

Brand: cult-Beauty

Sector: FMCG & Retail

Primary Objective: Sales

Formats used: Affiliate

Background and Overview:

Cult Beauty was born when two skin care obsessives grew frustrated by the all-too-often condescending messaging (and underwhelming offerings) they came across throughout the beauty industry. In 2018 they decided to move their affiliate programme to Rakuten Advertising. Since then, Cult Beauty has grown exponentially year-on-year. In 2019, Cult Beauty developed three key objectives for their affiliate activity:

- Focus on maintaining consistent year-on-year growth
- Find new revenue streams
- Acquire new customers and new partnership verticals


Through this collaborative approach with the network, Cult Beauty has achieved +58% YoY growth and partnered with a new era of affiliates, such as Reward Insight.

What was the role of digital within the media mix?

Cult Beauty and Rakuten Advertising implemented several new processes and digital strategies to help achieve the above objectives, whilst building on what contributed to the growth of the previous year:

Cashback & loyalty: The teams put in place an 'always-on' strategy with Cult Beauty's cashback and loyalty partners. This allowed Cult Beauty to remain competitive outside of promotional periods and the new customer objective was incorporated through the offer of a higher commission for first-time buyers.





Voucher partners: Using its attribution platform, Rakuten Advertising was able to prove the lifetime value of customers driven by the voucher vertical. With the growth of white-label voucher solutions, Cult Beauty could bridge the gap between content and voucher through partnering with well-known publications, such as the Daily Mail, The Independent and the Evening Standard. Constant review of the performance and strategy of these partners showed that they were not only bringing in incremental sales, but also reaching new audiences.

Attributed data: Rakuten Advertising used data from its attribution platform to guide the Cult Beauty affiliate strategy. A key example of this is looking at the value of typically upper-funnel publisher verticals, which often drive a high volume of traffic but lower conversions.

Diversifying & expanding the publisher base: When considering how to target new customers, the Rakuten Advertising team knew that expanding the publisher base would help to find new audiences. A new partnership was initiated with a card-linked offers provider, to target the customers of top banks through its apps. Through the partnership, Cult Beauty was able to target potential customers who had never shopped with them before via a closed platform. Together with Rakuten Advertising, the publisher generated a 57% new customer rate and moved into the top 15 partners on the programme.

What results did you attain? What was the biggest achievement?


The Cult Beauty affiliate programme saw great results during the judging period:

Revenue grew +58% YoY: This was accomplished through cashback partners achieving +91% growth YoY, Core8 growing +175% YoY through closer collaboration, and voucher sites growing +54% YoY

Diversification of publisher base: 53 new publishers became order-active in 2019, including a new and innovative partnership with Reward Insight and white label voucher partners that increased the order-active publisher base by 43%

New customer orders: 55% increase in new customer orders (beating the target by 50%). This was achieved through new partnerships such as with Reward Insight, who drove 57% new customers and other partners, such as VoucherCodes.co.uk who drove 64% of new customers





Leveraging data from Rakuten Advertising's attribution platform allowed Cult Beauty to ensure that all partnerships, including those not delivering on a purely last click model, were being recognised for their real value (e.g. reward style for upper-funnel contribution and lifetime value). This was vital in making sure that every partner on the programme was both contributing value across the full customer journey and affiliate programme, from influencers and content sites to voucher partners.

In a sentence...

Cult Beauty experiences +58% YoY growth since migrating to Rakuten Advertising.

