## What is a Banner Ad and How Does it Work?

For years on end Complete Media has been preaching and still continues to teach and offer examples on how to effectively use banner ads.

We've been talking about how to create them, whether it's from a designer's perspective, from a marketer's perspective or from an entrepreneur's perspective.

We've been talking about how does banner advertising work, which colors work best, where to place them, how to make them clickable instead of annoying, what strategies to have in mind before designing a banner ad, what questions you should ask yourself before you create a banner ad so that it actually works and resonates with your audience and so on.

This blog has always been a source of education, inspiration, and examples when it comes to talking about strategies used by different companies and industries when creating successful banner ads.

But there's still a lot of confusion around this term and others related to it.

So instead of skipping the basic information and jumping straight to "ways of using banner ads for your content marketing", we're gonna take a stroll down memory lane and go back to the basics to make sure you understand what banner ads actually are and also why and how they work, once and for all.

As someone who is still learning about banner ads as well, I'm taking this chance to learn by explaining and sharing my own opinion after careful research.

Shall we?

### What is a Banner Ad?

A banner ad, or a web banner, is an advertisement displayed into a web page. The advertisement consists of an image (.jpg, .png, .gif) or of a multimedia object (usually created using Flash). Thus, banner ads can be static or animated, depending on the technology used to make them.

If you're looking for a definition that's a bit more formal, according to Wikipedia:

"A web banner or banner ad is a form of advertising on the World Wide Web delivered by an ad server. This form of online advertising entails embedding an advertisement into a web page. It is intended to attract traffic to a website by linking to the website of the advertiser. In many cases, banners are delivered by a central ad server."

One more example from Investopedia:

"Banner ads are image-based rather than text-based and are a popular form of website advertising. The purpose of banner advertising is to promote a brand and/or to get visitors from the host website to go to the advertiser's website. "

But to sum it up and make this as simple as possible, all banner ads share the same basic function: you click on this image/multimedia object you see on a web page and your internet browser takes you to the advertiser's website/landing page. They are simple yet very important pieces of html and their presence on the web can make a big difference for internet-based companies and brands.

**A Little Bit of History**



Some of you might know already about the first banner ad ever created, but if you don't, here's your chance to travel back to simpler, "ancient" times and experiment an old-school website and its first clickable web banner ad.

Take your time to study it, I'll be waiting here.

Ok, all set? Let's move on.

**So How Exactly Do They Work?**

Just the way a physical banner outside a shop would make you enter the shop because it says they offer a great discount on a specific product or they have this new product that kind of sparks your curiosity. It's the same with online banner ads.

When creating a banner ad you usually have a single goal:

Banner ads are intended to generate traffic to your website by linking to it and from there you try to seal the deal, whatever your deal is.

But you need to do that by attributing a role to your banner ad and see what fits best in that specific context. Web banners work the same way regular print media advertising does: they inform, they notify about a new product, they grab your attention, increase brand awareness and so on.

Having that in mind, there are a few ways of sending people to your website to find out more about your business, through banner ads.

We are going to call those the roles a banner ad can play:

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## 1. Increasing customer traffic

The banner ad encourages the visitors to go on the advertiser's website by clicking on it. And through this method, the ad is paid in many ways (CTRs, impressions, time spent on the web page etc.)

A great example of how banner ads are used to increase traffic is provided by Target. They plan their ad strategy around certain time periods.

Target uses ads related to baby products and baby registries because the specific time period mentioned in this article was when many women were pregnant.
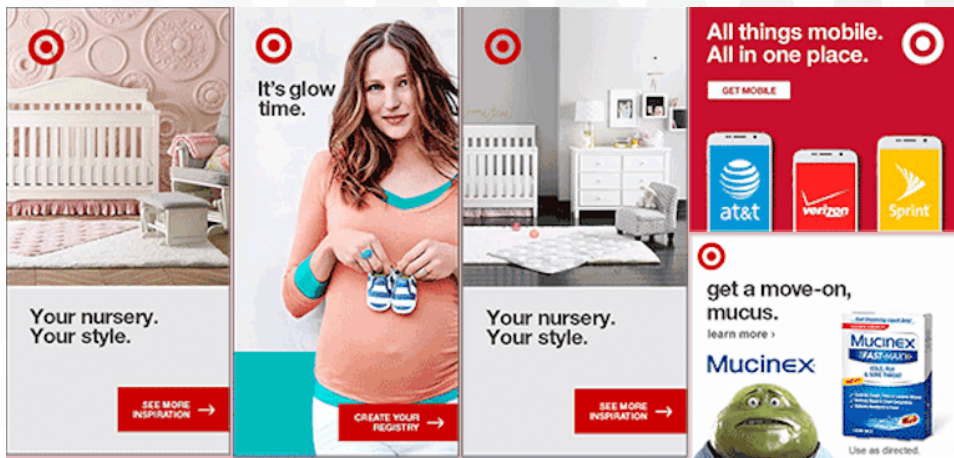


## 2. Sell a product

Banner ads encourage you to buy certain products.

And here it's all about the right context and placement. For it to be relevant and effective, the banner ad placed on a certain website has to be related to that niche and to offer an answer to the question the visitor that ended up on that website has.

Let's look at Airbnb for instance. Airbnb's success and reach were made possible through Google display ads. They started expanding by searching for platforms and channels that target a specific audience and by putting ads out there that are related to what the audience is searching for.

## 3. Grab the customer's attention

Capturing someone's attention nowadays can be very challenging, especially in the digital environment where it's all about being creative.

But you have a lot of information on how to be creative and how to design everything from scratch so that it's going to make your banner ad stand out from the crowd on this blog. It's up to you to study your target market and see if what you need is an animated bouncy ad or a classy font on a neat background.

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## 4. Announcing discounts and sales

Another way for businesses to generate and increase revenue is through sales and discounts. And what better way to reach potential customers than through banner ads? Let's say it's Black Friday and, of course, you offer discounts and a lot of your products are on sale. How do you spread the news and let your consumers know about them? By designing Black Friday themed banner ads that talk about it, of course.

### How to Make a Banner?

Here's a step by step guide on how to create a banner. With our drag-and-drop tool, it's easy to make a banner without designer skills. Give it a try!

### Why Do They (Still) Work?

Banner ads are a big part of the visual world. They work because people react better to visual content or a message that is accompanied by a visual example.

They are visual content and if you're still not convinced, here is this graphic to prove it:
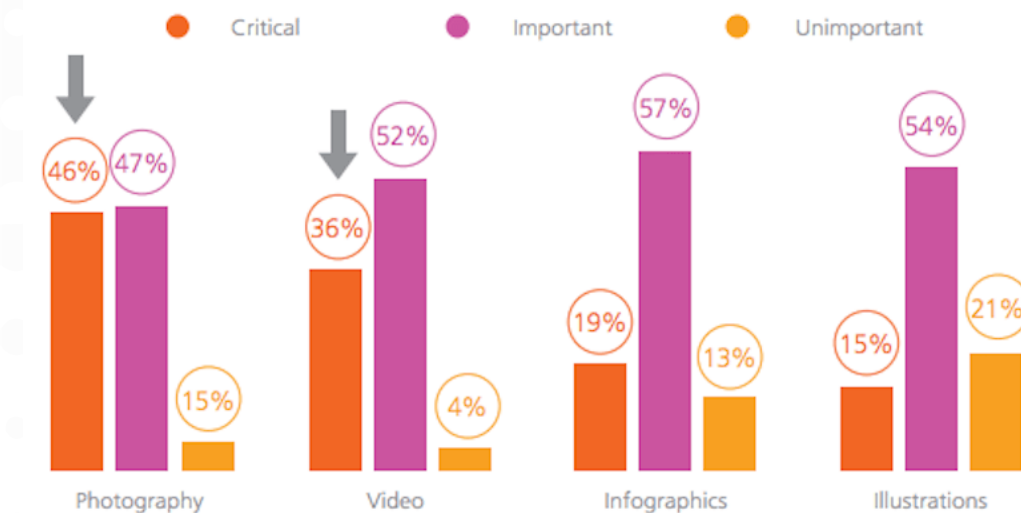


Since we're here, I want to shed some light on another term that seems to get in the way of the banner ad's success: banner blindness.

Yes, being exposed to thousands of ads daily, consumers have developed a certain immunity to them and they've learned how to focus strictly on the information that interests them, but that's far from concluding that they don't work anymore.

If you're already battling with this problem and want to learn how to make your banner ads work, take Neil's advice on how to overcome banner ad blindness.

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Just like with commercials, you have to challenge yourself and your brand to stand out, be creative and find what makes you different from your competitors, what makes your audience engage with you and what makes the customer respond to your ad and also when and where you should show up.

**Conclusion:**

Have no fear, banner ads are here!

And they're not leaving anytime soon, so you might as well learn how to design and use them because they are a powerful tool that can have a great impact on your business.

Source: Sonia Veres, Bannersnack

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