

How To Build A Better Banner Ad

Contributed by eMarketer
Friday, 24 December 2010

Pity the standard banner ad, the workhorse of the webpage. It does not dazzle with video or rich media or annoy visitors by popping up or under other content.

Declining clickthrough rates appear to have stabilized at a mere 0.09% in 2010, falling from a fractional 0.15% in 2008, according to a recent report from MediaMind.

And consumers scorn them: 43% of respondents to an online AdweekMedia-Harris Poll said they ignored or disregarded internet banner ads more than paid search ads and those in traditional media—TV, radio and newspapers.

Those sentiments aside, eMarketer estimates that ad spending on standard banners will increase 11.4% in 2011, to \$6.56 billion, and will continue to grow to \$8.63 billion in 2014. How can marketers make the most of their online investment?

First, give consumers what they want. Only one in five respondents (21%) said they would interact with a company or brand online through banner ads that simply “œmarket to me,” according to a report from strategic communications agency Cone, conducted by ORC.

The vast majority (77%) were motivated by coupons, discounts and other incentives and nearly half (46%) appreciated efforts to solve a problem or provide more information on a product.

Entertaining ads were farther down in the rankings—just 28%—as were widgets, games and online contests (26%).

Second, realize that CTR is not the only measure of an effective banner ad.

After analyzing more than 100 million conversions through thousands of campaigns worldwide, MediaMind reported only 20.4% resulted from clicks, meaning that 79.6% were the result of viewing the banner without clicking.

MediaMind suggested these ways to increase effectiveness of a standard banner campaign:

- * Choose sites with focused content vs. those with more general content aimed at a diverse audience.
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- * Get more real estate on the page with larger standard banners. Large ads perform better than small ones.
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- * Retarget users with multiple exposures. Users are more likely to click on ads that they have already seen, but most users see a campaign only once.

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13 December 2010