

Best Practices for Starting Your Affiliate Program

There are many things you should keep in mind when starting an affiliate program. This quick guide should serve as an overview of the main points to remember.

1. Make it easy for affiliates to sign up to your program. Only ask for the exact information that you need.
2. Have clear instructions on how your program works, how affiliates get paid and your payment schedule.
3. Don't make your affiliates wait for weeks to get paid, pay out regularly and if anything reward your best affiliates with early payments.
4. Ensure that you are accessible for your affiliates. Make sure they can connect with you quickly, and always answer their questions quickly.
5. Adding affiliate tools such as banners, text links, PDF files and more can help make promoting your program easier for everyone.
6. Don't forget that not all of your affiliates are seasoned ones. Make sure your affiliate center is easy to navigate and use.
7. Put up a Frequently Asked Questions page for your affiliates.
8. Create a specific mailing list for your affiliates and keep them updated by communicating with them regularly.
9. When selecting software consider your needs now and in the future. It is better to grow into your software than grow out of it!
10. Make sure your shopping cart and your affiliate software are compatible.
11. Test your affiliate program before going live.
12. Test your payment links and your tracking links. This way you know affiliates are being credited correctly.

13. Do not have your affiliates on auto approval. Always have the settings where you must approve any commissions first. This helps protect you as the vendor, and your affiliates.
14. Define your payment options clearly so you don't mislead any affiliates. Remember that Paypal is a great option, but is not available to everyone worldwide.
15. Choose an affiliate program that allows affiliates to create their own custom links. This way they can easily link to any page or product, instead of just sending visitors to your homepage.
16. Offer your top affiliates an extra incentive such as increased commission rates or the ability to recruit affiliates under them – 2 tier commissions.
17. Consider hiring an affiliate manager if you find yourself crunched for time.
18. Don't forget to advertise your affiliate program once it is live.
19. Offer a good commission rate if you want to recruit affiliates that will put in the time and effort to promote your products.
20. Keep your affiliate software up to date.