

How to Design Your Own Banner Ads

To help you get started creating your own banners, I have found 3 free automatic Internet banner creation programs and have put together these 10 killer banner design techniques.

If you want to take the easiest route to design a banner, you can use one of these three free sites:

- <http://www.animationonline.com>
- <http://www.zyris.com>
- <http://www.quickbanner.com>

To design my own banners, I use Paint Shop Pro which has a free fully working demo available for download at <http://www.jasc.com>. It is probably the easiest to use graphics software available online today. It even comes with a full animation shop program that makes animating banners easy.

Just having the right software doesn't mean that you will create a good banner though. To give you some ideas on your banner design, try putting these 10 banner design techniques to the test.

- Use the words "Click Here" or "Enter" every time you design a banner.

You may think that these two words are overused online, but tests have proven that these words are able to increase the effectiveness of a banner ad by 20-30% without changing anything else in the banner. They inspire the reader to click on the ad if the headline of the banner interests them.

- Animate Your Banners.

An animated banner will increase your banner ads effectiveness by 30-40%. The key in using animation in your banner is keeping it small. The reason that you don't want big pictures or images that look like live video in your banners is the fact that the banner will load too slowly on people's pages. The visitors just won't see it.

- Create quick loading banners.

Keep most banners under 10-12 KB. This will be very difficult to accomplish when you are using animation in your ads, but it needs to be done. Most animated banners are 15-20 KB, but that is way too large to load quickly. Keep them small. As a matter of fact, try to keep your banner under 10 KB to have good results from a banner exchange.

The way to do this when using animation is to keep it simple, maybe only one or two movements. Then, use Paint Shop Pro to decrease the number of colors. A banner that may have been 15 KB can often be decreased down to 3 or 4 KB when you decrease the colors to 16 or 216. You need a nicely designed banner that is high quality but loads quickly.

- Use an awesome headline in your banner.

Don't think that just having a good looking banner will make people click through. The key to effective banner advertising is having a good headline. A good technique to use is to keep the same headline on your banner ad that you have on your entry page. Then when they click through the banner, they will come to see the same headline that sparked an interest in them in the first place.

- The best word to use in your banner headline is "FREE."

This doesn't mean that you just need to put the word "FREE" on your banner without any other text. Tell them exactly what they will be getting for FREE. Using the word "FREE" in virtually any headline will make your response rate increase dramatically.

- Blue underlined text will often increase your response rate.

When Internet users see blue underlined text, they know they are links. By placing your headline in this type of format more people will realize that it is a link to another site. It will achieve a higher click through ratio.

- A blue border will give you a better response rate than any other color border for your banner.

Use blue as the border color for your banner and it will influence more people to click onto the entire banner. These little things may not seem like much, but they can increase your response rates.

- It is often a good idea to use your web site address or some type of company logo in the banner.

Don't focus your banner on your logo or web site address, but do include it in many cases. Your main benefit headline should be the focus of your banner. Your use of a web address or company logo in a small section of the banner just helps to produce a branding effect on people's minds giving you a few extra hits.

- Use trick banners.

Make your banner look like something in windows that people can click on. For example, a lot of effective banners I've seen use what looks like a windows slider. People create trick banners that look like sliders, buttons, checkboxes, and drop-down menus. These types of tricks will bring out the curiosity in people. They want to see more of the text and will click on the banner.

- Change your banner ads frequently.

Studies have proven that most banner ads start losing effectiveness after the third time a person has seen it. If they

haven't clicked on it by then, they probably never will. If you are spending a lot of money on advertising and purchasing hundreds of thousands of banner impressions, you will need to come up with a lot of different banners.