

## How to promote your website: Paid Advertising Strategies

Posted On Jan 21, Posted by [Admin](#) Category [Bloggies](#)

None of the approaches described above is “free,” since each takes time and energy. But if you want to grow your business more rapidly, there comes a point when you need to pay for increased traffic. Advertising is sold in one of three ways: (1) traditional CPM (cost per thousand views), (2) pay per click (PPC), and (3) pay per action (PPA) or cost per action (CPA) approaches. Examples of the latter are affiliate program and lead generation programs. Banner ads get such a low click-through rate (0.2%) that I don’t recommend paying much for them. Banner ads typically cost about 50 to \$1 per thousand page views, except on targeted sites. Do some small tests first to determine response. Then calculate your return on investment (ROI) before spending large amounts. Here are some methods to explore:

**1. Advertise in an Email Newsletter.** Some of the best buys are small text ads in email newsletters targeted at audiences likely to be interested in your products or services. Many small publishers aren’t sophisticated about advertising and offer very attractive rates.

More effective (and more expensive) is to send out an appropriate solo email to the targeted list’s subscribers. These often get a good response.

**2. Begin an Affiliate Program.** Essentially, a retailer’s affiliate program is a CPA program that pays a commission to other site owners whose links to the retailer’s products result in an actual sale. The goal is to build a network of affiliates who have a financial stake in promoting your site. If you’re a merchant, you need to (1) determine the commission you are willing to pay (consider it your advertising cost), (2) select a company to set up the technical details of your program, and (3) promote your program to get the right kind of affiliates who will link to your site. Software and service companies are available to facilitate the process. The problem is getting

enough affiliates who will actually work hard to promote your products or services. These “super affiliates” will probably consist of only 1% to 3% of your total number of affiliates.

**3. Purchase Pay Per Click (PPC) ads** with Google AdWords, Yahoo! Search Marketing, or Microsoft adCenter. This strategy is way down the list, but it is vitally important. Most Internet businesses will want to explore using Google AdWords to drive targeted traffic to their websites.

These PPC ads appear on the search engine results page, typically both above and to the right of the organic or natural search engine results. Since they are keyword-driven, they can be quite relevant to what a searcher is trying to find. Your ranking in this list of paid text ads is determined by (1) how much you have bid for a particular search word compared to other businesses, (2) the click-through rate on your ad, and (3) your Quality Score, which reflects the relevancy and quality of your ad and the landing page it points to.

PPC ads can be a cost-effective way to get targeted traffic, since you only pay when someone actually clicks on the link. But I strongly recommend that you study this carefully and expect a learning curve before you invest large sums of money in PPC advertising. You can find articles on Paid Search on our site.

**4. List Your Products with Shopping Comparison Bots and Auction Sites.** If you're an online merchant, you'll want to consider this. Shopping bots compare your products and prices to others. Some work on a PPC (Pay Per Click) basis, others on a CPA (Cost Per Action) basis, perhaps with a listing fee. Bots to consider include mySimon, BizRate, PriceGrabber, and Shopping.com. Shopping sites that include comparison features include: eBay, Yahoo! Shopping, and Amazon Marketplace. You pay to acquire first-time customers, but hopefully you can sell to them a second, third, and fourth time, later on.

**5. Rent targeted, commercial email lists.** The last website promotion technique I'll mention is renting targeted email lists. We abhor “spam,” bulk untargeted, unsolicited email, and you'll pay a very stiff price in a ruined reputation and cancelled services if you yield to temptation here. But the direct marketing industry has developed targeted email lists you can rent — lists consisting of people who have agreed to receive commercial email messages. These lists cost \$40 to \$400 per thousand or 4 to 40 cents per name. Do a smaller test first to determine the quality of the list. Your best bet is to [find an email list broker](#) to help you with this project. You'll save money and get experienced help for no additional cost. Realize, however, that due to the high cost of renting lists, many businesses won't generate

enough businesses to justify the cost. Run the numbers before you invest.

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