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SAMPLE: Affiliate Marketing Networks

Buyer's Guide 2008

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-networks-buyers-guide-2008>

SAMPLE: Affiliate Marketing Networks



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1. Introduction

Econsultancy's buyer's guides are the ideal starting place for anybody researching new suppliers in interactive market sectors. They contain **in-depth vendor profiles**; to help you quickly evaluate suppliers and service providers, as well as **market analysis** to help you put things into perspective. Vendors are selected for the report based on a combination of factors, *not limited to but including*:

- **Analysis of capabilities** (services / products)
- **Clients**
- **Experience** (qualifications / trade bodies / case studies / client lists)
- **Expertise** (by sector / topic),
- **UK status** (a UK office is preferred, occasional exceptions are made)
- **Ability to take on and fulfil new projects**
- **Recommendations from trusted sources** (or anecdotal evidence to the contrary)
- **Google visibility**
- **Business model** (a high % of turnover should be related to these services)
- **Company website**

Econsultancy does not explicitly recommend any of the suppliers featured in these guides, principally because it is impossible for us to work with all of them to form a first-hand opinion. But we do believe - based on an intensive and careful selection process - that the chosen vendors represent quality.

Buyer's Guides are updated on an annual basis, so the information contained within is recent and thus valid.

Send any questions or comments to linus@econsultancy.com.

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1.1 About Econsultancy

Econsultancy is the leading source of independent advice and insight on digital marketing and ecommerce.

Our reports, events, online resources and training programmes help a community of over 75,000 registered marketers make better decisions, build business cases, find the best suppliers, look smart in meetings and accelerate their careers.

Econsultancy is an [award-winning online publisher of reports](#) covering best practice, user experience benchmarking, market data and supplier selection aimed at internet professionals that want practical advice on all aspects of ebusiness.

Econsultancy also operates a highly popular [training](#) division, used by some of the world's most prominent brands for staff education, both in-house and via public courses. We provide training across all areas of digital marketing and at all levels from one day courses to diplomas to Masters in Digital Marketing.

In addition, we host more than 100 events a year, such as The Online Marketing Masterclass, regular Supplier Showcases and Roundtables, an annual Future of Digital Marketing event, Digital Cream and a range of social events.

The [Econsultancy](#) site now attracts 175,000 unique users per month where they access research, read the blog and take part in discussions in the forums. And as a portal to the digital marketing community, Econsultancy members can also link up with other members and digital suppliers through our directories, as well as find a new job or new digital talent using the job listings.

Some of Econsultancy's client-side members include: Google, Yahoo, MSN, MySpace, BBC, BT, Shell, Vodafone, Yell.com, Dell, Oxfam, Virgin Atlantic, TUI, Barclays, Carphone Warehouse, IPC Media, Deloitte and Touche, T-Mobile and Estée Lauder.

[Join Econsultancy](#) today to learn what's happening in digital marketing – and what works.

Call us to find out more on +44 (0)20 7681 4052 or [contact us online](#).

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2. Executive Summary

The focus of this report is Affiliate Marketing, with an analysis of market trends and challenges, as well as detailed profiles of the leading UK Affiliate Marketing Networks.

The UK market for affiliate marketing grew by an estimated 45% last year, taking the total value of online sales generated by this channel in 2007 to more than £3 billion.

We estimate that commissions and fees paid out to affiliate networks (covering payments for both networks and affiliates) amounted to £186 million in 2007, up 40% from £133 million in 2006 (and compared to £83 million in 2005).

Trends covered in this guide include:

- Blue chips and SMEs continue to invest as sector matures.
- Cashback sites gain ground while paid search affiliates decline.
- More merchants, networks and affiliates grasp the importance of communication.
- Agencies play increasingly important role in affiliate marketing.

Other related Econsultancy reports

Affiliate Marketing Survey Report

<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-survey-report-2008/>

Affiliate Marketing Briefing

<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-briefing-october-2008>

UK Affiliate Census Report

<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-census/>

Affiliate Marketing Request for Proposal Template File

<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-rfp-request-for-proposal/>

Affiliate Marketing Business Case Template File

<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-business-case>

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3. The Market

3.1 Focus of Report and Market Definition

The focus of this report is Affiliate Marketing, with an **analysis of market trends and challenges**, as well as **detailed profiles of the leading UK affiliate marketing networks**. This is an updated version of our 2006 Buyer's Guide¹ with a fresh analysis of a fast-changing marketplace.

The guide is intended to be of interest to **online retailers** and other types of **merchants** across a range of sectors who are considering affiliate marketing for the first time or reviewing their current approach. It should also be of interest to **agencies**, the **affiliate networks** themselves and also the individual **affiliates**.

The affiliate marketing networks, sometimes referred to as affiliate solution providers (ASPs), provide their advertiser clients (known as "merchants") with technology and services while acting as a gateway to large numbers of individual affiliates (the publishers).

The networks help to facilitate the mutually beneficial relationship between merchants and publishers whereby affiliates typically receive a fee for each sale or customer acquisition (or lead) which is made as a direct result of traffic referred from advertisements (and most importantly, the links) on their websites.

Jessica Luthi, of **Affiliate Program Advice**, describes the process as follows:

"In layman's terms, affiliate marketing is about the relationship between you (the merchant/advertiser), the affiliate tracking software provider (the network) and the affiliates (publishers). It is ultimately a loyalty program between you and the affiliate with the network operating as a facilitator and intermediate."

She adds: "Your affiliates will become your virtual sales force driving new traffic, new customer acquisitions and ultimately sales through a variety of tracked linking methods. You pay your affiliates only when a sale or lead has been generated. In essence you are only ever paying for results."

The affiliates themselves attract traffic in a number of ways, typically through **paid search**, **search engine optimisation** (organic search) or **email marketing**. It can be seen in the market trends section of this report below that the balance is changing in terms of the channels relied on by affiliates to get their traffic.

Origin of affiliate marketing

According to internet legend, Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, is said to have come up with the concept of affiliate marketing after chatting with a woman at a party about how she wanted to sell books about divorce on her website. According to this version of history, affiliate marketing was then born after he thought about how the woman could link her site to Amazon.com and receive a commission on book sales. Others believe that the first pioneers of affiliate marketing – before Amazon's program - were adult websites.

¹ <http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-networks-buyers-guide/>

3.1.1 Affiliate Marketing Networks – the benefit for merchants

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3.2 Market Value and Growth

Market Value

The UK market for affiliate marketing grew by an estimated 45% last year, taking the total value of online sales generated by this channel in 2007 to more than £3 billion.

Econsultancy

Our £3.13 billion total for 2007, compared to £2.16 billion in 2006, bears testimony to the healthy state of a sector which is well set for continued and strong growth in 2008.

The continued optimism surrounding affiliate marketing is based on the buoyant online retail climate as well as research by Econsultancy which points to a bright future for affiliate marketing.

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3.2.3 Size of market compared to other online marketing channels

It is instructive to compare the size of this market to other online channels and sectors. *For comparison, Econsultancy has previously estimated that:*

- The UK market for [Search Engine Marketing](#) was worth an estimated £2.22bn in 2007.
- The UK market for [Email marketing platforms and services](#) would grow by 24% to an estimated value of £221m by the end of 2007.
- Estimated spending on [usability and accessibility](#) by UK firms: £148m in 2006 and £178m in 2007.
- The UK market for [web analytics](#) will grow by 25% in 2007, from £56 million to an estimated value of £70 million.

3.3 Market Trends

3.3.1 Blue Chips and SMEs continue to invest as sector matures

Sectors such as retail, travel, financial services and telecoms continue to be the bedrock of affiliate marketing. When the biggest consumer-facing brands in these industries do not have a well-defined affiliate strategy, it now tends to be an exception rather than the rule.



The table below, taken from the Affiliate Marketing Merchants Report 2007, shows the extent to which this channel is driving sales for surveyed merchants in these key sectors.

Proportion of online sales from affiliate marketing – selected sectors		
Sector	Proportion of online sales	Size of sample
Financial Services	18.28%	25
Retail	13.57%	53
Telecoms /Mobile Phones	18.25%	12
Travel	17.79%	24

Buy.at CEO Kevin Cornils said:

“Companies spending the most in affiliate marketing tend to be blue chip clients with a relatively broad customer appeal, especially businesses that use the channel for customer acquisition such as financial services, mobile and telecoms, as well as retail and travel.”

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Voice of the Industry

“The types of companies typically spending the most on affiliate marketing are blue chips, financial services, travel and consumer electronics.”

Andreas Bernström, TradeDoubler

“My personal opinion is that as the sector is maturing, spending trends have become less erratic. As with any media channel, a ‘glass ceiling’ exists whereby clients will have maximised the volume they can achieve for a desired level of spend. What has changed is that clients have started to scrutinise who is taking a share of each affiliate pound spent and what value is being delivered for it. Therefore, they are able to drive their costs down and drive greater cost efficiencies through the channel.”

Mark Kuhillow, R.O.EYE

“The sector continues to mature and justify its place in the online marketing mix. Growing confidence with smaller business in the mechanism and the return is ensuring a steady growth in the number of merchants and programs. This may be hampered by the lack of expertise in the sector.”

Chris Russell-Smith, dgmAffiliates

“As we are all conscious of, one of the key areas to watch next year will be that of the financial services arena, and in turn, the wider economy should the economy descend into recession. However, I see little point in speculating about this, the main focus for affiliates, networks and agencies alike is to ensure that they have a healthy spread of income driven from a variety of business sectors to insulate against any possible downturn.”

Mark Kuhillow, R.O.EYE



3.3.2 Cashback sites gain ground while paid search affiliates decline

Perhaps the most significant trend in the affiliate marketing sector during 2007 was the strong growth in the cashback and reward sector. Sites such as **Quidco** have prospered by delivering volume for their merchants while also attracting consumers by giving 100% of their commission as cashback to their members in return for an annual administrative fee.

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<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-networks-buyers-guide-2008>

3.3.3 More merchants, networks and affiliates grasp the importance of communication

One of the major issues holding back the affiliate marketing sector has been a lack of communication between the four main types of stakeholder in the affiliate marketing “ecosystem”, i.e. affiliates, merchants, networks and agencies.

3.4 Return on Investment (ROI)

Effective use of affiliate networks can offer businesses a range of advantages ranging from highly tangible revenue increases to softer benefits such as improved brand perceptions.

Readers should also refer to our [Affiliate Marketing Business Case](#).

<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-business-case>

Affiliate marketing networks can help advertisers ...

- Drive revenue
 - Access to affiliates
 - Generate sales/actions
 - Drive acquisitions
 - Generate leads
 - Boost offline sales through couponing campaigns

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<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-networks-buyers-guide-2008>



3.5 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

This section contains a 'SWOT' analysis for the affiliate marketing sector, and also for networks in particular.

3.5.1 Strengths

- **The affiliate marketing channel continues to show strong growth** and this is expected to continue.
 - The UK market for the affiliate marketing channel grew by **45%** in 2007, taking the total value to more than **£3 billion**.
 - **85% of agencies** say that they now manage more affiliate marketing than two years ago, according to Econsultancy's Affiliate Marketing Agencies Report 2007.

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-networks-buyers-guide-2008>

Voice of the Industry ('opportunities')

"I personally believe the biggest opportunities for growth in 2008 lie in social networking, while some of us are already looking beyond 2008 and looking at the potential for mobile interaction and what can really be done with user generated content."

Keith Budden, Affiliate Health Check

"The greatest opportunity now open to affiliates is to integrate itself within the wider media mix. Whilst it has been positioned as a separate route to market that isn't a pure-play media channel, it must now move into the media mix in order to take its place on the digital media schedule. As the lines between the digital media channel blur, affiliate marketing can no longer be planned in isolation to search."

Mark Kuhillow, R.O.EYE

"The industry is largely undifferentiated and ripe for innovation. There is also opportunity for a greater degree of cross-selling and a 360-degrees approach to planning the digital marketing mix. Retail is likely to show the greatest growth as merchants come round to the distribution benefits such as stock control as well as the aggregated profitability."

Chris Russell-Smith, dgmAffiliates



5. Tips and Pitfalls: how to find the right network

5.1 Introduction

In order to identify the most suitable network - or networks - for affiliate marketing it is important to understand that different networks have different selling points, in terms of both their technology and their services.

This chapter, in addition to the detailed company profiles and market positioning charts contained in the next sections, will help you focus on what your company needs and help you to find the right match.

Here are some key questions and considerations which can act as a checklist to help you ask the right questions and avoid any **pitfalls**.

It is also worth consulting our **Affiliate Marketing Request for Proposal (RFP) template**.

<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-rfp-request-for-proposal/>

5.2 Can affiliate marketing help you to meet your sales and marketing objectives?

- Can affiliate marketing help you to reach and exceed your business targets?
- What advantages will affiliate marketing have over other types of online marketing, for example pay-per-click (PPC) or display advertising?

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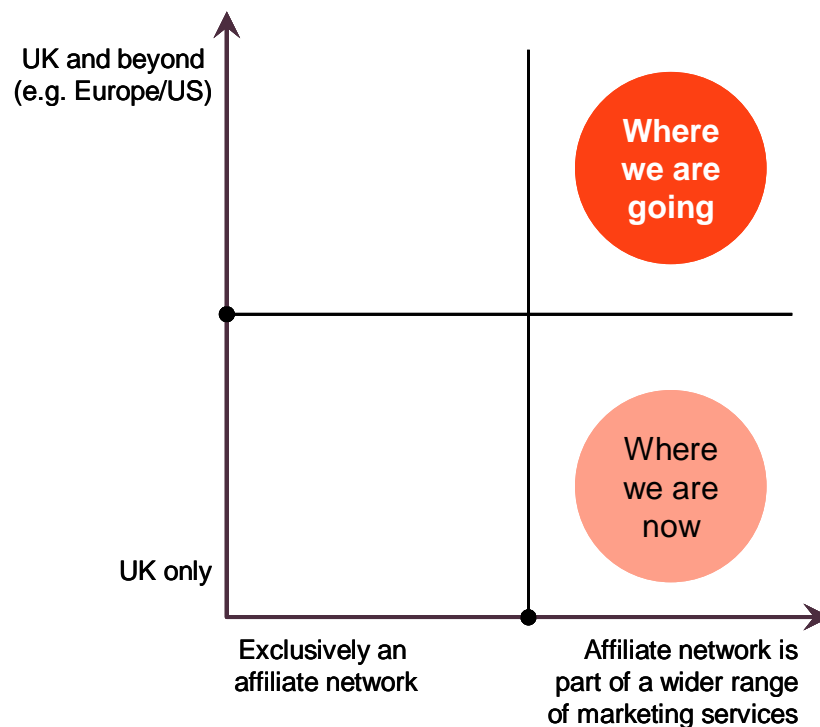
<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-networks-buyers-guide-2008>



6. Market Positioning Charts

6.1 Explanation for Chart 1 – Business Focus & Geography

Chart 1 - Business focus & geography



The vertical axis charts to what degree the network has a focus on the UK versus having a more international outlook (for example in the United States and/or wider Europe) which includes the UK.

The horizontal axis charts whether the profiled company is exclusively an affiliate marketing network or whether the affiliate network is part of a broader suite of marketing services available to the client.

The red circle denotes the company's current position while the blue circle reflects their medium and long-term aspirations. If there is no blue circle, or if the circles are in the same position, the company is happy with its current market positioning and has no plans to change.

A company positioned on the bottom right quadrant has an affiliate network as part of a wider offering and is focused exclusively in the UK market.

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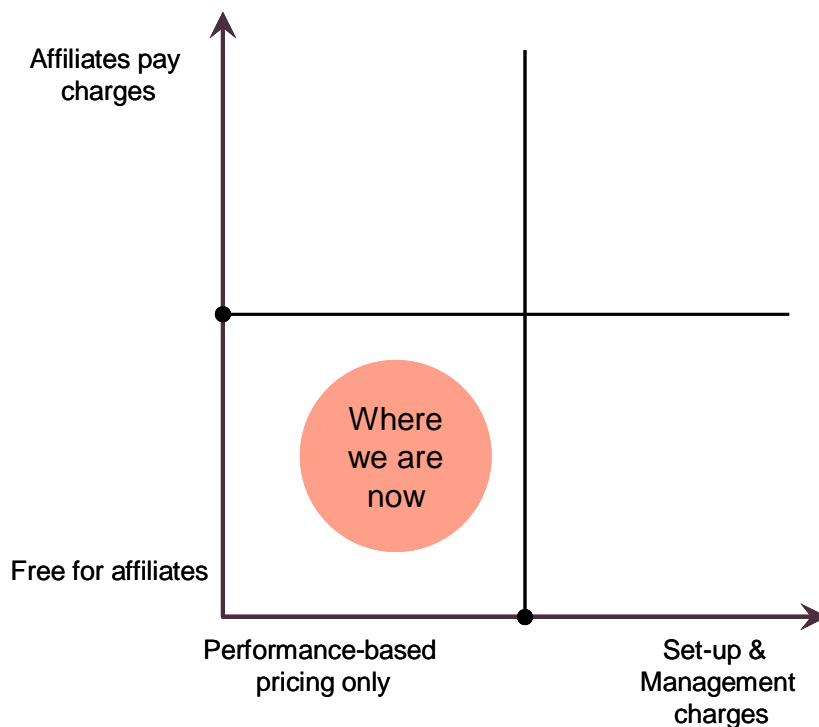


<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-networks-buyers-guide-2008>



6.2 Explanation for Chart 2 – Pricing

Chart 2 - Pricing



This chart shows the pricing model of the profiled network.

The **vertical** axis indicates whether or not affiliates have to pay to belong to a network.

The **horizontal** axis charts the balance between performance-based charges and set-up/management costs.

A network positioned as shown above will not charge affiliates for belonging to its network. The merchant will only be charged based on performance (in the form of over-ride fees).

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7. Supplier Matrix

An at-a-glance overview of who's doing what ...

Vendor Matrix: a fast guide to services	Advertising.com	AffiliateFuture	Affiliate Marketing	Affiliate Window	Affilinet UK	Brand Conversions	Buy.at	Clash Media	clixGalore	Commission Junction	dgmAffiliates	Online Media Group	Paid On Results	Stream:20	TradeDoublor	WebGains	Zanox
Services Offered																	
Affiliate Management																	
Affiliate Recruitment																	
Affiliate Support																	
Account Management																	
Consultancy																	
Two-tiered Program																	
Private Affiliate Program																	
Multiple programs under the same account																	
PPC assistance and control																	
Competitor Analysis tools																	
Merchants that offer drop shipping																	
Features & Functionality																	
Role-based user levels																	
Online Accounting																	
Grouping of affiliates into categories																	
Different commission based on affiliate performance or group																	
Different commission based on products/services																	
Visibility on Click Through Ratio (CTR)																	
Multi-currency																	
Multi Lingual																	
Payment Method Supported/ Tracking & Reporting Capabilities																	
CPA																	
Pay Per Lead (PPL)																	
Pay Per Click																	
Pay Per Impression (CPM)																	
Offline Tracking																	
IP-based Tracking																	
Database Tracking (non-cookie)																	
Real-time Tracking																	



Vendor Matrix: a fast guide to services	Advertising.com	AffiliateFuture	Affiliate Marketing	Affiliate Window	Affilinet UK	Brand Conversions	Buy.at	Clash Media	clixGalore	Commission Junction	dgmAffiliates	Online Media Group	Paid On Results	Stream:20	TradeDoubler	WebGains	Zanox
Affiliate performance incentives or bonuses																	
Linking Methods Offered																	
Banners & Buttons																	
Rich Media																	
Deep links to products																	
Product Feeds																	
Dynamic Linking																	
Pop-ups & Under																	
Search Boxes																	
E-mail Marketing																	
Pay-per-Call																	
Co-registration																	
RSS																	
Tickers																	

Sample only, please download the full report from:



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8. Supplier Marketplace and Profiles

8.1 Advertising.com - Company & Service details

Company Details	
Company Name	Advertising.com
Company Logo	
URL	http://uk.advertising.com/
UK Head Office Address	Shropshire House 11-20 Capper Street London WC1E 6JA

Other locations

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<http://www.e-consultancy.com/publications/affiliate-marketing-networks-buyers-guide-2008>

Relevant Contact Names (e.g. For publishers and merchants/advertisers)
Contact Telephone
Contact email
Company Proposition
Brief Company History (including number of years operating in the UK)
Number of UK full-time Employees (with breakdown for key functions)
Revenue for 2006 or last accounting period (including dates)
2006 year-on-year growth (compared to 2005)
Projected revenue for 2007
Projected year-on-year growth for 2007

USP

What sets you apart from competitors?

Clients (current)

Merchant list (or selection)



Details of sector specialisation

Do you run adult programs (i.e. sex or gambling)?

Services offered

Affiliate Management

Affiliate Recruitment

Affiliate Support

Account Management

Consultancy

Two-tiered program

Private affiliate program

Multiple programs under the same account

PPC assistance and control

Competitor Analysis tools

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Merchants that offer drop shipping

Features & Functionality

Role-based user levels (i.e. different access levels for different people in merchant organisation)

Online Accounting

Grouping of affiliates into categories

Different commission based on affiliate performance or group

Different commission based on products/services

Visibility on Click Through Ratio (CTR)

Multi Currency

Multi Lingual

Payment model supported/Tracking & Reporting capabilities

CPA

Pay Per Lead (PPL)

Pay per Click

Pay per Impression (CPM)

Offline tracking

IP-based tracking



Database tracking (non cookie)

Real-time tracking

Affiliate performance incentives or bonuses

Linking Methods offered

Banners & Buttons

Rich Media

Deep links to products

Product Feeds

Dynamic Linking

Pop Ups & Under

Search Boxes

Email Marketing

Pay-per-Call

Co-registration

RSS

Tickers

Where are banners hosted?

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Costs and pricing for merchants

Initial set-up/technical integration costs

What services are included with this?

Do you charge a monthly management fee? If so, how much is this?

Do you charge for ongoing technical support?

How much over-ride / commission do you take?

When do merchants get invoiced?

Please provide any other relevant cost and pricing details

Policy information

What is your policy with regard to communication between merchant and affiliates?



What is your policy with regard to affiliates bidding on brand names?

What anti-fraud protection measures do you have in place?

What policies and initiatives do you have in place to combat spyware/malware/adware?

How do you vet affiliates before they can join the network?

What control do merchants have over their affiliates?

What visibility do you give merchants on performance of affiliates?

What information does a merchant have to pass back to your software with regards to tracking a sale or lead?

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