

Brand Recognition

By Bob Osgoodby

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Most of your larger companies have recognized the value of brand recognition. McDonalds has their arches, Goodyear has its blimp and AOL has its distinctive pyramid.

While many people maintain that the Internet creates a level playing field with the larger companies, brand recognition is often overlooked. Larger companies do the majority of their advertising offline. Sure, they will reference their web sites in their ads, but are not completely dependant on web advertising.

Net based entrepreneurs must also create this brand recognition if they hope to succeed. This can be done in a number of ways. Many people who have local businesses, can promote their web site with their web address on their letter head or business card, but these are not the people we're talking about here. To them, the web site is simply an offshoot of their existing "brick and mortar" business.

We're referring to people trying to compete on the national or international level. There are a number of companies that have done this. Remember the old "Cookie Cutter". Their "dumb little ad" is their brand recognition. Anyone who has been around the web for awhile would have immediately recognized their ads. But this may be a case where the brand recognition worked against you. Many people adopt a "been there - seen that" attitude and immediately "click on by".

So what do you do to try to achieve your brand recognition? First - a consistency of ad copy will go a long way. It is suggested by most advertising gurus that it takes 5 to 7 exposures to an ad before someone may look further. If you change your ad copy every time you post it, people will not identify with your ad.

If you use the same ad in many different places, people will start to identify with your ad, and may ultimately take a further look. But that of course raises a dilemma. How do you know if you have a good ad that will draw, or one that needs to be changed? Experimentation is the key here. See which ads immediately get your attention and try to model your ads after them.

Keith Maurer, an Independent Marketing Executive for FreeLife kmaurer1@comcast.net has broken the code. He runs several ads in different Newsletters and hosts a weekly health column by Dr. Earl Mindell. Not only does he get exposure with the ads, but has a very low key plug at the end of each

of Dr.Mindell's columns.

His "brand recognition" is his association with Dr. Mindell. People will begin to identify with his ad, and after seeing it a number of times, and in different places, will usually investigate further.

After identifying a "killer ad", the smart merchant then carries that same theme through to their web site. Again, consistency is the key here.

While you may not have your arches, or own a blimp, your brand recognition is no less important than it is to the "big guys". Unquestionably, it is one of the more important thing you should try to attain.

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