Partnerize

2024

Expert affiliate and partnership marketing predictions

Partnerize tapped some of the best minds in affiliate and partnership marketing and asked how they see the channel evolving in 2024 and beyond. Here's what they said.

Brand-to-brand partnerships will surge and help reshape the affiliate landscape

Jeremy Aaronson

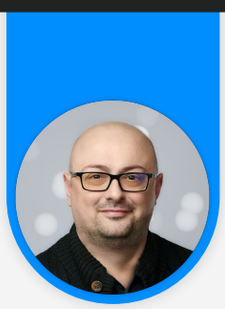
Chief Revenue Officer, UpSellit

With over 20 years of experience, Jeremy Aaronson has become a leader in the Digital Marketing arena. He has immersed himself in multiple facets of the space, including Search Engine Marketing, Website Optimization, Rich Media, Ad Buying/Selling, Re-targeting, Affiliate Marketing, Email Remarketing, and Website Abandonment. As Chief Revenue Office for Upsellit.com, he is responsible for the Global Growth of the Upsellit Brand.

In 2024, we'll see a surge in brand-to-brand partnerships reshaping the affiliate landscape, not only generating fresh revenue but also reducing the costs of acquiring new users. These collaborations enable brands to tap into new customer bases, while also trimming expenses tied to user acquisition. This marks a shift toward more efficient and collaborative strategies, emphasizing the power of brand partnerships for both revenue generation and cost-effective user acquisition.

Moreover, beyond the financial gains, these partnerships facilitate connections with new customer groups, extending reach, and fostering loyalty. This trend signifies a broader shift in business strategy, underscoring the significance of efficiency and teamwork for sustainable growth. These partnerships go beyond being mere tactics; they are integral strategies for businesses navigating the competitive market in 2024. They offer not only financial benefits but also the opportunity to establish enduring connections with customers.

Affiliate growth won’t happen in an echo chamber



Charlie Calabrese

President, All Inclusive Marketing INC.

In his latest venture, Charlie Calabrese assumed the role of President at All Inclusive Marketing, a trailblazing digital marketing agency with a commitment to performance marketing excellence. Building on a fifteen-year career marked by innovation and strategic prowess, Charlie now leads a team dedicated to delivering unparalleled results in the dynamic landscape of digital marketing.

After 15 years in the affiliate and partnership space working for multiple networks, platforms, and an agency, I believe that in 2024, retailers stand at a pivotal crossroads where embracing the partnership channel emerges as the linchpin for unparalleled revenue growth. With nearly $600B in global e-commerce sales, this shift necessitates a departure from traditional siloed strategies and an embrace of symbiotic collaborations. However, for this to happen, the industry’s key players need to get out of their own way, put in-fighting for their affiliate share aside, and instead open the doors by recognizing that success isn't solitary; it's cultivated through strategic alliances. True affiliate growth won’t happen in an echo chamber. Relinquishing outdated practices and fully embracing the partnership channel will allow retailers to unlock untapped potential, leveraging diverse networks of affiliate partners, influencers, and collaborators. This holistic approach will not only amplify brand visibility but also foster authentic connections with consumers, resulting in maximum revenue returns. Retail's future—as well as the channel’s—hinges on this transformation. Those unwilling to adapt risk stagnation, while those embracing partnerships will soar to new heights of profitability and consumer engagement.

Marketers will be required to drive strong ROI on media, tech, and services spend alike

Sarah Johnson Dayes

Chief Client Officer, Acceleration Partners (AP)

Sarah Johnson Dayes is Chief Client Officer at Acceleration Partners (AP), the world's leading global partnership marketing agency. Here she is responsible for the success of AP's 250+ member Client Services team and the health and happiness and global client relationships. Sarah has 20 years of services leadership experience and has served on AP's leadership team for over ten years. Sarah has been instrumental in shaping the AP client experience and supporting industry-leading brands including Target, Amazon Music, and Allbirds in developing partnership programs to create what's next.

It's going to be another unpredictable year! Other than that, in 2024, we will continue to see brands focusing on efficient growth - ensuring that every dollar counts. Marketers will be required to drive strong ROI on media, tech, and services spend alike, while being challenged with conservative up front budgets and maximizing last-minute budget availability. This will all come together to create both challenges and opportunities for the partnership marketing channel and the cream will rise to the top. While "good enough" programs will no longer be good enough -- healthy, diverse, strategic partnership marketing programs are extremely well set up to maximize the opportunity and drive growth and visibility for the channel.

An unprecedented surge in AI and automation integration will transform channel collaboration and efficiency

Dan Harding

Commercial Director, Envolve Technology

Dan Harding is the Commercial Director of Envolve Technology, a multi-award-winning Virtual Shopping Assistant and key tech provider operating in the performance channel, helping retailers improve site conversion through customer conversations. Before joining Envolve Dan was part of the original affiliate team at Vouchercloud, one of the UK's leading voucher platforms, acquired by Groupon in 2018. He brings 10+ years of affiliate experience to the channel and is one of the key advocates for tech in the space.

In 2024, I see the affiliate/partnership channel witnessing an unprecedented surge in AI and automation integration which will transform channel collaboration and efficiency. Specifically, AI-powered tools will evolve to streamline partner communication, enabling real-time data analysis for predictive modeling and personalized strategies. Automation will catalyze routine tasks, liberating partners to concentrate on value-driven engagements and creative problem-solving. This shift towards AI and automation will coincide with a revitalized emphasis on tracking. Advanced analytics will become the cornerstone, offering granular insights into partnership performance, consumer behavior, and market trends. Innovations in tracking technology will facilitate comprehensive monitoring across multiple touchpoints, fostering deeper understanding and informed decision-making.

Investment in affiliate tech will continue to advance in 2024 as we look to support shoppable content and further streamline purchasing

Jade Mayberry

Head of Affiliate & Performance Partnerships at dentsu, North America

Jade is an experienced marketer trusted by best-in-class digital marketing agencies, start-ups, and direct-to-consumer brands. She has a breath of experience across direct response, paid media and specializes in affiliate marketing. Jade is a board member of the Performance Marketing Association and is currently Head of Affiliate & Performance Partnerships at dentsu, North America.

In 2023 we saw a notable investment in the affiliate channel with social media giants such as Meta, TikTok Shop and YouTube Shopping launching in-platform affiliate programs to allow brands a direct avenue to partner, promote and drive sales within app. Investment in affiliate tech will continue to advance in 2024 as we look to support shoppable content and further streamline purchasing. AI will continue to be a main resource as companies look to incorporate AI to improve speed and agility, especially in operational workflows, and to aid in personalizing consumer experiences and promotions based on consumer behaviors. Another trend we are seeing that will continue into 2024 is that the lower funnel is now mostly comprised of loyalty /financial tech partners, such as Card-linked offer and Buy Now, Pay Later partners as brands are looking to increase access and affordability with payment options versus heavily discounting to win conversions. We can expect more retail media offerings, lending to a need for a more involved cross-channel collaboration between retail media and performance partnerships channels.

Performance marketing is poised to become even more data-driven and focused on tracking in 2024

Tricia Meyer

Executive Director, Performance Marketing Association

Tricia Meyer is an attorney and affiliate marketer. She is the founder and owner of Helping Moms Connect and Sunshine Rewards as well as the current Executive Director of the Performance Marketing Association.

For several reasons, performance marketing is poised to become even more data-driven and focused on tracking in 2024. As the industry has matured over the years, it is now time to address issues that demand more robust tracking and data analysis. For instance, privacy laws are emerging in many U.S. states, and from a technological standpoint, browsers are tightening restrictions on what is being passed. Additionally, growing publisher types like browser extensions, BNPL, and other cart technologies are compelling merchants to take a closer look at attribution policies. A tighter economic climate will require everyone to account more not just for ad spend but the incrementality, average order value, and overall profitability of that spend. Investment in influencers is going to need to be less anecdotal and more measurable. As new tools emerge to detect tracking issues, everyone will bear greater responsibility for accurate tracking and reporting.

More incremental revenue, more strategy on building and nurturing partnerships

Ashley McAlpin

Head of Marketing, Rockerbox

As the Head of Marketing at Rockerbox, Ashley leads the organization's marketing and sales development functions. With over 15 years experience as a marketer, Ashley is intimately familiar with the challenges facing marketers today. With a background in B2B SaaS, Ashley is passionate about helping companies make data driven decisions.

As we head into 2024 there is still some level of uncertainty from a macroeconomic perspective. From what we've seen in 2023 as we've tracked more than $2B in advertising spend across our various B2C customers, even in uncertain economic times, the strongest players are still making noise in the advertising space. We've seen brands move their focus from spending broadly to spending more strategically on emerging channels (like TikTok). As we move into 2024, I expect to see more of the same. I think brands will continue to cautiously scale channels in a way that's sustainable. I think we will continue to see increased pressure from brands to prove higher ROAS by channel, and less flexibility with channels that lack quantifiable performance data. As we continue to watch consumer spending trends, I think we will start to see the advertising landscape evolve as well. And, looking back to look forward, the 2023 BFCM trends that stand out as an indicator of something deeper in 2024 was the shift back to online shopping over in-store purchases. We saw a brief indicator of in-store making a comeback in 2022, but the 2023 holiday showed a much greater online impact. I'd watch that closely as we head into the new year.

Get ready for an explosion of AI "shopping assistants" in 2024

Lauren Newman

Executive Vice President, Media & Commerce at Red Ventures

Lauren Newman is Executive Vice President, Media & Commerce at Red Ventures. Lauren is responsible for all facets of revenue across Red Ventures Technology and Gaming verticals, which includes the leading global technology news brand, CNET. Lauren is focused on combining our partner-centric approach in performance marketing to drive sales with our consumer-centric content and editorial expertise to create even more value for our audiences and partners.

While we're still in the early innings of AI and its impact on consumer behavior and commerce at large, I expect we'll see an explosion of AI "shopping assistants" in 2024.

Both front and back-end refinements will lead to increased consumer adoption resulting in AI shopping tools becoming a meaningful and material contributor to a consumer's shopping journey.

Affiliate channel's core value proposition, crumbling cookie, innovative new models + more, continue to expand channel awareness

Brook Shaaf

CEO, FMTC

Brook Schaaf has been involved in the performance marketing space since 2000. He is co-founder of two companies, Schaaf-PartnerCentric (founded 2006, sold 2017) and FMTC.co (founded 2007). He is an active member of Entrepreneurs' Organization in Austin.

Affiliate marketing will benefit from increased pressure for performance-based outcomes, but 2024 will not see major breakouts for the space. The biggest dollars will flow into Retail Media Networks and the most chatter will be about large publishers monetizing with live events. That said, the core value proposition, crumbling cookie, increased privacy regulations and expectations, the fading taboo against revenue share (including for brand-to-brand), innovative new models, and more and more friction-reducing tools (including AI) for business development professionals will continue to expand the channel and awareness thereof. One thing to look out for is a turf war between traditional PR shops and seasoned affiliate management agencies, which will lead to mergers and acquisitions for relationships and expertise.

Crafting bespoke content experiences is not just a fashionable choice, it's an essential response to shifting consumer behaviors

Luke Simonsen

Ecommerce Digital Lead, Petstock

Luke Simonsen is the Digital Lead at Petstock, one of Australia's largest players in the retail space. He works within eCommerce focusing on acquisition, retention, and exploring new opportunities for innovation. With a background in eCommerce marketing, Luke is committed to delivering a seamless consumer experience.

As we dive headfirst into the unknowns of 2024, the affiliate landscape is a bit of a wild card. The market has changed: compelling brands, partners, and affiliates not only to adapt – but to elevate their game by fortifying their relationships with their consumers. Crafting bespoke content experiences is not just a fashionable choice, it's an essential response to shifting consumer behaviours, driven by an increasing hunger for personalization. Consumers are spoiled for choice and expect promotions to resonate intimately, marking a departure for brands from the one-size-fits-all paradigm. Instead, the trend emphasises the importance of targeting smaller, more engaged audiences with tailored offerings—this strategy is crucial for brands not gifted with limitless resources.

This shift in the marketing landscape mandates a recalibration of strategies, urging brands to fine-tune their campaigns and offers to target the individual, anticipate their needs, and communicate with them in a way that feels personal. In 2024, the key to success for both affiliates and brands will lie in their ability to cultivate strong relationships and be guided by results-driven strategies. The persistent call for accurate tracking and attribution remains vital, setting the stage for the integration of cutting-edge data analysis and targeting methodologies. Ultimately, the brands that balance these integral elements correctly will be the ones that succeed.

2024 is the year marketers learn to embrace AI as an integral part of their campaign development and channel optimization

Joseph Tertel, Jr.

Senior Director of Performance Marketing,
Eko Health

Joseph Tertel leads Eko's Performance Marketing Team and all direct to consumer marketing channels, strategies and campaigns. Eko provides healthcare professionals with industry leading digital tools to hear and understand their patients' hearts and lungs. With over 20 years of marketing experience, Joe has created, led and implemented marketing campaigns and digital strategies for Fortune 500 companies, strong regional powerhouses and top nonprofit organizations.

There's no doubt 2023 was the year of AI. In 2024, marketers will truly embrace AI and machine learning as an integral part of their campaign development process and channel optimization. Throughout the next year, AI will help marketers develop more and higher engaging creative assets, allowing for faster testing and optimization. AI will enhance audience targeting and drive deeper understanding of channel impacts.
Ultimately, AI will empower marketers with actionable insights to improve ROAS and drive incremental revenue.

Often the underdog, affiliate will become a core line item in marketing budgets in 2024 and investment in the channel will only evolve and grow.

Adam Weiss

Founder, Weiss Digital Consulting

Adam has more than 20 years of leadership experience in the digital space. He is the former SVP/GM of the Rakuten Affiliate Network and currently runs his own consulting practice where he serves as an advisor and consultant working with a wide variety of businesses in the Affiliate Marketing ecosystem providing solutions around strategy, partnership development, and increasing revenue.

In 2024 we will continue to see growth in the affiliate/partnership ecosystem. Publishers will really need to think about investment in diversification of traffic sources to mitigate the risk of the moving target that is SEO. As well they will need to build strategies for incremental revenue growth and optimization, yet, they won't have to do it all themselves as more and more technology is being developed to provide tools that support affiliate monetization. With this, I think we will continue to see more types of distribution come online. We're already seeing the initial phases of TV, more alignment with creators and influencers, and new types of loyalty, coupon, and content models embrace the channel and this will continue to be a trend. Affiliate is often positioned as the underdog but I do think in 2024 it will become a core line item in marketing budgets and investment in the channel will only evolve and grow.