



Playbook Affiliate marketing

- ✓ more reach! Increase
- ✓ turnover! Win
- ✓ customers!

SaphirSolution - Your 360° Online Marketing Agency

Professional online marketing along the entire customer journey

...because every € counts - performance marketing is an important part of our online marketing activities.



Performance



Brand Awareness

...because visibility means growth. We make your brand the focus of our online marketing activities.

...because problems need solutions. From web tracking to online marketing controlling.



Solutions

Table of contents

1.	What is Affiliate Marketing?	4
2.	Stakeholders in Affiliate Marketing	5
3.	Affiliate Marketing Management	9
4.	Affiliate Marketing SetUp	12
5.	Affiliate marketing condition models	13
6.	Affiliate Marketing Cancellation Management	14
7.	Affiliate Marketing Acquisition	14
8.	Advertising media for affiliate marketing	15
9	Fraud Protection in Affiliate Marketing	18
10.	Challenges in affiliate marketing	19
11.	Models of Affiliate Marketing	21
12.	Affiliate Marketing Agencies	23
13.	Conclusion on affiliate marketing	24
14.	Interview with Sebastian Denzin	25
15.	Pitfalls in Affiliate Marketing	29
16.	Affiliate Acquisition: How it works!	33
17.	Affiliate Marketing Tools	39
18.	Imprint	44

1. What is affiliate marketing?

1.1 The Affiliate Marketing Playbook

Affiliate marketing is and remains an important online marketing tool for advertisers to achieve performance-oriented more sales and leads. In this playbook we dedicate ourselves entirely to the topic of affiliate marketing. We show you what affiliate marketing is and how you can use it profitably for your business.

You will also learn how to orchestrate affiliate marketing with your other online marketing activities to achieve maximum performance in this online marketing channel as well. Let's go!

1.2 Affiliate Marketing Basics

Affiliate marketing is, in the broadest sense, an intermediary between partners. It can be compared well with the insurance brokerage business. Freelance commercial agents sell insurance services and are remunerated via commissions from the insurance companies.

Affiliate marketing is based on the same mechanics - only digital. In particular, this involves websites and online shops that link advertising partners to their affiliate marketing programme and pay a commission for each successful conversion.

Using this mechanism, a large number of different advertising partners can be connected to one's own affiliate marketing programme, thus increasing the reach for one's own products and services in a risk-averse manner.

Basically, there are three types of stakeholders in affiliate marketing who benefit from the programme. Firstly, there is the affiliate merchant, the advertiser who operates the affiliate programme. Then there are its publishers, the so-called affiliates and, if applicable, a so-called affiliate network, which not only provides the tracking but also takes care of the settlements with the affiliates, but more on that later. First of all, we would like to deal with the different affiliate stakeholders and their tasks in affiliate marketing.

2. Stakeholders in Affiliate Marketing

2.1 Stakeholders at a glance



Advertiser
(Merchant)

In the context of affiliate marketing, an advertiser is called a **merchant**. The interest of a merchant is to improve its performance KPIs (Key Performance Indicator) and to achieve its cost per KPI as favourably as possible.

As a publisher, the interest in an affiliate programme is to monetise its target group-specific reach. The **affiliate's** interest is, for example, to maximise the thousand-contact price [CPM] of his reach.



Publisher
(Affiliate)

The consumer is primarily interested in consuming good content and benefiting from very good offers. The **user** usually does not notice the affiliate process.



The network is the intermediary between the stakeholders. It is in the interest of the network to scale the affiliate programmes, as the **network** participates with a network fee of approx. 30% on the affiliate commission.

2.2 The Merchant

The merchant is the affiliate marketing programme operator. As a merchant, you use affiliate marketing to get new customers to your website or online shop, or to reactivate existing customers. The interest of the merchant is to commission his conversions as favourably as possible and thus to make more sales at a favourable price.

However, the merchant is usually not alone - several merchants vie for the attention of the top affiliates and the much-loved marketing opportunities. This field of tension triggers competition in affiliate branding on the merchant side, to which the merchant can react with the following adjustments:

- Distribution of higher commissions
- User-friendly website
- Better product - offer
- Better advertising media
- Better communication with affiliates
- Access to exclusive content / products
- Better campaign control through special promotions
- quality content



The more attractive a merchant's affiliate marketing programme is, the higher the closing rates of further partnerships with affiliates will be. For this reason, the merchant should have a strong interest in making its affiliate marketing programme as attractive as possible. Ideally, it should be more attractive than the programme of the competition.

2.3 The Affiliate

The counterpart of the merchant is the affiliate. The affiliate usually has a platform with good reach to a certain target group and the affiliate monetises this reach by displaying advertisements. The affiliate's interest is to monetise his reach with the highest possible ROI. For his affiliate programme, this means that he must look for partners (merchants) who have the following characteristics:

- Attractive commission modelling
- Advertising media that are well received by the target group
- Actions controlled after consultation with the merchant
- Target pages with a high conversion rate
- Merchants with low cancellation rates

Against the background of partner selection, affiliates focus in particular on merchants with whom money can be made in the long term and sustainably. Not all affiliates have the same model, but differ considerably in their mechanics.

2.4 The network

You don't always need it, but it is recommended in almost every place: the affiliate marketing network. It is the mediator for affiliate & merchant and provides other benefits for the other affiliate stakeholders in addition to tracking and billing.

Basically, an affiliate marketing network is financed by the commissions of the affiliates. In addition to the commission rates of the affiliates, up to 30% network fee is usually charged on the affiliate commission. The interest of the affiliate marketing network clearly lies in strengthening and intensifying the relationship between affiliates and merchants. Because long-term successful affiliate programmes are exciting business cases for the affiliate marketing networks.



The advantage for merchants lies in the huge reach of the networks. A large number of affiliates are already connected here and can apply for the affiliate programme. This means that you can quickly get your affiliate programme up to speed with the networks and can also quickly connect the first affiliates without having to do your own affiliate outreach.

Besides the connected affiliates, another advantage is the native fraud protection. Unfortunately, where money is earned, fraud can usually be found. Affiliate marketing networks provide employees at this point who take measures to prevent fraud and monitor anomalies.

3. Affiliate Marketing Management

3.1 Introduction

Affiliate marketing is important, but unfortunately it doesn't run on its own. Unfortunately, it is not a module that you can add to your online marketing and it will generate the corresponding sales. Rather, affiliate marketing is a process that requires care and programme management is crucial for the success of the affiliate marketing programme.

At this point, relationships with affiliates should be established and maintained, but in addition to the daily maintenance of the affiliate programme, strategic decisions are also important in order to set up the affiliate programme in a goal-oriented manner.

3.2 Strategic Affiliate Marketing

Within the framework of strategic affiliate marketing management, it must be determined which goals are to be pursued with affiliate marketing from the company's point of view. Tactical and operative measures should be subordinated to strategic and long-term objectives.



Due to the multitude of possibilities in affiliate marketing, one is encouraged to possibly jump on short-term tactics, which, however, have a long-term effect on affiliate marketing. Against this background, a clear strategy should determine the approach in affiliate marketing and possibly exclude certain types of affiliate marketing (SEM affiliates).

3.3 Operational Affiliate Marketing

Operational affiliate marketing is aimed at the daily business of an affiliate marketing manager. In the operational business, the tasks of the affiliate marketing manager include:

- Processing of new affiliate applications
- Creation of new affiliate actions
- Affiliate recruitment
- Campaign planning
- Communication with affiliates for the purpose of reconciliations
- Communication with affiliate network
- Cancellation list processing
- Validation of conversions for the purpose of fraud protection

- Competition monitoring
- Monitoring of the Core KPIs
- OutReach activities to acquire suitable new affiliate partners
- Creation of affiliate marketing reports
- Commission validation
- Promotion planning

Depending on the size of the affiliate marketing programme, it is worth considering distributing the programme and the operational activities within the team and managing the operational business with clear responsibilities.

3.4 Tactical Affiliate Marketing

Tactical affiliate marketing is particularly concerned with short-term strategy adaptations that are forced by the competitive environment. If, for example, the competition leads to adjustments in commissions, this can have a considerable effect on your own affiliate marketing, as you are in a direct competitive situation and the commissions to be earned are elementary for the affiliates. This is where it is decided how much the affiliate partners can earn with their programme.

Especially in tactical affiliate marketing, competitive monitoring is a decisive factor for quickly recognising developments in the market and steering one's own programme according to the developments.

4. Affiliate Marketing Setup

Tracking and programme descriptions

What do you need to get started with affiliate marketing? - Here, the technical integration depends strongly on whether the affiliate marketing programme is mapped via an affiliate marketing network or whether you set up your own autonomous programme.

In this article we want to concentrate on network integration: Not only should the condition model be in place for the set-up, but the following points should be considered for the start of the affiliate programme:

- Keyword analysis
- Detailed programme description with the benefits of the programme
- Work out affiliate advantages
- Tracking integration to measure conversions
- Creation of advertising material (banner / HTML5 banner / product data feed)
- Advertising texts/text links
- Creation of the condition models
- Definition of the affiliate marketing strategy
- Processing the first affiliate applications

From a strategic point of view, the set-up is an important undertaking, as it lays the foundation for a successful affiliate programme. We recommend that you make some considerations at this point, as the start is not insignificant for the overall success.

5. Affiliate marketing condition models

An important adjusting screw in affiliate marketing

The affiliate condition models regulate the commissioning of the affiliates' services and are thus an important adjusting screw for your affiliate marketing. However, the creation of the condition model should also be thought through, because not every affiliate brings the same value from the company's point of view. There can be considerable deviations here.

An example: You have an online shop for terry goods and have connected two different affiliates. One is a voucher platform and the other is a YouTube channel that specialises in terry goods. While the voucher platforms appeal to users in the lower funnel (the customer was already in the ordering process and is looking for the last incentive), the YouTube channel is aimed more at the upper funnel, which is also correspondingly more difficult to optimise. If the condition model corresponds to this weighting, the campaigns can be controlled according to performance.

In addition to specific condition models for affiliates, a popular method is to set up a graduated scale, which above all encourages performing affiliates to become even more active in the affiliate programme and thus generate additional performance. Through additional commissions for certain target achievements, the levers are correspondingly high in order to not only motivate the affiliates, but also to bind them to the programme through the graduation.

6. Affiliate Marketing Cancellation Management

Part of any affiliate marketing process

Reversals belong to affiliate marketing like the sun to summer (sometimes, at least in Germany). In affiliate marketing, depending on the condition model, only valid conversions are remunerated and for this reason there must also be a comparison in the affiliate programme between conversions that have taken place and those that have been measured, as well as valid sales. This reconciliation can significantly reduce the risk costs in acquisition and avoid the remuneration of invalid conversions.

Affiliate marketing cancellation management should be part of every affiliate marketing process, as it is not only invalid conversions that are noticed here, but also possible fraud processes such as cookie dropping or brand highjacking.

7. Affiliate Marketing Acquisition

Win more advertising partners

In addition to the affiliates who are already connected to the affiliate marketing network, there are other advertising partners who are eligible for the programme but may not even know what affiliate marketing is and what opportunities affiliate marketing has for their business.

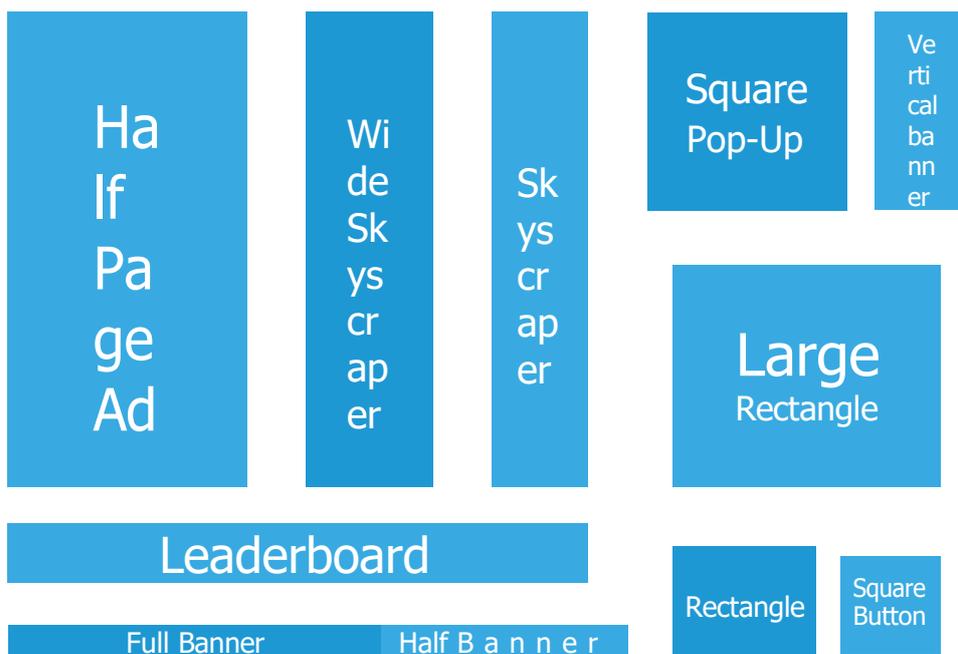
For this reason, one component of operational affiliate marketing should be the so-called OutReach. OutReach is the process of acquiring affiliate partners who are eligible for the programme. Here, the affiliates are contacted in the traditional way - via email or telephone - and convinced to join the affiliate marketing programme. This is how you get more relevant partners for your own programme.

8. Advertising material for affiliate marketing

What are the types and formats?

Another decisive factor for the success of affiliate marketing is the advertising material provided with which your affiliates can advertise. Here, a basic distinction is made between banner formats (dynamic or static), text links, product data feeds (for eCommerce companies) or video ads. The advertising media are of particular importance here, as they determine the click-through rate. Advertising media with good interaction rates are also very popular with your affiliates and are integrated into your own portals with priority. Basically, you should consider the following formats for affiliate marketing advertising media:

Half Page Ad (300 x 600 Pixel), Wide Skyscraper (160 x 600 Pixel), Skyscraper (120 x 600 Pixel), Square Pop-Up (250 x 250 Pixel), Vertical Banner (120 x 240 Pixel), Large Rectangle (336 x 280 Pixel), Leaderboard (728 x 90 Pixel), Full Banner (468 x 60 Pixel), Half Banner (234 x 60 Pixel), Rectangle (180 x 150 Pixel), Square Button / Large Square (125 x 125 Pixel)



Dynamic HTML5 banners in particular achieve a significantly better interaction rate than static banner types. Other affiliate advertising media would be:

Pop-ups are placed on a website like banners and also serve as advertising space. As a rule, pop-ups "pop up" in their own window, remain on the user's page and partially cover the content of the respective page. This banner usually has to be clicked away to disappear.



Pop-Up



Pop-Under

Unlike pop-ups, a **pop-under** is opened in the background, so it is not noticed at first. Only when you close the browser do you recognise the pop-under because it is "underneath" the open window.

A **text link** is a link that represents a connection between two files or web pages. It can consist of a word or a text phrase and is usually marked with a landing page to which the link leads.



Text links



Layer Ads

As soon as an advertisement appears on a website, which is superimposed on the content of the website and partially covers it, it is called a layer. **Layers are** similar to pop-ups, but are more a part of the respective web page and cover the content in such a way that parts of the page still remain visible. The user should be able to see what is on the website. The layer ad must be clicked away to disappear completely.

A PreRoll **Video Ad** is a video advertisement that plays before the video content and thus almost has to be watched. If the video ad appears within the video content, this format is called a MidRoll Video Ad. There are also formats that appear at the end of the video content (PostRoll Video Ad) and many more.



Video Ads



Video Ads

Video content is particularly suitable for emotional advertising messages and to generate awareness. Display marketers in particular should be aware of corresponding advertising formats are made available. Video ads are also suitable for the PPC sector, for example, for YouTube advertising via Google. ads can be played out. Here, the advertising media can be recycled accordingly.

A **newsletter template** can be used in particular by email marketers to push the mailing to their own recipients.



Newsletter
Templates



Individual
Advertising material

Depending on the marketer (affiliate), **individual advertising material** may be required. This should also be offered in the programme description, so that a quick process enables an agile creation and integration of the advertising material.

9. Fraud protection in affiliate marketing

Preventing fraud through fraud measures

Unfortunately, fraud can be found everywhere money is earned. In rare cases, this is also the case in affiliate marketing. As an affiliate marketing agency, we have identified potential sources of fraud and developed measures to avoid such fraud.

At this point we would like to give you an idea of potential fraud measures:

Brand Highjacking

With brand highjacking, SEM affiliates in particular book themselves onto your brand name and thus try to monetise valuable brand traffic that is searching for your brand.

Fake transactions

Here it can happen that affiliates place orders that are not orders - this is where the organised cancellation management comes in and helps you to recognise such orders early on and not pay out the commissions for such orders.

Cookie Stuffing

With cookie stuffing, a cookie is set for the user even though he or she has not clicked on an affiliate link on the target page. This happens especially through the integration of an iFrame. In this way, the cookie is already set when the user visits the website and not (as would be correct) when he clicks on the affiliate advertising material.

Fraud protection should be an essential part of affiliate marketing management. This is where unauthorised commissions can be saved.

10. Challenges in affiliate marketing

10.1 Competition, attribution models, etc.

One challenge is certainly fraud protection. But other challenges also await the affiliate marketing manager in other areas of affiliate marketing:

Competition

Competition is a decisive factor. If competitors are active here who already have long-standing relationships with affiliates, it is difficult to position oneself accordingly and to get a "foot in the door". Here you have to give special thought to the commission structure and make the programme as attractive as possible.

Attribution models

Which affiliate has what value for the customer's customer journey?

Here lies a particular challenge in managing the affiliates with the aim of achieving the maximum return on investment (ROI) as a merchant. As we know from the conditional models, we should not commission all affiliates equally. Even more interesting is the analysis of the entire customer journey and the synergies between affiliate marketing and other online marketing channels.

Several affiliate marketing networks

It becomes exciting when several networks are integrated and the same affiliates generate commissions from both networks and it is not clear which affiliate is entitled to the accruing commission. Here you are faced with the challenge of programming a cookie switch that regulates the traffic of cookies.

As an experienced affiliate marketing agency, we are happy to assist you with these challenges.



10.2 Affiliate Marketing Costs & Process

Affiliate marketing costs

What does professional affiliate marketing actually cost? - Due to the commission payment, affiliate marketing has a high variable cost share, i.e. costs only arise when the measures are matched by a measurable business success.

Of course, affiliate marketing is not without fixed costs. You need an affiliate marketing manager or an affiliate marketing agency to manage the programme and master the challenges of programme control.

Affiliate marketing process

Nothing works without processes and it is the same in affiliate marketing. There are many recurring activities that need to be organised. Here, the process is crucial for success.

The optimisation process includes ongoing analyses that put the current affiliate programme to the test and identify optimisation levers. Competitor analysis should also be part of the ongoing process, as important market insights can be generated here that additionally accelerate one's own affiliate marketing programme.

11. Models of affiliate marketing

Which model suits you?

Different affiliate models have an influence on your success as a merchant. We have listed the most important models in affiliate marketing below and what added value the models bring to your business.

Coupon / Voucher Affiliates

Affiliates who advertise with vouchers and promo codes pick up the customer very late in the customer journey. These affiliates should be remunerated accordingly with a lower commission. As a rule, voucher portals reach users deeper in the customer journey. For this reason, you should think about how to integrate voucher marketers into your own affiliate marketing concept or possibly exclude them.

Loyalty & Cashback Affiliates

From our perspective, cashbackers do not bring any direct added value in the acquisition of new customers. However, cashbackers have a large reach and can draw attention to campaigns.

Content Affiliates

Content affiliates are the most relevant form of affiliates. In particular, content marketers can be considered here, as well as publishers with a wide reach who deal with the specific topic and have reach in a suitable target group.

PPC Affiliates

PPC affiliates can sufficiently complement the portfolio if they do not trigger a competitive situation with their own advertising media. Especially in the SEA area, PPC affiliates should be excluded, as they only have a negative effect on click costs and worsen one's own performance in the SEA channels.

Email Affiliates

Large address distributors are also a possibility to bring further traffic to the pages. Here, too, you should check carefully how the affiliates generate email addresses and, above all, place value on qualitative characteristics.

Social Media / Influencer Affiliates

Influencers and social media channels can also be usefully integrated into affiliate marketing. Here, one should focus on partners who access similar target groups. In the SMA area, the social media affiliate's followers can then be targeted with the appropriate advertising media.

Blogger Affiliates

Similar to content affiliates, bloggers bring added value to the advertising company. Bloggers have the opportunity to generate reach via various media.



12. Affiliate Marketing Agencies

12.1 Earn money with affiliate marketing

As you can see, you can earn money with affiliate marketing in two ways: As a merchant or also as an affiliate. You just have to think about how to reach the right target groups. If you are in possession of reach, you could monetise the reach via various affiliate programmes. Especially for high-quality and problem-solving content, there is always marketing potential in affiliate marketing.

12.2 Cooperation with affiliate marketing agencies

So what is the first step when you want to start with affiliate marketing? - No, it doesn't necessarily have to be a call to us as an agency, but we would be happy to receive a call. You can also set up and manage a programme yourself. However, do not underestimate the effort that such a programme causes, not only in the beginning.

Affiliate marketing is a people business - you need to communicate and interact with affiliates and their networks on a regular basis to drive such a programme.

We as an agency naturally have some advantages here natively and allow us to work more efficiently:

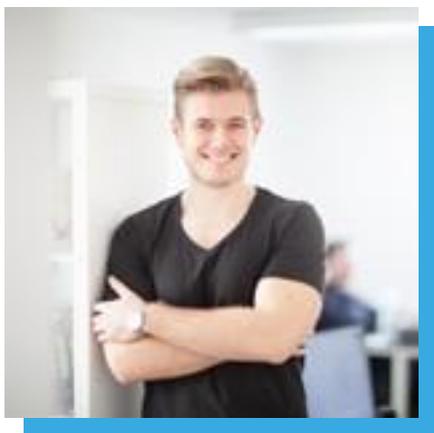
- we are already in exchange with the most important affiliates
- we know the affiliate networks
- we have the trust of the affiliates - our recommendations are linked faster
- we develop the right affiliate marketing strategy for your company
- we know the black sheep of the industry
- we have the processes for efficient affiliate management
- we have know-how in Affiliate OutReach
- we have an all-round view of online marketing and observe the market

You can build on our experience and use it to set up your affiliate marketing campaign quickly and effectively.

13. Conclusion on Affiliate- Marketing

What do I need affiliate marketing for now?

Professional affiliate marketing offers many companies numerous opportunities to generate performance and bring their own business closer to the desired goals. Especially in the area of eCommerce, the leverage effects of affiliate marketing on sales and growth cannot be neglected. Affiliate marketing belongs in every online marketing mix.



Sebastian Denzin

Digital Strategist & Owner
of SaphirSolution

14. Interview with Sebastian Denzin

14.1 Wasted potential: Sustainable growth with AM

Affiliate marketing is a term that many online retailers or service providers have heard before. But what does it mean?

Affiliate marketing - sounds like rocket science, but the principle is simple. Affiliate marketing is a performance-oriented online marketing channel that should be part of every successful online shop's portfolio. Affiliate marketing results from classic referral marketing. Strong sales partners draw the attention of the target group to the shop's products or the company's service through recommendation or linking. Affiliate marketing is an essential growth driver.

What are the benefits of affiliate marketing?

We see affiliate marketing as an important part of an online marketing mix. Through the affiliate channel, new customers can be generated and existing customers can be approached again. The biggest advantage of affiliate marketing is the manageable advertising expenditure.

The commission for the affiliate is only generated if a sale has taken place. An affiliate partner makes its reach available and participates in the marketing success by means of commissions. For the advertiser (merchant), affiliate marketing thus has the advantage that the advertising risk is distributed among various affiliate partners and they are only remunerated if they are actually successful (sale or lead).

14.2 Affiliate marketing: Classification in online marketing

What are the goals of affiliate marketing?

In addition to search engine marketing (SEM = SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING) and social media marketing (SMM), affiliate marketing is a powerful performance channel for acquiring new customers and belongs in every healthy online marketing mix. It is a channel that enables the advertiser to generate further growth and customer contacts through partnerships.

How can the success of affiliate marketing be measured?

Affiliates often participate in sales on a percentage basis or with a fixed amount. Here too, of course, the principle applies: the better the likelihood of the affiliate making a purchase, the more likely the affiliate is to offer the advertising space to the merchant. There are several factors that determine the success of the partnership:

Commission

The amount of the commission set determines the profitability of the campaigns for the affiliate. For this reason, one should tend to orientate oneself towards the competition when awarding commission rates in order to maintain the goodwill of the affiliates.

Tip: Integrate graduated commissions. Affiliates with good advertising performance

are additionally motivated to play out corresponding advertisements and you have a communication basis to plan more actions with the partner.

Selection & design of advertising material

The quality of the advertising material determines the CTR (Click Through Rate) and accordingly the advertising material should correspond to the AIDA principle.

Attention (generating attention)

Interest (arouse the interest of the user)

Desire (create a desire in the customer to interact)

Action (Clear call to action for interaction - Call to Action)

Potential of the shop

Of course, affiliates are also interested in successful cooperation. For this reason, if you have thought about conversion rate optimisation, you should also address this to the affiliate so that they gain confidence in the professionalism of your online shop. In this context, it is important to present the overall concept of the webshop coherently.

Communication

Affiliates love active programmes with a lot of "movement". Communicate discount promotions or other events that affiliates can use to promote your programme. For this purpose, the Adcell network, for example, offers the free opportunity to inform active affiliates who are already working for the partner programme about promotions via newsletters.

Actions

Regular promotions also have a significant influence on the success of the affiliate programme. Discount campaigns, seasonal campaigns or special conditions for very successful affiliate partners contribute to a better overall success and should be planned accordingly in the activity plan.

How does measuring the success of affiliate marketing work?

The origin of the user is determined via a cookie and this assignment is made at the end of the order. For the integration, a sophisticated tracking system is needed that meets the demands of the affiliates in order to enable transparent and fair billing.

Those who do not want to take on the challenge of integrating their own tracking system and going in search of partners can fall back on existing structures: so-called affiliate networks take over the billing with the affiliates and provide a corresponding tracking system. In affiliate marketing, affiliate networks take over tracking and billing with the affiliate partners.

What are the advantages of an affiliate network?

Especially for beginners, it is advisable to cooperate with an affiliate network, as it assists the advertiser with the set-up and acquisition of affiliate partners. For this, the affiliate network charges a fee that is linked to the commissions. Various networks charge a set-up fee and fixed fees for participation in the affiliate network. Our exemplary network Adcell does not charge any set-up fees and has no fixed monthly costs. This means that this network generates variable costs that are linked to turnover. It is a good way for beginners to gain their first experience with affiliate marketing.

Why should online merchants definitely rely on affiliate marketing?

A professionally run affiliate programme can bring you risk-averse new shop customers and contributes to customer loyalty. However, a successful affiliate programme is not a foregone conclusion. Capacities must be planned for the support of the programme and the activities of the affiliates must be monitored.

15. Pitfalls in Affiliate Marketing

15.1 Practical tips you should know

Affiliate marketing is a popular channel among advertisers and shop operators. Additional transactions can be generated in one's own online shop with the lowest possible advertising risk. The affiliate is only paid for the advertising services after the fact. Sounds like a wonderfully scalable concept for additional shop sales. But is affiliate marketing really that uncomplicated?

In this chapter we give you an outlook regarding pitfalls you may encounter in your daily affiliate marketing practice and how you should deal with them - let's go!

From countless affiliate marketing projects, especially in eCommerce, we have encountered a number of pitfalls over the course of time, which not only online traders should be wary of when starting their affiliate marketing programme. In principle, fraud is unfortunately not far away when money is at stake.

In the following, we would like to introduce you to concepts that cost you money in affiliate marketing but have no real effect on advertising performance. Our goal is to save you from the most common pitfalls in affiliate marketing.



15.2 Affiliate Marketing Pitfall No. 1 - Ad Hijacking

Ad hijacking is a common problem in affiliate marketing. In this case, the affiliate copies the advertisements of the merchant (especially in the search engine) and plays them out. In doing so, the affiliate books in on the merchant's performing search terms with the aim of using the existing performance for himself.

For the merchant, this form of advertising is difficult to recognise, as the ads are similar to the existing Google or Bing ads. Here, the traffic should be monitored daily in order to detect and avoid an ad hijacking attack at an early stage.

15.3 Affiliate Marketing Pitfall No. 2 - Cookie Dropping

With cookie dropping, clicks are artificially generated without a user actually becoming active - the aim: to set a cookie without the user having interacted with an advertising medium in order to profit from the commission in the event of a purchase. With this method, HTML tags or an image file integrated via iFrame are often used for cookie dropping and thus the actual advertising service is cheated.



Here, too, you should monitor your affiliates continuously and question the origin of the customers until you can trace the transactions in detail.

15.4 Affiliate Marketing Pitfall No. 3 - Voucher Trap

Vouchers are a popular advertising tool. Many voucher sites live from the mediation of discounts. You can see it in your own surfing behaviour. Add the item to the shopping basket and quickly browse the web for valid vouchers. Here, you quickly catch a cookie on common sites without finding the right voucher.

With voucher advertisers, the advertising service is generated relatively late in the so-called customer journey. As a result, we as an agency take the view that the transaction has value, but should be lower than the standard commission.

Because from a controlling point of view, you would not only be spoiling the affiliate, but also granting a price discount that reduces the margin. For this reason, you should pursue a clear voucher strategy at the start of your affiliate marketing and consciously promote voucher partners.

15.5 Affiliate Marketing Pitfall No. 4 - Brand Bidding

Another (even more brazen) method of ad hijacking is so-called brand bidding. In this fraud method, affiliate partners book themselves in the search engines on the brand search term, which usually has a high conversion rate and low click costs, with the aim of generating transactions at low cost.

In any case, you should monitor your SEA campaigns and the click behaviour on brand search terms. Alternatively, you can use tools such as AdPolice to protect your brand keywords from brand bidding.

15.6 Affiliate Marketing Pitfall No. 5 - No active affiliate marketing management

The biggest pitfall is an affiliate marketing programme without active support. It happens again and again that we discover affiliate marketing programmes that have entered advertising material once and then let the programme run without monitoring and delay. No less frequently, such programmes have a cancellation rate of 0%, which is in fact very unlikely and costs the programme operator money.

When you start affiliate marketing, only do it if you can muster the appropriate resources. A programme without supervision is a programme without control and usually does not bring the required impact for your sales, but on the contrary only costs commissions to be paid that are not justified. An avoidable pitfall on the 5th level.

15.7 Conclusion on affiliate marketing and its pitfalls

Affiliate marketing offers many potentials for shop and website operators to demonstrably increase the success of their own company. However, you should always keep an eye on the pitfalls in your affiliate marketing activities, because once initialised they can generate many hidden costs that reduce the ROAS of the affiliate marketing activities and thus make the advertising risk and the efficiency of the affiliate marketing channel obsolete.

16. Affiliate Acquisition: How it works !

16.1 Affiliate Acquisition Basics

The potential of the affiliate marketing campaign is increasingly being recognised for gaining new customers and increasing turnover. In addition to the set affiliate marketing goals, the acquisition of high-performing affiliate partners is also part of the affiliate marketing strategy. The portfolio of affiliated partners is decisive for the success of the affiliate marketing programme.

In this chapter we will deal with the acquisition of suitable affiliate partners for your programme. Let's go!

What do we want to achieve? - This question should be asked before starting any acquisition activity in affiliate marketing. Do we want to connect more content publishers or focus more on voucher publishers? The question of target achievement is absolutely important for success in affiliate marketing. Affiliates should not be connected to the programme indiscriminately, but it should be evaluated whether the affiliates also fit the programme and can generate a corresponding added value, because at the end of the day it is not only the quantity of active affiliates that is decisive, but rather the quality of the relationships. Finding quality affiliates is not easy at this point - you need to have access to the same target group that is relevant to you.

In this chapter we give you 5 tips from practice so that you too can find more TOP affiliates for your affiliate marketing campaign.

16.2 Affiliate Acquisition Tip No. 1 - Affiliate Acquisition Planning

As in other areas of business, the success of an affiliate acquisition starts with strategy planning. The effort of strategy planning for affiliate acquisition is usually underestimated. Affiliate acquisition is an ongoing process with major challenges for the affiliate marketing manager. The prerequisites for a successful affiliate acquisition strategy are precise knowledge of the affiliate programme and the advertiser's products. In addition, there is a competitor analysis with a view to conditions and promotions. Measurable factors for the affiliate acquisition for the affiliate programme are e.g. number of affiliates, turnover per affiliate, provision of advertising material or market share of the company.

Within the framework of acquisition planning, questions should also be answered, such as:

- Which affiliates do I still want to reach and convince for my affiliate marketing programme?
- What is my expectation of the partnership with the affiliate and what could be the affiliate's expectation?
- What are the unique selling points of my affiliate programme and what differentiates it from the competition?
- What other non-monetary reasons might an affiliate have for working with me and how can I communicate these reasons appropriately?

This is certainly only an excerpt of possible questions that you should ask yourself before starting the acquisition of your affiliate marketing programme. The homework done here will pay off several times over in the acquisition at the end of the day.

16.3 Affiliate acquisition tip no. 2 - Outbound acquisition of affiliates

Do you start in an affiliate marketing network or do you set up your affiliate marketing programme alone? Cooperation with the networks in particular makes acquisition easier, as you can fall back on a certain portfolio of affiliates. In addition, however, it always makes sense to become active yourself and acquire affiliates. How does this work? - Find out now:

Research of target group ownership partners

Search engines like Google help to identify which pages rank for similar keywords, which are primarily in the informational area. Here you can quickly see which content marketers rank for certain keywords and achieve the corresponding reach. However, make sure that these are not necessarily satellite pages of the competition that you want to acquire.

Benefit argumentation

What added value can you deliver? - Does the affiliate already have an existing programme with another merchant? - You should clarify these questions before contacting the affiliate. It may be that the site has not yet had any experience with affiliate marketing and for this reason may be a little over-qualified to deal with your enquiry.

The acquisition

Phone or email? - We are in favour of a phone call - it is faster, more personal and more effective. Depending on how professionally the affiliate operates its website, availability by phone may be limited. Similar to sales, persistence pays off in affiliate acquisition. Stay on the ball.

The onboarding

The affiliate is won? - Good, then the real work starts now. After the acquisition is before the acquisition. A connected affiliate is useless if he does not promote your site and your products. Stay on the ball. Cultivate relationships with affiliates. Relationships in affiliate marketing are the gold you should bet on.

Be My Friend

An affiliate marketing programme is only as successful as it really is. It is like friendships. Those that are not cultivated will not necessarily bring added value. However, if you are always in contact with your partners, you will also benefit through increasing sales. Sustainability in relationship management is a decisive factor for success in affiliate marketing.

16.4 Affiliate Acquisition Tip No. 3 - Acquire potential affiliates

The affiliate acquisition strategy is set, the programme benefits are defined. Now the search for suitable affiliates begins, which is not easy. Here again, preliminary work is required. At this point it is important to identify affiliates who have access to your potential target groups. A classic keyword search can help you here.

Which keywords do you rank with? - Based on these keywords, you can find out in the search results of various search engines which potential websites could still be relevant for you. Tip: You should be careful here and not identify any competitor as a potential affiliate.

Create lists of potential affiliate partners and a suitable acquisition strategy. The more information you have about the affiliate, the more successful you can make the acquisition. Here too, well prepared is half done.

16.5 Affiliate Acquisition Tip No. 4 - Tools for Affiliate Research

Professional SEO tools can be important tools for identifying suitable affiliate partners based on keyword research, for example. Software such as XQVI or SEMrush help you analyse the rankings for certain keywords and find out which domain ranks for which topic. In this way, you can quickly create lists of potential partners, but also competitors, which can then be used for enrichment in acquisition. Particularly popular for researching suitable affiliates are transactional search queries such as:

- Keyword + comparison
- Keyword + Test
- Keyword + Test Winner
- Keyword + 2019

With these search queries, you will often find comparative websites that actively advise users on their purchase. Here you should focus especially on transactionally oriented affiliates.

16.6 Affiliate Acquisition Tip No. 5 - Competitor Analysis

Looking beyond the end of one's nose can help just as much as analysing the market. Above all, the competitive analysis gives some impressions regarding the affiliates. Analyses of the partner programmes of existing competitors can provide corresponding impressions.

Here, too, professional SEO tools can be used to identify potential affiliate links on the basis of the backlink profiles of the competition. Tools such as SEMrush, Xovi or SISTRIX are also used here. However, there are also free variants such as the free backlink tool (<https://www.backlink-tool.org/>) which you can use.

16.7 Conclusion on Affiliate Marketing Acquisition

The acquisition of new and suitable affiliates is the fuel for your affiliate marketing programme. Every new partner that you make palatable to your affiliate marketing programme as a merchant provides new sales opportunities. Don't let these opportunities go to waste.

As a professional affiliate marketing agency, we are happy to support you in the management and expansion of your affiliate marketing programme.



17. Affiliate Marketing Tools

17.1 Basics Affiliate Marketing Processes

Affiliate marketing is an extensive online marketing measure. Many processes must be maintained and adhered to. In this chapter, we would like to introduce tools that significantly simplify the work with affiliates and help you as a programme operator to keep track of your programmes and avoid fraud measures. Let's go!

In the daily business of an affiliate, many different tasks arise that cry out for structure and processes. Communication in particular is a crucial success factor in affiliate marketing. Communication with partners has to be maintained, actions have to be coordinated and put on the road - in this chapter you will find some helpful tools that help to make affiliate marketing management more efficient through the use of certain tools. Affiliate marketing tools can support you in the following areas:

- Communication with the affiliate partners and corresponding documentation of the measures
- Fraud Protection: Avoiding Affiliate Fraud Measures
- Affiliate acquisition: Acquisition of suitable affiliate partners
- Task management & planning of activities

From our day-to-day work as an affiliate marketing agency, we have compiled our top tools for optimising affiliate marketing processes.

17.2 Affiliate Marketing Tool No. 1 - CRM/HubSpot

A CRM (Customer Relationship Management) tool is crucial today to manage the relationship with one's customers. It is no different in affiliate marketing. Here, there are a number of relationships to maintain and corresponding acquisitions to realise for one's affiliate programmes. This is where you can use CRMs like HubSpot. The tool offers versatile options for recording communication with affiliate partners and helps with the corresponding task management. This way, you never forget a follow-up and remain reactive and proactive with your partners. A great way to manage your relationship with affiliates.

17.3 Affiliate Marketing Tool No. 2 - Affilitizer

The Affilitizer is an extension for the Chrome browser that shows you in SERPs (Google search results pages) which website has an existing affiliate programme with the common affiliate marketing networks. This way you can quickly see which competitors are also active in affiliate marketing and which commission rates the competition is using to attract affiliates. This gives you a quick overview of the current market situation and you can use this information to strategically and tactically align your affiliate programme.

17.4 Affiliate Marketing Tool No. 3 - AdPolice

Brand bidding is a common problem in affiliate marketing. In SEA in particular, affiliates bid on the merchant's brand keywords and benefit from the brand awareness, which they then have incentivised accordingly via the agreed commissions.

If you enable SEA and restrict brand bidding in your affiliate marketing programme, we recommend using the AdPolice software. With this software, you can monitor your brand search terms in the common networks. This is an important measure for affiliate fraud protection.

17.5 Affiliate Marketing Tool No. 4 - Ghostery

The Ghostery tracking tool supports you in analysing the tracking software used on existing websites and shops. With this tool, you can read out how conversions are recorded by the competition. Ghostery is also a browser extension that is available for Chrome and Firefox.

Use this tool especially for affiliate acquisition & competition analysis. With Ghostery you can quickly recognise the degree of professionalism of potential partners and competitors. Important information for expanding your performance.

17.6 Affiliate Marketing Tool No. 5 - Google Analytics/Data Studio

Affiliate marketing goals should be measurable. Advertising media are provided with UTM parameters in our programmes so that the traffic via the affiliate partners can be tracked in Google Analytics. This information can then be used to evaluate how the traffic behaves on the website and what influence the affiliate traffic has on the customer journey. In principle, Google Analytics should be of decisive importance for the merchant.

In addition to Google Analytics, we also use the Google Data Studio. Here, essential KPIs from the networks and also from Google Analytics can be combined and monitored accordingly. In this way, we implement a control instrument right from the start of the programmes.

17.7 Affiliate Marketing Tool No. 6 - SEMrush/XOVI/Sistrix

Actually, XOVI, SEMrush and SISTRIX are important tools for scouting new suitable partners. Since some affiliates receive their traffic via the search engine, it makes sense to identify suitable affiliates via good rankings for relevant keywords. In addition, you can use the backlink profiles of your competitors to identify potential affiliates who advertise for your competitor. These affiliates are then absolutely suitable for acquisition because they strengthen your profile and weaken that of the competition.

17.8 Conclusion on Affiliate Marketing Tools

It works without them, but it takes more effort. Investing time and money in tools can pay off very quickly in affiliate marketing, as they simplify processes and provide structure. Of course, a lot can be done with EXCEL and the like. Many of our tools are also available in free versions and already fulfil the purpose in affiliate marketing to this extent.

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Publisher of the Affiliate Marketing Playbook
SaphirSolution Online Marketing Agency
Owner: Sebastian Denzin
Goerdelerstraße 15 | 53859 Niederkassel
Tel.: +49 (0) 2208 / 933 5008
E-mail: info@saphirsolution.de

Office
Karl-Hass-Straße 26 | 53859 Niederkassel
Tel.: +49 (0) 2208 / 933 5008

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Ina Denzin

Affiliate Marketing Manager at
SaphirSolution & Author of the
Affiliate Marketing Playbook

SaphirSolution as Affiliate Marketing Agency

✔ Affiliate marketing management for shops & websites

✔ Affiliate marketing strategy individually aligned ✔

increase reach and turnover with affiliate marketing ✔

more sales, customer acquisition, more growth,
More subscribers, qualified contact requests

✔ Affiliate marketing is performance marketing

✔ more turnover through more visibility and more traffic

✔ efficient use of the advertising budget

✔ Attention through advertising banners and text links

✔ Costs only arise with sale or lead

✔ Invoicing on a commission and success basis

Affiliate marketing

Growth with strong partners

In our Affiliate Marketing Playbook we give you a first insight into the topic of affiliate marketing.

When do you start affiliate marketing for your business?

