

Gear Patrol

How lifestyle magazine Gear Patrol leads an image-based commerce-related content strategy



Challenge

How to monetize an online daily magazine with limited resources

Solution

Gear Patrol adopted an image-focused content strategy and used Skimlinks to automatically affiliate product links and gather data to optimize their approach

Focused on maintaining older content along with new stories to yield tangible improvements

Results

A 22% increase in conversions on items with original imagery

92% increase in affiliate revenue year-over-year

Perfectly blended content with product links, adding value by allowing readers to learn about, easily find and purchase the products mentioned

Founded in 2007, Gear Patrol is a daily magazine for men that features a mix of highly-stylized stories around gear, adventure, food, design and culture. Described as “a gathering place for guys hell-bent on making the most of their time on planet Earth in the 21st century,” the lifestyle publication has over 5 million page views and an average million monthly unique visitors.

Challenge:

Gear Patrol had limited resources available to dedicate to sourcing and writing about commerce-related content. Their mission was to focus on telling captivating stories while still writing about products and earning, whenever possible, commissions from the sales they drive. Due to their relatively small size, Gear Patrol also needed to be sure that their efforts were bringing a positive return.

Solution:

Gear Patrol decided to focus on fundamentals: telling a good story and using original imagery. To optimize their posts, Gear Patrol included direct links in the images to online retailers where products can be purchased.

This strategy increased Gear Patrol's chances of attracting their audiences' attention while providing readers with an easy way to access the mentioned products.

One of the ways Gear Patrol applies this strategy is via buying guides such as the one on [men's Duffel bags](#). Original imagery illustrating and linking to each bag was added to the buying guide to give context to the reader and grab their attention.

Gear Patrol also made concerted efforts to maintain older content along with new stories. Via various tools, including the analytics provided by Skimlinks, Gear Patrol found that this article (and others like it) perform particularly well, so every six months they update the text and links to keep it current: out-of-stock products are replaced with in-stock ones, broken links are updated, and new products or merchants are added.

Other examples of commerce-related content that can be updated throughout the year include posts around [seasonal footwear](#) and [summer fragrances](#).

Original imagery adds authenticity that words can't. Using Skimlinks we now understand the real value of our imagery.

Ben Bowers, Co-Founder & Editor, GearPatrol

Results:

Focusing on producing content with an emphasis on high-quality imagery has proven to be tremendously successful for Gear Patrol. When original photography of a product is published along with the link to where the item can be purchased, Gear Patrol sees a 22% increase in conversion on those items.

With Skimlinks automatically affiliating product links on-click for Gear Patrol, the uplift in conversions also means an uplift in commissions earned for the publisher.

In addition, the impact of continued post maintenance has resulted in a 92% increase in year-over-year affiliate revenue for Gear Patrol — with the top 20 performing pages in affiliate revenue being published between 2012 and 2014.

22% conversion increase On items with original imagery
92% increase in affiliate revenue year-over-year Thanks to regular post maintenance and based on a pageview increase of only 45%
Perfectly blended product links with content Bringing value to Gear Patrol's audience by making it easier for readers to access the products they just read about

Gear Patrol's keys to success:

- Inspiration is just as important as information. Go outside the box and get creative to inspire your readers.
- Show as well as you tell. Use original imagery when you can.
- Always provide context. Anything that we do we're thinking about how products integrate into the bigger stories we want to tell.
- Keep older posts updated. Make sure to include correct links and product information to maximize affiliate revenue opportunities long after the original publish date.