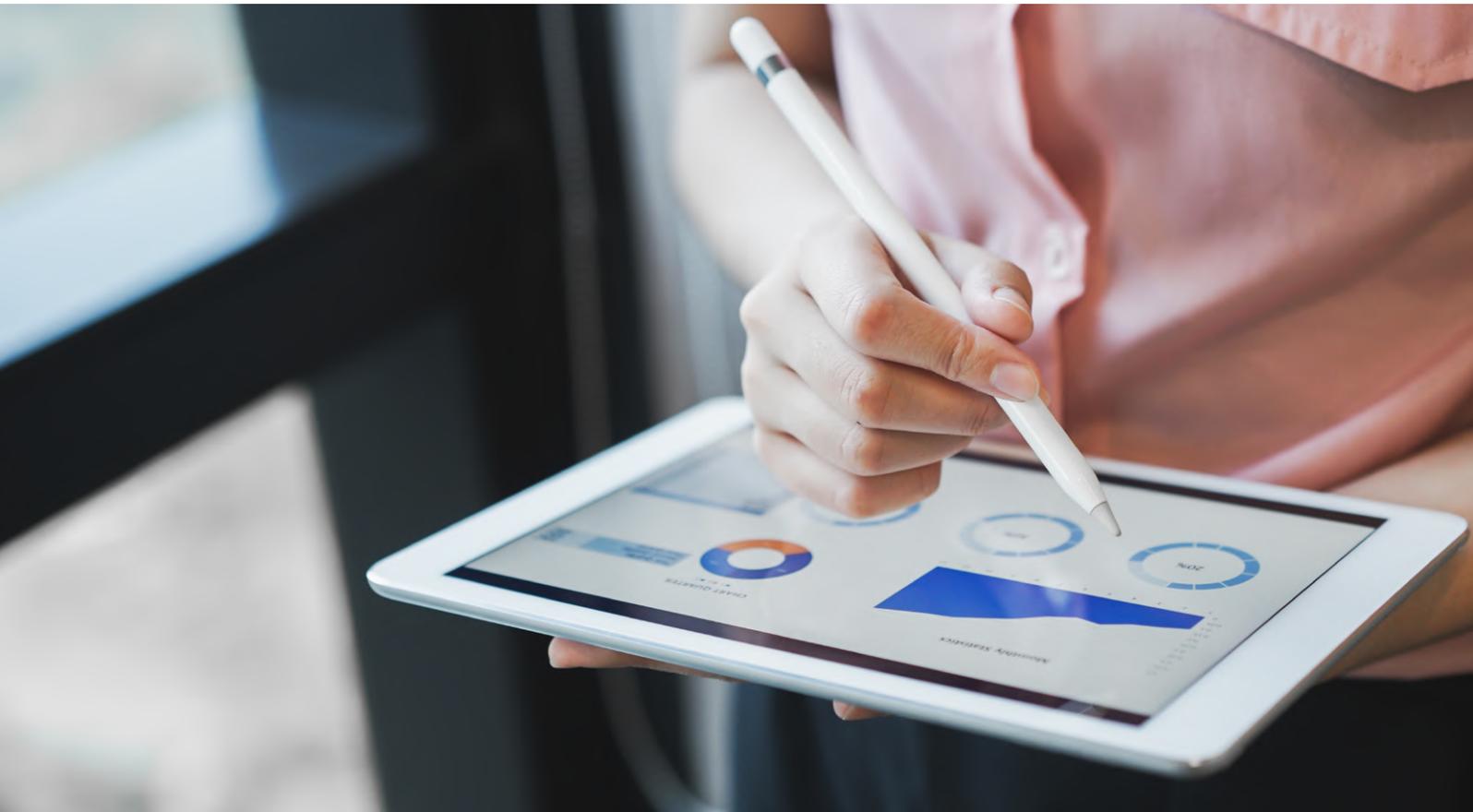
04

During a free trial **your program is fully operational**. You can start running ad campaigns. You create a new offer, set tracking, specify targeting groups, add advertisers, and affiliates. Along the way, you can adjust settings.

How to choose a partner software?

Analytics

Analytics is an essential part of any partner program. Based on the received data, advertisers can form proper judgments about what worked and what didn't and respectively update future campaigns.



Customization

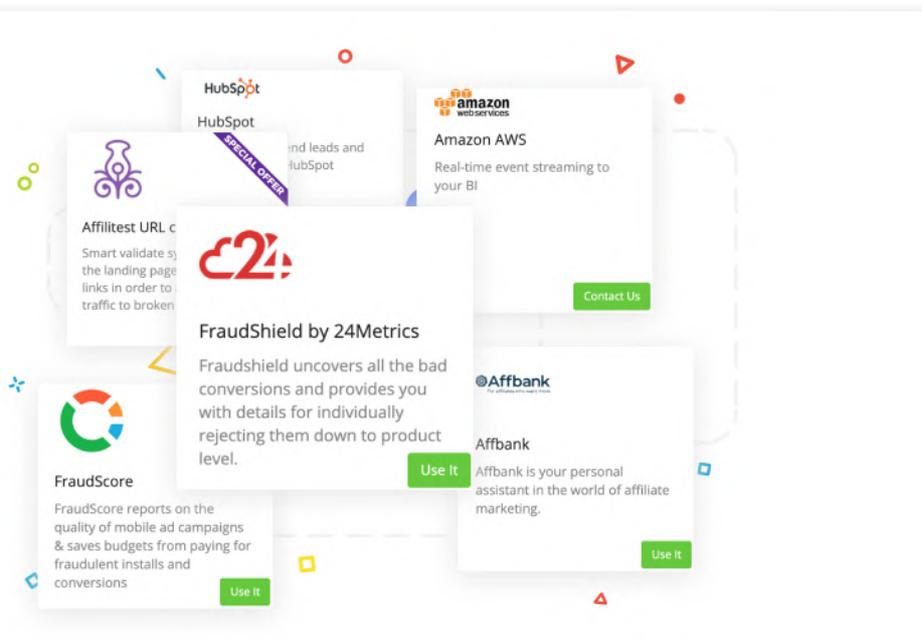
For some customization may seem not very important upfront, but it will play a difference in the long run. **Customization**, in general, consists of three levels: incorporating a company's brand and design, system configuration for particular operational processes, and the possibility of new modules implementation. The best option will be to go with a platform that allows all three levels. In this way, you can be sure that along with your business growth, the platform will always meet your needs.

Technical Service

Tech support plays a huge role in any tech business – you are never alone with your program. Prompt assistance from tech support can save you much time figuring how to handle certain setting issues. And better look for 24/7 support. Ad campaigns don't have a stable eight working hours day, and can indeed be more effective during evenings and night time.

Integrations with 3rd party services

For the operational workflow, you will probably need some other services as well. Check the available **integrations** that a platform offers. Pay attention to the most demanded, such as fraud prevention, billing services, CRM, eCommerce platforms, BI tools, etc.



Flexible API

If you would like to integrate with a particular operational service, which is not yet “plugged” into the platform, the integration will depend on API terms. If a platform offers a **feature-rich API**, then conducting any future integrations won't be an issue.

The Price

The price for “renting” a SaaS platform will be billed monthly and is estimated primarily based on the amount of clicks, conversions or the revenue you generate or expect to generate per month. Bear in mind that there may be some extra fees for additional services or future integrations.

Don't get confused if you see tracking solutions starting with \$40. Those are solely trackers that affiliates can use only for tracking clicks. They can start with \$40 and be up to several thousand depending on the amount of clicks and domains.

But this is not a solution for you if you are launching your own program. **You need a more advanced solution** where you can manage all partner communication, run and optimize ad campaigns, manage ad creatives, in other words, to **properly manage your partner program** – you need a full-scale partner management solution. The price for it can range from \$500 to thousands of dollars.

When choosing a partner program have in mind the list of necessary for your vertical or product type features. You will find services that are tailored to specific industries and also those that can be customized to suit any industry.

Features and Services

Multi-user access	✓	Unlimited custom domains	✓
Real-time statistics	✓	Affiliate API	✓
Predictive analytics tools	✓	End-to-end API	✓
Configurable Dashboards	✓	Click log	✓
Incorporated BI systems	✓	Multiple currencies	✓
Marketplace	✓	Multiple languages	✓
Alert system	✓	Advanced targeting	✓
Fraud prevention	✓	Shared reports	✓
SSL support	✓		

AFFISE

Essential tools for Business Scaling

White-label solution	✓
Full-cycle impression tracking	✓
CR automation	✓
Smartlinks	✓
Complete migration package <small>Automated offers pulling service, group & individual trainings, Academia, 24/7 Support</small>	✓
Real-time event delivery service <small>to your AWS, Google or AlibabaCloud accounts</small>	✓

AFFISE

Essential tools for Business Scaling

Dedicated account manager	✓
Free onboarding package	✓
Immediate response from Support	✓
Academy	✓

AFFISE

Do you want us to clarify which features you would need?

Contact us for a free consultation →

Scenario 2: In-house partner software from scratch

The third option of running a partner program is launching it on a dedicated in-house software.

Developing software from scratch is an option that not everyone will take upon. At least, it is not an option for a newbie. Advertisers or networks that decide to have in-house software are usually big brands with vast volumes of ad campaigns and numerous customization requests. Brands like Amazon and eBay, for example, run their partner programs on in-house software.

To start with in-house software, you will first need to find a company that provides a dedicated development team. You will begin by identifying technical requirements and conducting a business analysis of the whole development course. And once the developers start their work, depending on the level of complexity, it will take them several months to finish the project.

The Price

The cost of developing in-house software will be much higher than the two above mentioned options. Developing an in-house software for partner management may cost you from **\$35,000 for a SaaS MVP and \$100,000 or more for a full-featured application.**

And that's not all yet. Add rough \$15,000 of monthly expenses on developers to maintain the stability of the platform, and costs on servers. The final price range is very broad, it depends on the volumes you work with. A more accurate price can be available only after proper business evaluations.



\$100k
FOR A FULL-FEATURED
APPLICATION

SaaS Platform & In-house solution. Which one to choose?



| In-house solution



| SaaS platform

With the variety of available options at the market, it's evident that going with a SaaS platform is wiser. Key arguments – faster and cheaper.

Obviously, advocates of in-house solutions will emphasize the transparency and security of in-house solutions. But with modern days security and privacy regulations, there is no way that tech providers will exist unless they perfectly fall under data privacy requirements.

Don't let yourself be misled. Instead, think about the time that would be spent on a solution from scratch. Not to mention the time to recruit specialists who know exactly what a partner platform must have.

Here are key arguments in favour of a SaaS platform



No Initial Investment



Seamless Availability



Integration Possibilities using APIS



High Level of Security



Scalable Solutions



Automatic Update to Latest Versions

Why do we advocate or SaaS?



Competence & Intelligence

Versatile experience. You may think you know which functions exactly you need, but you can miscalculate when it comes to privacy or tracking updates for which you need to adjust the platform. Owing to a tremendous experience in the particular industry, SaaS platforms know which functional one needs to run a partner program. And consequently, they give you precisely what is required.



Agility

More agile for implementing new features. SaaS providers are better at foreseeing emerging trends and company demands. Thus, it takes them significantly less time to implement a new feature.



Maintenance and staffing

Careless on resources. You only monitor. Since an outsourced provider handles all updates, bug fixes, and releases, there is little for your company left to do but monitor the results. Subsequently, you don't need to hire additional personnel, besides, perhaps, an account manager. But it is nothing compared to recruiting the whole development team.



Price

Transparency and possibility to predict costs. SaaS platforms are commercially viable as they help brands cut costs on development from scratch and following software maintenance. The monthly price of a SaaS platform is pegged to volume and payment plans. Based on the evaluation of the amount of expected performance-based events, you can predict your expenses and the resulting ROI.

To Conclude

So, we believe that it has been a lot of information to digest. You may need time to reread it again and make a plan. Or you may already be ready to launch a partner program.

Do you already know what your first step will be? First thing first, you need to decide on the partner marketing platform. Should you decide to work on a SaaS program and have the complete control over the program - we can help you choose one.

From our side we can give you a free consultation and recommend on the plan and features that you need for your program. Further, you can have a 30-day trial to see how it works.

Should you want to talk, drop us a [line](#) and we will shortly get back to you to answer all your questions.
