

## **Effective Banner Advertising – Useful info from Maltaserv.com**

Banner advertising is by far the most popular and widespread form of advertising on the Internet, almost every website has some form of banner advertising on it. There's just no escaping the banner on the net.

With the right 'ingredients' banners can be a good source of visitors and income for most webmasters.

There are five of these ingredients considered to be the most important, using all or most of them will always enable you to get a higher click through for your various banners. We'll list them and continue to discuss each one in a bit more detail.

- \* **Small file**
- \* **Call to action**
- \* **Animation**
- \* **Good ad copy**
- \* **Fake factor**

### **1. Small File**

This is one of the most important things you have to get right when designing a banner, if the .gif or .jpg file is large it will take a few seconds to download and by then the visitor might have scrolled down the page, meaning he or she doesn't even get to see your banner. If people don't see your banner they definitely are not going to click on it. So make sure your file stays below 10K, 15K at the absolute most, it's sometimes hard to do, but if others can do it, we can do it too.

### **2. Call to Action**

This is one of the easiest ways to increase the CTR (click through rate) of a banner. On this all the experts agree. Using a call to action simply involves having the words 'click here' or some other words such as 'sign up now' or something similar.

Our thoughts on why using a call to action increases the CTR include the fact that there is so much advertising off-line, such as TV, Radio, billboards etc. etc. With advertising on these off-line mediums, target audiences are generally just required to watch or read the ad. All online ads have a link and the purpose is to get people to click on the ad and visit the advertiser's website. However, with the world being so used to off-line advertising, many people just see banners and think that's it. They don't realize that they are actually meant to click on the banner to find out more. That's why having 'click here' or another call to action improves the effectiveness of a banner.

### **3. Animation**

Banners with moving elements attract the eye a lot more than static banners do. The whole idea of designing banners is to grab the attention of website visitors. Using small animations helps do this. We say small because we don't want you to go overboard and fill a banner with lots of animation. This is a bad idea. First, it increases file size and secondly it is generally annoying to people after a while, especially when they are trying to read an article or tutorial. If your banner annoys them, they will most likely just leave without clicking on it.

### **4. Good Ad Copy**

This one should be obvious, but you should always include good ad copy in your banner. Lots of fancy animation and pictures won't entice visitors to click, they just grab a visitor's attention. It's the actual text that will get people wanting to check out your product. Try to emphasize the benefits, not features of your product or service. Tell people how your product will make their life easier. Keep your wording short and concise. If you can, use words that have been proven to attract people such as 'free', 'proven' and 'secret'.

### **5. Fake Factor**

Many of the very successful banner ads of late have incorporated some kind of fake elements in them. There are various fake elements banner designers can use, such as fake scroll bars, fake text links, fake selection boxes, fake text boxes, and fake submit buttons to mention just a few. Banners with fake elements perform well because people think they are clicking on a link to go to another page on the current site (as in the fake text links) or they think they are clicking on a button. In fact, they are actually clicking on a banner with a picture of a button and text link.

These fake banners are made using the Print Screen button usually found on the right side of any standard keyboard. Simply open a webpage or application and press 'print scr', then crop the image around the button or scroll bar area (the area you want to fake) and then paste it into your banner. That's it, you have fake elements in your banner. Alternatively, designers simply draw buttons, scroll bars etc. using their graphics program.

Well there you have it, the five most important pointers to remember when designing banners. We could end the article here, but before we end, we must talk about targetting your banner.

Always try to place your banner on sites that cater to your target audience (ie - the people most likely to buy your product). There's no point putting a banner for a new golf club you sell on a site dedicated to software, also, if you have a generic local target audience, don't buy banner impressions that will appear in another country. Visitors to the site are simply not going to be interested and you're just wasting your money. If you are not exposing your banner to your target audience, none of the above tips and tricks will help you.

**Maltaserv Bannerlink – Malta and Gozo's Free Banner Exchange – <http://www.maltaserv.com/bannerlink/>**