From in-house to powerhouse:
Semrush's affiliate program transformation

impact.com

SEMRUSH

Situation

Overcoming legacy system limitations

Semrush, a leader in digital marketing solutions, enables marketing professionals to build, manage, and measure campaigns across all channels to improve their online visibility.

The brand was at its crossroads with its proprietary affiliate management platform. Initially developed in 2009, the in-house platform was state-of-the-art, featuring a first-click attribution model paired with a 10-year cookie life. This system was initially beneficial for incentivizing early-stage growth by rewarding partners who discovered and promoted Semrush's tools.

However, as their affiliate program evolved and the brand expanded, the limitations of this setup became increasingly apparent.

Platform stagnation and limitations

The **outdated attribution model began to skew results**, emphasizing initial touchpoints at the expense of recognizing new partners' contributions to conversions. This imbalance hindered the onboarding of fresh affiliates struggling with the long cookie life and stifled growth opportunities.

The **user interface and user experience fell short of modern expectations**. The internal platform's design lacked visual appeal and intuitive navigation. The absence of visual reporting tools meant partners were greeted with data tables that offered little actionable insight, further complicating their ability to optimize strategies.
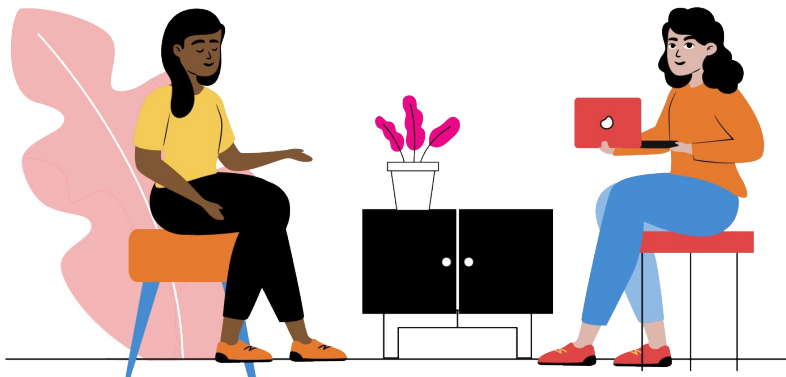
Situation

Overcoming legacy system limitations

A need for a modern solution

The company required a robust tracking platform, flexible attribution models, and a user-friendly interface. The goal was to enhance transparency and effectiveness for new and long-term partners, ensuring a competitive edge for Semrush.

About

Semrush

[Semrush](#) is a leading digital marketing platform that empowers over 10 million users with tools to boost online visibility. It offers over 55 tools for managing all marketing tasks from a single platform, including SEO, content marketing, PPC, and social media marketing.

Learn more about [Semrush's affiliate program](#), perks include:

- Commissions: $200 per sale and $10 for free trial activation

- Loyalty program benefits as you reach new levels

- Personal support from the Semrush affiliate team

- Regular monetary and content incentives

- Large promo assets library, and educational materials

Situation ❯ Solution ❯ Outcome

Solution

Architecting a seamless transition to modern affiliate management

The impact.com team executes a smooth migration plan

Semrush's transition to impact.com was a meticulously planned and executed process involving a few key teams and services.

A **dedicated impact.com technical manager** enabled seamless API integration, ensuring technical requirements were met without disrupting operations and laying a strong foundation for a successful migration.

The **customer success team** provided timely solutions to any issues, strengthening trust and confidence within Semrush's team and partners.

Multiple contract terms simplified the onboarding process for both new and existing partners. The feature streamlined the approval process by differentiating partners migrating from the previous program and new partners.

Comprehensive training and onboarding, supported by a user-friendly help center, equipped Semrush's team and partners to maximize the platform's capabilities.

This enabled effective use of impact.com's enhanced features and resources.

Solution *(con't)*

Architecting a seamless transition to modern affiliate management

Platform tools and features refine attribution and enhance user experience

The transition from a rigid first-click model with a 10-year cookie life to a more dynamic last-click attribution system was pivotal. This shift allowed for a more accurate representation of partner contributions, effectively enhancing transparency and performance measurement.

With a 120-day cookie life, the updated model aligned better with modern privacy standards and provided a clearer picture of affiliate marketing efforts, ultimately boosting partner satisfaction and program effectiveness.

The impact.com platform transformed Semrush's user experience with an intuitive interface, replacing outdated navigation. A key feature is the comprehensive dashboard, offering clear insights into program performance.

The impact.com platform is a massive partnership hub, and migrating there was a game-changer for us. Thanks to impact.com's innovative platform environment, our affiliate program grows faster than before.

Olga Leonteva
Senior Operations Manager
Semrush Affiliate Program

Situation > **Solution** > Outcome

![impact.com logo]

Solution *(con't)*

Architecting a seamless transition to modern affiliate management

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The system provides a detailed business profile for each partner, supporting data-driven decisions with information like promotional channels and geographic focus. Approved partners' profiles are continually updated with performance data, ensuring Semrush has current insights for effective collaboration and program success.

Features such as customizable dashboards and real-time data access improved processes, enhancing user interaction and productivity. This transformation met current expectations and laid the groundwork for long-term partner engagement and satisfaction.

Solution *(con't)*

Architecting a seamless transition to modern affiliate management

Additional improvements to program management drive efficiency

The brand witnessed remarkable advancements in its affiliate program's efficiency and performance — like the following:

- **Customizable payout terms** lead to more precise management of affiliate relationships and a significant uplift in program optimization.

- **Enhanced product and commission** launches by leveraging sustainable API integration with impact.com and customizable payout terms, enabling affiliates to quickly expand their reach and earnings.

- **Integrated email systems**, such as Newsletters, streamlined marketing communications, further improving outreach efficiency.

Situation   ❯   **Solution**   ❯   Outcome

Solution *(con't)*

Architecting a seamless transition to modern affiliate management

Semrush, leveraging impact.com's [Dynamic Payouts](#), has crafted a comprehensive reward system that supports partners throughout their affiliate journey:

- High commissions for every Semrush trial activation: $10

- Generous commissions for every new sale: $200

- Regular monetary incentives, quarterly performance bonuses, and bonuses for new promo content

This robust system nurtures partnerships by recognizing and rewarding partners' efforts and contributions. It helps them exceed previous performance metrics and fosters a collaborative and thriving affiliate network.

Outcome

Setting the stage for scalable growth and innovation

Before migrating to impact.com, Semrush began by running parallel programs. The evaluation compared the in-house *1st click attribution and a 10-year cookie life* against impact.com's *last-click attribution and a 120-day cookie life*.

In just six months, the transition to impact.com resulted in a **400% increase in new partner sign-ups** compared to their in-house program in 2021. Despite the surge in interest, Semrush ensures a selective, high-quality partnership program.

In an impressive feat, the impact.com team assisted Semrush in **migrating over 1,000 partners** following the evaluation's success, including some long-standing affiliates as far back as 2012.

The enhancements to program management underscore the strategic value of choosing the right solution — such as impact.com — to set a new standard for future growth and innovation.

Situation > Solution > **Outcome**

Want results like Semrush? | Contact grow@impact.com