Free Web Ads

By Bob Osgoodby

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Each week, several hundred people take the time to submit a free ad to our web site, and most will never be heard from again. We check the email addresses of all people who submit an ad, and as high as 5% of the email addresses submitted are not valid.

Maybe they don't want their real address known, or they are just careless when entering it. The bottom line however is that they are just wasting their time, as their ad will never be posted. Additionally, our experience shows that approximately 10% of E-mail addresses used for this purpose are not valid after a month. What causes this?

For starters, many of them are "free" E-mail addresses that people abandon if they don't make a "killing" in the first couple of days, and here is the surprising part - most returned mail that we get back, is due to the fact that their mailbox is full! They are probably sitting on a "ton" of prospects but don't have the ambition to check their mail. Who needs them?

Another large group are AOL addresses - they get their free hours and try to go into business. When the free hours expire, or they are cancelled for spamming, they are out of business.

We require that free ads be renewed each week to ensure that the people who submit them are still "alive and well". Why do we do this? The answer is simplistic. We don't want people who visit the web site, to find a bunch of ads from people who are no longer in business.

"But I put a free ad on a web site and had no responses." Let's face it - it takes between 5 and 7 exposures to an ad before someone may respond. Some people have had their ads on free sites for years - why you might ask? Because their ads are generating customers, and they track where the results are coming from. If they get a few sales from a free ad, it is certainly worth their time to take a few minutes each week to renew it.

There are plenty of web sites that offer free ads. What should you look for from one of these sites and what should you consider?

First - forget the programs that submit ads to hundreds of web sites at a time. We used to accept those and had several thousand ads submitted every few hours. Most web sites that offer free ads, put a top limit of 300 ads which will be on their site at any given time. To make room for the new

ads, the old ones are dropped off, and your ad may have had a life of a minute or so. This is a waste of your time and money.

Second - forget ads that are auto-submitted, and not approved by a human being, as you may find your ad intermixed with ads you do not wish to be associated with - I know I wouldn't want to find my ad between ads for various porn sites. Even if they are categorized, the porn site owners don't care - they will place their ads anyplace they think they might find an audience.

Most sites, such as ours, change the algorithm on a regular basis, and we know if the ad is being auto-submitted or placed from our web site. Auto-submitted ads are automatically deleted.

Third - if a web site offers free ads with enhancements such as Bold Titles and automatic links to web sites, for goodness sake use them. This will make your ad stand out in the crowd. But don't violate the rules set down. Your ad will most likely be rejected.

Fourth - don't use a free E-mail address in your ad - these are not a good harbinger of permanence, and many people will not respond for that reason. Your very best bet is to have your own domain. If you don't, at least show that there is some stability. I would much rather do business with someone who has an E-mail address and a Web Site through their ISP, than someone promising outlandish claims with just a "Hotmail" address.

Will you generate some business with "Free Web Ads"? Yes - but only if you do it the right way.

Did you know that subscribers to Bob Osgoodby's Free Ezine the "Tip of the Day" get a Free Ad for their Business at his Web Site? Great Business and Computer Tips - Monday thru Friday. Instructions on how to place your ad are in the Newsletter. Subscribe at:
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