

A NEW-TO-THE-WORLD MARKETING TOOL

Arkdom Commerce Affiliate (ACA) is a patent-pending, new-to-the-world marketing tool that maximizes brand power and retail relationships to satisfy online customers.

Online shopping is the fastest growing retail apparel sales channel. Seven percent of all consumer purchases are now made online. Far from being a threat to the future of retail stores, online and in-store channels complement each other producing more revenue for both. A new study from Forrester Research shows that consumers who shop both online and in-store for the brand they prefer spend 2 to 3 times more per year than those who only use one channel.

Many apparel brands have moved aggressively into online selling. Some own the whole channel; many more choose to compete with their retail channel partners. Other mass apparel brands that have placed high value on retail relationships have linked their sites by the best available means to enable high-volume retailers to fill orders. The designer/luxury market – characterized by strong brands, loyal customers, and independent boutiques who take individualized care of each client – have been least able to leverage retailer relationships to sell online...until now.

Through the power of ACA, brand owners and retailers can team up to levels not possible before to strengthen brand image and increase customer satisfaction.

ACA brings together select products and retailers chosen by the brand owner, customizable advanced shopping functionality, business intelligence, and on-demand infrastructure, all bundled and delivered as a managed service, implemented without significant impact on the brand owner's technical operation or business processes.

ACA delivers all these capabilities as a service while staying behind the brand owner's website and

seamlessly integrating ACA capabilities within the website, as illustrated in Figure 1.

SELECT PRODUCTS AND RETAILERS

Through established relationships with hundreds of online as well as brick-and-mortar retailers, ACA offers to a brand owner a variety of retailers, including department stores, exclusive e-tailers, and boutiques. ACA applies a sophisticated, proprietary rules engine capable of selecting only those products and retailers that meet the brand owner's strict criteria expressed in plain business rules. The result is a pristine collection of authentic products where customers, comfortably immersed in the brand of their preference, shop through approved channel partners without exposure to competing products or distracting offers .

CUSTOMIZABLE ADVANCED SHOPPING FUNCTIONALITY

ACA is highly customizable by the brand owner. The following presents key functionality:

- ❖ **Customizable Brand-driven Navigation.** Unlike other typical shopping portals, ACA provides a unique, brand-driven way to navigate through the brand owner's products. The brand owner can surround customers with its brand and appropriate marketing messages, all customizable to their liking.
- ❖ **Customizable Front-end.** ACA's front-end can be fully customized to meet the needs of the brand owner. The brand owner can use its own front-end while accessing ACA's back-end functionality in an easy, seamless manner.
- ❖ **Customizable Search.** ACA's intelligent search engine allows users to find products of their interest quickly and accurately with comprehensive information. The search engine can be customized in accordance with the brand owner's preference. For example, weights can be assigned to different keywords emphasizing preferred products, attributes or retailers.



- ❖ **Customizable Product Display.** The brand owner has full control over how products from different retailers are displayed when categories are browsed. This display can be random or pre-determined based on criteria set by the brand owner. Also, the brand owner can suppress the display of pricing information to discourage pricing comparison among retailers.
- ❖ **Customizable Categories.** With ACA, category trees, including hierarchical relationships and category names, can be fully customized by the brand owner.
- ❖ **Drill-down Category Trees.** ACA allows users to drill down a category tree and view products by category or retailer at any point. Users can also narrow product choice by retailer and additional search criteria.
- ❖ **Wish List.** ACA provides users with the capability to add products to a Wish List as they shop across various retailers, facilitating the product selection process.
- ❖ **Virtual Fulfillment Operation.** With ACA, the brand owner's customers find the products of their choice easily on the brand owner's website. When customers are ready to buy, the checkout and fulfillment process actually happen at its retailers' website, allowing the brand owner to leverage its retailer's fulfillment operations. Optionally, orders can be taken and forwarded via email for fulfillment to retailers without websites.
- ❖ **Actual Fulfillment Operation.** ACA provides the brand owner optional direct sales fulfillment

capability for items no retailers offer online to ensure online availability of the entire line.

- ❖ **Internationalization.** ACA can be customized to support international languages and currencies, allowing the brand owner to effectively target users located abroad.

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

ACA provides the brand owner with the ability to measure marketing effectiveness. ACA tracks each transaction made and can correlate that information to the brand owner's marketing campaigns, by retailer, and by product. ACA enables the brand owner to view reports online and analyze sales relative to marketing efforts in near real-time. Also, ACA can be customized to generate reports fitting the brand owner's unique needs.

ON-DEMAND INFRASTRUCTURE

ACA operates on infrastructure that can be scaled dynamically up or down, based on the brand owner's requirements. This is accomplished through ACA's robust on-demand technology. Computing resources and capacity are packaged, delivered, and measured in Managed Service Units (MSU). The brand owner can add or remove MSUs and pay only for what is used. ACA provides reporting facility that gives the brand owner a clear understanding of how much MSU capacity is being used.

ACA's on-demand infrastructure, hosted in a state-of-the-art data center, is secure and reliable with 24x7x365 access from anywhere in the world.



Figure 1 – How ACA Works

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