

From luggage
retailer to fashion
brand: How
Strand's Are Media
partnership drove
**160% revenue
growth**



Situation

A heritage brand ready for reinvention

For decades, Strandbags was synonymous with luggage across Australia and New Zealand. But when the company rebranded to simply “Strand,” the ambition was clear: transform from a travel accessories retailer into a credible travel and fashion destination.

The challenge wasn’t the products — Strand’s portfolio already included fashion-forward handbag brands like Evity, Laura Jones, and AYA. The challenge was perception.

The credibility gap

As an established heritage brand, Strand had built strong recognition in the luggage and travel category. But that very success created a ceiling. Fashion-conscious consumers didn’t think of Strand when shopping for handbags.

The rebrand signaled a new direction, but changing customer perception required more than a new name.



Situation (cont.)

A heritage brand ready for reinvention

“Prior to the rebrand, our fashion offering wasn’t as clearly defined or elevated, which limited our ability to compete in the fashion space,” the Strand team explained. “Building credibility with new customers required external support.”

A bottom-funnel problem

Strand’s existing affiliate program reflected its legacy positioning. The partner mix leaned heavily on cashback publishers driving bottom-funnel conversions — effective for short-term revenue but unsustainable for building the brand recognition Strand needed.

Previous content partnerships had been limited and sporadic, primarily activated during key calendar moments.

Worse, the content that did exist skewed towards travel, reinforcing the very perception they were trying to evolve.

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About

Strand

Strand serves customers across Australia and New Zealand with an extensive range of designer and own-brand handbags, luggage, business bags, backpacks, and accessories. Following its rebranding from Strandbags, the company has expanded its fashion portfolio with brands like Evely.

Are Media

Are Media is Australia's leading content company for women, reaching 9 in 10 Australian women through magazines, digital, social, and events. The publisher's portfolio includes iconic titles like marie claire Australia, ELLE Australia, Gourmet Traveller, and WHO.





Solution

Finding the right partner through [impact.com](https://www.impact.com)

The turning point came through [impact.com](https://www.impact.com)'s quarterly tenancy packages — preferential pricing opportunities that connect advertisers with premium content publishers at attractive rates. When [impact.com](https://www.impact.com)'s team identified the alignment between Strand's repositioning goals and Are Media's fashion-focused audience, they facilitated an introduction. The new offering allowed Strand to test the partnership's potential before committing to a larger investment.

“[impact.com](https://www.impact.com) opened up a door to a refreshed partnership with Strand, which has led to commercial success,” Are Media noted. The introduction reignited a relationship that had gone dormant amid team changes at both organizations, bringing fresh strategy and new possibilities.

Why Are Media was the right fit

The brand alignment was immediate and authentic.

Situation > **Solution** > Outcome



Solution (cont.)

Finding the right partner through impact.com

Are Media's publications reach precisely the consumers Strand needed: high-value women who prioritize fashion, premium shopping, and travel experiences.

Each publication brought distinct value to the campaign:

- **marie claire Australia:** Luxury and fashion-focused readers with an average household income of \$132k, spending \$253 million monthly on fashion and accessories
- **ELLE Australia:** A younger demographic of early fashion adopters where 76% describe themselves as "born to shop"
- **Gourmet Traveller:** Affluent travelers and early adopters of premium products
- **WHO:** Trend-conscious readers who stay current with style and culture

"We struggled to find a publisher audience that aligned with our key customer demographics and had genuine interest in fashion," Strand explained. "Are Media helped solve this by providing a strong, fashion-engaged audience that matched our target customer."



Solution (cont.)

Finding the right partner through impact.com

A five-month content partnership

Rather than one-off placements, Strand and Are Media built a sustained campaign running from April through September 2025. The partnership included shopping guide inclusions across all four publications, a targeted email campaign promoting Strand's sale, and — most distinctively — a dedicated product review.

Are Media's Shopping Editor, Phoebe Youl, conducted a genuine wear-test of the Evity Clara bag, documenting her weekend travels to Melbourne as a carry-on-only traveler. The resulting content featured polaroid-style photography and an authentic narrative about the bag becoming a wardrobe staple. This editorial approach aligned perfectly with marie claire's luxury, fashion-focused readers while positioning Evity as a credible fashion choice rather than a promoted product.

Collaboration built on authenticity

Are Media's process provided content that felt native to each publication's voice. After aligning on goals, budget, and brand priorities, the publisher's editorial team developed angles independently — drawing on social media trends and audience insights rather than following a brand script. “We also ensure that the content is aligned to the publications' tone of voice to ensure that the content is authentic to Are Media's audience,” Strand noted.

This collaborative approach meant readers encountered Strand products through trusted editorial recommendations, not transparent advertising.

Outcome

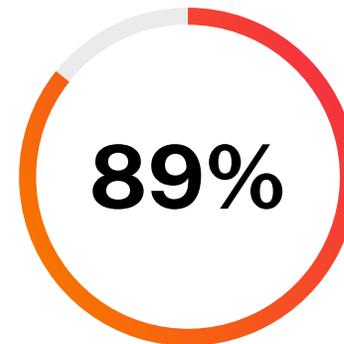
Results that exceeded expectations

What began as a brand awareness play delivered unexpected commercial impact. Period-over-period, the campaign generated:

- **+193% increase in clicks** — dramatically expanding Strand's visibility among fashion-conscious consumers
- **+89% increase in average order value** — suggesting customers were purchasing higher-value fashion items, not just discounted luggage
- **+160% revenue growth** — proving that upper-funnel content can drive bottom-line results



increase in clicks



increase in average order value



revenue growth

“The most unexpected benefit of the Are Media partnership has been the conversions,” Strand acknowledged.

Outcome (cont.)

Results that exceeded expectations

“With most content publication partnerships, our primary goals are usually traffic and new customer acquisition. It’s been a pleasant surprise to see these campaigns not only drive strong top-of-funnel traffic, but also deliver meaningful conversions.”

Fashion credibility achieved

Beyond metrics, the partnership accomplished what Strand set out to do: establish credibility in fashion. The Evity brand gained visibility through premium editorial placements that no amount of bottom-funnel affiliate activity could replicate.

“Are Media has been a crucial partner in repositioning Strand from Strandbags, supporting the brand's growth in fashion and elevating the credibility of Evity as the fashion category expands,” said Shaira from Strand's team. “It's been wonderful working with the Are Media team and we look forward to a long partnership.”



Outcome (cont.)

Results that exceeded expectations

A transformed affiliate strategy

The success reshaped how Strand approaches partnerships entirely. Following the Are Media results, the team expanded their content publisher network and revised their affiliate strategy to maintain greater content focus throughout the year — moving beyond the cashback-heavy, calendar-moment approach that had previously defined their program.

impact.com's platform simplified this expansion by consolidating flat-fee payments into a single system and providing accurate tracking of clicks, revenue, and spend through Shopify integration.

“impact.com has been key to growing our content publisher network, particularly through the use of exclusive content partnership discounts,” Strand noted.

“Additionally, our account manager, Dan, has been instrumental in driving growth by introducing us to a range of valuable publishers.”

The partnership continues

Both parties look forward to building on this foundation. Are Media continues exploring new partnership opportunities through [impact.com](https://www.impact.com)'s referrals and recommendations, while Strand plans sustained investment in content partnerships that build the fashion credibility their rebrand demands.

The transformation proves a simple truth: when brand alignment is authentic and partnership structure enables testing before scaling, content partnerships can deliver both perception shift and measurable returns.