

RCU Cast #101 – THE THREE SECOND RULE!

Hello, this is Erick Royer, your company's personal sales and marketing consultant with RCUniverse.com. Before we get into this first RCUAudiocast, I wanted to take a moment to thank you personally for your support of RCUniverse.com. In just 5 short years we have become the largest media in the radio control hobby making a huge impact on the way hobbyists share information and learn about products and services offered throughout the industry.

Today I wanted to talk to you about what I like to call, "THE THREE SECOND RULE"

What is the three second rule, you ask? Three seconds is the amount of time that you have to grab the attention of an RCUniverse.com visitor. When you think about it, people are coming to RCUniverse, to read and post in the forums, check out new products, to buy and sell their RC Wares in our Marketplace, and to read our online magazine articles. They are NOT, coming to RCUniverse to specifically look at banner ads. Just like the fact that no one buys magazines specifically to look at the advertising. So with that in mind you need to remember that a good banner campaign is one that stops someone in their tracks and causes their eyes to pull away from what they are doing and want to peer at your ad. Once you have accomplished that, you have just burned an impression in that users mind of your product, company logo, and/or message. The best ad designs will burn all three. With this, you have just accomplished your first banner ad marketing goal of **BRANDING**. Branding is typically the main, if not only, result that you get from print media advertisements. But thankfully you are part of the upper echelon of companies, who advertises online, not to keep up with the joneses, but because you know if properly done right, it can be the most cost effective, easy, robust, marketing avenue that you take.

Of course what makes a banner ad so much more robust than a print ad is the fact that once you've gotten the persons attention, he/she is only 1 mouse click away from your website and your order page. Forget about dog-eared magazine pages, booting up your computer and maybe typing in the address of your website to obtain more information, on RCUniverse, your banner ads are one click away from a potential sale.

So now that we know what the Three Second Rule is, and the benefits of banner advertising, lets talk for a little bit about how to best utilize the Three Second Rule.

How can you grab someone's attention in 3 seconds or less? Perhaps the best way to start this discussion is to talk to you about things that do not work.

With 5 years of experience working with companies of all types offering thousands of different products, I may not consider myself to be an **EXPERT** on the subject, but I certainly consider myself **VERY** knowledgeable on banner advertising and what works and what does not work.

Banners with lots of small text are one of the first no, no's. If it takes you longer than 3 seconds to read the text in your ad, then that is a sure sign that you are not meeting the three second rule.

Ads that are grainy or low resolution are not going to work either. Your ad is a direct reflection of your business. So let me ask you... Would you put low resolution images or grainy photos on your box art? Would you have rough edges in the finish quality of your products? Of course not! You should put the same attention to detail into your banner ad design, as you put into your products, business image, and services. A poor quality Banner ad will make the consumer think that you offer poor quality products or services. It is all about Image.

Online, everyone can be perceived as a fortune 500 company. The internet makes the playing field even for all companies. You could have a 1000 square foot rent on main street and yet your website and banner ad designs can make the consumer think that you are 400,000 square foot building with 5000 employees. RCUniverse goes the extra mile in evening out that playing field.

How do we do this? Consider a magazine and your marketing budget. Can you afford a full page ad? How about 2 of them? How about 5? If your answer is no, then how do you ever expect to compete with a 1-5 full page spread from one of your larger competitors in the industry? Will your ¼ page ad in the back of the magazine have the same attention grabbing power as a full page ad? NO, of course not! On RCUniverse, every ad location is shared evenly with all the advertisers contracted to that specific location. So if your budget only allows one banner campaign, then in that given spot you have the same penetration as a company who spends 10 times more to have 10 different campaigns.

Now that you understand that we have evened the playing field, then that should make you more excited about the quality and message that you are going to portray in your ads from this day forward.

Some examples of characteristics that make a banner ad work and keep within the Three Second Rule are:

Clean, Simple Layouts with Bright colors – Studies have been done as to the effect that people have with online ads and how they react to different colors. For instance, an ad that is predominantly green has a lower click through rate than an ad that has a lot of Red in it. Ads that are not cluttered and have a good clear picture of your product with a simple but effective message also have a ten fold better chance of obtaining a higher click ratio.

Nice clean Animations are very effective. I personally like the use of animations in banner ads, but the speed of the animation and the function of it need to be considered. An ad that is too fast is just too annoying. An animation that does not make sense will

leave the viewer passing by it as to him it reads “too complicated” Keep your animations simple and effective and you will gain more clicks.

Flash ads have been taking the internet by storm for the last year. We’ve started to see more and more of them on RCUniverse as more companies and graphic artists are learning the technology. While they tend to be more expensive to contract someone to make the ad, the reward is an ad that is clicked on an average of 15-25% more than a non-flash ad. Flash is nice because it gives you more flexibility in your design and the animations can be smoother with more effects all the while keeping the file size low.

Your message in your ad is above and beyond the most important item of your banner ad. Just putting a picture of a plane or car on your ad and your company logo, even though clear and crisp, is not giving a “call to action” to the viewer. Your ad should grab a persons emotions and cause them to want to click. Things like “Sale”, Limited Inventory, Act Now, Sale Ends Sat. Hot new product, and X Dollars off are all effective calls to action. They instantly spark a person’s emotions. Limited Qty, Sales Ends Saturday? I really want that product, I got to act now or I could lose the sale, or the chance to be one of the first people at my field with this product. Anthony Robbins talks about the Pain and Pleasure principal. What do you spend more time doing? Avoiding pain or gaining pleasure? Most people try to avoid pain. Paying more money – is painful. Having to wait for something that you are eager to buy, is also painful. So to avoid pain – what do you do? Click the ad and you buy the product. Keep these emotions in mind the next time you are working on a concept for your banner ads. Put yourself in the consumers place and ask your self what emotions your ad makes you feel.

The last and possibly the most forgotten aspect of banner advertising involves how often you change your ads. I am not going to lie to you and tell you that banner advertising requires no effort, because it does. In fact, the more time and energy you put into your banner campaign, the better your results are going to be.

Let me talk to you about it using some numbers. RCUniverse has an average of 70,000 visitors come to the site each day. If your ads are being shown to 5000-10000 of those visitors every day, how many times can you expect the person to click and react on your ad? What if that guy comes every day to RCUniverse and sees your ad 5-10 times each visit? Do you think he will click on it every time he sees it? Ofcourse not. This is not a total loss though, because you are still building a strong branding with your ads, but if you go 2-3-4 months or more without changing that ad, you have moved from powerful branding to a meager existence. To get the most from your campaign you should be changing ads every 2 weeks at the very least. If this is not possible, then consider running multiple ads and change them once a month. If you look at your click stats for your banner ads, you will see a definitive pattern of the click activity from when you first put the ad online, to 2 weeks later, to 2 months later. It looks like hill of which you are coasting down. Don’t let this happen to you. We supply an ever increasing amount of daily ad views, don’t waste them. Clicks equal sales. The more clicks – the more sales.

At this point you are probably shaking your head as you are guilty of some if not all of those banner mismanagements I hope that as you listen to this you now have some direction as to ways you can improve your banner campaign performance in the future. My goal is to ensure that you are getting the highest return on investment from your advertising dollars on RCUniverse. I would be happy to arrange some one on one time with you to go over your campaign specifics and come up with some new ideas. We have professional graphic artists that I can put you in touch with if you need help with the design elements. So Call me, email me, think about these ideas, and make the changes. Please, don't just do NOTHING!. A little time invested into your RCUniverse marketing campaign will pay off highly in results.

Thank you for listening to the first RCU AUDIO CAST. I look forward to your comments. Look out for more Audiocasts in the near future.