

10 Effective Ways to Boost Banner Click-Through

by NewMedia Staff

Banner advertising is one of the most widely used marketing media on the Internet. Though banner click-throughs have decreased to way less than one percent in the past year, it is still possible to achieve reasonably good click-throughs of three percent and above.

Below are 10 effective steps that I have successfully used to help my clients boost click-throughs on their banner campaigns.

1. Employ Action Words

Use action words like "free" and "click here" in your banners. Offering something free in your message attracts the reader to click on your banner. Banners with "Click Here" teasers and similar action phrases also increase click-throughs.

2. Use Short and Punchy Headlines

A short and punchy banner headline makes a difference. Always load your headline with benefit statements -- offer solutions to the challenges that your customers face. If you sell diet products, try "Lose 10 pounds in four weeks." Work on a winning combination of text and graphics in your banner ad.

3. Animated Banners vs. Static Banners

Animated banners usually outperform their static counterparts by more than 100 percent. Surfers are more likely to notice banners that are animated. Example: If you have the words "Click Here" flashing in your banner, it will perform better than a static version.

4. Adopt Better Designs

Many of us are not graphic artists. We can create simple banners but it is hard to match the work of a professional graphic artist. You should engage a professional banner ad designer to create your banners. Expect to invest \$80 per banner.

The standard sizes for banner ads are 400x40 pixels or 468x60 pixels. I recommend that you design a 468x60 banner. With the clutter of graphics on most Web pages, a larger banner has a higher chance of getting noticed.

5. Try Trick Banners

These banners resemble Windows dialog boxes, scroll bars, submit buttons or blue-colored underlined hyperlinks. They attract you to click on the dialog boxes and scroll bars, which you are already accustomed to doing with the Windows operating system. If you use trick banners with short and punchy headlines, you can get click-throughs above 10 percent.

6. Reduce Your Banner File Sizes

Reduce your banner file size to less than 15K. The last thing a surfer wants is a slow-loading Web page. Most Web sites and banner exchanges do not allow excessively large banners.

Create a fast-loading banner right from the start. Optimize your banner file size through your graphic software or an online graphic optimizer.

7. Rotate Your Banners Regularly

Always have two or more banners to promote each product. A banner usually burns out after a surfer has seen it three times. They will ignore (if not hate) banners that they see repeatedly. If your click-through is steadily declining, then it is time to rotate your banners.

8. Target Your Banners

Place your banners on Web sites visited by your potential customers. If you promote gourmet coffees, place your banners on sites targeted at gourmet coffee drinkers. The quality of leads generated are higher, and more likely to result in sales.

Running your banners on targeted sites generally yield higher click-throughs and return on investment (ROI). You are reaching people who are most interested in what you have to offer. Of course, you can try Web sites with general audience if they generate substantial ROI.

9. Monitor Your Banners' Performance

Make it a point to check on your banners' performance every few days. Monitor the click-through rate. The click-through tells you how well your banner performs. Most banners fetch a click-through of between 0.8 percent and two percent. If your banner gets more than two percent, it's doing a pretty good job. By monitoring your banners' performance, you can kill under-performing banners before they waste away your advertising dollars.

10. Do Your Mathematics

Do your mathematics for each banner advertising campaign. Calculate the cost-per-visitor, cost-per-sale and return-on-investment ratios.

For example: If a Web site charges you \$20 per thousand impressions (\$20/CPM), and you get a two percent click-through (20 visitors), your cost-per-visitor is \$1.00 (\$20/20 visitors). And if one in every 10 visitors buys your product, your cost-per-sale is \$10.00 (\$20/two sales).

So if each sale of your product produces a gross profit of \$15, then your net profit per-sale will be \$5.00 (\$15 gross profit/\$10 cost-per-sale). Your ROI, before non-marketing expenses, is 50 percent (\$10.00 total net profits/\$20 investment). This campaign is profitable.

Try advertising on different sites or using different banners. Find the winning combination(s) that can yield the highest ROI. Comparing Deal A, which yields an ROI of 20 percent to Deal B that yields 60 percent, your advertising dollars work three times harder (and profitable) with Deal B.

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