

Her Affiliate Manager **How ad layout and website design affects your affiliate revenue**

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*“Keeping the desires of **advertisers** in mind throughout the design process is critical if the website is going to be selling ads directly to other businesses.”* <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/>

If your business relies on advertising from your website/blog for income then your ad placement requires MAJOR consideration when developing your website layout and design.

Not having the enough space for your ads OR those spaces not being in the right location will have a negative impact in your advertising revenue potential. When the ads perform badly you will;

- A) Have developed a poor reputation within the ad network (or sponsors) as a poor choice for advertising – reducing the value of your advertising space.
- B) You will be faced with having to move the ads to make them perform better. Which will either make your current design look – well bad. OR maybe even result in having to invest time and money into designing a new site.



Consider this ... *“No designer is going to create an e-commerce website without making the placement of products, descriptions, and images in the layout a priority.”* Smashing Magazine

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If your income stream is advertising revenue (that includes ‘sponsorships’ and brand advertising as well!), your advertising space is your product and your site design should be designed around optimizing the sale of your ‘product’.

Where can you earn advertising and affiliate advertising revenue?

Your TOP advertising revenue potential placements on a resource website or blog as of today (2011) are:

- 1) EMAIL/Newsletter – Still the top performing advertising opportunity. Consider placement of subscription opportunities a priority over ads.
- 2) Social media updates – Facebook is first – followed by Twitter
- 3) Onsite contextual ads- Text links that relate to the text copy
- 4) Targeted banner ads: content/category, geo targeting, time caps
- 5) Site Banner ads – TOP FOLD

These very same ad distribution properties are ALSO your TOP resources for promoting your **inhouse campaigns** – such as newsletter subscribers, sign ups for a members area, recruiting new social media followers, and networking opportunities for traffic generation. Consider the **ongoing** monetary value of each ad space.

Your newsletter subscribers or ‘sign ups’ and gaining social media connections should take priority over ads. Neither of these should take much space it’s more about placement.

Ad performance considerations are;

- Placement
- Monetizing Impressions (caps and targeting)
- Content
- Audience
- and Reach

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User Experience

Your ad placement definitely has an impact on performance. However, one item has even more impact; **User experience.** If a visitor lands on your page and leaves (or worse you get on the list of webpagesthatsuck.com) then the entire ad placement in the world isn't going to help.

So here are some top user experience items you HAVE to consider;

- 1) Colour and screen viewing - limit light on dark backgrounds for emphasis ONLY. Your choice of branding colours and layout colours need to work together and not make viewing hard for your visitors.
- 2) Overstimulation – this includes animation, flash, and bright colours.
- 3) Fonts and sizes - over use of different fonts, sizes, and colours.
- 4) Navigation – readable, described, and in the right spot. Don't make users search for your content.
- 5) Images- in today's Internet society there is no excuse EVER for using crappy resolution, blurry, images on your website. Stock art can be affordable purchased at clipart.com or Dreamstime.com . There is also no excuse for using cheesy 1990 clipart or tools like a traffic counter.

These can all be summed up into one statement. **If your eight year old child (or mine) could create a more aesthetically pleasing site then yours then your user experience SUCKS. Which means your ads won't perform.**

Considerations for ad placement on your site design

Layout and Spacing – Top Fold, IAB ad sizes, limitation of outgoing clicks to increase performance.

Colours – Will draw a user's eye.

Your background should not out colour your banners if your goal is to convert the ads. Use colour to increase the CTR of a banner (limit this technique)

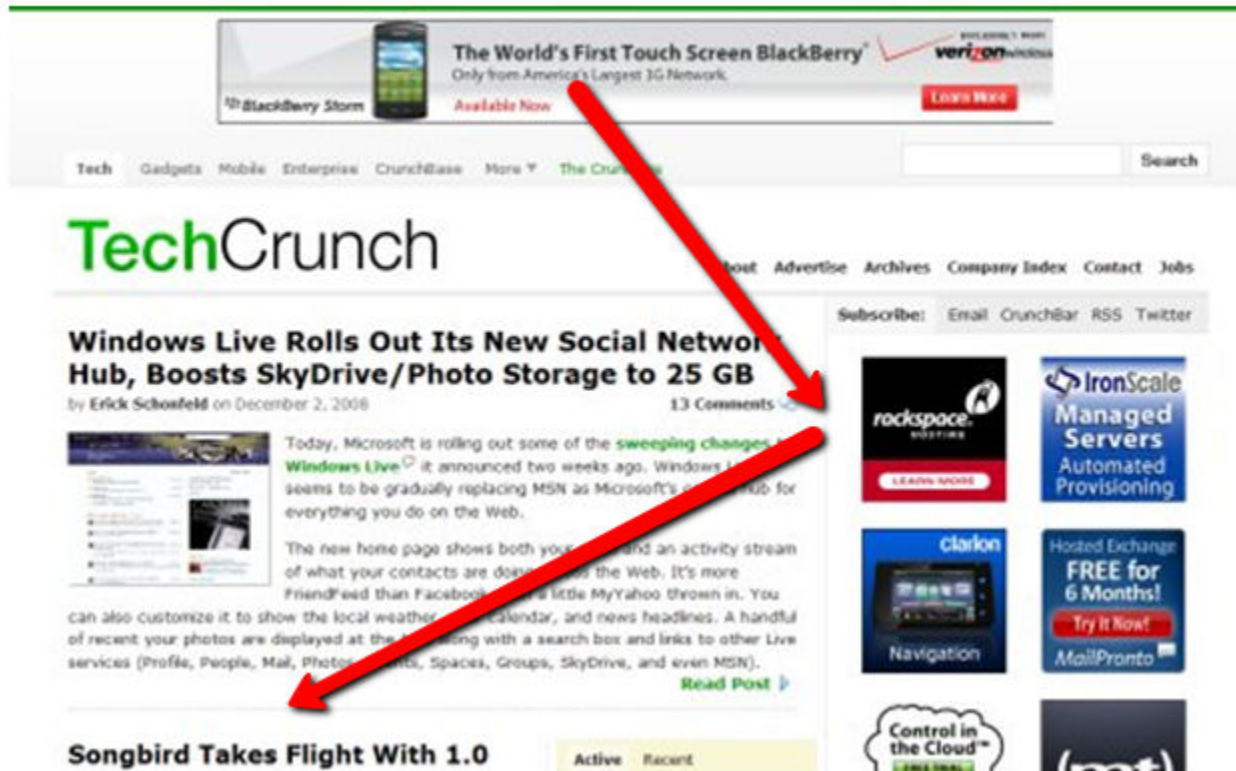
Flow – The zig zag motion of a users movement down a page.

Don't rely just on banners. In fact - you can create ad revenue on a website with no banners. Instead place your affiliate links within content or create a product site using product data feeds. Affiliate marketers and website publisher only limit their ad revenue potential if the solely use banners for ad placement.

Banner Ad Layout Samples:

1) Ad /leaderboard – ad /Right Sidebar - Content

This layout nicely weights placement to advertising while still drawing user to the content as well.



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2) AD /Header Leaderboard – Ad / Left 300 rectangle- AD/ Right Skyscraper

This layout weighs heavily on banner ads and incorporates three standards ad sizes.

Focus on the 300x250 based on location and colour. Likely a high CTR for the DayQuil ad.

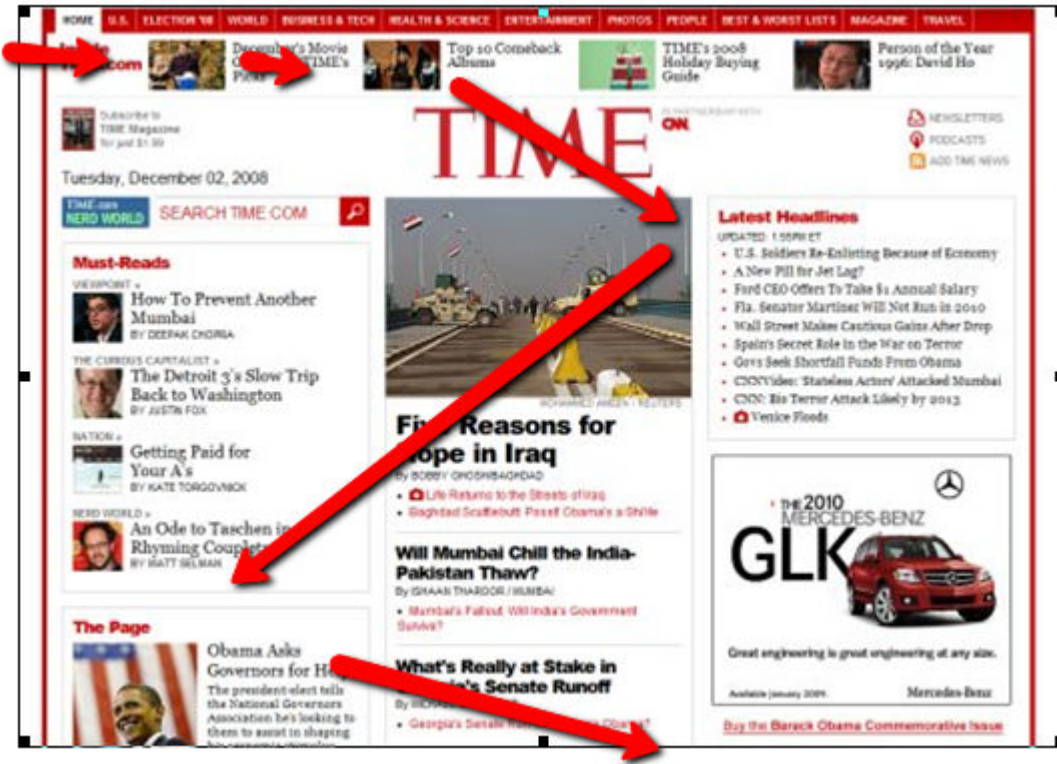
The screenshot displays the Readers Digest website layout with several key elements:

- Header Leaderboard:** A red banner at the top with the text "The most extraordinary story on The Oscars' could be..." and "Redeem the Race for Answer". A red arrow points to this banner.
- Navigation:** A search bar and a menu with categories like "YOUR AMERICA", "LIVING HEALTHY", "ADVICE & KNOW-HOW", "LAUGHS!", "GAMES & MORE", "MAKE YOUR MARK", and "IN THE MAGAZINE".
- Main Article:** "A Classroom of Visiting Scholars" by Carol Kaufmann. The article discusses field trips for Washington D.C. public school students. A red arrow points to the article title.
- Left Sidebar:** A vertical purple banner with the text "GIVE Books = Gifts".
- Right Sidebar:** A "NEW" advertisement for "DayQuil Plus Vitamin C" with a red arrow pointing to it. Below the ad are sections for "Related Topics" (Back to School, America's Schools), "Related Articles" (A Look at Single-Sex Classrooms, How Boys and Girls Learn Differently, When Your Child Hates School), "Daily Tip" (Use your knuckle to rub your eyes...), and "Bonus Tip" (During the winter months you should clean your humidifier every three days...).

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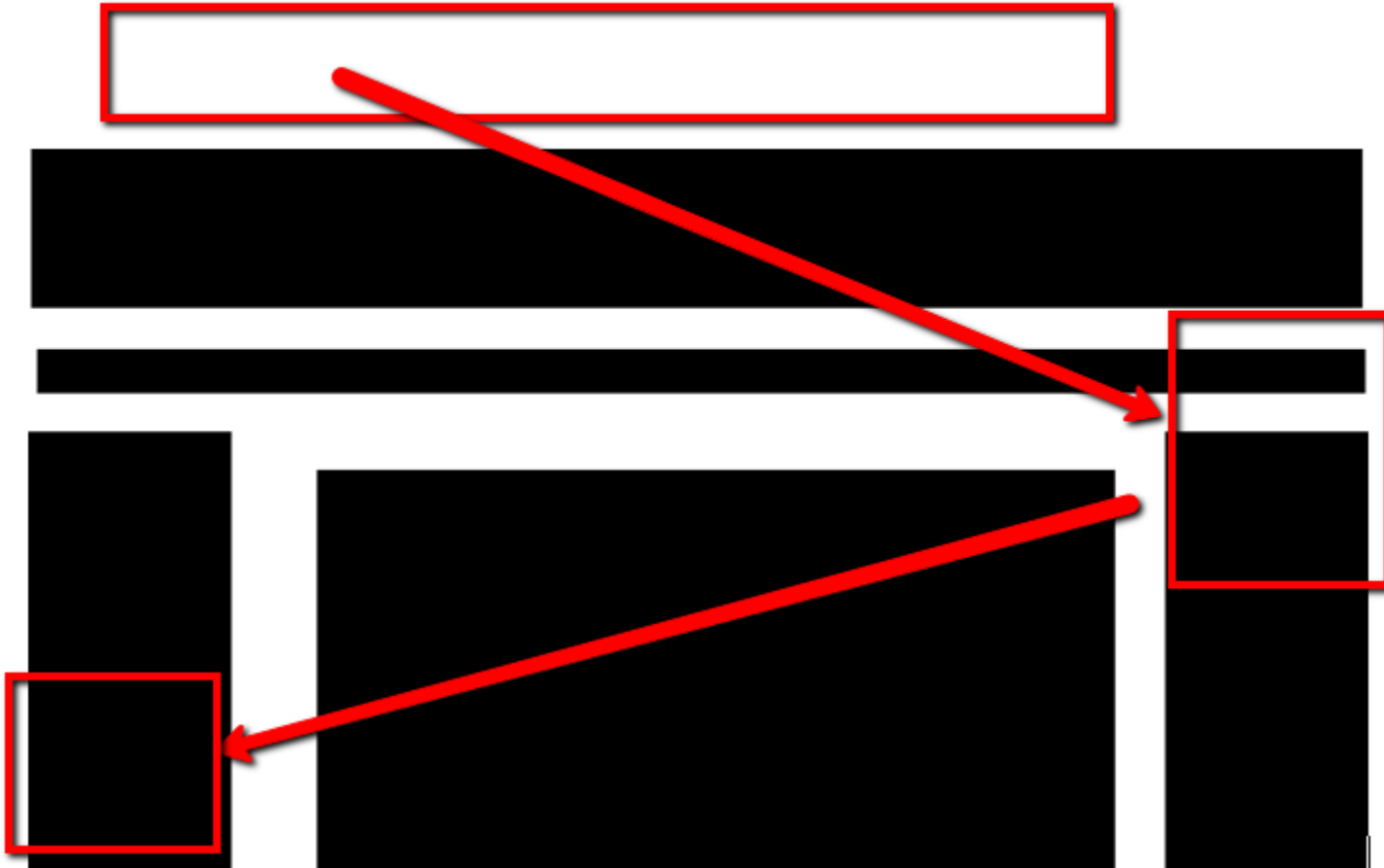
3) Content – Content – Content – only one ad

This layout and flow of this website focuses on the content. However, this plays to the ad's advantage for performance as when the user is ready to leave the page – there really is only one offsite link. A large 300 by 250 ad in the top fold.



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General rule of high CTR placement within a layout based on the zig zag motion (flow) of a user viewing of a web browser.



Each website is different, these are general tips to consider when designing your layout. They should not replace Split testing, and ongoing evaluation of your ad performance. All ad campaigns need to be monitored and optimized during their duration .

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