

An Overview of Affiliate Management Solutions

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There are several types of models for affiliate management software. Below is a brief description of each model. Hosted Affiliate Management Solutions or ASP (Application Service Provider) Small to medium sized businesses typically use this model. The company hosts the software on their own servers. There is typically some type of set up fee and then a monthly hosting fee. Hosted affiliate management solutions have several advantages

The company can easily install upgrades (you don't have to worry about it) and additional features. They are typically very customer service oriented as keeping you as a customer is usually their main goal because of the nature of the model. Disadvantages

The only slight disadvantage is that you must recruit your own affiliates. However some companies do not necessarily see this as a disadvantage because when you recruit your own affiliates they are yours to "keep" (i.e. if you decide to switch companies and leave, your affiliates come with you). Affiliate Management Network Solutions

These solutions are typically "turn key" solutions and are best suited for medium to large businesses.

Network models typically handle everything for you. They have a large pool of affiliates in their network that you can solicit to join your affiliate program. However most affiliate networks do not allow you to "own" your affiliates, so if you leave the network you will lose your affiliates. Some may consider this a huge disadvantage, as they feel that can be held "hostage" by the company. If you ever want to switch services, this could be extremely difficult because you will lose your affiliates and have to start all over. In addition to management software, they also typically handle the payouts to affiliates, which many find a very nice feature. License software This is software that you purchase and install on your own server. Costs can range from \$100-\$1000 dollars. The major downside is that because this is a one-time purchase, the company may not be motivated to add new features in a timely manner. Plus if they do, you may have to pay for an upgrade. In addition, you or someone else will need to install and maintain the software (including backups, etc).

Shopping Cart Affiliate Add-Ons Many popular e-commerce shopping carts now offer add-ons to manage affiliates. These are typically quite cost effective. However, typically they are not as robust as full scale affiliate management solution.

These add-ons are not upgraded often. Be sure to investigate the features of any affiliate add-ons for your shopping cart, they might meet your needs. If not, be sure to investigate other alternatives. Reviews of Affiliate Management Solutions Hosted Affiliate Management Solutions AssocTRAC 4.0 AssocTRAC has been a top choice among merchants for several years. The main reasons are that it is easy to use; budget friendly with its fixed cost structure, hosted externally and is very scalable to the number of affiliates and the affiliate programs you want to manage. AssocTRAC 4.0 is a fully hosted software solution (this is nice because they take care of the backups, etc). You will be able to manage all of your affiliate needs quite easily. It can be integrated into your shopping cart with just a few clicks, password management and more. AssocTRAC is very popular for merchants who are just starting their affiliate program because it does not involve a significant upfront cost or take a percentage of your affiliate sales. As a matter of fact many merchants who end up with a large affiliate program stay with AssocTRAC because of the savings they receive by not having to pay a percentage of sales. AssocTRAC also comes with an extensive support system, that provides articles and videos on how to run an affiliate program. AssocTrac also provides tech support online and via telephone. Costs: \$677 set up fee, plus \$47/month. AssocTRAC does not charge the monthly fee until you have 50 unique affiliate hits tracked inside 30 days. Currently AssocTRAC is offering a free 90 day risk free trial of their software. You can get the offer by following this link.

Affiliate Management Network Solutions Commission Junction - Considered to be the leader in the United States and provides an abundance of advanced features. Commission Junction's network will allow you to advertise to affiliates quickly, however if you ever decide to leave commission junction you will lose all the affiliates you have signed up. Costs: Typically charge several thousand dollars to set up and then a 25-30% commission on fees paid to affiliates (a minimum fee will apply)

MyAffiliateProgram - This is a network program with 2 positive twists. Instead of charging a percentage based fee, you pay a monthly flat rate. In addition the network allows you to "own" your affiliates. This provides the best of both worlds as you can tap into their affiliate network to sign up new affiliates, and if you decide to leave you can take them with you. In addition they provide personalized support via phone, email and online chat. Costs: \$995 set up fee and then \$149/month.

ClickBank - ClickBank is very popular and packs quite a punch for its fees. ClickBank is for digital products only. ClickBank's interface is not as easy to use as others, however it does have a substantial network and is well known among affiliates. Costs: \$49.95 setup then \$1 plus 7.5% of each sale

LinkShare - One of the biggest network solutions available. They offer a wide variety of features and have extensive technical support. Costs: \$10,000 license fee and then transaction fees are roughly 2-3% of sales, with a monthly management fee of around \$5,000 (this is tailored to the customers needs).