



ODYSSEY
Partnerships

Odyssey Partnerships

The future of affiliate marketing



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The beginning

Do you remember the beginning of affiliate marketing?

Just a few networks, a few advertisers and a small bunch of publishers who helped advertisers in selling their products by showing the advertisers where the gaps lied. Maybe the publishers posted some items on their website, or were they promoting the products via social media (which was also in their early phases) or were they filling up the gaps of your Google search keyword lists by directly linking theirs to your site. What a peaceful time.

The Affiliate Wild West

But then the cowboys came. And the cowboys created The Affiliate Wild West. Brandbidding, auto-clicks and discount code websites that didn't have any discounts available roamed the wild west and all of a sudden the landscape changed.

And from the other side as well. Whereas the publishers initially seemed as a valid resource, soon they were seen as an extra cost that could easily be fixed. Because why would you pay out ALL the commissions when you could also decline a few and call those 'returns' or 'cancellations'? More for you!

For the short term at least. Soon the good publishers left, the sketchy ones stayed and affiliate marketing turned into a small side hustle for most marketing managers. Such a waste...

But luckily we're in a new era! An era that's leaving the filth in the previous one and one where affiliate marketing will be an incremental source of revenue for advertisers AND publishers. Welcome to the future of affiliate marketing!

Affiliate marketing in the current landscape

Affiliate marketing is a beautiful concept. It includes both branding and performance and gives the merchant great opportunities to set up amazing marketing campaigns. It's just sad most people don't see the beauty. Advertisers see affiliate marketing as a small bonus and barely give it any efforts, and publishers just see advertisers as a partner they can make a few bucks on.

And this is caused by various reasons.

1. For one; advertisers see publishers as a number. The only communication they usually have with their publishers is when a publisher is selling REALLY well or when they cancel commissions (or well.. this is an automated mail) and publishers on the other hand see advertisers as big massive money jars that shouldn't complain if the messaging on ones website isn't brand consistent if that ugly ad creates clicks.
2. For too long this created a feeling of impersonality towards each other which again is a cause of the system we are currently working with. And maybe the biggest problem is that the content creators who ACTUALLY try to create valuable content aren't getting the money they deserve.
3. Why? Because even though content creators actually create content that will help to drive up sales for the advertiser, there are usually some cowboys between them who will get (some of) the commission. And there we have the big problem. We even saw companies who were spending 70% of their affiliate budget to the wrong publishers.



**70% of the
affiliate budget
of multiple
companies is
being spent on
the wrong
publishers.**

The Last-Click Attribution Fallacy

Last click attribution doesn't really tell everything you need to know. But unfortunately, first-click, linear or position-based aren't telling the stories either, if you don't actually have all the information. And affiliate networks tend to ignore that fact even though the information they lack, mostly found in incrementality, is already out in the open.

We've been talking about looking at incrementality in the affiliate channel for years. Everybody seems to agree that last-click attribution in affiliate marketing isn't sustainable, yet nothing has changed in the recent years.

Only believing in last-clicking is for people who believe you can still fall off the earth.

Why do we need incrementality in the affiliate channel?



The affiliate marketing industry is one of the most challenging marketing industries as the affiliate networks are limiting the possibilities by applying last click attribution.

Everybody in the affiliate industry knows that last-click focussed publishers (like voucher and cashback) are often over-rewarded due to the last click attribution model. Simultaneously, publishers that are active more at the beginning of the customer journey are often under-rewarded. It's clear that the last-click attribution model limits the possibilities of both the merchants and the creative publishers to really work together and create great marketing campaigns. And it's also very unfair.

The only way advertisers can fully create a creative partnership program is by rewarding the publishers based on their incremental value with a multi-touch attribution model.

Content will be king.

So what will the future of affiliate marketing be? With the implementation of incrementality into affiliate marketing and rewarding publishers for being in the customer journey suddenly content also will rule in the affiliate world. All of a sudden publishers have the ability to create content that isn't per se driving up to the sale instantly and will they even have the possibility to create content in which they promote several advertisers without sounding too salesy. By having this freedom they might even completely stop with fixed fees, as affiliate content could suddenly become more profitable.

But that doesn't mean content shouldn't be sales-driven. It will be a nice mix for the publisher to combine it all, as that will only make the content look more diverse. In the last few years we have already seen personalization in display ads for instance already and it's clear that this will only be better and better. Display ads tend to show you the items you were casually browsing before and those banners will only become more and more interactive. And in the near future they don't even have to be interesting items from companies you've already searched for, but those ads will just show you ads with products you are probably interested in based on your internet behaviour and such.

Talking about a domino-effect: Odyssey Partnerships brings the best out of the advertisers and the publishers, the performance increases with 55%.

Automated content

Even though automated generated content sounds like something impossible, it really is not. Creativity is something computers will probably always struggle with, but that doesn't mean content cannot be written. Imagine the hours publishers save when the overall content is automatically created and even personalized based on the tone of voice of the other content on their pages. It sounds far away, but it really doesn't. For instance, look at the progress translated content in Google Translate already made and imagine how that will be in a few years. Trust us, this will be a very normal thing within just a few years, so you better prepare.



How Odyssey Partnerships works.

When creating Odyssey Partnerships, the goal was to create a very good and straightforward platform that's easy to use for both publishers and advertisers. And obviously, the core of the product is multi-touch attribution and incrementality.

With that struggle in the back of our heads, we started brainstorming on the affiliate platform we created. As we do with Odyssey Attribution, there are two main core values we used in the development of Odyssey Partnerships:

1. Cross Channel multi-touch attribution

With Odyssey Attribution we use Google Analytics and apply multi-touch attribution to that data to provide advertisers with better insights into the performance of their marketing channels. Odyssey Partnerships uses this attribution data to determine the value of individual publishers.

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What does Odyssey Partnerships mean for advertisers

As an advertiser, Odyssey Partnerships can help you out on multiple levels. The most obvious one is wanting to pay publishers based on their full performance in the customer journey. This way affiliate managers can optimize their affiliate strategy and work with all types of publishers on a CPS basis. Instead of working with fixed fees, advertisers can now trust that their budgets are well spent.

The moment your budget is worth 5 times more thanks to Odyssey Partnerships...

[Sign me up please.](#)

What does Odyssey Partnerships mean for advertisers

As a publisher, and most definitely as a content publisher, you've been on the wrong end of the deal for too long. Working with (a lot of) big brands based on fixed fees is nearly impossible but working with them through the affiliate channel is also undoable because of the last click payouts. With Odyssey Partnerships, publishers get two main advantages:

1. Publishers are being paid fairly for their performance. This is because Odyssey Partnerships pays publishers throughout the whole journey, not just the last click.
2. Transparency is key. As a publisher you get all the same data as an advertiser. Besides that, you also get insight into the full customer journey, so you can exactly see where and how often you were part of a customer journey.

Publishers on average earn 35% more due to multi-touch attribution

So what should you do?

You see, the future isn't that far away. We can barely call it a futuristic thing, it's just that most people aren't using the tools that are available just yet. So by now you understand what the problem is, but how can you fix it? Well, we have a perfect solution for both the advertiser as publisher:

For advertisers:

You can actually create value with affiliate publishers if you reward them for every part in the customer journey. This sounds difficult, but honestly, with Odyssey Partnership it really isn't. So let us know if you'd like to know more.

For publishers:

You probably deserve more commissions than you are currently getting so there's no reason not to jump on the Odyssey Partnerships train. You can easily sign up as a publisher and discover the brands we are already helping.

So no matter whether you are an advertiser, publisher or just a tech geek, we hope you do realise affiliate marketing isn't just a small factor in the marketing cycle. It should be a huge factor!

**Let's talk about a
win-win-win-win-win situation:
Odyssey Partnerships.**

