



**Incorporating Text Ad
Alternatives to
Google AdSense**
*Thinking “Outside the Box”
to Maximize Your Text-Based
Ad Revenue Opportunities*
By James L. Paris

When it comes to the topic of pay-per-click advertising, there’s no doubt, once you do the research, that Google AdSense is really the best opportunity out there right now. Given that, then, why would we bother spending time discussing alternatives to the Google program in the realm of pay-per-click? Well, for a number of reasons, actually. For one thing, it’s natural to want to see what else may be out there. Additionally, you may well find that different advertising campaigns resonate differently with different people, and so it is in your best interests to be sure you are connecting with as many prospects as possible. Beyond all of that, there is the matter of payout; different ad campaigns will have different payouts, and there are some that can put money in your pocket at a superior rate to AdSense - we’re going to look at one of those here.

What I really want to do here is to go beyond the realm of pay-per-

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Creating the Sales Letter (Part 1)
*Breaking Down This Essential Tool to
Realizing Substantial Sales*
By Robert G. Yetman, Jr.

When we mention “sales letters” as Internet marketers, what are we talking about? We’re talking about those compellingly-crafted pieces that serve to both market and advertise a product that we’re selling. You’ve doubtless seen bunches of them. The letters open as though they’re being addressed to you personally (without using your name, of course), and the tone of the letter that’s maintained throughout is such that it remains sounding as though it is written one-on-one from the writer (salesperson) to “you.” Well-written sales letters can be exceptional tools to convince one to buy whatever it is that’s being offered, precisely because of their capacity to draw you in at the outset and make several compelling arguments throughout the course of the letter. Once you finish reading such a piece, it is very likely...assuming the product is one in which you already had a pre-existing interest...that you won’t need any more prodding to initiate the purchase transaction.

Sales letters are very commonly used with Internet-based products. If you take a look at digital product retailer ClickBank (www.clickbank.com), you can uncover a lot of advertisements that use sales letters or sales letter-like formats. If you go to the “Marketplace” section of the site and search for a sample product or product category, you won’t have to click on too many of the search results before you find a product advertisement in the form of a sales letter. That said, sales letters are by no means unique to the Internet. Indeed, sales letters have long been common sights in magazines; advertisers selling this program

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click, per se, and discuss the opportunity to use text-based ads to make money with affiliate sales. It is easy to get sidetracked and limit your advertising effort to the AdSense program. It's easy, effective, and does not take much work. However, I'm a big believer in the idea that you are better off making use of a variety of different sales mechanisms on your website or blog, because you simply do not know what campaigns may resonate better or worse with your site visitors. For example, one of the effective campaigns I have running at Christian Money.com involves ClickBank. ClickBank, as many of you already know, is the Internet retailer where you can promote selected ClickBank products on your site and then be paid a portion of the sales price. It is not pay-per-click, because I am not paid simply by virtue of a visitor clicking on the text ad for the ClickBank product, but I *am* compensated if someone decides to actually purchase the advertised product from the link that originated on my web page.

One of the big questions that comes up from people who read the Google AdSense Terms of Service concerns the language in the TOS about not having other contextual ads on the same page as your Google AdSense ads if they look very similar to the AdSense ads. I get a lot of questions like, "Jim, if I have the Google AdSense ads on my page, am I allowed, on that same page, to have other text-based ads that are for something else?" The answer is "yes," as long as they do not look like the AdSense ads. The easiest way to comply with that rule is to simply do what I

do, which is to make the ads a different color. My understanding is that having the ads reflect in different colors is really all you have to do be OK in letting the alternative ads appear on the same page with the AdSense ads. The other thing I would suggest is to refrain from putting the ads right next to each other. It would be a good idea, for example, to be sure that the two different ad sets do not appear in the same column – you might be pushing your luck a bit if you were to keep them positioned that closely together. The point is that what Google is really wanting is for whatever other ads you might have to not appear in the same ad unit with AdSense ads.

What I want to be sure we discuss here is how to create these text ads in ClickBank. ClickBank is a fantastic, moneymaking opportunity. Sometimes I'll receive an email from a new student who is frustrated with what he's making from his AdSense account thus far, and is looking for suggestions on how to make a lot more money. Look, here's the truth: AdSense is a fantastic moneymaker, but in order to do well with it, you really need a lot of traffic to your website. As a brand new person doing this, it can be difficult to come right out of the box and have a huge amount of traffic. For guys like me who have been doing this for many years, I have fortunately been able to accumulate a great deal of regular traffic, so Google AdSense is an especially fruitful mechanism for us, and will be for you when you see a high amount of traffic to *your* site. However, for people who are just starting out, you will

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likely want to also put in place opportunities that are not as dependent on traffic level. One of the great things...perhaps the greatest thing...about ClickBank for Internet marketers is that \$50 or more can be generated from just *one sale* of a ClickBank product. So, for a lot of you who are basically starting out with this, or perhaps have chosen to theme your website or blog on a more specialized topic that does not have as much potential to realize huge traffic flow, I recommend that you make some space for some ClickBank ads.

I am not, in this article, going to discuss *display* ads, but let me make a few quick comments about those. While there is a place for display ads in your marketing efforts, you have to be aware that a lot of web-surfers have developed what is called ad blindness – this is something I’ve discussed before, and will no doubt discuss again. Ad blindness is the condition wherein a person surfing the web very quickly, and practically subconsciously, learns to discern ads from “real text” as soon as a page loads, and simply avoids spending any time looking at the ads directly. There are ways to at least partially deal with that and still use display ads, but the best way to deal with it is to stick with text-based ads. Text-based ads simply do not scream “This is an advertisement!” the way display ads obviously do, and when you factor that in with strategies you can use to make your text-based ads even less intrusive, you’ll find that text ads are probably the best way for you to advertise affiliate sales opportunities on your site.

There are a couple of different ways to create text-based ads in ClickBank. Obviously, this whole discussion presupposes that you have a ClickBank account already, so if you do

not, it will not make much sense to you. That said, you should certainly have one as an Internet marketer, and remember that a ClickBank account is free. Anyway, once you are in ClickBank, you will go to “Account Settings,” and, from there, to the “HopAd Builder.” The “HopAd Builder” is the place that provides you some terrific, easy-to-use tools for building ads for ClickBank products. Once you are at the HopAd Builder, you will be presented with two mechanisms by which to create ads: the “Text Ads Builder” and the “Tabbed Ad Box Builder.” Let’s first take a look at how to build ads using the Text Ads Builder tool.

Text Ads Builder

The Text Ads Builder block that appears at the left-center of your page will feature a “Get Started” button, and you’ll want to click on that to begin. When you do, you’ll be taken to a box that’s also labeled “Get Started.” In that box, you will be asked to fill in the following: *Keywords*, *Affiliate Nickname*, and *Tracking ID* (you won’t have to actually fill in Tracking ID). For starters, your affiliate nickname should already be filled in when this box opens up. If not, be sure to complete that, because it is the identifier that ensures you are paid for the ClickBank sales that take place from your page. Next, you will want to select your keywords. You might want to play around with this a few times to help you to decide which products you will want to promote. For example, let’s say that you have a site on health and fitness, and you think that you might want to create an ad block (a block of ClickBank text ads) related to weight loss. You might plug in “lose weight” as your keywords to see what comes back to you. However, before you search for ads, there are still a few more

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steps you have to complete. After you plug in your keywords, click “Next.” What follows is the “Appearance” screen, which allows you to customize the appearance of your ad box. Now, the options that you can manipulate, like ad width, ad height, font color, etc, are all self-explanatory, but the neat thing is that on this same page appears a preview of your ad that you can refer to as you make adjustments to the appearance of your ad block. As you make changes, you will click the “refresh” button for the preview, which updates the ad preview with your changes. Anyway, you can keep making these adjustments until you’re satisfied with the look of your ad block.

Something else you can do at this stage of things, as well, is to click on the actual ad links that make up your prospective ad block to see just which full ads are going to appear. That is, you can click on the links in the Ad Preview and see just what your site visitor will see when he clicks on the link(s), which is, of course, precisely what you want your visitors to do.

Once you’re happy with how the ad looks, you’ll click the “Next” button at the bottom of *that* screen, and move to the third and final step of the process, which is to get the ad code. After you’ve completed the first two steps of this process, a segment of HTML code is produced that is really the “guts” of the ad(s) that appears to visitors to your site. The specific code that is generated is a function of the first two steps of the process, wherein you clarified the keywords to be represented, the appearance of the ad, and a few other items. Now, you simply copy the code that’s generated and paste it into the location of your website or blog where you would like the ads to show up. If you happen to be

a member of our Internet Coaching program, you can receive assistance with that directly from our support team, but it is really a very easy task to accomplish.

Tabbed Ad Box Builder

One of the things I like about the tabbed ad box at ClickBank is that it really does a good job making the links look to be something other than ads. The way this happens is that the mechanism configures the ads in such a way that they are related to several tabs over the ads themselves. For example, the tabs might be labeled Top Products, Pets, and Education, and when the site visitor clicks on each of those tabs, perhaps five different ad lists, relevant to their respective tab names, will appear. Not only does this mechanism, then, give you the advantage of further masking the ad intent of your ad block, but it also provides a way for many more and different ads to appear in the same size space.

Your first step here is to be at the “Basic Setup” screen, which will appear automatically when you start the process of building the ad block. You will be asked to complete the titles for each one of the three tabs that will comprise your ad block. Again, let’s say that your website’s general theme is weight loss and fitness. Given that, you might make the title of the first tab *Lose Weight*. Moving on, the title of the second tab might be *Build Muscle*, and perhaps the title of the third tab is *Reduce Stress*. OK, now that we have the titles for each of our tabs, we next have to select at the same screen some appropriate keywords to correspond with each. For the first tab title, *Lose Weight*, it would be fine to also make the keywords “lose weight,” and leave it at that. For the second tab title, some good keywords might be “fitness, weight lift-

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ing,” so we’ll select those. Finally, for the third tab title of *Reduce Stress*, we can make those keywords “stress, relaxation,” and we’ll stop there. From here, you will click the “Next” button at the bottom of the screen.

The next screen that will open is entitled “Appearance,” and, as with the Text Ads Builder, this is the stage at which you manipulate the look of your ad block. A selection of options similar to that which is available in the Text Ads Builder will show up, and you will also have the use of the same, helpful Ad Preview on the right-hand side of the page that you can refresh each time you manipulate one or more of the appearance variables. From here, the last screen is the “Get Ad Code” screen, and just like before, you will copy the ad code to the place on your site you want the ad block to appear.

At the end of this easy process, someone with a website on health and fitness will have a block of 15 different ads...five ads per tab...with intriguing descriptions like, “Lose Weight By Eating More” and “How To Lose 80 Pounds Now.”

If you have yet to really prioritize ClickBank in your Internet marketing moneymaking efforts, you’re missing out on a LOT of money. These products carry with them huge commissions...some as much as 70%. This means that, depending on the product, one sale of a ClickBank product from your website could see you earn more from that than you might from a whole month of sales from the Google AdSense platform.

One of the things we all know, as Internet marketers, is that the visitors to our websites are becoming less and less inclined to click on display ads, and are now more inclined to click on text ads. Now this does not mean

that we avoid using display ads altogether; however, as an example, the banners that so often (less often now) appear at the tops of web pages are now receiving such poor responses that many sites have done away with them completely. The bottom line is that the online advertising world is really changing. The novelty of the Internet, and the associated novelty of big, “loud” display ads has worn off considerably from the days when this was all brand new. Clever graphics still exist, of course, and always will, but the point is that as the Internet’s “wow” factor has subsided, people are generally now looking for simple, text-based information, and advertising that coincides as closely as possible with that is going to be the primary way to go. Moreover, as we’ve seen, text-based ads that look a lot like the very content that site visitors are seeking to consume is an even better, more useful way to incorporate text-based ads, beyond simply having them.

The thing, too, to remember about ClickBank is that because so many of the products have such great, compelling sales pages...which are the places that visitors will end up after clicking on your small text ad...these products almost sell themselves; in other words, you don’t have to worry about your simple, text-based ad being enough to procure the sale, because the sales page will do it for you – what you need to focus on is the best way to get a site visitor to click through to the sales page, and a text-based ad will be your best option, overall.

I encourage you to gain “mastery” over the power of the text-based ad, and utilize its vast potential. We will continue to look at different varieties of this ad format as we go along, so that you may have as many revenue options as possible working for you.

Creating the Sales Letter (Part 1)

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or that system have always found a home in regular magazines.

Get in Front of a Variety of Different Sales Letters

One of the most useful tools of which you can avail yourself whenever you're looking to get good at something like this is to be sure that you're exposed to a lot of examples. In this case, you would do well to read a lot of sales letters, and read a wide variety of them; one of the nice things about going to ClickBank to get exposed to sales letter samples is that because ClickBank offers such a wide variety of products, you can see how sales letters can be developed that are applicable to many different types of products and services. Perhaps a product that you are planning to offer is very similar to one already available at ClickBank that has associated with it a good-looking, compelling-sounding sales letter. Something like that would surely be a good resource for you as you look for features of existing sales letters that you can apply to your own. Even if you cannot find a sales letter for a product that is terribly close to the nature and theme of what you will be promoting, there will undoubtedly be enough from which you can glean some good ideas or helpful tips. In the end, as with any kind of writing that you want to emulate, it's always a good idea to get in front of a lot of good examples of that kind of writing, so that you will have ample evidence of what to do, as well as what *not* to do.

Basic Elements of a Sales Letter

The basic elements of a sales letter are as follows: *image*, *headline*, *greeting*, *lead paragraph*, *body*, and *closing*.

Image: I'm not a big fan of the use of images in sales letters, but they are used frequently. If you do choose to use an image, make sure it's specifically relevant to the product you're selling; do not simply make it a replica of your company logo or something like that. Images *can be* compelling, but they have to do a good job of capturing your prospective buyer right away.

Headline: This represents the first element that those considering your product will see when they come across your sales letter. In this case, a "headline" is going to be a bold, large-font "shout-out" that grabs your reader's attention and becomes the catalyst to get him to begin reading. For example, if the theme of your sales letter is promoting a product for weight loss, the headline might read something like this: "*Latest Report Indicates that Obesity is the Number One Overall Cause of Cancer & Heart Disease.*" Now, I have no idea if that is actually a true fact or not, but I created this example to illustrate the kind of headline often used successfully in a sales letter. The person using that headline would then introduce and promote his weight loss product using, in part, an explanation of the referenced report. Sales letter headlines, in general, should be very catchy, and somewhere in between 3 and 30 words in length, although 30 words would be a lot.

Greeting & Lead Paragraph: Although I listed these separately at the outset of this section, they are often very similar to one another and are frequently one and the same. For example, I'm going to show you an example of the beginning of an actual sales letter where the greeting is in the form of a sub-headline, but is also a paragraph, and so could be considered both the greeting and lead paragraph of the sales letter, even

Creating the Sales Letter (Part 1)

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though the main body of the sales letter is still yet to come.

What follows is the very beginning of a sales letter authored by Bill Anderson of Chatham Artillery BBQ (www.bbq-book.com) that is being used to sell a book on great barbeque recipes.

Professional Barbecue recipes! Competition style ribs, butts, chicken, and beef brisket...

Have you ever been to a restaurant and ordered a plate full of succulent, mouth watering, fall off the bone, ribs? Would you believe me if I told you that "competition BBQ" is better than any barbecue you can get in any restaurant?

Now...you can learn the secret barbecue recipes of barbecue pros. Soon you'll be able to cook on a level that you never knew even existed.

Read on...

Now, the very first line here is the headline, which sort of shouts at you and is constructed in larger font. The paragraph that follows could fairly be described as a combination of the greeting and the lead paragraph. The headline makes you curious, and now the quick read of the emboldened opening paragraph/greeting makes you even more curious. It's at this point that you're ready to start reading the letter in full.

Body: Of course, the bulk of the sales letter is comprised of the body. The body should use the same tone as the greeting/lead paragraph, and expand on the ideas noted at opening. Your principal objective with the sales letter is to either exploit a pre-existing

need or want on the part of the reader, or *create* that need or want by making the argument for your product or service so compelling that the reader decides it is something he must have, even if it was not something he thought he should have prior to reading your letter.

Closing: All of the components to the sales letter are important, but if I was forced to pick the two most important components, I would say the headline and the closing. The closing is, of course, the last part of your sales letter, and it is where a lot of the deals that are ready to happen actually *do* happen. That is, your prospect might be 75% sold on your product by the time he reaches the closing, and it's up to the closing part of the sales letter to push him the rest of the way. The closing is where you reiterate the strongest arguments to buy, and it is also the place where you can make a special offer that actually sweetens the regular deal.

Creating Effective Headlines

Let's go back to the headline and talk more specifically about perhaps the single most important part of the sales letter (although, as I said, it's important that you do a good job in creating all parts of the sales letter). The headline is the shortest component to the sales letter, but is the most important, for what I hope are obvious reasons, and so we'll want to examine it more thoroughly.

Remember that everyone is pressed for time, so it's imperative that you grab people right

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Creating the Sales Letter (Part 1)

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away with the strongest headline possible.

Ask a Question: “Have You Ever Wondered What It Would Be Like to NEVER Have Another Argument With Your Spouse For the Rest Of Your Life?” Question-oriented headlines are very effective, largely because they draw the reader in immediately by beckoning him to ponder a question and formulate a response, even if it’s just to himself. That is, he right away becomes an active participant in the sales letter.

Begin Your Headline with a “How To:” “How To” kinds of headlines can be very compelling. If you have a site that’s about weight loss, something like this could work very well: “How to Lose 15 Pounds in Three Weeks!” The key to this approach working lies in having your “how to” headline say something so amazing that it prompts the reader to want to move on to your sales letter right away, because they anticipate that you will indeed be explaining “how to” do that amazing thing you shouted in your headline.

Provide a Testimonial: While it’s good to have testimonials as a part of the body of your sales letter when you can have access to them, you can make a testimonial your headline, as well. For example, this could be a reasonable headline for someone whose sales page is promoting his stock-picking method:

“The John Smith Stock Selection System Revolutionized My Portfolio and Allowed Me To Achieve Financial Independence in Just One Year!” Robert Jones, Age 58, Anywhere, USA

How exciting is something like that? Not only is what’s being said very dramatic and compelling, but it’s being said in the form of

an actual testimonial from a real person.

Issue a Command: Headlines in the form of commands have that weird way of getting a response even though the reader is not, obviously, being forced to do anything he doesn’t wish to do. How about something like this?

Take the Next 5 Minutes and Read My Letter to You If You Want to Learn How to Defend Yourself from Any Attacker, Regardless of Size

This is clever, because even though you’re issuing a command with this headline, what you’re saying is very appealing even without the command form: I can learn how to defend myself if I take just the next five minutes to read this guy’s letter.

These are just a few ideas on how to format headlines for sales letters, but you’ll find that a lot of sales letter headlines mirror what we discussed here. The point is that it’s not just what you say in the headline, but *how* you say it; how, exactly, is the information being expressed from a psychological standpoint so that it raises the chance that it will fully grab the attention of the reader? As we have seen, some of the “tweaks” you can apply to a headline are very subtle, and yet those subtleties can make a big difference in how well your sales letter pulls for you.

Next month, we will continue this important discussion of sales letters. We will get into several, additional topics, including whether you should offer a product guarantee through your sales letter, the questions your sales letter should answer before they’re asked, the importance of using short, powerful phrases to enhance sales letter effectiveness, and lots more; see you then!