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Classified ads are a simple but effective method of announcing your products or services in cyberspace, and they should be a part of your online marketing plan. But when you post a classified ad, you're competing with dozens of other ads. This week, we'll conclude our list of classified ad tips for online guerrillas. Check the [previous weekly](#) for the rest of the list.

1. Use power words

The same power words that work in classified ad titles also work wonders in the ad's message. Words like "free," "guarantee," and "save" subconsciously make readers want to know more.

2. Offer something free

In most cases, your ad is only the fuse that ignites a productive business relationship. Often, the next step in the relationship is where the customer asks for and receives more details about your company or offer. Guerrillas make taking that next step as attractive as possible. In an ad for business financing services, for example, which of the following would make you more likely to take that next step?

"Reply now for more information."

or...

"Reply now for our free guide, "Six Steps To Business Funding."

3. Make it easy to respond

Offer your readers as many ways to respond as possible. If you have a phone and fax number, include it in your reply statement. Some customers may even be more comfortable sending you a letter via snail mail, so include a postal address, too. Don't cut yourself off from potential business by failing to offer a communications option.

4. Check your ad's position regularly

Classified ad areas on the Net and on online services change quickly. The ad you posted yesterday and which appeared on the first screen of ad titles could easily have been pushed down two or three screens by an influx of ads posted since then. Ads located on the first two or three screens are far more likely to be read than ones buried farther down than that. Most people won't bother to read through more than the first dozen or two ad titles.

Check the ad's position each day to make sure your ad hasn't slipped down into purgatory. If it has, re-post the ad with a similar title to move it back up in the list again.

5. Use multiple postings and coded responses

Your ad may fit into more than one classification on an online service, or you may be able to tailor it so that it does. For example, your diet and fitness program could be tailored to appeal to participants in specific sports, or to different groups of people (mothers, seniors,

teens, and so on). A customized ad for each area would magnify your visibility.

On the other hand, don't post the same ad to several different areas just for the sake of visibility--such "cross-postings" identify you as someone too lazy to make sure their ads are appropriate for each area, and such ads may be rejected by the ad area or newsgroup's moderator anyway.

When you post a series of tailored ads in different places, use different response keywords so you'll be able to tell which ad is pulling the best. For example, if you're offering a catalog of audio equipment and you post to a business products area as well as to a consumer electronics area, you might tell readers of the business products ad to reply and ask for your "Business Audio Catalog." In the ad posted to the consumer electronics area, you could tell people to reply and ask for your Home Audio Catalog. That way, you'll know by the words people use in their replies which ad is doing better.

Classified ads are popular because they work. But like any marketing weapon, guerrillas learn to make the most of them in battle. Follow these strategies when creating and placing your ads, and you'll be well ahead of the competition.