

LinkShare Signature Overview

LinkShare Signature offers LinkShare publishers the ability to track and generate detailed reports on the commerce activity of their sites down to the transaction level of each individual member, organization, or subsite. LinkShare Signature makes it easier for publishers to track, manage, and optimize their comprehensive programs efficiently and cost-effectively.

Ways to Utilize LinkShare Signature

There are many different sites and different business models that find LinkShare Signature to be a good fit for their tracking needs. Below are some ways publishers have used LinkShare Signature in the past:

Loyalty Sites – These publishers offer members points, cash, and other rewards for purchases made through their sites. These sites use the member ID field to determine which member receives a reward.

Fundraising and Charity Sites – These publishers allow visitors to donate a portion of a purchase to a specific organization. These sites use the member ID field to determine which organization receives a donation.

Community and Member Sites – These publishers provide Web users with the personal publishing tools and services to create online environments. These sites use the member ID field to track the commerce activity generated by the sites that the users create.

Tracking Campaigns and Ad Placement – Both publishers and advertisers have used LinkShare Signature in order to track the success of various campaigns. For example, the member ID field can be used to track different links in an email campaign.

How LinkShare Signature Works

LinkShare Signature is able to track commerce to the transaction level for each member, organization, and subsite through the use of the member ID field.

Member ID Field

The member ID is the identifier that represents each member and organization of the Signature Publisher, and it is denoted by a '&u1=' that the Signature Publisher must append to the advertiser link codes provided in their LinkShare account. The value following the = sign represents the Signature Publisher's member, organization, or subsite and is created by the Signature Publisher. This identifier can be up to 72 alphanumeric characters in length.

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How to Use the Member ID Field

The Signature Publisher must place '&u1=' plus the identifier at the end of the first href string in LinkShare advertiser links. We suggest using a placeholder such as '&u1=defaultmemberid'. If you only have a few codes to edit, it is easiest to do so manually. For those employing a login for site services, a unique identifier can be passed to the link code or swapped out in place of defaultmemberid via a number of methods, including Java scripts. Each member, subsite, and organization should be correlated to a certain alphanumeric character, such as Jane Doe equals 1234 and Bob Smith equals 5678. Please note that the use of cookies is not advised because if one of your members has disabled its cookies, the member ID field will not be tracked. Also, note that the member ID is case-sensitive, therefore a lowercase "u" and the numeral "1" must be used for the member ID identifier to be tracked.

A LinkShare advertiser link that has been properly appended with the member ID identifier may look like this:

```
<a href=http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-  
bin/stat?id=/FYI6fQ9PWs&offerid=7097.10000015&type=3&subid=0&u1=Bob123  
>LinkShare Referral Program</a><IMG border=0 width=1 height=1  
src="http://ad.linksynergy.com/fs-  
bin/show?id=/FYI6fQ9PWs&bids=7097.10000015&type=3&subid=0" >
```

In this example, &u1=Bob123 is representative of one particular member or organization of the Signature publisher. The identifier changes for each individual member or organization belonging to that Signature publisher's site. The member ID makes it possible for the publishers to distinguish between members and between organizations within the Signature Orders Report located in its LinkShare account. Here you can see the benefit of using a placeholder such as '&u1=defaultmemberid'. If you find that a transaction in your reports shows a u1 value of 'defaultmemberid' instead of 'Bob123,' an error could have occurred on your end with the way the member ID was appended.

Advertiser Compliance

LinkShare Signature works exclusively for advertisers within the LinkShare Network. More than 99 percent of LinkShare advertisers are compliant with Signature technology. If an advertiser is not able to work with Signature Publishers, it will be noted in their Advertiser Info section, where it will state "Signature Compliant: Yes or No". Additionally, transaction level data will only be recorded within the publisher's Signature Orders Report if they have acquired the LinkShare advertiser links through their LinkShare account and have had that account enabled with LinkShare Signature.

Accounting

Signature publishers are responsible for all accounting with respect to their members or organizations. The payments that Signature Publishers receive from advertisers or from LinkShare will be aggregate payments that reflect the total commissions earned from all of the members, organizations, and subsites combined according to the payment period agreed upon. Signature Publishers may divide and distribute the aggregate commissions among their members, organizations, and subsites at their own discretion. A Signature Publisher will not receive an outlined invoice with all of the transaction level data for its members or organizations, but may rely on additional reports available to them—the Signature Orders Report and Signature Activity Report—to facilitate the accounting process. The checks will be made out

and sent to the company or person you have designated within your LinkShare account. If your payment contact is different from your primary contact, please indicate this in your account.

Reporting

Once a publisher is enabled for LinkShare Signature, it will have access to two additional reports on the Publisher Dashboard, the Signature Activity Report and the Signature Orders Report. These reports can be accessed when you log in to your account and click on the **Reports** tab.

Signature Activity Report

This report records all of the click-throughs that are generated from your site to the sites of your partner advertisers. The following fields are included in the Signature Activity Report: member ID, advertiser name, click-throughs, sales (\$), and commissions (\$).

Signature Orders Report

This report itemizes transactions made by each member, organization, and subsite. The fields included in the Signature Orders Report are described on the next page.

Field Name	Description
Member ID	A variable field defined by the publisher. This can contain up to 72 alphanumeric characters, with mixed-case letters.
Advertiser ID	LinkShare's numeric value that identifies a particular advertiser. This value is a constant.
Advertiser Name	An advertiser's name as it appears to publishers within the LinkShare network. The advertiser can alter this value without notice to either LinkShare or the publisher.
Order ID	The order number that is assigned by the advertiser. This represents one shopping session.
Transaction Date	The date that the consumer completes his or her order as reported by the advertiser.
Transaction Time	The time the consumer completes his or her order as reported by the advertiser.
SKU Number	The stock-keeping unit that is assigned by the advertiser. Each product in an advertiser's inventory has a unique SKU value.
Sales (\$)	The total pre-tax and pre-shipment price of the line item multiplied by the quantity.
Quantity	The number of each product a consumer buys in his or her order.
Commissions (\$)	The dollar amount of the commission earned by the referring publisher. All commissions are pending credit card authorization and returned merchandise.
Process Date	The date the transaction was processed through the LinkShare system.
Process Time	The time the transaction was processed through the LinkShare system.

Why the Signature Orders Report is Different from All Other LinkShare Reports

The Signature Orders Report is based on “process” date, which is the date the transaction was processed through the LinkShare system. The transactions that are processed in a given day can never change once that day is over. As such, the report that you run for any given period will be the same whether you run it today, tomorrow, next week, next month, or next year. Commission payments are also based on process date. Note, however, that all other reports in your interface are generated based on “transaction” date, which is the date the order was placed as reported by the advertiser. Therefore, the Signature Orders Report and your commission payments will typically never match the other online reports.

How Transactions Appear in the Signature Orders Report

Each line item transaction represents a unique product that is purchased. During one shopping session, many different products can be purchased, and for this reason one order ID may be represented on several lines of the report.

Returns and Cancellations

When items purchased are returned or orders made are cancelled, the returns and cancellations will be deducted from the publishers’ reports. They will appear as separate lines in the Signature Orders Report, with the same information as the original transaction, except that the Sales and Commission” columns will reflect negative amounts and the process date and time will be different. Please keep in mind that returns and cancellations are posted to your account as LinkShare receives this information from the advertisers. The timing of this is dependent on each advertiser’s return and cancellation policy. You will need to contact advertisers directly for specific information regarding their return and cancellation policies.

Signature Orders Report Download Feature

Signature Publishers often need an automated way to retrieve transaction and associated member ID information on a daily basis, in order to properly credit members for their activity in a timely manner. LinkShare has developed a feature that provides publishers with the ability to directly access and download the online Signature Orders Report for any specified period of time. We have created a flexible and efficient way for publishers to generate this report how and when they want.

How the Feature Works

You will download the Signature Orders Report using one of the two special URL syntaxes displayed below. Note that certain parameters must be specified by you in order to access your report for the desired period.

URL Syntaxes:

```
http://www.linkshare.com/areport/ulfield?bdate=YYYYMMDD&edate=YYYYMMDD&cursorid=[username]&cpi=[pass]&eid=[sitecode]
```

```
http://cli.linksynergy.com/cli/publisher/reports/downloadReport.php?bdate=YYYYMMDD&edate=YYYYMMDD&cuserid=[username]&cpi=[password]&eid=[sitecode]
```

You must supply the information for each of the fields described below:

bdate - The begin date for the report you would like to generate, in YYYYMMDD format, based on process date

edate - The end date for the report you would like to generate, in YYYYMMDD format, based on process date

cuserid - The user name that you use to access your publisher channel

cpi - The password that you use to access your publisher channel

eid - This is the LinkShare-assigned tracking ID for your publisher channel; if you only have one channel you don't have to supply a value for this field. Your **eid** is the unique 11-character code that tells LinkShare which publisher a click came from. It can be found in any of your links and appears in red in this example: ``

Example URLs

The URLs below will download a Signature Orders Report for all transactions processed in the month of January 2009 for a publisher whose account username is "**link**," whose password is "**share**," and whose LinkShare tracking ID is **lMh7Xiq9xN0**.

```
http://www.linkshare.com/areport/ulfield?bdate=20090101&edate=20090131&cuserid=link&cpi=share&eid=lMh7Xiq9xN0
```

```
http://cli.linksynergy.com/cli/publisher/reports/downloadReport.php?bdate=20090101&edate=20090131&cuserid=link&cpi=share&eid=lMh7Xiq9xN0
```

Sample Report

The output file will be in tab-delimited format with the same fields that appear in the Signature Orders Report.

```
Member ID Advertiser ID Advertiser Name Order ID Transaction Date
Transaction Time SKU Number Sales($) Quantity Commissions($) Process
Date Process Time 331def 1234 Advertiser Y 2163 1/31/2002 8:58 32 7.99
1 0.3995 2/1/2002 12:46 782ghi 567 Advertiser Z 30201312800284 1/30/2002
20:42 *not-available* 0.0395 1 0.001975 2/1/2002 17:46 782ghi 567
Advertiser Z 30201312800284 1/30/2002 18:53 *not-available* 0.0295 1
0.001475 2/1/2002 17:46 132jkl 1101 Advertiser W WEB-4420121 2/1/2002
18:30 rba4530 39.98 2 1.999 2/1/2002 23:46
```

Guidelines for Using the Signature Orders Report Download Feature

LinkShare does not recommend or endorse any particular method for integrating these reports with your backend system. However, below are a few general guidelines to consider as you plan what will work best for you.

1. Typically, member IDs are associated with transactions as LinkShare processes them. However, sometimes there will be a slight delay between when a transaction is posted to your online reports and when the member ID is associated with it. This delay could be as short as two days or up to seven days. For this reason, it is not recommended that you run a report for the current day.

Please note that member IDs will only be associated to transactions if the publisher has correctly appended the '&u1=' code to the advertiser link.

2. If you use a proxy server, LinkShare does not recommend using the Signature Orders Report, as the username and password to your LinkShare account are in the URL syntax.
3. We suggest using a network utility such as wget in order to retrieve these reports. Sample 'wget' command syntaxes:

```
wget -O ulfield.txt -S  
"http://www.linkshare.com/areport/ulfield?bdate=20020101&edate=20020131&cus  
erid=link&cpi=share&eid=lMh7Xiq9xN0 "  
  
wget -O ulfield.txt -S  
"http://cli.linksynergy.com/cli/publisher/reports/downloadReport.php?bdate=  
20090101&edate=20090131&cuserid=link&cpi=share&eid=lMh7Xiq9xN0 "
```

Best Practices for Signature Publishers

Choosing advertiser partners:

- Review the list of LinkShare Premium Partners; it recognizes advertiser programs that conform to publisher-friendly practices. These premium partners:
 - o Pay publishers on a monthly basis.
 - o Pay publishers based on a maximum \$25 threshold.
 - o Offer seven return days or more in their baseline offers (this does not apply to advertisers with pay-per-click programs).
 - o Supply complete and current contact information in their profiles.
 - o Use LinkShare's check-cutting service (which allows LinkShare to publish detailed information on payment status in their payment reports and provides a trackable process for consistent, timely commission payments).
 - o Ensure prompt authorization of publisher payments so publishers are paid at the end of the following month.
 - o Are active and in good standing.

- Choose advertisers that provide excellent customer service and logical navigation on their site.
- Read advertisers' offer terms and legal agreements.
- Use the **Payment History** under the **Reports** tab in your LinkShare account to identify advertisers that pay their advertisers in a timely manner.

Reporting transactions to members, organizations, and subsites:

- Be advised that advertisers have 90 days from the date of a transaction to report a return or cancellation.
- Develop a schedule for reporting any money or points to your members, organizations, and subsites that takes returns and cancellations into account.
- Consider posting transaction data to a "pending verification" area that members can view until you are comfortable with releasing funds.
- Provide detailed information about when transactions will be reported to manage your members' expectations.

Constructing member IDs:

- Script the pages with a default member ID such as "defaultmemberid" that is replaced with the actual ID of the member when they log into your site.
- Once a member or visitor is assigned a unique ID, when the member visits the site again, the same ID should be assigned. Do not randomly generate a new ID each time the member revisits your site.
- If applicable for your business model, construct member IDs that contain both an identifier for the member who is shopping and the organization or charity designated by them.

Fraud prevention:

- Redirect all clicks away from your site through your own servers prior to sending the visitor through the LinkShare link to detect the IP address of your members.
- Watch for an unreasonable number of click-throughs to a particular advertiser for the same IP address in any 24-hour period (only applicable for per-form and cost-per-click advertisers).
- Use LinkShare click data to reward members (for cost-per-click advertisers) and not your server's click data.
- Flag very large purchases as a precaution.

Payment to members, organizations, or subsites:

- LinkShare invoices advertisers for publisher payments within 5 days following the close of a month. At the end of that month, payment is due, and the advertiser will either issue publisher payments directly to publishers or to LinkShare (who will issue payments to an advertiser's publisher partners on their behalf within 3 to 5 business days).
- Issue payment to members, organizations, or subsites after you have received payment from the advertiser.

Promoting advertisers:

- Promote advertisers in your online and offline marketing initiative, including sending emails and newsletters to your member base.
- Leverage top real estate on your site for top-tier offers with advertisers.