

Sonos Trusts Its Brand with BrandVerity

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

SONOS

COMPANY SIZE

1,000-5,000
Employees

HEADQUARTERS

Santa Barbara

FOUNDED

2002

INDUSTRY

Consumer
Electronics

About Sonos

Founded in 2002, Sonos® creates the leading smart speaker system. Once a tech startup populated with nerdy engineers and brilliant designers who love music, Sonos has grown into a global music brand dedicated to transforming the experience of listening out loud to music in the home. Its family of wireless smart speakers and home audio products make it easy for everyone to listen to the music they love in every room of their home.

About PerspectivePMA

PerspectivePMA is a performance marketing agency that manages Sonos' affiliate programs for Canada, Australia and the U.S. For the last four years David Pricco, Affiliate Program Manager, has managed the Sonos account and has used BrandVerity for paid search monitoring.

BrandVerity Protects the Sonos Brand Online

As a leading brand in the consumer electronics industry, Sonos was facing a significant amount of ad hijacking. This is when an affiliate tries to impersonate the brand by running search ads that look identical to the brand's ads. By using similar headlines, descriptions, and the same display URL, these affiliate hijackers increase the odds that unsuspecting users will click on their ads instead of the brand's ads. These clicks convert to purchases, which means the affiliate earns a 5-10% commission on these purchases. Ad hijacking does not refer to arrangements authorized by the brand where the affiliate has exclusive permission to run campaigns on behalf of the partner brand.

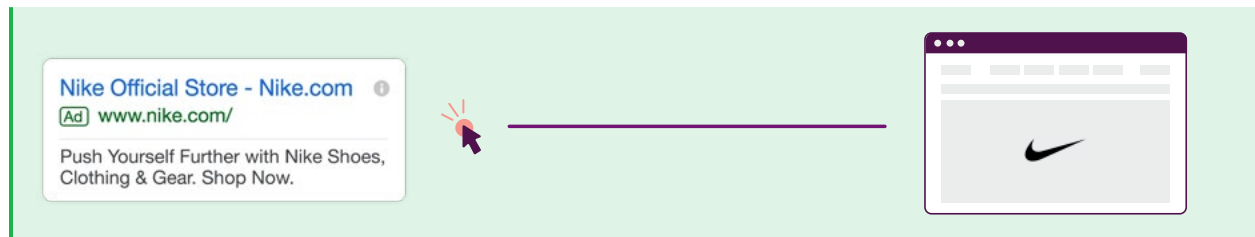
David Pricco, the Affiliate Program Manager for Sonos, used the BrandVerity Paid Search Monitoring tool to virtually eliminate ad hijacking. Now they are focused on keeping the abuse at a minimal level, rather than solving a rampant problem.

Today, Sonos spends more time actively pursuing misuse of coupon codes by affiliates. Since there are many different sales channels and each one uses different coupon codes (internal employee discounts, partner discounts, existing customers, etc.), it's difficult to keep track of which affiliates post what codes. While Sonos wants to keep certain codes in specific channels, affiliates who run coupon sites want to have the best coupon codes on their site. The BrandVerity monitoring tool looks for inconsistencies and alerts Sonos when a code is posted incorrectly on an affiliate site.

What does ad hijacking look like?

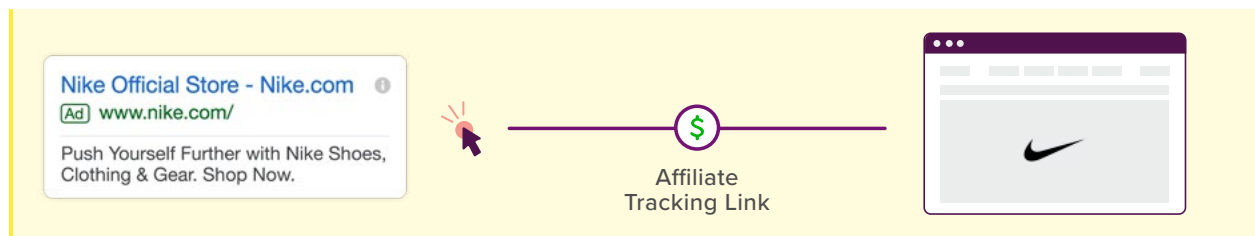
To someone looking at a Search Engine Results Page (SERP), ad hijacking doesn't look any different from regular advertising. Ad hijacking specifically refers to unauthorized situations where the affiliate, counter to the brand's policies, uses similar headlines, descriptions, and the same display URL, to increase the odds that unsuspecting users will click on their ads instead of the brand's ads.

What is happening behind these ads?



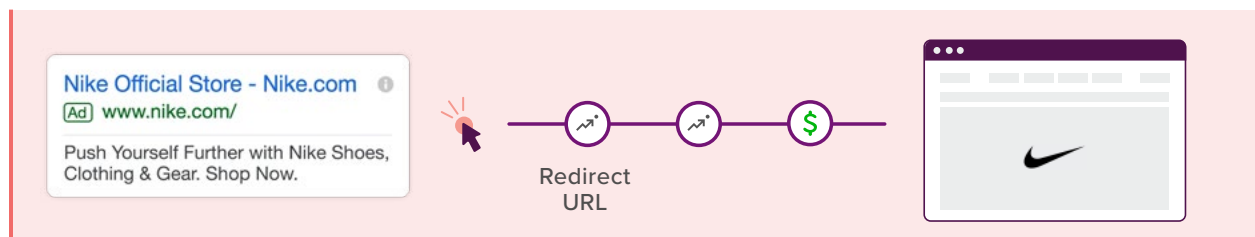
The Brand's Ad

This is the brand's ad that leads directly to their own site via their own tracking link. The brand pays a few cents per click.



The Affiliate Hijacker's Ad

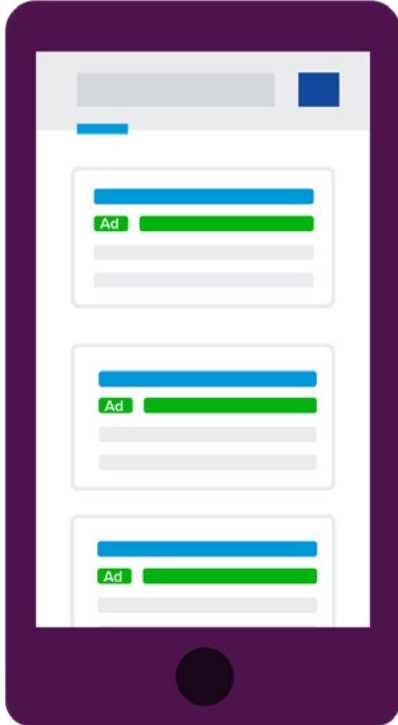
The affiliate places an ad that looks identical to the brand's ad that goes immediately through their tracking link to the brand's site. They therefore are stealing the commission on subsequent purchases and are increasing the cost-per-click on branded search terms.



The Sophisticated Hijacker's Ad

The affiliate places an ad and masks its referral through a series of redirect URLs. The affiliate receives an unearned commission and uses techniques to avoid detection. This is particularly damaging to a brand's affiliate marketing program because it is virtually impossible to determine who the affiliate is without the help of a paid search monitoring tool.

What is the impact of ad hijacking?



Ad hijacking can be very damaging to a brand's paid search programs with several negative impacts including:

Reduction in brand revenue

Ad hijackers steal clicks, eat into profit margins and gain un-earned commissions. Brands lose money when they have to compete with their affiliates for conversions or sales from paid search keywords. Metrics such as impression share and ROI are also affected—the brand's metrics become skewed and accurate revenue attribution becomes impossible.

Channel conflict

When the affiliate and the brand are advertising on the same keywords, channel conflict ensues. The search engines will only show one advertisement at a time with the same display URL. As a result, the affiliate is increasing the brand's CPCs and competing against the brand to be on the SERP. The affiliate is supposed to be bringing new business to the brand, not diverting existing business.




Messaging conflict

The affiliate's ad, which visitors think is the brand's ad, may not match the brand's messaging. Outdated offers and off-brand

messaging are common. Since the search engines only allow an advertiser's domain to appear once on a given SERP, affiliate hijackers often replace brands' ads with their own—taking away the brand's control of their own message.

What are common indicators of ad hijacking?

Three indicators of ad hijacking include:

-  Spikes in referral traffic and conversions from affiliates that are not well known to the brand.
-  Nearly identical conversion rates for an affiliate and branded paid search.
-  A reduction in impressions and clicks since the search engines don't allow multiple ads with the same display URL to serve at the same time.

A good rule of thumb is that if the affiliate is not a well-known site, or the brand doesn't have a strong working relationship with them, it's worth taking a closer look at how the affiliate is driving their traffic.

Sonos' Evolving Challenge - Then and Now

As the Sonos brand has grown over time, so has its commitment to protecting its brand. Since BrandVerity's tool is central to online brand protection, it has become an important part of ensuring a smooth customer journey.

Sonos has continued to work with BrandVerity for a number of reasons:

1

The BrandVerity Paid Search Monitoring tool finds infringements people can't.

Manual monitoring is time-consuming and ineffective because trademark infringers use tactics like geotargeting and dayparting to evade detection. The BrandVerity tool automatically crawls thousands of web pages, finding infringements that even the most seasoned and crafty marketer wouldn't be able to find. Once BrandVerity flags the issues, it makes it easy for an affiliate manager to notify the affiliate, partner, or search engine about the violation.

2

Sonos values BrandVerity's expertise.

David Pricco says he relies on BrandVerity to help him keep all the Sonos channels clear of abuse. But when he finds something through the tool that he can't explain, or if someone calls him with a question, he knows he can rely on the expertise of the BrandVerity team.

3

The BrandVerity tool has evolved and improved to meet today's needs.

When Sonos first started using BrandVerity, they were mainly interested in combating affiliate abuse. As BrandVerity has rolled out new products to tackle other forms of trademark abuse, Sonos has adopted those. Being able to continue to deliver value to Sonos by making new products that meet today's needs has been key to this long-term relationship.

“When someone calls me with a particularly challenging question about what appears to be an affiliate ad, I know I can always call BrandVerity and get a quick answer. I sincerely value that level of deep expertise and being able to resolve an issue quickly.”

David Pricco

SONOS CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

With BrandVerity's Paid Search Monitoring Sonos can:



SAVE TIME:

The alerts let paid search managers know when there is a potential problem. David says this is one of his favorite features of the tool:

“With the alerts, I don’t have to dedicate so much time to monitoring. I rely on the alerts to tell me when something needs my attention. It’s a big time saver.”



QUICKLY GET HELP TROUBLESHOOTING:

Sonos knows that if they or PerspectivePMA have a problem or question that they can't figure out, they can reach out to the BrandVerity customer success team and quickly resolve the issue.

“I’ve worked with several BrandVerity Customer Success Managers and they have consistently been helpful- not only in tracking down tricky infringements, but also doing extensive research with the help of their analyst team, to get to the bottom of an issue.”



HAVE PEACE OF MIND:

BrandVerity is always working in the background protecting their trademarks and ensuring that everyone is playing by the rules.

“For me, BrandVerity acts as a fire alarm and the fire department. I know that if there is a problem, BV will find it and help me solve it. It’s a huge peace of mind knowing that BrandVerity is on my team.”

Want to see who is bidding on your trademarked terms?

Schedule a Demo