Advertiser's Guide to Using the Merchandiser

Version 6.1

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This specification document is a dedicated guide for LinkShare Japan. Please note that the implementation details and required items may not necessarily match those of other regions outside of Japan.

Introduction

This document is a technical specification guide for advertisers using the Merchandiser service provided by LinkShare Japan. By utilizing this service, advertisers can upload their product data to the LinkShare Japan system and provide more effective data to affiliate partners. The data generated by this service includes the following two types:

Product Links

By uploading basic product information, product link codes that can be used on LinkShare Japan are generated. LinkShare Japan provides a product link search tool to affiliate partners, allowing them to search for necessary product links and obtain link codes. Advertisers can also provide product links only for specific links.

Merchandiser Data

The product data uploaded in bulk by advertisers is converted into usable code by LinkShare Japan and provided to affiliate partners who have approved the Merchandiser partnership. To reflect the validity and stock information of products, the data received by LinkShare Japan is processed and provided to affiliate partners as soon as the processing is complete.

0. Supported File Formats

The file format that can be used with the Merchandiser is the feed file for Google Shopping Ads.

1. How to Use Feed Files for Google Shopping Ads

To use the Merchandiser, you need to complete two steps: creating and uploading the file.

1.1. Creating Feed Files for Google Shopping Ads

Please adhere to the specifications on the following page for the feed file for Google Shopping Ads: https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/188494
The recommended file formats are .txt, .csv, and .tsv with tab or comma delimiters. It is recommended to upload files exceeding 1 GB in size in a compressed state, either as zip or gzip.
Supported character encodings are UTF-8 and SHIFT-JIS.
If third-party tracking parameters that affect LinkShare tracking are included in the product URL, they need to be removed.

1.2. Uploading Feed Files for Google Shopping Ads

Push / Pull Files can be uploaded to LinkShare via SFTP (push method). Advertisers who wish to upload directly to LinkShare need to first create an FTP account with LinkShare. LinkShare will create the FTP account and provide the login ID/password. The host name for FTP connection is "products.linksynergy.com".
LinkShare can also retrieve files from the advertiser's system via HTTP, HTTPS, or SFTP (pull method).

File Naming Conventions: Spaces and special characters cannot be used in file names.

<<Pull Method>>
 When using a method where LinkShare will get your file via HTTP, HTTPS, or SFTP, follow the file naming rules in the format below. Only full update files can be uploaded using the pull method. Note: Always use the same file name and do not add sequence numbers or timestamps to the file name. Recommended file naming rule: <mid>_nmerchandis_full.txt
For example (if MID is 1234): 1234_nmerchandis_full.txt
File name other than the recommended rule can still uploaded as long as the name always same, but please consult our LinkShare Japan helpdesk in advance via the inquiry form

(https://linkshare-ec.zendesk.com/hc/ja/requests/new).

<<Push Method>>

When uploading via SFTP, follow the file naming rules in the format below, and enter a number to distinguish the file (such as date or sequence number) in the "*"
("*" part is mandatory).

Recommended file naming convention: <mid>_nmerchandis*_full.txt

For example (full update with date 2024/06/01): 1234_nmerchandis20240601_full.txt

File name other than the recommended rule can still uploaded as long as the name always same, but please consult our help desk in advance via the inquiry form (https://linkshare-ec.zendesk.com/hc/ja/requests/new). <mid> is the advertiser's ID. If you are unsure, please consult our LinkShare Japan helpdesk via the inquiry form (https://linkshare-ec.zendesk.com/hc/ja/requests/new).

Update Schedule and Frequency: When files are uploaded to LinkShare via SFTP (push method), the files are imported each time, and the processing begins thereafter.

When LinkShare retrieves files via HTTP, HTTPS, or SFTP (pull method), files are retrieved according to a predetermined schedule adjusted with the advertiser's file creation frequency. Please consult our LinkShare Japan helpdesk for schedule adjustments.

Important: The product data information you upload must be accurate and up to date. Affiliate partners display the advertiser's product data information on their affiliate sites, and if there are any errors in the product data information, LinkShare Japan may stop providing the product data until the issue is resolved.

1.3. File Compression

Both feed file formats support zip and gzip compression. Compression is recommended, but if you compress the file, the file naming rule should append ".zip" or ".gz" to the end of the aforementioned file naming rules.

Examples: 1234_nmerchandis20240901_full.txt.gz 1234_nmerchandis20240901_full.txt.zip

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2. Contact Information

For advertisers using the Merchandiser for the first time, or for changes in format or data transmission methods, please consult our LinkShare Japan helpdesk via the inquiry form (https://linkshare-ec.zendesk.com/hc/ja/requests/new).

Rakuten

Appendix A: Product Data File Details

For details on the feed file for Google Shopping Ads, please refer to the following
URL: https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/188494
Please check the table below for the required items for LinkShare Japan.
When listing on Kakaku.com (Search), there is information and items that must be included
when creating the Merchandiser data, so please refer to the Kakaku.com requirements
below. (Note: Listing on Kakaku.com (Search) requires approval (company review), so please
consult with your sales representative first.)

Attribute	LS Required	Kakaku.com Required	Remarks
id [ID]	○	○	**Note**: Based on the id value in GoogleColumns, a link ID is automatically assigned on the LS system side. Since Kakaku.com uses the link ID as a key for search result ranking logic, if the id=link ID value changes, it may impact the logic and temporarily lower the ranking.
title [Product Name]	○	○	It is recommended to include shipping

Attribute	LS Required	Kakaku.com Required	Remarks
			information at the end of the product name. Example: [Free Shipping on All Items]. Please include the company name in the product name (e.g., Nissen/ニッセン).
google_product_category [Google Product Category]	○	○	Please set the category name (e.g., Fashion & Accessories > Apparel > Dresses) instead of the numeric category ID. Please set the category in Japanese (categories set in English cannot be listed on Kakaku.com). Please set the category up to the 5th level (excluding products that do not have a 5th

Attribute	LS Required	Kakaku.com Required	Remarks
			level). **For listing on Kakaku.com (Search)**: Depending on the genre handled by the EC site, one of the following categories must be included. Please consult your sales representative for category selection and approval. Both LS unified category and Google category must be set to the end category. ・Google Category ・LS Unified Category 【Important Points】 ※For Google Product Category, Kids and Shoes product are not available for

Attribute	LS Required	Kakaku.com Required	Remarks
			listing on Kakaku.com. If you wish to do listing for these Kids and Shoes product, please use LS Unified Category. Also, if product category is not added in the end, it will not be listed on Kakaku.com
link [Product Link]	○	○	URL of the product page
image_link [Product Image Link]	○	○	Please set the URL with https. If the image URL is http, it will cause an error on the Kakaku.com site, and the image will not be displayed correctly, making it unlistable.

Attribute	LS Required	Kakaku.com Required	Remarks
description [Product Description]	○	○	For Kakaku.com (Search), it is recommended to include as much detailed information as possible to make it easier to catch keywords in searches and SEO from Google, Yahoo, etc. Including color, size, and alternative keywords in the text makes it easier to display. Please include the brand name in both English and Katakana. Also, please set the company name and site name in the product description (if there is an English name, it is recommended to include both). Example: NIKE / ナイキ COACH / コーチ GUCCI / グッチ BEAMS /

Attribute	LS Required	Kakaku.com Required	Remarks
			ビームス Nissen/ニッセン, etc.
sale_price [Sale Price]		○	Register the product price with the 3-digit ISO 4217 currency code. Setting the sale price to 0 yen or leaving it blank is not allowed for listing on Kakaku.com. If there is no sale price, set the same value as the price. Example: 1500 JPY
price [Price]	○	○	Register the product price with the 3-digit ISO 4217 currency code. Set the tax-included price. Example: 1500 JPY

Attribute	LS Required	Kakaku.com Required	Remarks
availability_date [Availability Date]			
expiration_date [Expiration Date]			
brand [Brand]			
shipping [Shipping]			It is recommended to set this.
mpn [Manufacturer Part Number]			It is recommended to set this.
shipping_label [Shipping Label]			
availability [Stock Status]			
gtin [gtin]			Enter a unique

Attribute	LS Required	Kakaku.com Required	Remarks
			value for all product data. If values overlap in other items, only one of the overlapping records will be retained. If the ID is unique, it is possible to import with duplicates as before. It is not mandatory but recommended to set.
age_group [Age Group]			
color [Color]			
gender [Gender]			**For listing on Kakaku.com (Search)**: Fashion sites with Google product categories must specify the Gender. Set it in English

Attribute	LS Required	Kakaku.com Required	Remarks
			according to Google Merchant Center specifications. Google categories include "male", "female", and "Unisex", but "Unisex" cannot be listed on Kakaku.com (data import not possible). For unisex products, please enter either "male" or "female". In that case, it will be listed in the men's or women's fashion category on Kakaku.com.
material [Material]			
size [Size]			

[Notes]

- **Characters that cannot be used:** The following characters may not be reflected correctly, so their use is not recommended:
    - Various device-dependent characters (circled numbers, Roman numerals, parentheses, etc.)
    - Full-width tilde (～), full-width minus (－)
    - Emojis (mainly for mobile devices)
    - Half-width Kana characters

    *Full-width hyphen (-), full-width long sound (ー) can be used.

    Regarding LinkShare, the data format reflected on the affiliate side is either TXT or XML. Some affiliate sites may use XML data for publication purposes. Therefore, please ensure that the XML format data does not contain any control characters that would render the data unusable.

- **Regarding "4: Product URL":**

    1. Set the value of "Product URL" to a full URL starting with "https://".
    Also, full-width characters cannot be included in the URL.

    2. Some major media have an upper limit on the number of product URLs that can be listed. If the product URL is likely to exceed 200 bytes, please consult the helpdesk in advance.