

IAB Affiliate Marketing Council Voucher Code, Code of Conduct

Last updated October 2010

The IAB's Affiliate Marketing Council code of conduct for voucher code sites and affiliates who make use of voucher codes ensures voucher traffic sent from affiliate sites to merchants is not misleading or confusing and that consumers receive a good user experience.

The following networks are committed to enforcing the code: Affiliate Window, Affilinet, Commission Junction, OMG, Rakuten LinkShare, TradeDoubler, TradeTracker and Webgains.

The code of conduct

1. Affiliates must not use a mechanism whereby users are encouraged to click to interact with content where it is unclear or confusing what the outcome will be. For example:
 - i) Using "click to reveal code" and opening the site when no valid code is present or an offer/deal/sale is presented instead, without this being made clear before the click.
 - ii) Using "click to copy code" and opening the site when no valid code is available
 - iii) Opening the merchant's site without making it clear that this will occur
2. Affiliates must clearly detail the nature of the voucher or offer/deal/sale before a user clicks to interact with it (by revealing, copying, visiting the merchant site etc.)
3. A valid code is defined as a code that has been legitimately issued by a merchant for affiliate use online.

The onus will be on the affiliate to ensure the code being monetised via affiliate networks can legitimately be used. Affiliates will be expected to confirm with affiliate networks, agencies and other third parties when they wish to offer a code that is not obviously available via the affiliate channel. Affiliates are urged to only monetise codes via affiliate links that are available from network interfaces or have been provided directly by the merchant

This also extends to affiliate sites monetising user generated content. When codes are submitted they must be checked before affiliate links can be added. Sites featuring user generated content should be aware of the implications of featuring invalid codes even if the links are not monetised.

4. Voucher codes will have an activation date and preferably (where provided) a deactivation date. When a code has expired it must either be removed or the fact that it has expired must be **clearly stated in writing**, not simply by listing the expiry date.

Clarity of the expired content is key. Affiliates should consider whether expired content is clear to the consumer. The content could, for example, be **struck through or greyed out**.

Networks will use discretion when advising affiliates whether their expired content is clear enough.

5. Sites displaying voucher codes must contain clear categorisation and separation between deals/offers/sales and voucher codes.

Any affiliate judged by one of the participating networks to be contravening the code will be referred to the IAB's Affiliate Marketing Council. The discretion of the council will be used when determining what is judged as misleading or confusing and is not confined to the examples above.

Any voucher infringements can be referred to the AMC via this email address vouchercode@iabuk.net for investigation.

The current procedure for dealing with infringements is as follows:

For first time offenders:

- Networks confirm breach, if client specific issue then individual network(s) to act independently within a realistic timeframe.
- If the issue is considered to be cross-network the IAB AMC will send an email to the affiliate and the affiliate has seven days to acknowledge receipt of the email.
- If no response is received or the response is unsatisfactory the affiliate will be informed they are being unanimously suspended from all member networks for a minimum of seven days or until the content is compliant.
- If the response is satisfactory and the affiliate indicates they are willing and able to make changes, a realistic timeframe will be given in order for the changes to be made.
- The affiliate will be monitored in order to ensure compliance.

For repeat offenders:

- Following the initial seven day ban a second offence will result in a two week ban or until the site is compliant.
- A third breach of the same code will lead to permanent expulsion.

An appeals process exists for anyone who feels they have been unfairly adjudged by the Council. Please see the Voucher Code Disciplinary Procedure document on the IAB AMC blog.