



## **How To Run A Successful Online Advertising Campaign**

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Advertising on the web has become as prevalent, if not more so, than advertising on television. So many of the sites we visit are littered with pop-up ads, banner ads, and embedded videos that block the actual content of the site. I am a person who happens to believe that web ads are ineffective, but the numerous site administrators that I have complained to over the years insist that they make money from placing the ads. That is all well and good, but my question is this... do the people who buy the ads from their website make any money? Before any company decides to run a web-based ad campaign, they should understand what is and what is not effective when it comes to advertising on the Internet.

You're sitting at home watching your favorite television show or sports team and the station roles into a commercial break. You sit there, mesmerized by the advertisements and immediately pickup the phone and buy everything you see on the screen. It's an ad executives dream; only it's not anywhere close to reality. The fact is, most of us just flip over to another station and watch something else until the commercials are done. Ad executives are so aware of this that they are trying to get your cable providers to use technology that prevents you from flipping away from their commercials. Other executives have moved away from pushing for longer commercial breaks in favor of using product placements during shows or, worse yet, the dreaded crawl or bug at the bottom of the screen.

So, if television executives can see the problem with using standard advertising techniques, why are Internet sites attacking their viewers with an ever increasing barrage of invasive ads? Honestly, I do not know. We have debated this over and over again in my company. Is Doctrino Systems going to benefit from web advertising if I dump thousands of dollars into it? Every company probably asks itself the same thing. Unfortunately, there is no one simple answer. It really depends on what it is that you are selling.

In the past, my company has purchased high quality, professionally crafted radio ads, newspaper ads, and mailers and plastered them all around the Tri-state Area. We've placed banner ads on websites and gone into marketing agreements with other companies. None of these endeavors has ever come close to garnering us the success we have had with positive word of mouth from our existing customers and the simple, in-person sales visit. We sell services and, to be more precise, we sell ourselves and our talents and skills. You cannot capture that in an ad or web banner, you have to be able to



show it to potential customers. We are a perfect example of a firm that does not benefit from a massive web campaign.

Companies that can benefit from a web-based ad campaign are ones that have a concrete product to sell. But, even then, if your product is one that is bought solely within a niche market, plastering your ads all over the web is a waste of time and money. Take care to understand your market. If you sell gardening equipment, put your ads on a gardening website. If you sell books, put your ads on an online book seller website.

Even by identifying your market and going after them on websites that pertain to your product, you still cannot guarantee that your ads will be effective. In my opinion, web ads in general are a waste of time. The most important thing to do to promote your company on the web is to ensure that your website has high placement within search engine results. The reason for this is quite obvious... people like to use search engines to find the products or services they are looking for. If you can come up high on the list or at the top of the list, you will increase traffic to your website.

But, you need to be careful. Search Engine Optimization is a tricky business and needs to be crafted with thought and expertise. Many companies offer SEO services and you may want to seriously consider making use of such services if you intend to spend a lot of money. Doctrino Systems works very closely with several SEO companies to help ensure that our customers get the exposure they need.

But, beware... you can wind up losing a lot of money if you pay for high placement on search engine sites, but do not handle your keyword management correctly. If you intend to pay Google or Yahoo money to place your ad in a prominent spot, you need to think about how much you want to spend. Is it really necessary for you to blow your budget to be the first name on the list? Can you deal with being second or third? Additionally, you need to make sure that the little blurb that appears along with your URL makes sense and quickly describes what you are selling or offering.

You should also consider adding content to your site that the various Internet bots out there will pick up on. The more text content you have on your site that references the key areas you work in or products you are selling, the higher you will place in search engine results. This does not require you spending money, it only requires some time and effort on your part. Try setting up a blog that discusses your products and services or create weekly news articles related to your offerings.

Finally, so many companies forget a very important element of web advertising. They spend thousands of dollars on web ads and search engine placement, but put nothing into making their website compelling. You need to make sure that your website is easy to navigate, that people can see immediately how to contact you or buy your product, and that your site is attractive and representative of your business. I am always surprised by



the number of companies I see that pop up at the top of a web search, but have awful looking and unmanageable websites. Put as much care and effort into your site as you do into getting people to go to it.

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