

CLICKBANK®

HOW TO GROW A SCALABLE AFFILIATE PROGRAM:

GENERATING MEANINGFUL REVENUE
FOR YOUR BRAND WITH AFFILIATES



MODULE 1:

INTRODUCING THE SCALABLE AFFILIATE PROGRAM

Welcome to ClickBank's "How to Grow a Scalable Affiliate Program" guide.

We've seen countless examples of ecommerce brands, online course creators, software companies, and product owners who transform their businesses when they start and grow their own scalable affiliate program.

Here on ClickBank, the Lionheart Legacy Media CBD supplement company generated multiple six figures in annual revenue from the affiliate channel alone.

And the e-business course creator, Joel Peterson, took his company to more than \$4 million in annual revenue based on the power of affiliates.

There's also Alex Miller with her Pelvic Floor Strong offer, which took her from a personal trainer job to heading up a multi-eight figure million dollar branded wellness company.

ClickBank has thousands dozens of success stories of businesses that reached a whole new level of success when they tapped into the growth potential of a scalable affiliate program.

No matter what your business or brand is, chances are good that a scalable affiliate program could help you drive net new customers and meaningful incremental revenue at scale!

Interested? Let's talk about how to get your business ready for a scalable affiliate program.



Who is This For?

Before we get started, I want to clarify who this guide is for.

You're in the right room if:

- 1) Your business earns in the high six-figure, seven-figure, or eight-figure revenue range; you have at least one proven product; and you're looking to scale.
- 2) You're ready to put your assumptions about affiliate marketing aside and consider guidance on building your affiliate program into a *scalable* customer acquisition channel that can make up 10%, 30%, or even 80% of your total sales.
- 3) Your team is willing to dedicate time and resources to learn and apply what we share in this guide.

At ClickBank, we've seen affiliate marketing explode the earnings for many, many companies – but we typically liken it to “adding fuel to the fire,” as opposed to “starting the fire.”

That means you shouldn't expect affiliate marketers to help you sell a product that *you* aren't already able to sell!

Let's say that again: the biggest myth in performance affiliate marketing is that “affiliates will sell my product for me, without me having a product that I already successfully sell.”

Nine times out of 10, that doesn't happen.

But no matter where your business is at right now, this guide will teach you everything you need to know to make your business “affiliate-ready.”

Clearing Up Misconceptions

Real quick, let's define a few things so we know we're on the same page when we use certain terminology.

First, an **affiliate program** is simply a system that tracks and rewards the affiliate partners who promote your products. All you need to have a viable affiliate program is (1) a way to track affiliate sales and (2) a way to pay your affiliates.

There are many different ways to structure and manage an affiliate program, but at least we can agree on what an affiliate program is!

Next, let's briefly talk about **affiliate marketing vs influencer marketing**. While these are similar concepts, we tend to think of affiliate marketing as the umbrella term for an arrangement where you compensate a third-party who helps promote your product, while influencer marketing is simply one specific example of how to do affiliate marketing (by working with influencers on social media).

Lastly, what do we mean by **proven product**?

A proven product is a product that already sees consistent sales and, ideally, has been tested engaging with cold traffic (i.e. convince people who have never heard of your brand or product before to buy it after a single touchpoint). This is often called an "offer." (More on this later – or jump ahead to check it out now.)

Of course, even if your brand, or product, or offer is successful, that doesn't necessarily mean it's "affiliate-ready" yet. More on that later!

Understanding the Scalable Affiliate Program

Now, what does a scalable affiliate program actually look like?

It might not be quite what you think. If you're coming from the world of ecommerce, you might probably think of affiliate marketing as partnering with affiliates on a network like Share A Sale or CJ to point potential customers to your product pages or your online store in exchange for a modest commission of maybe 5-25% – or offering similar commissions to a coupon affiliate who drives customers near the point of sale to complete their purchase.

But in the scalable or performance affiliate marketing realm, we mean that you have one (or maybe a few) of your highest-converting products available for affiliates to promote, and you're very deliberate in structuring a campaign that's focused around your product as an "offer."

In this model, you may pay a 50% commission or higher, because you're getting affiliates to bring you net new customers and fresh audiences who you can continue to sell to for months or years. The focus is on customer acquisition - not front-end profit!

Again, we'll talk more about this, but keep an open mind about what "scalability" could mean for your affiliate program!

Joel Peterson is a good example of someone who's built his business around affiliates. With his Crypto Codeproduct teaching people how to invest in cryptocurrency, Joel primarily uses affiliate marketers in the "make money online" or "e-business" space with large email lists, and he pays them up to \$1000 upfront plus recurring revenue on a multi-thousand-dollar product, essentially outsourcing most of his customer acquisition to these valuable affiliate partnerships.

If we're being honest, an affiliate program doesn't need to be flashy. Sometimes, a successful affiliate program involves partnering with just a few high-powered affiliates who have an email list, run paid media, or manage a popular blog or social media account.

Scalable Program Definition

So, with all this in mind, what is the definition of a scalable affiliate program?

A **scalable affiliate program** is a structured system that can support revenue growth through affiliate partnerships. Here are the primary factors to keep in mind:

- ➔ **Revenue Growth Potential:** Your affiliate program can drive significant revenue growth by focusing on a product that will perform well for affiliates. A high-converting product ensures that affiliates are motivated and rewarded for their efforts, which means you'll be able to build a broad network of affiliates to promote your product(s).
- ➔ **Robust Affiliate Management:** Your affiliate program has the necessary internal infrastructure behind it to handle a high volume of affiliates efficiently – whether it's 10, 100, or 1,000 – without experiencing any breakdowns or inefficiencies. This means setting up accurate tracking systems, reliable payment processes, and comprehensive support for affiliates.
- ➔ **Internal Infrastructure:** Every aspect of your business operations is prepared to accommodate a significant influx in sales, from production to fulfillment to customer support. Adding a scalable affiliate program isn't just about managing affiliate relationships – it's about ensuring that all of your internal systems can keep up with a growing voluming of sales.
 - Ask yourself: *Would your business be prepared if total sales doubled overnight?*

The Reality of Scalable Affiliate Programs

To recap, there are two major points to remember when it comes to the viability of a scalable affiliate program for your business:

- 1) **Use proven products only.** A successful affiliate program is built around a product that is *already* working and scaling. (Remember, adding fuel to an existing fire?)
- 2) **Acquire customers first.** A successful affiliate program can help you acquire new customers, but it shouldn't be relied on to bring in your *first* customers. Establish your product's success before you leverage affiliates.

To understand these points, put yourself in a successful affiliate's shoes. They're leveraging their considerable marketing expertise – and possibly an established audience they've built up over time – to drive sales for someone else's products (hopefully yours).

But like with any other business endeavor, affiliates are always thinking about their ratio of reward and risk before they promote anything.

If you've demonstrated that your product gets consistent sales and satisfies customers, then you're limiting your affiliate's risk.

Similarly, if you are scaling your own marketing campaigns profitably, then you likely have your margins to a point where you can offer a higher payout (reward) to your top affiliates.

E-commerce Considerations

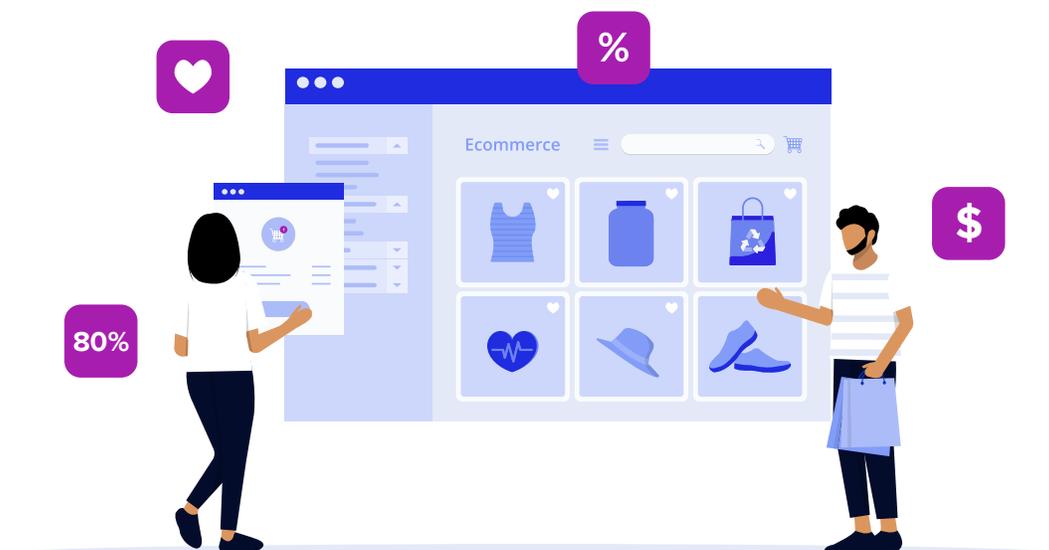
Before we wrap up this first section, I want to speak again about affiliate program expectations for ecommerce brands.

If you have an online store with dozens or even hundreds of products, we get why it's tempting to just set up an affiliate program that rewards affiliates who bring people to your site or promote any product you sell there (and offer only a modest commission for their trouble).

But I challenge you to look at your *own* sales figures and look at which products drive the majority of your sales today.

In most cases, the 80/20 rule applies and just 20% of your products are driving 80% or more of your total revenue. We recommend focusing on those products for building your affiliate program around, because again, a scalable affiliate program absolutely depends on a product that will convert for your affiliate partners.

If that sounds intimidating, don't worry: In the next section, we'll walk you through everything you need to know before you start building your scalable affiliate program!



MODULE 2: STARTING A SCALABLE AFFILIATE PROGRAM

A lot of businesses are eager to start getting affiliates out there making sales for them, but you'll have a lot more success if you've dotted the i's and crossed the t's first.

To make sure you're ready to build a scalable affiliate program, you will need these 5 things:

- 1) A High-Converting Offer
- 2) An Ideal Affiliate Avatar
- 3) Average Order Value (AOV) and Average Payout Value (APV) Numbers
- 4) Financial Metrics
- 5) Solutions for Scaling

We'll go over each one in detail so you know what your business needs in order to establish an affiliate program that can scale to the moon!

1) *Creating a High-Converting Offer*

There are some differences between a typical e-commerce product listing you would sell in your multi-SKU online store (or through a third-party marketplace like Amazon) and a crafted high-converting "offer" that will perform for affiliates.

Below is a quick look at how the two types of products vary:

	Traditional E-commerce Product	Scalable Affiliate Offer
Conversion Rate		1%+
Typical Margin		
Affiliate Payouts		50%-90% RevShare, \$100+ CPA

Here are the hallmarks of a product that makes a good affiliate offer:

- ➔ **It appeals to a specific addressable audience.** Affiliate offers perform better when affiliates know who to target and are armed with a compelling hook or angle that moves customers to make a purchase. Unlike with most ecommerce product pages, a good offer hinges around a sales page that “tells a story” to the potential buyer. This sales page may consist of a text sales letter or a video sales letter, sometimes in combination with a more traditional product page.
- ➔ **It converts 1% or higher on cold traffic.** That’s right, an affiliate offer that can generate at least one sale per 100 people can be very attractive to affiliates... IF the commissions are high enough, and we agree that “cold traffic” means audiences not familiar with your brand or offers yet.
- ➔ **It has a sufficiently high price point and margin to pay affiliates.** The ideal margin and average payout value (APV) number will differ depending on the type of product and vertical you’re in, but generally, the higher your margins, initial cart value, and average order value (AOV) are, the more affiliates will be interested in promoting it.

We can’t cover everything you’ll need to know about creating a high-converting affiliate offer in this guide, but we can share the kinds of products that we see doing well within this scalable affiliate model:

- 1) **Dietary supplements and consumables.** Weight loss, blood sugar regulation, nootropics, pain relief, etc.
- 2) **High-end consumer goods.** Fancy golf clubs, specialized popcorn makers, etc.
- 3) **Online courses or info products.** Diet and recipe books, exercise routines, spirituality guides, woodworking plans, etc.
- 4) **Software and coaching.** Software as a service, membership sites, etc.

If you already have a product like this, great – you’re well on your way to having a scalable affiliate offer!

If you don’t, you may consider how you can adapt your current product(s) to make an offer that can bring in new customers and grow awareness of your brand. Keep in mind that $\text{Average Payout Value (commission)} \times \text{CR (conversion rate)} = \text{Earnings Per Click (EPC)}$ – and your goal when creating an offer is to maximize the earnings per click for affiliates. The obvious way to do that is by boosting average payout for your affiliates, improving your offer’s conversion rate, or both!

NOTE: With this scalable model, we often suggest stacking multiple products into the same purchase flow, so once the customer has clicked the “buy” button, they’ll see a complementary product they can add to their order with a single click. This can boost your “average payout value” number, which makes the offer more enticing to affiliates!

Here's a wireframe of what a scalable affiliate offer funnel might look like:



Similarly, you can boost conversion rate with conversion rate optimization (CRO) tactics, including improving the headline or copy on your page to make any visitors more likely to purchase the product.

2) Identifying Your Ideal Affiliate

Before you can establish a scalable affiliate program, you need to know *who* should promote your products as an affiliate partner. It's tempting to say "everyone," just like you might have been tempted to do when describing your ideal customer – but defining the *right* affiliate is key!

So, let's drill down to what an affiliate actually is, and then we'll talk about how to pick the right one.

Just like you, an affiliate is an entrepreneur or business. They pay bills, they worry about reaching their revenue goals, and they want to find high-converting products to promote that will help them do those things with minimal risk.

We typically divide affiliates into two buckets: paid traffic (media buying) and "free" traffic (organic).

- ➔ **Media Buyers:** Competitive to recruit, but have the ability to boost sales dramatically for an offer that can convert on cold traffic through ad platforms like Facebook Ads, YouTube Ads, Google Ads, or native. The stats your affiliate offer needs to be competitive for media buyers will depend on your niche or vertical.
- ➔ **Email and Organic:** Less competitive to work with, and often works better for branded products that perform best with warm traffic. These affiliates will tend to be social media influencers, content creators, email list managers, and online community managers.

The Value of Affiliates

Keep in mind that recruiting just one ideal affiliate partner – whether they're a media buyer, email marketer, or content creator/influencer – could be the equivalent of acquiring ten, a hundred, or even thousands of customers! That's why you should put just as much work into defining your ideal affiliate avatar as you would with your ideal customer profiles and buyer personas.

The best way to determine your ideal affiliate is by considering your most effective channels for acquiring customers *right now!*

Remember, affiliates want the biggest possible return with limited risk to themselves, so you want to find affiliates who can duplicate *your* proven results in order to grow and scale sales through their own marketing efforts.

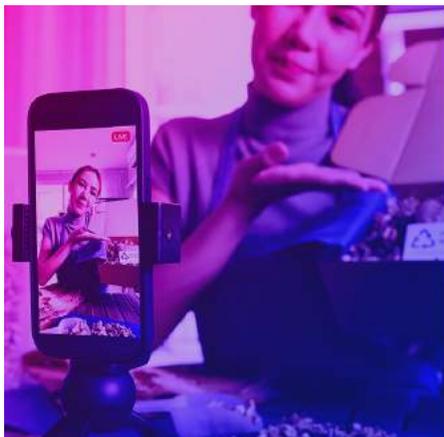
Example: If you've seen your product get a lot of engagement on Instagram, it's a decent bet that influencers on Instagram or media buyers who run campaigns on Meta may be worthwhile channels to look at for your affiliate program.

Of course, this also comes back to where your target audience tends to consume content online. You probably wouldn't try to sell a product for prostate health to teens on TikTok, or a student loan info product to seniors on Facebook. It's important to meet your buyers where they actually *are* – not just for you, but for your affiliates as well!

The only caveat here is that you'll tend to have a warm audience on your *owned* channels (email list, social media, website), so if you're expecting affiliates to drive a high volume of sales from *cold* traffic, you need to know that you're not comparing apples to apples there. (We'll talk more about how to test and optimize your affiliate offer later on.)

Ultimately, on ClickBank's marketplace, we have *all* of these popular types of affiliates, from PPC/media buyers and email marketers to content creators/influencers to publishers. Leveraging the right affiliates to reach your buyers will make all the difference in growing a successful affiliate program. Lastly, here's another good rule of thumb to remember when deciding who to work with:

- 1) Influencers and publishers for multi-touchpoint campaigns.**
- 2) Media buyers and email marketers for high-volume performance products.**
- 3) Existing customers for referral marketing (if applicable).**



3) Average Order Value and Average Payout Value

The next important consideration in growing a scalable affiliate program involves the financials of the offer: in particular, the average order value (AOV) and the average payout value (APV).

The AOV refers to how much revenue a typical order will bring in overall, which can include not just the initial product sale, but also order bumps, upsells, and other additional products included in the purchase.

The APV is the amount you'll pay out of the AOV to compensate an affiliate per sale. This can either be done on a revenue share % basis (such as 50% of the total), or a cost-per-action (CPA) basis (such as \$100 per sale), regardless of the total order value.

Now, here's the key question: Of the AOV, what can you afford NOT to pay affiliates in commission?

Or put another way... how big of an affiliate are you willing to miss out on because you weren't willing to pay enough?

I know the natural tendency is to offer as little as you feel you can get away with, but with a *scalable* affiliate program, the whole purpose is to attract the *best possible* affiliates – and you absolutely cannot do that with a small payout!

At this stage, determine the *maximum* you could pay an affiliate without harming your business. (This may require additional math on customer lifetime value, which we'll get to in a bit.)

If you're not sure about your own financials yet, you can always research competitors to discover what the standard payouts are in your niche. This is a good idea anyway, because in affiliate marketing, you'll make the process of recruiting affiliates a lot easier if your payouts are at least at parity with others in your space, if not higher.

Just remember - your competitors might have poorly performing affiliate programs. So if they're offering 10% commissions on a \$60 product, that doesn't mean if you offer \$15, you're automatically good to go. They might have a whopping 0 affiliates promoting them. You want to build the *best* affiliate program you possibly can – not just a decent one on murky data.

NOTE: You won't only be comparing "your brand" versus a "direct competitor." In reality, you're looking at "your brand" versus "whatever your ideal affiliates are promoting right now." That's why it pays to learn as much as you can about your ideal affiliate!

Example: Your product is a smart jump rope. Your direct competitors may be other jump rope sellers, or alternative exercise equipment. But your ideal affiliate might promote protein powder, sleep products, cooking and nutrition gadgets, meal services, etc.

Of course, while big payouts are important and will draw the attention of better affiliates, they aren't the *only* thing that matters!

You should build a reputation as a good partner for affiliates by solving problems for them beyond just a higher payout, such as:

- 1) **Providing affiliate tools and resources that help them market your product more easily and effectively;**
- 2) **Staffing a dedicated affiliate manager to communicate, work with, and support top affiliates;**
- 3) **Investing in product quality and customer support to avoid unnecessary returns (<10% refund rate and <0.8% chargeback rate).**

4) Financial Metrics

Now, here are the numbers that *really* matter to top affiliates!

Getting these financial metrics as attractive as possible will be like rocket fuel for your scalable affiliate program:

- ➔ **Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC):** How much it costs you, on average, to acquire a new customer. Divide all of your sales and marketing costs by the number of new customers you've gained within a specific period (typically, a rolling 365 days). **Lower is better!**
- ➔ **Customer Lifetime Value (LTV):** How much money a customer, on average, is worth to your business over the lifetime of their relationship with you. Take the average order value x the average number of purchases per customer to find customer value over a specific period (such as a year). Then, take the customer value x the average customer lifespan to determine your total customer lifetime value. **Higher is better!**
- ➔ **Earnings Per Click (EPC):** How much money, on average, an affiliate earns for each click of their affiliate tracking link. This affiliate marketing term is often used in conjunction with performance channels like paid ads and email marketing. Divide total earnings by number of clicks to determine this number. **Higher is better!**
- ➔ **Conversion rate (CR) by channel:** What percentage of visitors go on to the next step in the affiliate funnel per channel. On ClickBank, we calculate the "hop conversion rate" for you, which is the number of initial sales divided by the "hops," or "clicks" on your tracking link. **Higher is better!**

All of these are vital to consider as you structure a scalable affiliate program for your business.

The first two metrics (CAC and LTV) inform how much you can afford to pay affiliates.

Example: If your typical customer acquisition cost is \$50, then you should be able to pay affiliates at least \$50 for bringing you a brand-new customer.

Similarly, customer lifetime value represents the value of a customer over time. If you have an LTV of \$250, but you only spend \$50 to acquire a customer right now, then you know you can afford to spend significantly more upfront to acquire a customer (which includes potential commissions to affiliate partners).

As for the latter two metrics (EPC and CR), these are standard metrics along with payout that top affiliates always look at when deciding which affiliate offers to promote.

- ➔ **Earnings per click** helps affiliates make more direct comparisons between offers and types of promotions, rather than simple dollar amounts. For example, if your product has a typical earnings per click of \$1, then that means.
- ➔ **Conversion rate** is crucial in determining how much money an affiliate can earn. The higher the conversion rate, the more they can afford to spend on promotion to get potential customers on your page.

Taken as a whole, these key metrics ensure that both you and any affiliate partners can make informed decisions about your affiliate program.

Readiness Check: If you don't know your product's financial metrics, then you may not be ready to launch an affiliate program... yet.

The good news is, now that you know how important these numbers are, you can actively start tracking them and improving them to ensure you're ready to establish an effective affiliate program!

5) Solutions for Scaling

The last thing you need before you can start scaling your affiliate program is the infrastructure to support it, especially tracking and payments.

You need some kind of solution to handle these basic functions for your affiliate program, and ideally one that integrates with your tech stack (such as Shopify).

There are a few different options for this:

- ➔ **Self-hosted Programs:** Hosting the affiliate program yourself is easier to set up but results in more manual management. Requires in-house affiliate program management and dedicated affiliate management software.
- ➔ **CPA Networks:** Access media buyers but lose direct affiliate relationships. A CPA network will allow you to set up an affiliate relationship over more actions than just a completed sale, such as filling out a form or downloading an app).
- ➔ **Big Affiliate Networks:** Layer over existing setups but attract many coupon affiliates.
- ➔ **Performance Affiliate Networks (ClickBank):** Hybrid solution with extensive affiliate exposure and managed services.



MODULE 3:

EXECUTING YOUR SCALABLE AFFILIATE PROGRAM

Welcome to the most exciting section, where we talk about actually executing on your affiliate program goals!

By now, you should have a good understanding of what a scalable affiliate program is and how to know if you're ready to start one for your business.

So, we can move on from theory and get into the action steps for everything from affiliate recruitment and program management to tracking and testing!

Starting Your Affiliate Program

Real quick, let's check in on what you'll want to have before you start executing:

- 1) A high-converting offer with proven metrics to attract affiliates!
- 2) One or more ideal affiliate avatars so you know which affiliates to target!
- 3) Internal solutions to handle a high volume of both affiliates and sales!

You may not have all of these elements perfectly defined, but you should do your best on them before you start your affiliate program in earnest.

Now, with those in place, let's go over the three big jobs you'll need to handle to launch your scalable affiliate program: affiliate recruitment, tracking/payment, and affiliate resources.

1) Define Affiliate Recruitment Strategies

You can't have a successful affiliate program without affiliates!

To start your scalable affiliate program, you'll need to be prepared to begin recruiting affiliates effectively. These steps include:

- 1) Identifying Traffic Channels**
- 2) Searching for Affiliates**
- 2) Hiring an Affiliate Manager**

Everything comes back to your ideal affiliate avatar, particularly the channels where you're aiming for affiliates to promote your product, such as paid media, organic social, blogs/websites, email lists, and so on.

So, just like with your ideal customers, you'll need to ask yourself:



- 1) Which affiliates are already talking to your target market?**
- 2) Where do they hang out online?**
- 3) What events do they attend?**

4) Are they on any affiliate networks?

5) What kind of products do they promote?

As you answer these questions, you'll get more clarity about which affiliates you should go after. Then, it's time to actually recruit them.

Finding Quality Affiliates

Okay, day to day, how do you actually *find* these affiliates you want to promote your products?

1) List Your Product on Affiliate Network(s)

Well, one good step is to get your product or brand listed on an affiliate network like ClickBank. Once it's public, your listing will be visible to active affiliates who may choose to promote your affiliate offer on their own.

2) Networking

Another key here is networking your way to the right affiliates. In this space, a lot of business gets done between people who meet at industry events. The network for affiliates is actually quite small at the top, so this is an important part of the process of attracting new affiliates!

Important industry events to look out for include Affiliate Summit, Affiliate World, and ClickBank events like Platinum Summit (after you qualify to attend).

3) Manual Outreach

You can try establishing affiliate relationships online through manual outreach. This process involves looking for relevant businesses in your industry, people with certain job titles, or accounts on social media, and sending them direct messages (DMs) and emails to introduce them to your affiliate program.

If this sounds like a time-consuming job, well – it can be. That's why it may be worthwhile for you to hire an affiliate manager, so that you have someone full-time on the team who can focus not just on managing affiliates, but also recruiting and supporting them on an ongoing basis!

4) Referrals

Lastly, once you start getting affiliates, you can ask them for recommendations or referrals on other affiliates. Sometimes, this is an informal thing, but it can also be a formal arrangement with second-tier affiliate relationships (which we'll cover in more detail shortly).

Hiring an Affiliate Manager

Before you hire someone to fill the key position of affiliate manager, affiliate program manager, partnership manager, or influencer manager, it's important for you to understand what affiliate management *actually* is: B2B sales.

Much of an affiliate manager's time will be taken up with recruiting and onboarding new affiliates.

The other big chunk of time will be managing relationships with *existing* affiliates. Both functions require serious people skills and a knack for sales!

This is why you can't expect big results without having at least one person on your team focused on the job of recruiting and working with affiliates.



When it comes to affiliate management, here's the reality:

- 1) **It's highly relationship-driven**
- 2) **It's personal and collaborative**
- 2) **There's often a long lead time before you see results**

You can get a huge lift in sales over the long haul when you get the right affiliates on board – but there's a lot of testing, outreach, and trial and error before you get there.

Obviously, that message isn't quite the same as what most businesses *like* to imagine about affiliate marketing: **that thousands of affiliates will spontaneously go promote your brand with no additional work on your part.**

But with that said, a scalable affiliate program is absolutely worth it for all kinds of businesses! If you can figure out where your ideal affiliates are and start reaching out to them, you can get your affiliate program moving on a solid trajectory toward growth and success.

2) Set Up Tracking and Payment Systems

The next facet of affiliate management is establishing some kind of tracking and payment systems. You can't have a working affiliate program of any kind without both of these systems!

Tracking

First, when it comes to tracking, you'll have to decide whether you're using an affiliate tracking software solution like Cake or Tune, a webapp, or an affiliate network like ClickBank to track affiliate sales for you.

You'll also need to decide between first-touch and last-touch attribution models. These distinguish which affiliate gets credit if multiple affiliates refer the same person to your sales page – the very first one or the very last one. There are pros and cons to both, but at ClickBank, we do last-touch attribution.

You should also determine the cookie window, which determines how long an affiliate can get credit for a sale they've referred. It's 24 hours for Amazon.com affiliates – others may offer a lifetime cookie. At ClickBank, we have a 60-day cookie.

In practice, it's rare that a buyer would click one of your affiliates' tracking links, visit your sales page, and come back 59 days later to buy – but it's *possible*, and affiliates obviously appreciate the longer window to get credit for those potential sales they had a hand in.

NOTE: The one place where a longer cookie window can be super handy is if you set up your funnel to credit leads from an affiliate and encourage them to buy over time with email. In that case, it may take weeks before the sale, but the affiliate who brought you that contact will still get credit.

Ultimately, this may also factor in when it comes to recurring revenue and subscriptions (i.e. rebills). How long does an affiliate who generated a recurring sale for you continue to receive rebill or subscription revenue for those additional months?

These tracking questions can make a big difference in terms of the affiliates who will want to promote your offer!

Payments

How are you going to pay your affiliates, and on what schedule? Some businesses do net-7, others net-30, while some do net-60 or longer! Whatever payment schedule you choose, be sure this is something you can communicate to your affiliates and stick to.

Also, what payment methods will use? Common options include PayPal, wire, check, ACH, or authorize.net.

Next, when you get refunds from affiliate sales, will you deduct that from your affiliates' payouts? Who is the specific person on your staff who tracks and pays all of your affiliates?

Lastly, there's the big question: How many affiliates can you realistically work with? Are you prepared for the administrative load that comes with paying dozens of affiliates per month? What about hundreds or even thousands?

Your company's cash flow depends on how well you manage affiliate payments. You also open yourself up to liability if you promise affiliates one thing and don't deliver. In the end, it's extremely important to think through payments and come up with a reliable system that will work for the long term!

Affiliate Program Management

Beyond tracking and payment systems, there are some additional details related to affiliate management that you may want to think about, such as:

- ➔ **Affiliate approval.** Will you only allow affiliates you've vetted and whitelisted to promote your product?
- ➔ **Terms and conditions.** Are there certain requirements you'll place on your affiliates? (For example, no brand bidding, only certain traffic sources allowed, use of only approved product images, etc.) Who is monitoring affiliates to make sure they abide by these rules?
- ➔ **Second-tier commissions.** One way you can attract more quality affiliates is by getting your current affiliates to refer *other* affiliates in exchange for a commission when those new affiliates make sales. Consider if this is something you want to offer and how you'll track it.

Affiliate management is an ongoing job. You may be able to find quality affiliates, but you'll only get them to stick around by maintaining a mutually beneficial professional relationship.

Like with any customer you have, managing affiliates doesn't stop at the acquisition/recruitment stage. It takes time to nurture potential affiliates into top performers for your brand. But once you get there, you'll be amazed at how quickly your sales can grow!

3) Create Marketing Materials and Resources for Affiliates

The final facet of a scalable affiliate program is creating affiliate resources for your future affiliate partners.

To understand why, stop and memorize this mantra for affiliate marketing: make it easy.

Quality affiliates have a plethora of options when it comes to which products they can promote, especially if they have proven success and a network of other e-commerce brands and product owners who know them.

So, in addition to building a strong affiliate offer with competitive stats, you also want to make the experience of working with you as frictionless as possible for affiliates!

No matter how you find and recruit affiliates, here are some affiliate resources and assets you'll likely want to create:

- ➔ **Recruitment page.** An affiliate recruitment page (sometimes called an “affiliate tools page”) is a landing page designed to showcase your entire affiliate program to both potential and existing affiliates of yours. If you have more than one product to promote, you can feature them all on one central page or create separate affiliate recruitment pages for each one.
- ➔ **Email swipes.** Provide a variety of pre-written emails that affiliates can use in their promotions. Share angles and hooks that will get a customer’s attention and drive conversions.
- ➔ **Product images and banner ads.** Share a variety of branded visual materials for affiliates to use on their blogs/websites, YouTube channels, digital ads, and other places where they may talk about your product.
- ➔ **Demographic data.** Share the ideal audience(s) for your product, including demographic information like age, gender, income level, and other relevant details. This can be particularly helpful for media buyers who want to target specific audiences on their ad platform of choice.
- ➔ **Custom landing pages/product pages.** Every affiliate has a different audience and may choose to promote their product differently. For example, a colder audience may want more information before making a purchase decision, while a warmer audience may already be primed to buy. Some affiliates prefer to link to a text-based sales page, while others prefer a video-based sales page. Creating different options – or even offering *custom* landing pages that meet a valuable affiliate’s unique needs – can not only encourage more affiliates to promote your offer, but may also help you get more sales when they do.



These simple affiliate assets are tremendously helpful for affiliates who are considering whether to promote your offer. Think about it: testing your offer as an affiliate may be as simple as copying and pasting your pre-made copy or image into their email service provider, blog post, or ad and hitting a button to see how it performs!

Another way to think about this is, what assets would you create for your own in-house marketing team in order to help promote and sell your product(s)? If it’s something you would need internally, there’s a good chance your affiliates could use it too.

Ultimately, whenever you can simplify the process for affiliates to promote your brand, do it.

Wrap Up

With those three systems in place – affiliate recruitment, tracking/payment, and affiliate resources – you should have all the fundamentals to grow a thriving scalable affiliate program.

By the time your offer converts and is getting traction, effective scaling is a matter of operations. Part of this involves testing new marketing creatives. You should also be keeping up with algorithm changes in tech platforms to ensure your offer will continue to convert for affiliates.

As all this affiliate growth is happening, don't neglect your own internal traffic and promotion efforts. It's important to continuously monitor and optimize your affiliate program over time to maximize your chances of long-term success.

When it comes to affiliates, you should provide incentives for them by unlocking higher commissions as they hit higher sales goals for you. And while you're thinking about incentives, offer some to your in-house affiliate manager as well!

Conclusion: Working with ClickBank

To have a scalable affiliate program, we encourage your brand to start small, test internally – and when you're ready, **scale up on ClickBank's world-class marketplace** alongside our team of experts!

If you're wondering why ClickBank is a good foundation for your scalable affiliate program, ClickBank has:

- ➔ **Integrated payments** - We automate payment processing and taxes for you, and ensure you can scale without limits – no approvals or processing caps! In more than 25 years, we've never missed a payment.
- ➔ **Affiliate management** - We serve as a one-stop shop for attracting, managing, and paying all of your affiliates, with flexible commission options including revenue sharing and cost per action, affiliate approvals, and more!
- ➔ **A proprietary network of affiliates** - We operate an exclusive affiliate marketplace where you can list your products and get them seen by top affiliates. We also make it easy to set up strategic partnerships and joint venture contracts to help you and all of your partners find success stress-free!

Happy Scaling!