



## Advertise on Cable Without Breaking Your Budget

Not many small businesses have thousands of dollars to bank on a series of TV commercials. But less than \$10 a day is a price you can't afford to pass up.

Cable advertising comes in many forms. Local breaks you see on channels like MTV, ESPN and Lifetime are the kind most people think of first. With fees to produce your commercial and air time rates, a series of commercials on cable can cost over \$500 a month or more to be effective in our Montana markets.

However, there's good news for advertisers who want exposure to a variety of customers without handing over their wallet. There are other ways to reach cable subscribers that are often overlooked.

### Crawls

You've seen the scrolling text on news channels at the bottom of the screen. In TV, these are called crawls.

Any time you watch your local forecast on The Weather Channel, you'll see a crawl with local ads for businesses. These are some of the most affordable ads you could ever purchase.

Rates depend on your city's size. Ad rates on a Chicago, IL, cable system are going to be higher than ads on a Macon, GA, cable system because you have a larger viewership in Chicago.

Crawls run on the 8's of the hour during the local forecast. For example, 11:08, 11:18, 11:28, 11:38, 11:48 and 11:58.

The Weather Channel ad crawls have been advertising businesses for over 20 years. Surprisingly, though, ad rates for the crawls have remained very low.

- **Low Rates, High Amount of Viewers**  
Some cable companies offer crawl advertising on The Weather Channel for under \$10 a day. Monthly rates are offered at such a deep discount that you can advertise for around \$100.

Most ads will run at least 24 times in one day. Any time a viewer wants to check out the local forecast, they tune in on the 8th minute and there's your crawl.

- **Easy to Prepare Your Ad**  
Another advantage of crawls is that you don't have to be a copywriting genius to prepare

your ad for a crawl. You're given a certain amount of characters, just like for a newspaper ad.

Keep it simple. A few words about your company, the company name, your phone number and Web site address can be very effective.

Joe's Heating and Air. 24-hour emergency service. No extra service charge. Call Joe's Heating and Air. 555-4200 or visit [www.EmergencyHeatAndAC.com](http://www.EmergencyHeatAndAC.com)

- **Convenient**  
Not only are crawls very affordable, they're also convenient to change. Everything is handled through the computer at the cable company so changing a line in your ad is as simple as picking up the phone to call your cable sales rep and having them plug a few things into the computer. The changes take effect immediately without you having to wait.

### **Full Screen Ad**

Most cable companies have community channels that feature full screen graphics from businesses in the area. Like crawls, these are usually very low by way of production costs.

Depending on where you live, your local community channel may feature your business info over a graphic or use a picture of your company's business. Your text is added to the graphic or photo and displayed on this community channel among other ads.

- **Among the Least Expensive of Cable Ads**  
Full screen ads on community channels are generally less expensive than crawls. Some cable markets offer them for as little as \$5 a day or just \$50-60 a month.
- **But Who's Watching?**  
This channel on your cable is set up solely for these types of ads. There's no programming, just ads.

Someone has to be sitting there watching your ad for it to be effective. But without any programming, you face the possibility that the only people watching the community channel might just be looking for their own ad.

### **Above Program Listings**

Advertising on the TV Guide Channel gives you another way to combine graphics and your message into a low cost form of advertising.

- **Increased Price**  
You'll have more viewers than on a Full Screen Ad but you'll pay for it. You also have more space to play with than on a crawl and you'll be able to add graphics/images but the cost for an Above Program Listing ad is roughly 50-percent higher.
- **No Work Involved for You**  
The cable company will send someone out to take pictures of your store and products. Your message and pictures then appear on the upper half of the TV Guide Channel screen as people tune into see what's coming on their favorite channels.

No matter what form of cable advertising you choose, you can advertise your company on a tight budget through cable. Each cable company has sales reps who can help you figure out which method will work best for you if you're stumped or if you're looking to advertise long-term as well. Negotiations are also crucial to you getting a good deal if you want to advertise more and get a lower rate.

And don't forget, there's no rule that says you can't advertise your business outside of your local viewing area either. This works best for Internet companies that aren't limited by locale. Research cable companies all over the country to find markets with rates that suit you and start down the path of low cost, effective cable advertising.