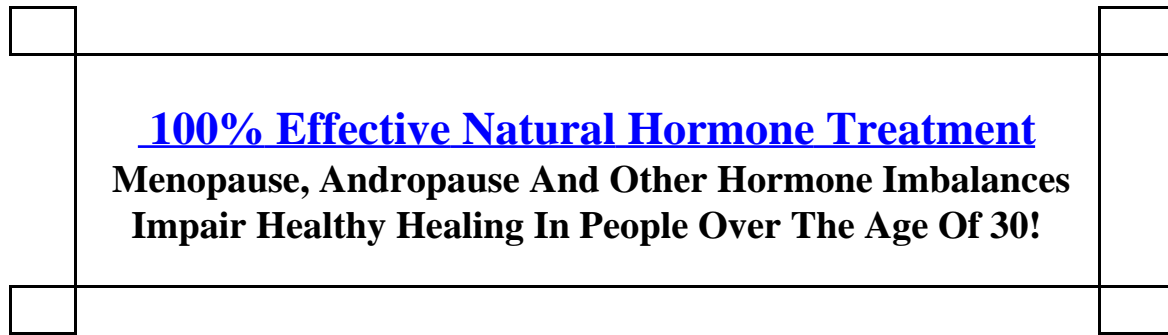


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Banner Ads Don't Work, But Non-Banners Do!

By Ernie West

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Make your banner look like text on a page.

This is what I call a "non-banner" (close to "no-brainer"). If your banner looks like a banner, it gets ignored. Conventional banner ads only pull less than three percent on average.

Why is that? It's because we have learned to ignore advertising. Every day we are bombarded with sales pitches in newspapers, on the radio, on television, on highway billboards, and so on. It becomes background noise that we learn to tune out.

Something that doesn't appear to be a sales pitch will receive more attention. Intelligent surfers are looking for information. They want to find out about something and be told how their problem can be solved. Do that properly and you will get their click. If you try to entertain them, impress them with graphics or bore them with your company's features, you won't get noticed.

Your banner is pretty much a classified ad. And classified ads work when the rules of marketing are followed. Make your banner an attractive text ad and it will pull like crazy. Make it look like any other flashy, hyped up banner and it just becomes more of the clutter on a site.

If your banner will be staying at a permanent home, design it so it looks like it is part of the site. Match the background color, fonts and layout as much as you can. If your banner is going through a banner exchange, use white as a default color. At the very least your text will be highlighted if it lands on

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a dark background.

Put useful information on your banner. Highlight key words and phrases. Use a power headline consisting of your best benefit right up front. Appeal to their "click impulse". Make them an offer they can't refuse. Create a sense of urgency.

Put the words "Click Here" at the end of the text message, underlined and in standard blue. This visual is the most underused and yet the most effective way of getting a surfer to click. Who cares about having fancy buttons, use what works!

Don't use animated banners. Animated banners do pull better than static banners but they still look like banners. Most people smile and say "That's cute!" before clicking away somewhere else. Normal text doesn't flash or move, so neither should your non-banner.

By following these and other simple rules for banner design you could very well, through testing, end up with a non-banner that generates a much higher click-thru rate than a conventional banner.

Currently many website owners are only too happy to host your banner and collect your money for doing so since the banner is only pulling a little of his traffic and is harmless to him. However, he might become concerned after your new non-banner starts to pull a bigger chunk of his traffic away from his site! Of course, you won't care because you'll be on your way to the bank...

Ernie has put the rest of the design ideas and a sample "non-banner" on his site at <http://go.to/erniewest.com>

Ask Mr. D – Banner Ads

By Bill Daugherty

Ask Mr. D – Banner Ads by Bill Daugherty

Dear Mr. D,

Banner Ads Don't Work, But Non-Banners Do!

Do you think banner ads are a waste of time? Some of my friends tell me that I am wasting my time by using banners and I would like to know what you think.

Just one more thing. I have found a site where I can make my own banners for free, but they are not the animated kind. I have read that animated banners do better than the others. Is this so and how can I make animated banners.

I sure do hope you can help me.

Signed,

Banner Man

Dear Banner Man,

No, I don't think banners are a waste of time. While banners don't enjoy the high click-through rate they once did, they can still be an effective marketing tool.

To be most effective, banners need to be placed on high traffic sites that target visitors most likely to want your type of product or service.

Animated banners do produce higher click-through rates than non-animated banners. At least, that has been my experience. The two sites I have listed below offer free animated banners. They are both easy to use.

Animation Online

<http://www.animationonline.com>

AdDesigner

<http://addesigner.com/cgi-bin/samples.pl>

Banner Ads Don't Work, But Non-Banners Do!

Don't make banner ads your only marketing effort, but only one part of your overall marketing plan.

Bill Daugherty Do you have an advertising or marketing question you'd like to see published in this column? Send it to <mailto:MrD@epm.zzn.com> You can visit Mr. D's website at: <http://www.freeadsgalore.com>



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