



# Link Web Services

An IntelliNetwork Solutions Division

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## Miva Merchant 5.5 Affiliate Program Instructions

### Set Up & Administer Affiliate Program

Affiliates are companies that refer business to you in exchange for a referral fee or commission on sales. For example, an equipment rental company might recommend a plant nursery to their rental customers, earning a commission on nursery orders placed by the customers they refer. A wedding dress shop could refer clients to a bakery.

Affiliates can even send shoppers directly to particular categories or products in your store. For instance, an affiliate selling heirloom-quality scrapbooks might send shoppers to the category in your store where they can buy acid-free adhesives. Potential affiliates include your satisfied customers, suppliers and manufacturers, and related businesses. You might also inquire about *their* affiliate programs and refer customers to them.

You can elect to have an affiliate program or not. If you do activate this feature an **Affiliate Login** link will appear in the store, just above the category tree.

Reward affiliates by paying them a set amount for each shopper they refer who visits your store, a set amount for each order generated by their referrals, a percentage commission on the orders generated, or some combination of the three. Orders placed during the shopper's initial visit are commissioned.

Each affiliate can log in to your store to update their information, and to see how their account is doing. You set a threshold amount, and send a check to each affiliate when their accumulated commissions reach that amount.

### How Referrals are Tracked

When you set up an affiliate in MIVA Merchant, you provide them with a customized URL (Web site link). They use this URL when they create a link to your site. When a visitor on their site clicks the link, and goes to your site, the unique URL enables MIVA Merchant to recognize them as a shopper referred by that affiliate.

When the shopper arrives at your store, a cookie is sent to their computer. MIVA Merchant uses this to identify the shopper as they move through the store, to properly credit the affiliate who referred them.

If a shopper has cookies turned off, their orders cannot be tracked and their visit will not be recorded. The affiliate referring them will not be credited for the referral, or for any order they may place.

### Commissions on Visits and Orders

When any shopper visits your store, a basket is created for them. When an affiliate refers a shopper to your store, a basket is created, and identified as belonging to a customer referred by that affiliate. If you are paying commissions for referrals, the initial visit counts as one referral. If you are paying commissions based on the order amount, that is calculated when the shopper checks out.

The basket remains in existence for as long as the customer is actively browsing in the store, plus the time specified for basket timeout in your store settings. A cookie on the shopper's computer identifies them as they move through your store. It also enables the store to recognize the customer if they leave, then return while their basket is still active - even if they have not added any items to the basket.

### Options

Begin setting up your affiliate program on the Affiliate Configuration / Options screen.

If you will be having an affiliate program in your store, select the **Activate Affiliate Program** check box. Even if you create affiliates and specify commissions, the affiliates program will be in effect only if this is selected.

### Default Application Status

Specify the initial state of a new affiliate, when they sign up from your store.

If you want to review each affiliate before accepting them into your affiliate program, select **Pending**. The not-yet-approved affiliates will be able to access their account, and update information, but no commissions will be credited until you approve them.



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Select **Approved** if you want people to be able to sign up as affiliates and get started right away. No action is required on your part, aside from paying them when they reach the payout threshold. Their account is credited, using the default commissions, as soon as they start using the customized URL to refer shoppers to your store.

To close down the application process, and hide the login link, without deactivating the program for existing affiliates, select **Disabled**. Affiliates will not be able to access their accounts via the store, but commissions will continue to be credited to their accounts. You might prefer this option if you have only a few select affiliates, and do not want others trying to sign up.

## Specify Default Commissions

You can use any combination of the three types of commission. The commissions you enter here are defaults, which are assigned to each affiliate as they sign up for your program. You can change them later, on a case-by-case basis.

**Default Commission per Referral** pays the affiliate a fixed amount each time they send a new shopper to your store, whether or not the shopper buys anything. Enter a set amount, such as 0.5000 (not a percentage), to be credited to the affiliate's account in the units of currency used in your store.

Specify a **Default Commission Percent of Order** to pay your affiliates based on the value of the orders placed by customers they referred to your store. Choose whether to pay the commission on the **Entire Order** or **Subtotal** (before tax and shipping).

To pay a fixed amount each time a referred shopper places an order, regardless of the value of the order, specify a **Default Commission Flat Fee per Order**.

## Payout Threshold

It could be inefficient to pay affiliates based solely on a regular time period. Some affiliates will accumulate commissions faster than others. The active affiliates will be eager to collect their earnings, while it would be inconvenient for both you and the quieter affiliates to deal with checks for only a few dollars. Instead of paying at a certain time, regardless of commissions, specify an amount that must be reached before you pay out the affiliate's earnings.

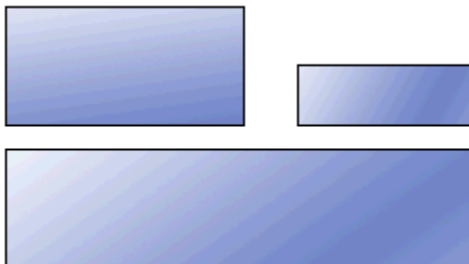
When you are ready to pay your affiliates, only the affiliates whose accounts have reached the payout threshold will be presented for your attention.

## Link Text and Link Image

You can make the link to your store stand out on an affiliate's page by providing a professional-looking **Link Image**, perhaps with your logo and store name. The image is stored on your server, and remotely linked into the affiliate sites. This means you can change the image, perhaps seasonally, or if you design a new store logo, save the new version in place of the old one, and it will appear from that point onward on each affiliate's site.

You can create a link image of any size, but to achieve the most professional look, and so that your image works well in the design of your affiliates' sites, it is best to use standard sizes. There are many standard sizes. You can see many examples on popular sites, and check with professional associations, such as the Interactive Advertising Bureau, for published standards.

Here are three common link image formats. The smallest, 88 x 31 pixels, is often used when the site designer groups affiliate links together in a small area. The next largest, 120 x 60 pixels, is typically placed in a narrow, vertical sidebar area alongside the main content of the site. Finally, the larger format generally is used at the top of bottom of the page, either alone, or alongside another of the same size.





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If you specified a link image, the **Link Text** becomes the alternative or alt, text for the image. This is an important accessibility issue, even if your graphic includes words, because shoppers using screen reader software rely on this text to describe where the link goes. For example, "Visit Sandy's Seashell Shanty" would be preferable to "Get great deals here!"

If you are not using a link image, the **Link Text** is included in the link HTML code provided to your affiliates via the affiliate account information page in your store. When they insert that code into their store pages, this text will appear as the link.

## Terms

In any business deal, things go best when both parties clearly understand the agreement. Describe your affiliate program here, in the **Terms** field. This information is displayed when a new affiliate is signing up, and again on the affiliate's account screen.

Include information on the commission rates you pay, and when affiliates can expect to be paid. If you have a specific person who is responsible for working with your affiliates you can provide contact information here.

You can also set down guidelines for the use of your links and link images. For example, you might require that affiliates use the remotely-linked image you provide on your server, without any modifications, and with a minimum of 15 pixels of space surrounding it.

## Lost Password E-mail

If an affiliate forgets their password, they can request that it be sent to them, at the Lost Password E-mail address they entered when they signed up. This message will be sent automatically.

Specify how the message to the affiliate will be addressed, and enter text to appear in the message.

## From

The message sent to the affiliate will appear to have been sent from this address. If the affiliate were to reply to the message, perhaps to request information about their account, that reply would be sent to the address you specify here. The default is the e-mail address of the store owner.

## CC

If you want to be notified when an affiliate is experiencing problems logging into their account, enter the e-mail address of the store administrator or other contact here. You can enter multiple addresses here, if needed, separated by commas.

## Subject

This is the subject the affiliate will see when they receive the message. Keep the subject brief, although it can be up to 254 characters, so that the recipient can see it easily. Use only plain (non-HTML) text.

To help the affiliate recognize the incoming message (that is, to differentiate it from any spam they might receive), it would be thoughtful to include the store name in the subject line.

## Header Text

The comments you enter here will appear as a single paragraph at the top of the e-mail message, followed by the password.

*The header uses plain text only (no HTML formatting).* The e-mail is sent as a plain text message, to ensure that it will be easy to open and read.

## Affiliates

View, search, and edit affiliate records from this screen.

Note that the **Hits**, **Percent**, and **Flat** columns show the three commission rates for each affiliate. The Hits column gives the commission amount per referred shopper, not the number of hits.



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For more information, see [Add & Edit Affiliates](#).

## **Affiliate E-mail Notification**

A store administrator and/or affiliate can be notified by e-mail when a new affiliate signs up in your store. To enable this feature, select **Activate New Affiliates E-mail**.

Specify how the message will be addressed, and enter text to appear in the message.

If the default application status is Pending, consider including comments that explain what the prospective affiliate can expect to happen, and in what time frame.

The **Subject** can be up to 254 characters, but keep it brief, so that the recipient can see it easily. To help the affiliate recognize the incoming message (that is, to differentiate it from any spam they might receive), it would be thoughtful to include the store name in the subject line.

Enter the message in the **Header** field. *The header uses plain text only (no HTML formatting).* The e-mail is sent as a plain text message, to ensure that it will be easy to open and read.

## **Payouts**

This screen provides an easy way to view and edit your affiliate payouts.

To begin the process of paying your affiliates, click **Add Payout**.

You can pay out commissions to any affiliates who have reached the threshold you specified. That is, if you set the payout threshold at \$25, and some of your affiliates have earned at least that amount, you can pay out the earnings to those affiliates.

The Add Payout screen gives you a summary of the status of the affiliate program. The **Payout Threshold** shows your current setting for the commissions to be earned before an affiliate is paid. The number of affiliates who have reached that threshold, and are due to be paid, is given by **Payee Count**. Finally, the total amount to be paid out is the **Payout Amount**.

If no affiliates have reached the threshold amount, you will see the summary information displayed, and the note "There are no affiliates to be paid." There will be no **Continue** button available.

## **Pay These Affiliates**

When you are ready to pay the affiliates included in this set, click **Continue**. This will mark the amounts due each of them as paid, and their account balances will be reset to zero. *Note that you do not need to mark the payout as processed for this to take place.*

From the Payout Details screen, you can mark the payout as processed, for your own reference, when you have written and sent the checks.

## **Add or Edit Affiliates**

Whether you are adding a new affiliate, or editing an existing affiliate record, the same information is called for. If the affiliate signed up in your store, they will have entered most of the information themselves.

## **Identification**

The affiliate will sign in to your store using the **Login** name you enter here. This is also added to the end of the URL the affiliate uses to link to your store.

When an affiliate requests that their password be sent to them, it will be sent to the **Lost Password E-mail** address.

Enter a **Password** for the affiliate, then enter it a second time to confirm. If the affiliate signed up in your store, they already specified a password, which is not displayed here, for privacy reasons. In most cases, do not enter a new password. If you must change it, remember to let the affiliate know about it, since their old password will no longer work.



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The initial **Status** will be the default you specified under Affiliate Configuration. You can change the status for each affiliate, after reviewing their application. When an application is **Pending**, the prospective affiliate does not earn commissions. After the account is **Approved**, the affiliate accumulates earnings and payouts can be made. If you determine that an applicant should not be part of your affiliate program, select **Rejected**.

## ***Info***

Enter the affiliate's site name and URL (Web address), and mailing address where you will send their commission checks.

## ***Commission***

When a new affiliate is created the default commissions, specified under Affiliate Configuration / Options, are applied. You can change these commissions for each affiliate.

The current balance for the affiliate's account is displayed here.

## ***Earnings (on Edit Affiliate, but not Add Affiliate)***

View an ongoing record of all the commissions earned by this affiliate, along with any adjustments and payouts. If you prefer, you can delete old items, such as those that have already been paid out, to keep the list short and current.

To enter a manual adjustment to the account, click **Add Adjustment**. For more information, see [Add Adjustment for Affiliate](#).

## ***Mailing Lists (available when using MIVA Mailer)***

If you are using the MIVA Mailer marketing tool in your store, the mailing lists to which this affiliate has subscribed are shown here. You can manually remove an affiliate from lists here. You can also assign an affiliate to lists, but it is poor practice to include people in mailing lists without their having requested it, and in some cases may be illegal.