

## Affordable Advertising on Craigslist

The advertising on Craigslist is certainly affordable. In fact there is no fee for the majority of posts made on Craigslist. Craigslist began as a non-profit organization but in 1999 it was converted to a for profit organization. However, operating costs are supported by charging nominal fees for help wanted advertisements placed on the San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City Craigslist websites. Additionally, there is a fee for brokerage apartment listings in New York City.

The vast majority of those posting advertisements on any of the Craigslist over 300 websites are not paying a fee to do so. This definitely makes posting advertisements on Craigslist to be worthwhile from a financial standpoint. While the advertisements are free care should be taken to post these advertisements judiciously because although there is financial loss, poor posting can result in a loss of time and resources if it leads to poor profit potential.

## Why Craigslist is Free

Although the founder of Craigslist, Craig Newmark, was approached in 1997 about the possibility of running banner advertisements on Craigslist to generate a profit, he made the decision to keep Craigslist as a noncommercial website. Even after Craigslist was converted to a for profit organization commercialization did not infiltrate the website. The points listed in the Craigslist mission statement demonstrate why Craigslist has remained noncommercial:

- \* Giving each other a break, getting the word out about everyday, real-world stuff
- \* Restoring the human voice to the Internet, in a humane, non-commercial environment
- \* Keeping things simple, common-sense, down-to-earth, honest, very real
- \* Providing an alternative to impersonal, big-media sites
- \* Being inclusive, giving a voice to the disenfranchised, democratizing...
- \* Being a collection of communities with similar spirit, not a single monolithic entity

## Advertising on Craigslist vs. Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is another type of marketing which many business owners find to be both worthwhile and affordable. For many the appeal of affiliate marketing is the affiliates are not compensated for their efforts unless the business owner sees some type of gain from the advertising. This gain may be in the form of website traffic in the case of pay per click marketing, in the form of sales

in pay per sale marketing or in the form of potential leads when a website visitor performs a specific action such as registering with a website or signing up for an offer.

While affiliate marketing is very appealing there are others who prefer advertising on Craigslist. The advantages Craigslist offers to advertisers is, of course, that the advertisers never pay for their business advertisements and the community receives a great deal of website traffic already so driving traffic to the website is not a concern.

#### Why Free Is Not Always Better

However, there are some specific instances where free advertising is not the best type of advertising available. Consider a product or service for which Craigslist does not have an appropriate category. In this case advertising on Craigslist may not be worthwhile because although the advertisement is free, it is also not likely to receive a great deal of attention from members of the target audience. In this case, advertising on Craigslist may be a waste of resources.

Another example of an instance when Craigslist may not be a great advertising option is when the market is already saturated with competitors' advertisements. In this case it can be difficult to sway customer loyalty so it might be more worthwhile to pay for advertising in a less crowded market.

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