

Internship Report Article

The Company's Perspective on Affiliate Marketing Programs in Increasing Brand Awareness and Conversion at PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how affiliate marketing strategies can enhance brand awareness and conversion rates at PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia. Despite its reliance on affiliate marketing, the company faces challenges such as weak management structures, limited performance tracking, and inconsistent affiliate results. Using qualitative methods such as interviews with five staff members and field observations. The research evaluates how structured management tools like performance tracking systems and statements of work (SOW) can improve accountability. It also analyzes the role of storytelling-based content in boosting consumer trust and engagement. Findings show that applying structured guidelines, optimizing affiliate selection and incentives, and using emotional storytelling significantly strengthen brand awareness and conversions. The study offers practical insights for marketers seeking to improve affiliate program effectiveness.

Keywords: affiliate marketing, brand awareness, conversion

INTRODUCTION

Affiliate marketing has become an essential tool for companies aiming to enhance their digital reach and sales conversion through third-party collaborations. It is a subcategory of performance-based marketing that uses an affiliate program to promote a merchant's goods in exchange for a commission on sales or lead conversions (Haikal *et al.*, 2020). Research also suggests that every business wants a competitive edge in the marketplace, and one of the keys to success is a well-thought-out, structured marketing strategy (Haikal *et al.*, 2020). E-commerce platforms that use affiliate marketing see increases in market share and sales or conversion (Mardiani *et al.*, 2024).

PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia is a subsidiary of PT. Otak Kanan strategically located in Candi, Sidoarjo, and operates as a vital extension of its parent company's mission to lead in digital marketing, especially for body care products. PT. Otak Kanan is strategically located in Surabaya and was established in 2009. It is a multifaceted enterprise specializing in website



and application development, design and multimedia, digital marketing services, education, and other innovative digital solutions (Companies House, no date; PT OTAK KANAN Group, 2009).

The success of affiliate marketing at PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia has been partly attributed to its partnerships with influencers and digital campaigns. However, inefficiencies in performance tracking and management frameworks have posed serious limitations to the program's impact. Mangiò and Domenico (2022) highlight that multiple monitoring systems should be used in parallel and continuously to protect brands more effectively, even when affiliate marketing programs are successful or exposed to varying and problematic degrees of falsehood, ultimately endangering customers and brands. Additionally, as Fahim (2024) suggested that advanced tracking tools are required to identify the most successful affiliate methods and make real-time modifications to increase their effectiveness. The absence of tools like structured statements of work (SOW) and real-time tracking systems restricts accountability and decision-making.

Another challenge is the need for engaging storytelling-based content, a powerful tool for persuasion and establishing a connection with the customer based on similar values through storytelling or narrative as a communication tactic (Woldarsky, 2019). Despite its recognized importance, many affiliate campaigns still rely heavily on transactional promotions or hard selling. Affiliate marketing has become a very popular digital marketing strategy in recent years (Almestarihi *et al.*, 2024). However, few have examined the managerial gaps companies face in implementing these strategies effectively from an internal operational perspective. PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia offers a case study to explore this void.

This paper, thus, aims to examine the company's affiliate marketing program with a specific focus on structured performance tracking, storytelling-driven content, and strategic optimization. This paper also evaluates how managerial improvements in these areas can drive higher brand awareness and conversion rates for the company. Three research objectives were developed.

- Objective 1. To examine how structured management tools such as performance tracking and the statement of work (SOW) can improve the efficiency of affiliate marketing.
- Objective 2. To explore how storytelling-based content can engage consumers and increase conversions in affiliate marketing
- Objective 3. To identify effective strategies for improving the affiliate marketing program at PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia with the goal of boosting brand awareness and increasing conversion rates.

The second section briefly describes the Structured Management Approaches, followed by a Storytelling-Based Content Strategies. Next, a review on Affiliate Marketing Strategy. The research method is discussed in the third section, followed by a presentation of the results' findings. The discussion and conclusion section is presented at the end of the paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Structured Management Approaches

Structured management in affiliate marketing is essential for ensuring that affiliate partnerships align with business objectives and yield measurable outcomes. It involves implementing performance tracking systems, establishing a clear statement of work (SOW),

and defining measurable performance criteria. Dwivedi *et al.* (2017) emphasize that structured management is crucial in digital marketing since it increases return on investment (ROI), ensures consistency in promotional strategies, and simplifies operational processes. Without it, affiliate programs risk inconsistent content, poor performance measurement, and ineffective resource allocation. Companies can utilize tools to accurately assess affiliate contributions and make data-driven marketing decisions (Edelman and Brandi, 2015). Additionally, implementing a statement of work (SOW) ensures that affiliate responsibilities and deliverables are clearly defined. Gengesarwan *et al.* (2024) emphasize that the best standards consider the views of all stakeholders, which lends credence to the notion that a clear SOW can increase the clarity and accountability of project participants. Furthermore, determining the effectiveness of promotional methods in affiliate marketing requires the establishment of exact performance indicators (Olbrich, Schultz and Bormann, 2019).

The theoretical grounding for structured management in affiliate marketing is robust. the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Model, integrates perspectives on internal operations, clients, finances, and learning to evaluate business performance holistically (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). Another relevant theory is the Principal-Agent Theory, which explores the relationship between a firm (the principal) and its affiliates (the agents). The theory suggests that to guarantee that affiliates act in the company's best interests, structured management practices such as performance-based incentives, monitoring systems, and contractual agreements are crucial (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). Without systemic oversight, affiliates may prioritize short-term commissions above long-term brand alignment, leading to inconsistent marketing campaigns (Ballestar, Grau-Carles and Sainz, 2019). According to Locke and Latham (1990) highlights how motivation and performance are enhanced by specific, measurable goals, further supporting the necessity of disciplined management. As Kingsnorth (2016) by giving affiliates access to establishing clear performance goals, such as required storytelling content, engagement rate benchmarks, and conversion targets, businesses may promote goal-oriented behavior that leads to more successful marketing outcomes.

For PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia, these frameworks provide a pathway to resolve internal gaps such as weak tracking, unstructured affiliate agreements, and misaligned campaign execution. By integrating these structured management strategies especially through tools like analytics dashboards and automated reporting systems, the company can scale its affiliate program effectively, leading to higher brand awareness and optimized conversions.

Storytelling-Based Content Strategies

Storytelling has emerged as a powerful tool in digital marketing, enabling brands to connect with consumers on an emotional level while communicating their value proposition effectively. According to Lund, Scarles and Cohen (2019), storytelling can forge emotional bonds with customers, motivating them to act and defend a brand's narrative. Unlike traditional advertising, which focuses primarily on product features, storytelling-based content emphasizes relatable experiences, emotions, and brand authenticity, making it more compelling for consumers. how storytelling helps build enduring relationships between brands and their customers (Dessart and Pitardi, 2019). Altamira, Putri and Samudra (2023) stated that digital storytelling strategies foster unique and memorable messages, promoting dialogue and social media interaction. For PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia, incorporating

storytelling into its affiliate marketing strategy can elevate campaign performance by ensuring that affiliate promotions are emotionally resonant and not just transactional.

One of the storytelling theories is the narrative transportation theory, which suggests that when customers are emotionally engrossed in an engaging story, they become more involved with a brand (Laer, Feiereisen and Visconti, 2019). Higher engagement and stronger brand memory are direct outcomes of this immersion. Kang, Hong and Hubbard (2020), more positive emotional reactions were evoked by stories, and they also impacted participants' intentions to spread word-of-mouth product information. Another relevant theoretical framework is the Customer Engagement Theory, This highlights that storytelling-based content is a powerful tool for fostering trust between brands and consumers (Dessart and Pitardi, 2019). Lou *et al.* (2019) suggests that brands utilizing storytelling-driven campaigns, especially those incorporating user-generated content and influencer partnerships, experience higher levels of engagement and loyalty. Wang (2024), companies doing well in terms of organic reach and customer retention are those who use narrative to foster a feeling of community and authenticity.

To apply these theoretical insights, PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia should implement structured storytelling guidelines in its affiliate program. This includes requiring affiliates to craft content based on real user experiences, share personal stories, or highlight brand values through video testimonials or behind-the-scenes content. Such approaches not only increase engagement but also strengthen emotional ties with the audience. In a competitive digital marketplace, emotionally driven, story-rich content will enable PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia to optimize brand awareness and improve conversion outcomes more effectively.

Affiliate Marketing Strategy

Affiliate marketing has emerged as a fundamental component of modern digital marketing strategies aimed at expanding market reach, increasing brand awareness, and driving conversions. The success of an affiliate marketing program largely depends on several factors to increase online sales, including selecting the right affiliate partners, offering attractive incentives, effective communication strategies, performance tracking and analysis, effective communication, quality and creative content, user experience optimization, market segmentation, update and innovation (Suryana, 2023). According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) commission, cookie durations, and creative ads lessen the possibility of misuse. These terms must be specified in detail in the affiliate agreement. These structured terms not only enhance performance monitoring but also ensure accountability and consistency in brand representation. As suggested by these researchers, a strategically developed affiliate marketing program can lead to measurable improvements in both consumer reach and brand impact. Thus, the integration of structure, analysis, and innovation makes affiliate marketing an indispensable tactic for boosting conversion and engagement.

Partner selection plays a vital role in the performance of affiliate marketing campaigns. Businesses must align affiliate partners with their brand values, target audience, and marketing objectives to enhance credibility and effectiveness. According to Suryana (2023), choosing the correct affiliate is the most important phase of an affiliate marketing strategy. Businesses must conduct in-depth research to comprehend possible affiliates' characteristics and target markets. Furthermore, research by Hill (1987) suggests that The ability of an incentive type to evoke a specific aspect of affiliation motivation varies to some extent. Increased commissions and well-tailored rewards encourage affiliates to perform at

higher levels, which contributes to long-term success. Therefore, strategic affiliate recruitment and compelling incentive offerings are essential for achieving sustained marketing success.

Beyond technical structures and partner alignment, storytelling content can greatly amplify affiliate marketing outcomes. This emotional resonance helps affiliates communicate brand values authentically, deepening consumer engagement. Furthermore, effective communication enables businesses and affiliates to collaborate more effectively, accomplish shared objectives, and boost online sales using affiliate marketing tactics (Suryana, 2023). Segmented, targeted content coupled with collaborative communication maximizes the reach and impact of affiliate campaigns, allowing brands like PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia to achieve stronger customer relationships and improved conversion metrics.

Conceptual Framework

This research analyzes PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia, from a marketing perspective, focuses on enhancing brand awareness and conversion rates through a strategic affiliate marketing program. The company's perspective on affiliate marketing begins with structured management approaches, such as defining clear performance metrics, establishing affiliate guidelines, and fostering effective communication between the company and its partners. These management practices ensure that affiliate partnerships are aligned with the company's overarching business goals, thereby providing a solid foundation for successful marketing campaigns. Additionally, Storytelling-based content strategy as one central component of content-based marketing strategies plays a crucial role in engaging the target audience, enhancing emotional connections, and amplifying the effectiveness of affiliate marketing efforts. By combining structured management approaches with engaging, narrative-driven content, PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia can significantly boost brand awareness and drive higher conversion rates, leading to long-term business growth and a more loyal customer base. This integrated approach ensures that the affiliate marketing program remains focused, impactful, and results-oriented. The illustration of the conceptual framework is presented in figure 1:

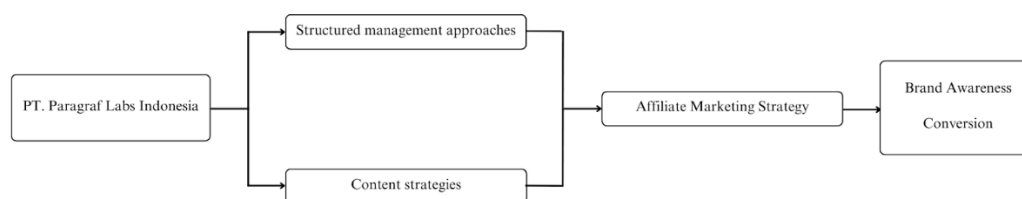


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to explore the role of structured management and storytelling-based content strategies in enhancing the effectiveness of affiliate marketing at PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia. Given the complex and dynamic nature of digital marketing ecosystems particularly within the context of affiliate marketing a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate to capture rich, contextual insights into the company's internal practices, decision-making processes, and strategic challenges. As

Zikmund and Babin (2010), Qualitative research focuses on discovering true core meanings and generating new insights while addressing marketing objectives. It utilizes techniques that allow researchers to provide a comprehensive interpretation of market phenomena without relying on numerical measurements. The data collection process relies on both primary and secondary sources.

Primary data is gathered through in-depth interviews with the five respondent which will be explained in table 1. These sessions are designed to elicit detailed narratives and experiential insights concerning affiliate management structures, performance tracking practices, and storytelling approaches used in content creation. Additionally, observations of digital content campaigns and informal communications within the company provide contextual evidence supporting the study's interpretations. Secondary data is obtained through company records or websites from digital campaign analytics.

To process and interpret the collected data, the study applies descriptive analysis and content analysis techniques. Descriptive analysis is used to systematically describe patterns, themes, and relationships observed in the qualitative data. It provides a structured portrayal of marketing practices and identifies consistencies or inconsistencies in how affiliate marketing strategies are implemented.

According to Nazir (2011), descriptive analysis involves examining the condition of a group, subject, set of circumstances, way of thinking, or phenomenon to provide a systematic portrayal of the topic under investigation. Complementing this, according to Krippendorff (2019) content analysis, on the other hand, is a research method that considers the context of data to draw valid and reproducible conclusions. These combined analytical methods ensure that the study not only captures nuanced internal perspectives but also interprets them systematically to produce actionable findings.

Table 1. Respondents Data

No	Name	Code	Position	Reason
1.	Nita	N1	Digital Marketing Manager	The Leader of the marketing team is responsible for all marketing activities, including affiliate campaigns.
2.	Mitha	M2	E-Commerce and Customer Service Manager	Selected for her expertise in monitoring customer behavior and managing online sales platforms.
3.	Vita	V3	Talent & Live Streamer	Chosen for her involvement in content delivery and real-time engagement with the audience.
4.	Nadhifa	N4	Advertising	Selected as she contributes to campaign design and evaluates ad performance.
5.	Eki	E5	KOL	Chosen for his role as a Key Opinion Leader, directly influencing audience decisions through personal branding and endorsements.

Source: Primary Data (2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Structured Management Approaches

The respondents stated that using structured management tools, such as performance tracking, plays a significant role in improving the effectiveness of affiliate marketing program at PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia. The company tracks affiliate performance through data from the TikTok Seller Center dashboard. Key metrics includes gross merchandise value (GMV), sales volume, number of uploaded content pieces, and affiliate-generated revenue. The respondent mentioned the following.

Respondent N1 Tracking is done through the Tiktok Seller Center dashboard, including sales data, content uploads, GMV, and traffic sources (ads or organic). Regular monthly reviews identify top-performing affiliates.

The interviews revealed that in the early stages, affiliate selection was based solely on GMV and engagement, as noted by one respondent, regardless of content quality or the potential of smaller creators. However, all respondents highlighted that after shifting the selection strategy to prioritize content quality and strategic alignment, there was a marked improvement in brand awareness and conversion performance. The following are their feedbacks.

Respondent N1 Initially, affiliates were selected based on GMV and engagement only. No strategy was applied for smaller accounts, and content quality was not considered. The new approach, focusing on content quality over GMV, positively impacted brand awareness and conversions, primarily through minor affiliates producing quality content.

Respondent M2 Effective affiliate selection has increased conversions and stronger brand visibility through extended live-streaming efforts on e-commerce platforms.

Respondent V3 improvements in the affiliate selection process boosted affiliate performance, primarily through the creation of viral content and live streams that drive traffic to the brand's official page.

Respondent N4 After refining the selection, TikTok affiliate content contributed significantly to brand visibility and sales, especially when using boosted codes.

Respondent E5 The strategic selection of affiliates helped increase awareness for Kisana Hair Removal, proving that affiliate marketing is crucial for newly launched products.

Structured performance tracking is vital in ensuring that affiliate marketing activities are aligned with brand goals. However, implementing these systems is not without challenges. Several respondents identified issues such as inconsistent content quality and affiliates failing to produce content even after receiving product samples. Furthermore, they noted difficulties in generating traffic that leads to conversions, rather than just attracting visitors. Another significant challenge highlighted was the difficulty in identifying cooperative affiliates aligned whose values align with the brand's, particularly under budget

constraints. These challenges add complexity to the overall execution of affiliate campaigns. The respondents mentioned the following.

- Respondent N1 Tracking systems are available through platforms such as TikTok Seller Center. The main challenge lies in the inconsistent content quality and affiliates's failure to create content after receiving samples.
- Respondent M2 Delays in content uploads from affiliates, even after receiving product samples, remain a significant challenge and require follow-up.
- Respondent V3 One of the main challenges involves generating high-traffic engagement, as this not only attracting visitors, but also effectively guiding them toward completing a purchase. The key to addressing this lies in finding effective strategies to drive traffic and convert that interest into sales.
- Respondent N4 The difficulty is managing affiliate expectations regarding budget or sample, and maintaining high content standards. Many creators request samples but do not meet quality criteria or fail to deliver content.
- Respondent E5 Finding aligned and cooperative KOLs and affiliates is difficult. Budget constraints also create challenges, making it difficult to balance campaign expectations with effective execution.

Implementing a statement of work (SOW) in affiliate management has played a vital role in improving alignment between affiliate actions and brand objectives, leading to greater campaign consistency and effectiveness. Most respondents emphasized that SOW helps affiliates understand structured guidance, brand consistency, and clarity of campaign goals. The following are their feedbacks.

- Respondent N1 SOW provides structured guidance for affiliates, ensuring consistency with brand messaging and clarity in campaign objectives. It contributes to maintaining message alignment, enhancing content quality, and increasing brand visibility.
- Respondent M2 SOW offers a clear guidance for affiliates, including product explanations and hashtag usage, thereby enhancing the consistency of their contributions.
- Respondent V3 SOW plays a vital role in the success of an affiliate campaigns, as clear and consistent promotion by affiliates in alignment with the brand message significantly enhances brand and product visibility.
- Respondent N4 While the clarity provided by SOW helps align affiliate activities with brand expectations, paid advertising tends to deliver stronger results in terms of performance outcomes.
- Respondent E5 SOW is crucial for aligning expectations between the brand and KOLs or affiliates. It helps standardize key elements such as message delivery, caption formatting, and hashtag usage, thereby enhancing overall brand awareness.

In evaluating affiliate marketing performance, PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia applies specific KPI benchmarks to track success and brand visibility. The respondents mentioned the following.

Respondent N1 The primary KPI used is the number of content views, with a minimum target of 10,000 views per piece of content. This metric is prioritized to enhance brand awareness, supporting potential conversion growth.

The respondents highlighted that the application of structured management approaches has led to key benefits for the brand notably improved brand awareness and alignment of brand messaging, both identified by most participants. Meanwhile, increased conversions and more explicit affiliate guidance were also acknowledged, though mentioned less frequently. The data further reveals that challenges in implementing structured performance tracking are primarily due to inconsistent content quality, which most respondents noted. In contrast, budget limitations appeared to be a less frequent concern. Additionally, the impact of statements of work (SOW) showed positive outcomes regarding brand message alignment and affiliate guidance, with a moderate indication of enhanced brand consistency. Table 2 summarises the content analysis based on the interviews.

Table 2. Content Analysis of Structured Management Approaches

Question	Description	Respondent					Total
		N1	M2	V3	N4	E5	
The Brand Impact	Improved brand awareness	√	√	√	√	√	5
	Increase in Conversionx	√	√		√		3
Challenges in Implementing Structured Performance Tracking	Inconsistent content quality	√	√	√	√		4
	Budget limitations					√	1
	Improved brand message alignment	√		√	√	√	4
	Clearer affiliate guidance	√	√	√			3
The Impact of SOW	Increased Brand Consistency	√		√			2

Source: Primary Data (2025)

Storytelling-Based Content Strategies

The respondent emphasized that storytelling in affiliate marketing is a subtle yet effective method of capturing attention and driving conversions. The respondent mentioned the following.

Respondent N1 Storytelling is a soft-selling technique by embedding narratives within affiliate content. Typically, a story is introduced initially to capture and sustain viewer engagement, followed by a subtle hard-selling message positioned in the middle or at the end. This structure effectively delivers the brand's message while maintaining audience interest throughout the content.

The respondent acknowledged that emotionally driven and relatable storytelling content significantly boosts consumer engagement. The respondent mentioned the following.

Respondent N1 Storytelling content, which begins with personal experiences or real-life scenarios such as humor, relatable frustrations, or emotional events, tends to capture consumer attention effectively. Typically, this content starts with unboxing, followed by a review highlighting product benefits and usage, making it more engaging and informative for viewers.

Most respondents stated that storytelling is essential in building emotional connections, boosting consumer trust, and leading to higher conversion rates. They highlighted that storytelling enhances message retention and engagement, shapes public perception, increases content credibility, and creates stronger emotional resonance in product marketing. The following are their feedbacks.

Respondent N1 Storytelling helps audiences emotionally connect with the content, increasing engagement and message retention, and positively influencing trust and conversions.

Respondent M2 Storytelling, along with hard-selling and soft-selling techniques enhance both brand awareness and conversion rates as these elements are interconnected and mutually supportive.

Respondent V3 Incorporating storytelling into content and live streams play a significant role in shaping public perception and building trust, which in turn has a direct impact on sales performance.

Respondent N4 It was emphasized that the first three seconds of storytelling are critical for capturing audience attention, and compelling narratives significantly contribute to building trust and driving conversions.

Respondent E5 Audiences tend to trust product reviews presented in a storytelling format than traditional static content, making storytelling a powerful driver of conversions.

The interviewees emphasized that storytelling-based content strategies significantly boost conversion rates and increase brand awareness or trust, with unanimous agreement from all respondents on both aspects. These findings indicate a strong consensus on the dual strategic value of storytelling in enhancing both the effectiveness and credibility of brand messaging. However, although improving engagement was noted, it received comparatively limited support, suggesting it may be regarded as a secondary benefit rather than a primary driver. Table 3 summarizes the content analysis based on the interviews.

Table 3. Content Analysis of Storytelling-Based Content Strategies

Question	Description	Respondent					Total
		N1	M2	V3	N4	E5	
The Impact of Storytelling	Boosts Conversion Rates	√	√	√	√	√	5
	Increases Awareness or Trust	√	√	√	√	√	5
	Improving Engagement	√			√		2

Source: Primary Data (2025)

Affiliate Marketing Strategy

Most respondents stated that improving communication with affiliates and optimizing support systems, such as strategic advertising and affiliate grouping, are key to enhancing brand awareness. They emphasized the importance of centralized affiliate communication, collaboration with KOLs, effective sample distribution, and storytelling-based support for affiliates as key factors in enhancing conversions and performance outcomes. The respondents mentioned the following.

- Respondent N1 Combining affiliate strategy with advertising and KOL collaborations to increase brand exposure and support affiliate performance, especially for low-visibility accounts.
- Respondent M2 It was proposed to form a centralized affiliate group to facilitate efficient updates and ensure consistent communication regarding promotions, campaigns, and commission structures.
- Respondent V3 While the current tracking system and strategy are considered adequate, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of maintaining detailed affiliate performance data via platforms.
- Respondent N4 It is recommended to strategically select affiliates and provide sample support based on the effectiveness of storytelling, with an emphasis on the potential for upfront costs (product sample) to generate greater brand awareness and higher conversion rates.
- Respondent E5 It was advised to increase the sample distribution budget for affiliates, especially given that Kisana is a new product, to support content creation and enhance brand awareness.

Effective affiliate recruitment and incentive strategies are essential to improving conversions and campaign performance. According to the respondents, affiliates are evaluated based on key performance indicators such as GMV, content quality, and sales volume. A tiered incentive model is employed to motivate affiliates to consistently produce high-performing content and drive better conversion outcomes. The respondent mentioned the following.

- Respondent N1 Affiliates are evaluated based on GMV, content quality, and performance. Initial commissions start at 10%, but for high-performing affiliates, the rate may increase up to 25% based on sales results. This tiered incentive model encourages consistent content creation and boosts conversion rates.

The use of digital marketing tools and techniques plays a crucial role in increasing the effectiveness of affiliate marketing initiatives. The respondent mentioned the following.

- Respondent N1 Emphasis was placed on the use of advertising features across digital platforms to identify aspects requiring improvement, either content quality or storytelling delivery. It was noted that viral content grows organically, and leveraging ad tools across multiple platforms can significantly boost brand visibility and affiliate performance.

Most respondents stated that affiliate marketing programs significantly boost brand visibility and conversions, but also present operational challenges. The advantages include increased brand awareness, cost-effectiveness, and expanded reach. However, drawbacks were consistently highlighted, such as inconsistent content quality, affiliate non-compliance with the statement of work (SOW), and reduced brand margins. The following are their feedbacks.

- Respondent N1 The advantages identified include increased brand awareness, improved conversion rates, and greater cost efficiency. However, the disadvantages involve inconsistent content quality and lack of follow-through by affiliates, which may negatively impact the brand's reputation.
- Respondent M2 Reduced marketing costs serve as a benefit. However, issues arise when affiliates fail to produce content after receiving samples and ignore the SOW.
- Respondent V3 The advantage is the cost-effectiveness. The main issue is affiliates who do not comply with content agreements even after receiving product samples.
- Respondent N4 Broader marketing reach serves as a benefit. The drawback is profit-sharing policies on platforms such as TikTok, which reduce brand profit margins despite offering high levels of exposure.
- Respondent E5 increased trust and visibility for new products serve as advantages. The drawbacks include budget constraints and affiliate non-compliance with the SOW or deliverables.

Most respondents stated that affiliate marketing will be increasingly crucial in supporting the company's long-term brand development and sales performance. They agreed that affiliate programs contribute significantly to product virality, cost efficiency, and consumer trust. In addition, the programs were emphasized for its effectiveness in expanding brand visibility and driving conversions. However, some respondents noted the need for optimization when launching new products, due to platform-specific policies. The respondents mentioned the following.

- Respondent N1 Affiliate marketing is essential due to its power to generate product virality and extensive reach at a relatively low cost. It builds brand trust and consumer familiarity effectively.
- Respondent M2 It is considered highly important, as increased brand awareness through affiliates leads to higher conversion rates and helps reduce marketing costs.
- Respondent V3 Strongly supports its continued use, highlighting that affiliates help grow brand visibility and are integral to modern marketing strategies.
- Respondent N4 Recommends ongoing use, especially for established products such as Kisana, while suggesting optimization for new products in light of platform policies and administrative deductions.
- Respondent E5 Affiliate marketing is critical for building consumer trust and increasing visibility, especially for new brands or products in early growth stages.

The interviewees identified that affiliate marketing strategies enhance brand visibility through centralized affiliate groups and sample product campaigns. In contrast, cost efficiency and increased brand awareness were the most acknowledged advantages. However, challenges such as affiliate non-compliance with SOW or deliverables and inconsistent content quality were frequently noted as drawbacks, highlighting areas in need of improvement. Despite these issues, there was strong consensus on the strategic importance of affiliate marketing, with all respondents recognizing its value in enhancing brand visibility, fostering trust, and offering potential for low-cost virality. Moreover, its long-term use was unanimously recommended, affirming its role as a key driver of future brand growth. Table 4 summarizes the content analysis based on the interviews.

Table 4. Content Analysis of Affiliate Marketing Strategy

Question	Description	Respondent					Total
		N1	M2	V3	N4	E5	
Enhance Brand Awareness through Affiliate Marketing	Integrate affiliate campaigns with ads and KOLs	√					1
	Centralized Affiliate group		√	√	√		3
	Increase Product Sample				√	√	2
The Advantages of Affiliate Marketing Programs	Increased brand awareness	√				√	2
	Improved conversion rates	√					1
	cost efficiency	√	√	√			3
	Extended marketing reach				√		1
The Disadvantages of Affiliate Marketing Programs	inconsistent content quality	√	√				2
	Affiliate non-compliance with SOW or deliverables	√	√	√		√	4
	profit-sharing policies				√		1
The Importance of Affiliate Marketing for the Company's Future	Recognized as essential for enhancing brand visibility, fostering trust, and achieving low-cost virality	√	√	√	√	√	5
	Recommended for long-term use	√	√	√	√	√	5

Source: Primary Data (2025)

Observation

Before implementing a structured scope of work (SOW), storytelling content strategies, and an optimized affiliate marketing program, observational data from October 2024 showed significant fluctuations in gross merchandise value (GMV) performance. Based on the Affiliate Center dashboard, GMV during this period averaged IDR171,527; indicating instability and low campaign traction.

Traffic sessions were inconsistent, and there was no standardized narrative in content or consistent messaging, leading to weak brand recall. The affiliate team relied on generic promotions without targeted collaboration with key opinion leaders (KOLs) or measurable content impact. Although there were brief peaks of GMV, such as around October 7th and 16th, these were isolated and lacked sustainability. The observation revealed that the absence of creative and structured storytelling in content creation led to lower user engagement and

weaker conversion rates. An overview of the Affiliate Center dashboard data for the period of 1-31 October 2024 is presented in Figure 2 below:

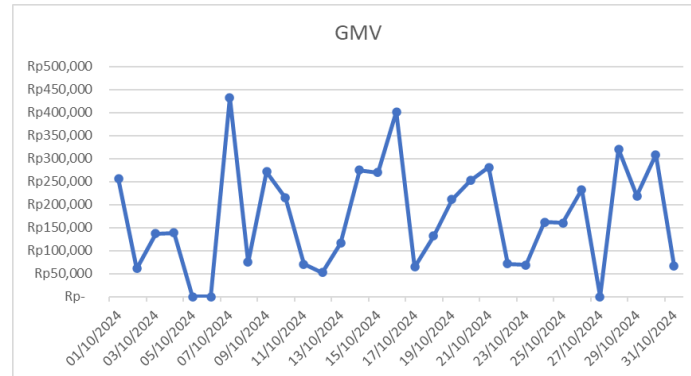


Figure 2. Affiliate Center Dashboard Overview (1-31 Oct 2024)

Source: Tokopedia (2024)

After implementing the SOW, creative storytelling approaches, and a refined affiliate strategy in early November 2024, a more consistent and upward trend in performance began to emerge. Observational data collected throughout November showed an increase in daily GMV, with significant growth spikes, particularly on November 11th and 19th, and an outstanding peak at the end of the month on November 30th, surpassing IDR 900,000. The strategic use of narrative-based content, alignment with audience values, and collaboration with fewer but more engaged creators contributed to stronger emotional resonance with consumers. Although the number of active creators decreased, the content became more tailored, impactful, and conversion-focused. This phase also showed enhanced traffic stability and stronger customer retention metrics, indicating increased brand awareness and a deeper emotional connection with consumers. Figure 3 presents an overview of the Affiliate Center dashboard data for the period of November 1-30, 2024:

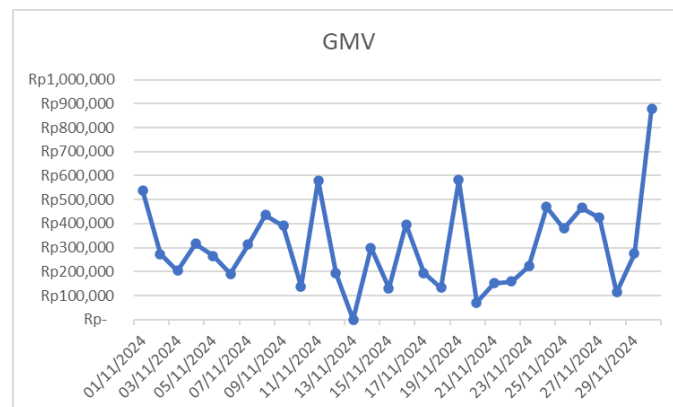


Figure 3. Affiliate Center Dashboard Overview (1-30 Nov 2024)

Source: Affiliate Center for Tokopedia (2024)

In conclusion, the observational data collected from both phases before and after the strategic implementation indicate a positive transformation in performance outcomes at PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia. The pre-implementation period was marked by sporadic engagement and low conversion, whereas the post-implementation data highlighted the

effectiveness of storytelling, structured collaboration, and affiliate integration. Despite a reduction in the number of content creators, the GMV experienced a significant growth. This indicates that quality and strategic content had a more substantial impact than content volume alone.

Discussion

Structured Management Approaches

Regarding the impact of a structured management approach, all respondents emphasized enhanced brand awareness as a key outcome resulting from its implementation. This resonates with Dwivedi *et al.* (2017), who highlight that structured management in digital marketing contributes to increased ROI and improved brand recognition, ensuring consistent promotional strategies. Similarly, most respondents pointed to an increase in conversion, underscoring that structured management is crucial in optimizing conversion metrics. This is supported by observational data, which shows an increase in the conversion ratio after implementing structured management. As mentioned by Edelman and Brandi (2015), businesses can use tools to make data-driven marketing decisions and precisely evaluate affiliate contributions. These findings align with the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) model proposed by Kaplan and Norton (1996), which integrates perspectives on internal operations, clients, finances, and learning to provide comprehensive assessment of corporate performance.

A key challenge most respondents face is inconsistent content quality. As emphasized by Gengesarwan *et al.* (2024), inconsistent content quality can become a barrier to achieving business goals without a well-defined statement of work (SOW) and clear performance indicators. Olbrich, Schultz and Bormann (2019) also stresses the significance of clear benchmarks in measuring the success of campaigns in affiliate marketing. Additionally, the respondents confirmed that budget constraints remain a persistent challenge for smaller enterprises, which often lack resources to invest in structured tracking tools needed to monitor affiliate performance effectively. As noted by Jensen and Meckling (1976) in the Principal-Agent Theory, aligning the interests of affiliates and partners with those of the company frequently necessitates significant investment in infrastructure and performance-based incentives.

Regarding the impact of SOW, most respondents highlighted improved alignment of brand messaging as a significant benefit. Clear and structured management practices were seen as instrumental in ensuring that affiliate content remains consistent with the brand's goals. This aligns with the Goal-Setting Theory (Locke and Latham, 1990), which emphasizes the importance of setting clear goals to enhance motivation and improve performance outcomes. Additionally, several respondents cited clearer affiliate guidelines and increased brand consistency as significant advantages, noting that a well-established SOW fosters accountability and alignment, thereby enhancing the efficiency and focus of marketing efforts. These elements collectively drive more consistent and strategic marketing outcomes for businesses.

Storytelling-Based Content Strategies

A majority of the respondents emphasized that storytelling boosts conversion rates. This claim is supported by observational data, which shows that the implementation of compelling storytelling techniques led to measurable improvements in conversion performance. This

finding is consistent with Lund, Scarles and Cohen (2019), who argue that storytelling enables brands to connect with customers emotionally, thereby motivating them to take action and engage with the brand. The emotional resonance fostered through storytelling increases consumer involvement, leading to higher conversion rates. Moreover Laer, Feiereisen and Visconti (2019), through their Narrative Transportation Theory, suggest that an engaging narrative can capture greater attention, evoke stronger emotional responses, and influence attitudes, ultimately encouraging consumer action. This theoretical insights further support the respondents' views on the positive impact of storytelling on conversion performance.

Similarly, all respondents agreed that storytelling increases awareness or building trust in a brand. The research by Dessart and Pitardi (2019) highlights that storytelling-based content is a powerful tool for fostering trust between brands and consumers. When consumers form an emotional connection with a brand's narrative, they are more likely to develop trust, as storytelling emphasizes the brand's authenticity and relatability. This aligns with Altamira, Putri and Samudra (2023), who observed that storytelling in digital media not only raises brand awareness but also drives engagement through emotional and interactive content. In addition, storytelling strengthens brand loyalty by establishing a more profound connection, which is critical for ensuring long-term success.

Lastly, the respondents noted that storytelling is key to improving engagement. This finding aligns with Wang (2024), who found that brands employing narrative techniques in their marketing efforts achieve higher levels of organic reach and better customer retention. Lee and Hoffman (2015) also emphasize that visual storytelling, especially in video format, generates higher engagement levels compared to static content. By utilizing storytelling techniques such as customer testimonials, influencer collaborations, and brand-origin stories, PT. Paragraf Labs Indonesia can improve audience engagement and enhance the overall effectiveness of affiliate marketing initiatives.

Affiliate Marketing Strategy

some respondents stated that establishing a centralized affiliate group could enhance brand awareness through affiliate marketing. This corroborates the findings of Suryana (2023), who emphasized that selecting appropriate affiliate partners and managing them effectively enhances campaign outcomes, particularly by ensuring alignment with targeted branding objectives. In addition, some respondents highlighted product sample distribution serves as a strategy to boost brand visibility. Therefore, providing tangible incentives such as product samples can enhance affiliate engagement and performance by increasing product familiarity and motivating affiliates to promote more effectively (Hu, Shin and Tang, 2015; Olbrich, Schultz and Bormann, 2019). Meanwhile, the respondent suggested integrating affiliate campaigns with ads and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), which aligns with Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) suggestion that elements such as creative ads, cookie times, and commission structures are essential. These provisions, when clearly defined in affiliate agreements, help minimize the risk of misuse or abuse.

Regarding the advantages of affiliate marketing programs, some respondents viewed cost efficiency as a core benefit, indicating that this model allows companies to manage marketing expenses more effectively while ensuring performance-based returns. This claim corroborates the findings of Suryana (2023), who emphasized that performance tracking and cost-effective communication are central to optimizing affiliate strategies. Most respondents noted that affiliate marketing contributes increased brand awareness, a finding that aligns with Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), who assert that well-executed affiliate programs can

significantly enhance brand visibility, particularly when agreements are clearly defined and effectively implemented. Additionally, one respondent mentioned improved conversion rates which is supported by observational data indicating an increase in the conversion ratio after implementing an effective affiliate marketing strategy. Tailored incentives have been shown to drive higher affiliate productivity and enhance consumer targeting (Hu, Shin and Tang, 2015; Olbrich, Schultz and Bormann, 2019). Another respondent acknowledged extended marketing reach, further reaffirming the importance of segmentation and affiliate alignment in successfully broadening a brand's access to new demographics and markets (Suryana, 2023).

Several respondents stated that one of the main disadvantages of affiliate marketing programs is affiliate non-compliance with the statement of work (SOW) or deliverables. This aligns with Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), who emphasized the importance of clearly defined agreements, such as cookie durations and creative expectations, to prevent misuse and maintain performance standards. Additionally, some respondents reported issues related to inconsistent content quality, which can negatively affect the credibility and consistency of affiliate campaigns. This concern is supported by Suryana (2023), who stated that the quality and creativity of affiliate content are essential elements for effective communication and brand alignment. Meanwhile, one respondent mentioned dissatisfaction with profit-sharing policies, indicating potential imbalances in compensation expectations. This challenge aligns with Hill (1987), who highlighted that the structure of incentives and perceived fairness are key determinants of affiliate motivation and long-term cooperation.

Regarding future strategic direction, all respondents acknowledged that affiliate marketing plays a vital role in enhancing brand visibility, fostering consumer trust, and enabling cost-effective virality. This view is strongly supported by Suryana (2023), who emphasized that affiliate marketing is no longer just a supplementary tool but a core driver of online growth and competitive advantage-particularly when implemented with proper segmentation and partner alignment. Similarly, most respondents recommended affiliate marketing for long-term use, viewing it as a sustainable and scalable component of modern business strategy. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) state that well-structured affiliate programs generate consistent brand benefits and measurable conversion outcomes over time, particularly when agreements are managed professionally and performance is rigorously monitored. These findings underscore a broad consensus regarding the strategic importance of affiliate marketing within evolving digital ecosystems.

LIMITATIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study has several limitations that need to be considered for more careful interpretation of the results. First, although the study provides a strong picture of the effectiveness of a structured management approach and storytelling strategy in digital marketing, the findings are mostly based on in-depth interviews and observational data from internal respondents. This limits the generalizability of the results to other industry contexts or organizations with different structures, scales, and resources. Second, variations in content quality and affiliates' non-compliance with the statement of work (SOW) are recurring challenges in affiliate marketing strategies. However, the study does not delve deeper into the root causes of these challenges, such as low affiliate motivation, unequal incentive systems, or limited control mechanisms available. Third, the findings related to budget constraints in implementing performance tracking tools suggest that the effectiveness of this strategy is highly dependent on the financial capacity and technological infrastructure of the company. Thus, small or

medium-sized organizations with limited resources may find it difficult to implement the suggested approach. Finally, although this study has linked some findings to management theories such as Goal-Setting Theory, Narrative Transportation Theory, and Principal-Agent Theory, these theoretical approaches have not been validated quantitatively, so further research is needed to test the strength of the theoretical relationships more empirically and longitudinally.

In terms of managerial implications, this study provides several important recommendations for decision makers, especially in the fields of digital marketing and affiliate management. The implementation of a structured management approach has been shown to have a significant impact on brand awareness and conversion rates. Therefore, companies are advised to develop clear performance indicators, establish detailed statements of work, and develop a standardized reporting system to ensure campaign consistency and effectiveness. Storytelling-based content strategies have also been shown to increase conversions, build consumer trust, and strengthen brand loyalty. Content managers need to prioritize authentic and emotional narratives through interactive media such as videos, customer testimonials, or brand founder stories. In addition, to overcome the challenges of content quality and affiliate non-compliance, managers need to design a fair and performance-based incentive system, accompanied by a firm but flexible cooperation contract. This approach is in line with the Principal-Agent Theory principle which emphasizes the importance of aligning interests between the company and its affiliate partners. Affiliate marketing also needs to be positioned not as a complement, but as a core component of a long-term growth strategy. Efforts such as integrating affiliate campaigns with digital advertising, collaborating with Key Opinion Leaders (KOL), and providing incentives in the form of products or samples can significantly improve affiliate performance and expand brand reach. Finally, investment in digital infrastructure, particularly data-driven tracking and analytics tools, is critical to support accurate decision-making and drive continuous optimization of campaign results.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of affiliate marketing at PT. Paragraph Labs Indonesia has significantly increased through a structured management approach, specifically a performance accounting system and a clearly defined statement of work (SOW). This framework is designed to promote accountability, improve goal setting, and ensure alignment between affiliate and brand objectives. This aligns with the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) model and supports the need for performance indicators to efficiently manage marketing results. According to Kaplan and Norton (1996), the balanced scorecard (BSC) Model combines viewpoints on internal operations, clients, finances, and learning to measure corporate performance holistically.

Furthermore, storytelling-based content has emerged as a crucial strategy for strengthening consumer engagement and increasing conversions. This kind of content enhances emotional connection and trust, which are critical for influencing consumer behavior in the affiliate ecosystem. This finding is supported by the Narrative Transportation Theory and recent literature that link storytelling to improved awareness, trust, and consumer action through relatable and authentic messaging. According to their Narrative Transportation Theory, an engaging narrative may catch more attention, elicit stronger emotional reactions, and alter attitudes, so promoting customer action (Laer, Feiereisen and Visconti, 2019).

Marketers should integrate centralized affiliate management, strategic collaborations with KOLs, and creative, narrative-driven content creation to optimize their affiliate marketing strategies. The incentives, such as product samples, strategic segmentation, and consistent SOW implementation, enhance campaign outcomes and brand visibility. The long-term potential of affiliate marketing lies in its cost-efficiency, scalability, and ability to build trust. According to Suryana (2023), performance tracking and cost-effective communication are central to optimizing affiliate strategies. Therefore, a refined strategy that combines structured management, compelling storytelling, and selective affiliate engagement will sustain growth and improve brand awareness and conversion rates.

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