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When Is An Ad Not An Ad?

By Stuart Reid

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One marketing technique used by advertisers old and new is to conceal sales pages as something else.

The Infomercial, for example, extends the TV Advertisement into something that pretends to be an informative program.

Likewise, newspaper and magazine advertisements often mimic the style of news reports or editorials.

In Internet Marketing we can also make use of this technique, in a number of ways.

The most common method is to write an article. The article provides useful and interesting information yet also sells a product.

I don't just mean the resource-box here. You can submit a blatantly advertising article to an e-zine if you like, but you can't expect them to publish it. If however you paid for it as an ad, they would be likely to publish it for you. Unfortunately you'll hit a snag.

This problem is similar to the newspaper ads mentioned above. Often, in newspapers, the ad has a nice "This is an Advertisement" line tagged to the top! Pretty much ruins it's effectiveness, right?

The same thing happens in e-zine advertising. You'll either get the article/ad stated as such in the subject line or at the top of the e-mail body. Publishers have to do this to protect themselves, but it instantly marks out your article as an ad.

There are alternatives. If you enter into an agreement with a publisher, i.e. a Joint Venture, they may print your article as you provide it without boxing it out as an ad. Again this happens in the newspaper world – often without you realising OR tagges as an "Advertising Feature".

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Another way is to disguise your article. Don't blatantly sell in the article, but pre-sell. Excite your reader to the possibilities of whatever your article is selling without actually mentioning it. Then the link in your resource box would lead to a site that does the rest.

You of course get the added benefit of the fact that articles are essentially free to publish :-)

The last method we can use is `fake` web-sites. These sites are again focused on selling a product but disguised as a news report, article, resource or similar. Often that would involve selling behind the scenes via e-mail (with e-mail capture at the site). Or the site could provide free information and a problem, and a (paid) way to eliminate the problem.

You can see this in action at Virus Killer, Ad-Ware, Evidence Eliminator sites and similar. The site looks like a "Warning! Your Computer Is Infected!" page, or perhaps provides a report on the latest

viruses and offers a (sometimes free) way to fix them.

These techniques are very useful in selling anything online and take advantage of humans basic emotions. You are more likely to believe a voice of authority, or what appears to be!

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