

GOOGLE, MICROSOFT, AND YAHOO CONVINCING SMALL BUSINESSES TO ADVERTISE ONLINE



Microsoft

If you are a small business owner, be sure to pay attention because technology giants are offering help for your company, with the majority of it free. Yahoo, Microsoft, and Google are using millions of dollars to aid small companies jump to pay-per-click advertising, which can launch their business into another level. The search advertising market in the United States should hit \$14.4 billion before 2011 is complete and is expected to jump to \$17 billion before 2012 is complete. Microsoft and Yahoo are advertising partners who expect to increase their combined 30 percent slice. Google is hoping to keep a stranglehold on its 65 percent slice as well. All of these companies are trying to entice small businesses to purchase sponsored links that appear in search results on Yahoo Search, Microsoft Bing, and Google. "Small advertisers are critically important, not only because of the huge revenue opportunities, but also because a broad spectrum of local advertisers provides a better user experience," says Kevin Lee, CEO of search consultancy DidIt. For those not used to advertising on the internet, novices can become confused and overwhelmed easily. To get a link displayed on a search results page requires quite a bit of information. The advertiser needs to bid for specific words or phrases related to their products or services. These words or phrases should be something an internet browser would type into a search engine. "Typically, they don't re-evaluate and they miss out on the opportunity to leverage a powerful marketing channel to grow their business," Larry Kim, chief technology officer at online advertising consultancy WordStream, says. AdWords Express was released by Google recently in an effort to help streamline the advertising process for those not accustomed to using the internet. This is a paid service that generates search ad campaigns for small companies. Google has also announced that it is offering free phone support for advertisers, free help when it comes to designing mobile websites, and pitching products in the Google+ social network. "There's no shortage of options for small businesses to reach customers online," says Francoise Brougher, Google's vice president for small- and medium-size business sales and operations. To get advertisers to use Bing and adCenter, Microsoft has been releasing incentives to customers. Users of Bing can accumulate credits that can be redeemed for gift cards, products, or charity donations through the loyalty program known as Bing Rewards. Microsoft has been sending out coupons worth \$200 in click credits in an effort to get small business owners to switch from AdWords to adCenter. "I much prefer Google's tools and I'm definitely Google-biased," says Traci Lester, an electronic marketing specialist at ASPE. "But if you're serious about pay-per-click advertising, you need to be advertising in Bing and Yahoo as well. You'd be missing a huge market if you're not advertising on Microsoft."

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