

I Want Free Advertising!

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So you've got your website all set up. You know what you're promoting and it's looking good. You know you need to advertise and promote as much as possible to actually get your website seen. You've tried the normal avenues such as classified ads, safelists, ffa's. etc, but now you're ready to try something else, right?

There IS another way of getting free advertising. It's called Bartering. It basically means to exchange goods and/or services without using money. Bartering, also known as Trading, Exchange or Ad Swapping comes in all shapes and sizes. Many small sites use banner exchanges as a way to reach more people. Ezines often swap sponsorships in an effort to gain more subscribers etc.

The terms of a trade are usually only limited by the creativity of those taking part. The main consideration is to make sure it ties in with the goals of the site. Also, making sure that everybody involved has a clear understanding of the agreement details.

Here's a list of 5 different ways to "ad-swap" for free.

Reciprocal Links:

Basically, this is where 2 sites agree to show a link to each other. This can work wonders for search engine ranking, so long as the site you swap links with is relevant to your site. To find potential linkswap partners for free, do a search on say www.google.com for sites similar to yours. Mail the webmaster a nice friendly mail, telling them what you like about their site, and asking if they might be interested in exchanging links with you. Don't worry if some of them say no, keep trying, and you'll be surprised at how many will actually say yes.

Banner Exchange:

In laymans terms, the concept behind a banner exchange is "I'll put your ads on my site, if you'll put my ads on yours". Banner exchanges are different to simple link swaps in terms of how many potential site visitors can be reached. Members of large banner exchanges have the potential for their ads to be shown on thousands of other sites. Also, unlike simple link swaps, banner exchanges result in your ads rotating through many many different sites, sometimes with the benefit of sophisticated targeting.

Here are some free banner exchanges for you to check out:

<http://www.bxmegalist.com/>
<http://www.bcentral.com/products/bn/default.asp>
<http://www.bannerswap.com/>

Button Exchanges:

Button exchanges are similar to banner exchanges in all ways apart from the size of the graphic displayed. Button exchanges usually have smaller membership numbers than banner exchanges. As a result, they tend to come and go, with very few of them lasting and/or become much used. Some niche exchanges, particularly webmaster related, have used the micro-button (88x31) effectively. While small in size, the micro-buttons allow a site to earn more views (and credits) per page.

<http://www.adbility.com>

Text Link Exchange:

This is pretty much the same as reciprocal link swapping, apart from here there's a whole Network of sites, where all participants display text ads in exchange for credits which are converted into ads to be displayed on other sites.

<http://www.txtswap.com/>

Web Ring:

Web Rings are basically a group of like-minded sites all linking to each other. Web rings are usually made up of small/midsize sites. The number of web rings and member sites runs into the millions. A web ring can be created on just about any topic, by just about anybody. After creating a ring, the ring owner is responsible for attracting and approving applicants. Approved sites become part of the web ring.

Navigating through webring is normally done by using the "next", "previous" "random site" and "complete list" links. The first original web ring system, which is now part of Yahoo! is still the most popular and can be found here: <http://www.webring.org/>

Web Site Award:

A Web Site Award is basically an award given from one Web site to another, as a means of creating linkswaps. They range from great big events like the Webby Awards to thousands of smaller sized link exchanges from small sites.

A lot of the Web site awards are really more about attracting site visitors than they are about competition. Sites that GET awards hope to attract visitors from the award sites, and sites that GIVE awards hope to attract visitors from the recipient sites.

<http://www.webbyawards.com/>
<http://www.awardsites.com/>
<http://www.awardsscoop.org/background/history.html>

And there you have it. Maybe not the easiest ways of getting free advertising, but most definitely not the hardest. Try them out, see what works, and stick with it. Remember, as with all advertising, you need to do a lot of research, homework, and testing to find out what's right for you.

Good luck in your promotions!

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-----Resource Box-----

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