

Affiliate Marketing Scandals are Here to Stay

Submitted by: Kin Communications2

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- September saw bookies caught up in fake news scandal
- Small businesses burned by Affiliate marketing
- Affiliate Marketing rarely lives up to purpose

The function of online affiliate marketing is to recommend appropriate products or services to people who may have a genuine interest in the matter being promoted. With several high-profile scandals surrounding the mechanic, it begs the question whether this form of marketing is fit for purpose as consumers continue to move online.

February 2016 saw charity Age UK exposed for promoting special energy tariffs available to the elderly, however, the advertised deal cost £245 more than the providers cheapest rate . The Sun reported that Age UK was making £6M per year from marketing these products, although legal the charity faced backlash over the morality of promoting the deal.

“Age UK got this very wrong, the product they were advertising was relevant to its audience but represented something of a scam. This is one of the pitfalls of affiliate marketing, harking to hard selling; it can offer incredibly high commission and leave morals at the door.” Comments Fabrizio Fantini; Co-Founder, Expressly.

September 2017 has seen major online gambling firms experience a marriage of affiliate marketing scandal and fake news . One brand found that some of its affiliates were promoting gambling to make big money fast using fake ‘advertorial’ stories, including one of a husband making enough via gambling to take his dying wife to an expensive specialist hospital.

“Affiliates are usually distant from the merchant and hidden behind affiliate networks or media buyers. This once again can lead to affiliates trying to maximise commission by sending spam emails, taking a shotgun approach to targeting potential customers, or even riding unpopular trends such as fake news stories – not ways you would like your brand to be promoted!” Comments Andrea Tricoli; Co-Founder, Expressly.

The mismanagement of affiliate marketing affects small businesses too, one business owner found that he was paying out commission in large quantities but on closer inspection realised that those customers were visiting the online store regardless of the affiliates efforts. However, at the checkout customers were pausing, searching affiliate websites for voucher codes and redirecting back to the checkout – meaning that that customers business was attributed to the affiliate despite the fact they did not initially attract the customer . Fantini comments that,

“Voucher codes are offered regularly by online merchants and consumers are savvy to this. It is common for customers to see the ‘enter voucher code’ box at checkout and hunt around on Google for codes. If an affiliate is promoting your site via discount codes this means the merchant will be hit both by the

discount and commission – it is not sustainable”

Expressly is a network which was founded to allow merchants and advertisers an alternative form of online advertising. One of its key goals is to allow merchants to know exactly where their brand is being promoted, and how. Unlike affiliate networks, Expressly users connect logically; merchants and advertisers can promote stores and goods which are in line with their customer bases interests (an independent kitchen store could team up with a luxury olive oil store for example) and maintain control. The merchant not only has control of how their brand is advertised, but also where. Furthermore, merchants can offer voucher codes via these promotions which means that customers will not need to pause their purchase to find voucher codes on a different site. Explaining one of the core reasons Expressly was founded Fantini and Tricoli explain,

“We created Expressly to ensure that our affiliates and merchants can maintain the core ethic of affiliate marketing, to recommend appropriate products or services to people who may have a genuine interest in the matter being promoted. The secondary must was to create an environment where the likelihood of the types of scandals we see in the press massively diminishes.”

You can find out more about Expressly at: Expressly (<http://www.buyexpressly.com>)

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For additional comment and for imagery to accompany this release please contact Kin Communications; Danielle Hope-Wynne on danielle@kincomms.com or Lewis Gunn on Lewis.gunn@kincomms.com or call +44(0)207 7179696.

Notes to editors

Expressly multiplies the effectiveness of direct customer referrals across Internet properties by as much as 15x.

Its proprietary technology transforms the post-click customer journey, cutting down onboarding on the receiving end from as many as 7 steps to a single click, while enhancing data security and privacy for all parties involved.

Their proprietary solution can be trialled free of charge, and it takes half a day or less to get started with a real live campaign. 200 UK digital merchants are already part of their growing network for direct customer acquisition, more info can be found on buyexpressly.com