

Web Advertising Startup Guide

Our hosted software package offers you the ability to take full control of your Web advertising and its revenue potential. The close integration of our AdPilot ad management software with the Gryphon content management system makes managing your Web ads fast, simple, and flexible. But for those just starting out in Web advertising, there are a number of issues to consider before implementing an online advertising strategy. This guide should address some common questions as you build your Web advertising workflow.

SIZE AND PLACEMENT

The sizing and placement of ad positions on your new Web site is an important part of the design process. As with the print edition, advertising on your news site should be secondary to editorial content. That said, it still must be prominent enough to catch readers' attention. The flexible templating system that drives the display of your Gryphon-powered site allows you to strike a balance that can satisfy both readers and advertisers.

Although there is no technical limit to the sizes you can choose, the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) has developed a set of standards that many follow. The IAB's guidelines include more than a dozen suggested sizes designed to occupy common Web ad positions. The popularity of a given size may be linked to price, exclusivity or position on the page. With careful attention to your statistics and sales for each size, you can make adjustments to your online advertising strategy to maximize its revenue potential.

PRICING

Once you have determined your Web ad sizes and placement, you will need to think about pricing. The complexity of your cost structure can be scaled to fit the staff resources available to you.

By Month — The simplest method of pricing ads employs a flat monthly rate. One advantage of this pricing format is it provides the customer and your staff with set dates for the launch and removal of the ad. This consistency can be helpful for smaller advertising departments, as there is little day-to-day maintenance required. The total number of impressions accrued during a month will fluctuate based on the number of ads in rotation and seasonal changes in traffic.

By Impression — Another pricing method is based on total impressions. This is a more flexible format than a flat monthly rate, and it can be an inexpensive point of entry for new customers. Each ad position is priced at a cost per thousand impressions (typically with a required minimum buy). What makes this method more challenging to manage is that it is difficult to predict exactly when the ad will reach its target impression count. Therefore, your staff must track the progress of each ad and retire ads as their impression caps are reached. As described below, Detroit Softworks provides regular reports containing these statistics.

To compute actual dollar amounts, start with your smallest ad size and choose a base price. From there, multiply pixel width by pixel height to get a total area for each size and increase the base price accordingly. For ideas on where to set your base prices, we suggest reviewing the rates of other papers whose format and circulation are similar to your own. Using a combination of both pricing methods described above is a good way to ensure your offerings fit every client's needs. After the first few months, you will have a better idea of how long it takes for an ad to reach a certain number of impressions and how many impressions an advertiser can expect in a month. This information can help you sell more effectively in the future.

TRACKING

Tracking Web statistics is critical if your pricing is based on impressions. The data you collect over time will give you a better idea of monthly averages and can be a strong selling tool. Detroit Softworks utilizes custom reporting features within Google Analytics to gather impression counts and click-through rates for each of your live ads. We provide both automated weekly email reports and 24-hour access to the Web-based reporting interface, so detailed Web advertising statistics are always within reach.



PROSPECTING

Local — Although the Web can be a great addition to many of your clients' current advertising schedules, it is not for everyone. Clients with no online presence will have nothing to link their Web ads to. This can actually cause more harm than good, because they will have no way to call the reader to action. Also, if your client is already hesitant to advertise in your print edition, throwing out too many options may be overwhelming.

Examine how a client can benefit from Web advertising ahead of time and be able to present your findings when you make the pitch. Focus on clients who frequently update information (movie theaters, university departments, bars), run sales (clothing stores, restaurants), or experience high seasonal traffic (bookstores, apartment complexes, loft-building companies). Identifying the purpose of the ad will help both to develop a design and to craft a sales pitch.

National Agencies — Several major agencies offer national advertising targeted for campus markets. For these clients, the best thing to do is make sure your publication is on their radar. Some agencies allow you to input (or update) your Web advertising rate information online, through their Web sites. Others may require you to email a copy of your rate card. For information about specific agencies, we recommend conferring with other publications similar to your own in size and format.

Ads by Google — One of the easiest ways to earn passive income from your Web site is through Google AdSense. AdSense is a free service provided by Google that can fill your open Web positions with ads and pay you based on recorded click-throughs. Visit google.com/adsense for more information or to sign up. AdPilot is fully compatible with ads generated by AdSense. If you need help getting started, contact us at support@detroitsoftworks.com.

PITCHING

When pitching Web advertising, try to keep it simple. Some clients may be confused by too much Web-specific terminology. Of course, some will be very familiar with these concepts, but for those who are not, keep it basic and clear. Let them know exactly what they will receive for the quoted price. Some clients will ask for more specific information, but many will likely be content with the basics. You can always help them develop a better understanding of Web advertising concepts during subsequent meetings.

Use the information that you gathered during prospecting to outline the benefits of advertising online. Whether this information is presented in a document or verbally, it is important to always keep it present in the client's mind. However, you should also be careful not to overstate the return on their investment. As with any medium, Web advertising will not spark an overnight turnaround in sales. It is a complement to other forms of advertising, with its own unique advantages.

DESIGN

Once you have sold a client on Web, you will want to create something that is going to stand out on the screen. Like a billboard, the ad has to deliver the message quickly and clearly, because it may only be present on screen for a few seconds before the user clicks away to another page.

Do use:

- Images
- Short, precise language
- Call to action
- Colors that differentiate the ad from the background screen (no neon)
- Logo

Don't use:

- Too much text
- Overly bright/neon colors
- Too many slides or quick transition times (if the ad is animated)
- Clutter

