

# How to Optimize with Publisher Partners amid Covid-19

Despite the devastating impact of Covid-19 on the lives of so many, history shows us that periods of great struggle will also give rise to great opportunity. We understand that clients and partners may be appropriately focused on matters of more urgent need, but for those of us in a position to identify and activate those opportunities on their behalf, we are obligated to do so.

The affiliate marketing channel has an unprecedented opportunity to facilitate revenue creation at a time when people's livelihoods are under direct attack from the virus. The inherent pay-for-performance mechanics of the channel deliver maximum spend control to marketers who need to maximize their return on ad spend as they navigate the current crisis.

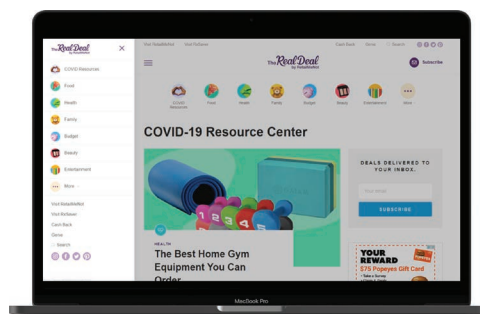
The following recommendations are intended as a resource for marketers seeking actionable information on opportunities available with Pepperjam's publisher partners who have curated a range of compelling opportunities for marketers seeking performance-based results.

## The rise of dedicated landing pages

Partners including [Coupons.com](#) and [RetailMeNot](#) have deployed dedicated landing pages highlighting Covid-19 related content and promotions focused on the good and services consumers need most.



**Tip: Secure brand or product placement on these landing pages to maximize exposure to partner's most engaged audiences.**



## Read all about it: Covid-19 newsletter edition

In addition to dedicated landing pages, custom newsletters are effective vehicles to disseminate targeted messaging to qualified audiences who have indicated an interest in your goods or services, or content related thereto. For example, [Skimlinks](#) has demonstrated their commitment to supporting their advertiser and publisher partners through the deployment of twice weekly update newsletters that highlight advertisers offering attractive commission rates and relevant consumer promotions.

Leveraging this guidance, a well-known fashion retailer capitalized on this opportunity in March by launching a weekly sale that garnered editorial inclusion with a top Skimlinks content publisher. The sale achieved a 6.4% conversion rate and a 60% lift in conversion over Black Friday and Cyber Monday promotions. In another example, a leading home interiors retailer pivoted their messaging to highlight work from home solutions and subsequently realized a 340% increase in average order value in the affiliate channel.

Newsletters also serve the critical function of efficiently communicating any adjustments to affiliate program terms. Transparent and timely communication, always critical, has heightened importance in the current climate as strategic planning is happening in accelerated timeframes and the rate of change is constant. Partnerships are built on a foundation of trust and timely and honest communication is necessary to protect all parties and ensure long term, mutually rewarding relationships.



**Tip:** Inform publisher partners about relevant goods and services, any changes in commission rates that impact earning potential, and all promotional offers. Timely communication will increase the probability that your offers will be included in a timely manner.

## The power of influence

While influencers may be seeing a decline in paid placement compensation related to Covid-19, this group retains an engaged audience and they remain an effective channel for driving revenue. **RewardStyle** has meaningful opportunities for marketers seeking high-yield influencer activity and they are reporting significant growth across a range of key performance metrics.

### Rewardstyle | March 2020



**12%**

Daily GMW  
(gross merchandise value)



**22%**

Daily conversion  
rate



**100%**

Increase in  
LiketoKnow.it  
app searches for  
office & desk  
furniture



**460%**

Increase in  
loungewear  
searches



**40%**

Daily traffic to  
products  
containing the  
term 'skincare'

In a pragmatic approach, **Shopstyle** is advising influencers to focus on content themes and trending products.



### Themes:

- Work-From-Home Style
- Recipes and Meal Prep
- Tips on Productivity
- Keeping Kids Learning & Entertained
- How to Support Your Community
- Challenges to Bring People Together

### Trending products:

- Loungewear
- Slip-On Footwear
- Skin & Hair Care
- Family & Entertainment
- Home
- Kitchen



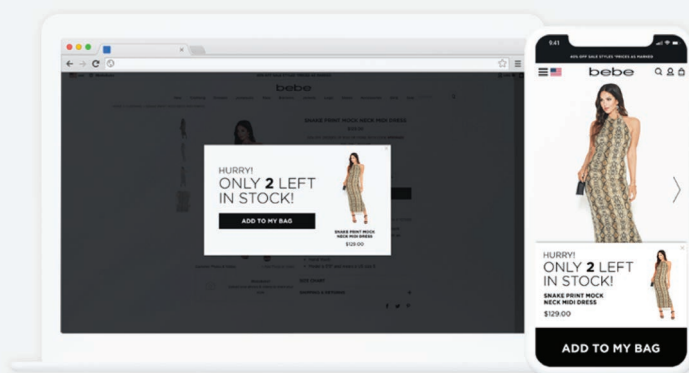
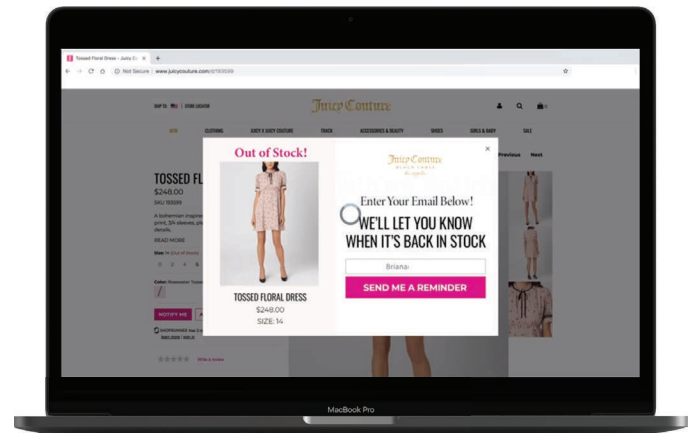
**Tip:** Share your relevant products and services so influencer syndication partners can get your brand in front of content creators.

## Optimize with onsite conversion tools: Back in stock alerts

Back-in-stock alerts are a great way to entice consumers back to your site and conversion optimization partner, **UpSellit**, allows you to:

- Capitalize on site traffic driven by popular products that are no longer in stock.
- Capture email addresses from visitors looking for specific products that are out of stock.
- Automatically notify them when the item is back in stock and available for purchase.

UpSellit's cart rebuilder technology allows them to click through the email and be brought back to checkout with the item automatically repopulated in their cart and ready to purchase.

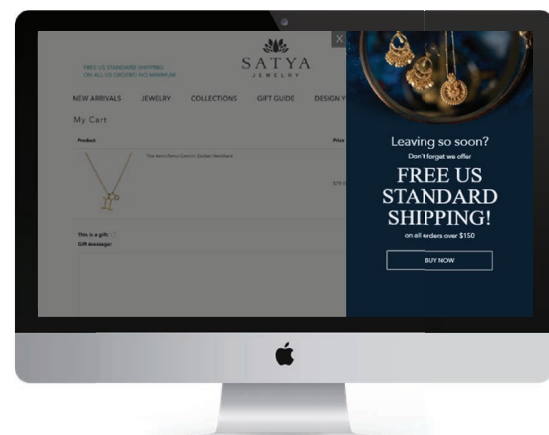


## Low stock alerts

In the same vein as back-in-stock alerts, UpSellit also engages visitors who may be abandoning from a product page with a limited inventory pop up designed to heighten the urgency to purchase now. Leverage scarcity and the fear of missing out to create urgency and encourage abandoning visitors to "get it before it's gone." UpSellit can combine these strategies with social proofing by showing how few are available and how many other shoppers are viewing that product on the site.

## Abandonment incentives

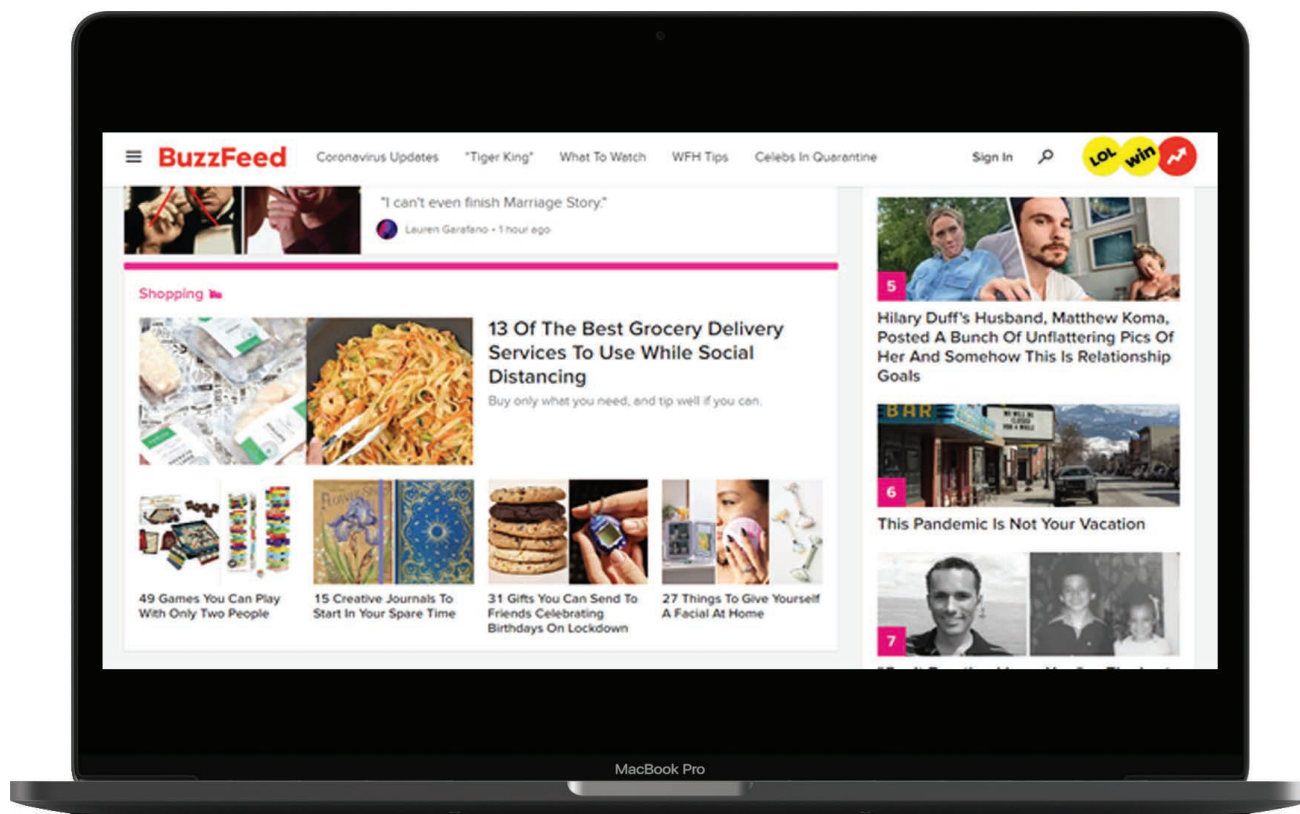
Partner, **Cybba**, offers solutions that are configured to engage users' intent to buy when on site. Specifically, Cybba can help brands convert on-site users that attempt to abandon the site before converting. Their solution dynamically offers incentives to users who have at least 1 item in the cart and express exit intent. Those users can be re-engaged through a promotion, customer testimonial or relevant messaging. This on-site targeting can be applied to certain items that are added to the cart, increase cart value and more.



**Tip:** Once a consumer reaches your site, an optimal buyer experience will increase the likelihood of conversion. In these times, it is critical to ensure browsers have all the information they need, from product stock information and promotional incentives. Activate these partnerships and easily enable relevant and timely consumer messaging.

## Content partners really resonate with quarantined audiences

With a large audience of readers (650+million!), editorial site, [Buzzfeed.com](https://www.buzzfeed.com), is catering content towards readers who are spending more time at home. They are seeing surges in interest for 'at-home' supplies like home goods, comfort attire, online courses, at-home workout apps, food/grocery and drink delivery services as well as finance for tax preparation.



Buzzfeed can hone in beyond content thematic to target interest-based groups and position relevant products, like recently restocked items through both editorial content and paid placements. If your brand has relevant products/restocked products, get the word out by teaming up with BuzzFeed to amplify your message.



**Tip: Engage commerce content partners on both an editorial and paid basis to increase your brand's visibility with readers.**

## Look for special incentives and reduced placement rates

Partners like [Sovrn.com](https://www.sovrn.com) and [Befrugal.com](https://www.befrugal.com) are taking special measures to accommodate brands whose budgets may not be able to flex for flat-rate paid placements at this time.

Content syndication partner, Sovrn, is offering reduced rates on Q2 2020 publisher dashboard placements and newsletter gift guides that are sent to their top 100K publishers that are booked in the month of April.

BeFrugal is providing a special rate for brands that opt into their BeFrugal+ VIP program, at only \$1K for the remainder of 2020. This program offers advertisers a jailed brand page, meaning no competitor listings will appear adjacent to the brand, significant discounts on paid placements, higher cashback incentives for new-to-file customers and more.



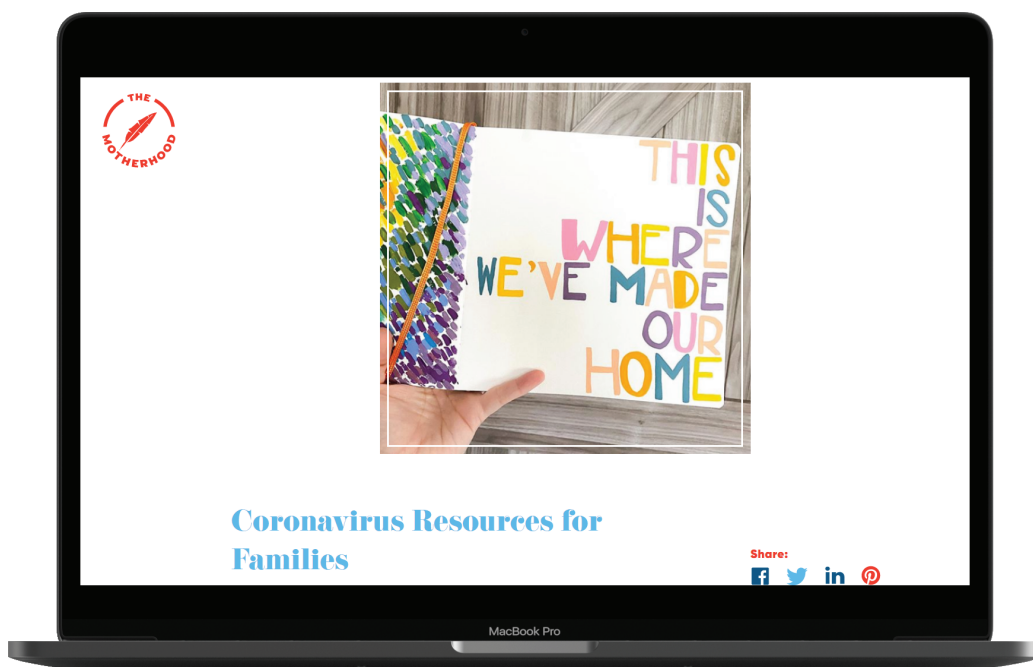
**Tip: Inquire about reduced placement rates or special incentives. Some publishers will oblige in order to maintain a long standing partnership.**



CouponFollow.com has produced a series of blog posts, providing consumers with information coupled with incentives and promotion codes for products and services that are experiencing increased demand, like food and groceries, children's games and education and work from home goods and services. Partners like Coupon Follow syndicate content to news and media outlets like NBC News, USA Today and the Today Show, extending their reach to consumer audiences.



**Tip: Inquire about reduced placement rates or special incentives. Some publishers will oblige in order to maintain a long-standing partnership.**



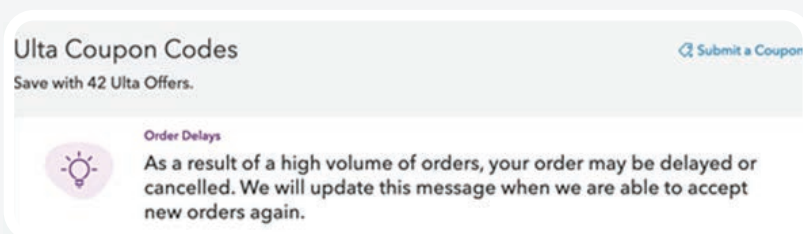
**Tip: Don't limit your brand's reach by assuming a publisher partner's audience is solely limited to their web visitors. Inquire with publishers to identify properties their content may be syndicated to, expanding**

## Savings destinations: a hot spot when confined to home

Throughout March, partners like RetailMeNot.com are seeing promotional trends by category that reflect the response from brands including:

- Stronger offers in clothing, designer and travel with greater % off promotions
- Fewer restrictions in health & beauty and personal services with lower spend thresholds to unlock discounts
- More sitewide deals in electronics, home & garden finance, sports & fitness and toys & kids
- A timing shift, with VIP or exclusive events occurring earlier in the season

Messaging is also a critical component to keeping the lines of communication between brands and consumers open and clear. To assist, RetailMeNot is also providing additional information to consumers for brands that are experiencing supply chain disruption as seen below.



On the consumer side, spend increased across:

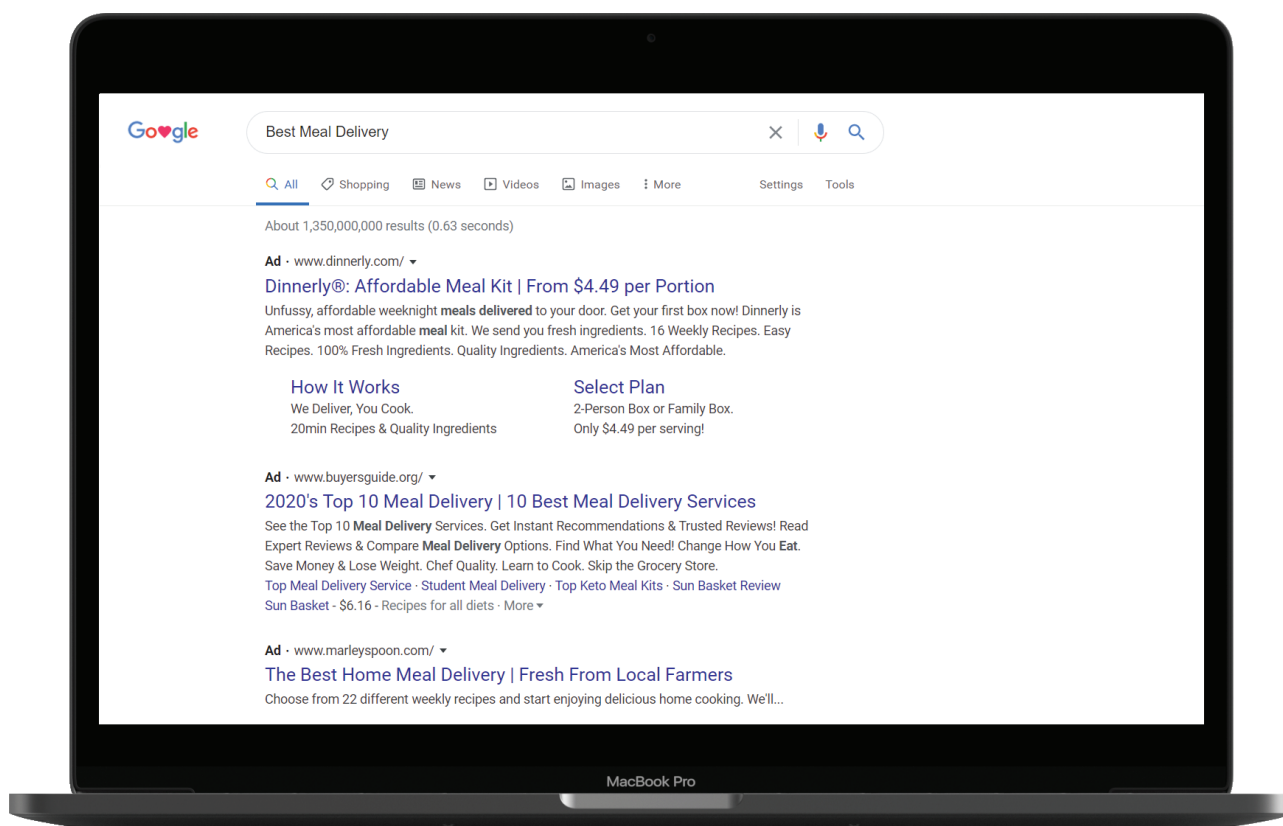
- Necessities (office supplies, baby items and food delivery)
- Entertainment (toys, hobbies/DIY, home improvement, party supplies, cable services and games)
- Health & Wellness (vitamins & supplements, workout equipment and outdoor sporting goods)
- Other (fine jewelry, intimates and online learning tools)



**Tip: Publishers know their audience demographic and behaviors better than anyone. Ask publishers what trends they are seeing across their users so that you can capitalize on increased search activity or affinity to promotion types so that your brand is tuned in to what users are reacting to on a per-publisher basis.**

## Extend brand reach through search marketing

Self-isolation during Covid-19 has expanded the popularity of many verticals including meal delivery, emergency food, mattresses, wine, etc. However, covering the search engine results page (SERP) for non-brand terms may be expensive for some brands. Search marketer, **Wickfire**, is thinking ahead about consumer shifts and can help provide coverage on the SERP. Online education, online therapy and online workouts are also focus for them, as they see consumers settle in to a longer-than-expected quarantine.



**Tip: Evaluate costly search terms and phrases and enable publishers to run PPC campaigns on your behalf, extending your brand's coverage on search engine results pages, improving your chance's in occupying impression share.**

To learn more about how Pepperjam partners are optimizing during Covid-19 or for access to a variety of Covid-19 marketer resources, visit us [here](#).

