Best Practices for Facebook Advertising

Exploring emerging social media opportunities for Facebook

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Introduction

Facebook now has half a billion active users. Yes, that's billion with a "B." That means about one in every 14 people on the planet now uses Facebook – and the user base is still growing.

Not only that, users spend more time on Facebook, up to 700 billion minutes every single day. Even if you're marketing to only a tiny slice of that audience, you simply can't afford to ignore Facebook as a valuable advertising resource.

Consider these statistics from a recent post on the All Facebook Blog:

- "Facebook" now ranks as the top search term, representing 4% of all online searches
- More than 18% of Facebook visitors make more than $100,000 per year
- Facebook captures one in every eleven of all web site visits in the U.S.

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With an audience that clearly identifies its interests and demographics, search engine marketers are working harder than ever to incorporate Facebook into their strategic planning and execution – either on the Facebook platform directly or by leveraging third-party campaign management solutions.

But advertising on Facebook is even more challenging than traditional PPC. Without understanding some of unique characteristics of this new form of media, you can easily go off on the wrong track, without realizing why your results didn't meet expectations.

Understanding the Facebook User

Once a largely college-aged/youth-oriented social media hub, Facebook has now extended its presence across an exceedingly wide range of demographic groups – and has been the world's top-ranked web site for traffic for more than two years.

But Facebook no longer caters merely to young people. About 40% of Facebook users are over 45 years old, with 20% of users age 55 of older.

Now everyone from high school students to their parents – and even their grandparents – uses Facebook to stay in touch with friends, interact online and, most, importantly, search for products and services.

What's more, Facebook now spans a much wider geography, with 70% of users located outside the US.

With so much diversity, the notion of "the Facebook user" as an audience is far less relevant than the ability to target highly specific attributes, such as interest, hobbies, political views, purchasing patterns, and more.

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And as Facebook users share more and more data, online marketers with the right campaign management tools can now take advantage of highly specific targeting opportunities.

Selecting Your Audience

In the past, marketers had a rough idea of their ideal target audience, but Facebook offers much finer segmentation potential.

Broad categories, such as gender and age for example, are certainly a place to start. Through the Facebook platform you can craft finely tuned messages based on these criteria.

For example, if you own a gourmet chocolate shop, you might already know that your core consumers are mostly females between 30 and 50 years old – and that most of your non-U.S. online orders come from Canada and the UK.

Through Facebook – and an effective campaign management platform – you could use this information to build a campaign that targets these audience more precisely than with other media.

With the ability to quickly and easily target these groups, and exclude those who don't match your criteria, you can create both short- and long-term advertising programs with extremely high ROI potential. And you can quickly adjust campaigns to rapidly optimize performance.

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Creating Highly Granular Campaigns

Although specific targeted audiences can help you boost campaign performance and eliminate wasted ad spend, Facebook gives you a highly granular level of control over your campaigns with limitless combinations for linking targeted messages to specific audiences.

With Facebook, you can target and measure a variety of attributes and group them into combinations. For example, using the scenario of the gourmet chocolate shop mentioned above, you could test a wide variety of ads to determine the relative targeting value of

- Gender and location (female chocolate buyers in Canada vs. the UK),
- More specific age criteria (female chocolate buyers age 30-40 vs. 40-50)
- Gender, location, and age (female chocolate buyers age 30-40 in Canada vs. female chocolate buyers age 40-50 in Canada)

Or perhaps you could test a specific campaign to target males, compare ad performance based on relationship status, and much more. You can easily develop hundreds of different combinations – each offering unique targeting opportunities.

Unfortunately, Facebook itself does not provide advertisers with this level of granularity, but on a third-party platform, you can automate the process of testing and scaling out campaigns. In fact, with the right user-friendly tools, you can design and measure advertising performance through an intuitive user interface that minimizes cost and complexity.

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Automating Dynamic Campaigns

One issue with Facebook is that the network is so dynamic that quality scores and cost per click can rapidly change. That means it's essential to create a strategy for rotating image ads and messaging to keep campaigns fresh.

Yet it's nearly impossible to respond to these dynamic changes through manual processes. The time and resources needed to manage a program like this is one reason why many advertisers aren't using Facebook to its full potential.

But through sophisticated third-party PPC tools that are integrated with Facebook, you can automate this process to keep your creative messaging responsive and fresh. Plus you can generate reports as often as needed to pinpoint new ways to improve your campaigns – both on Facebook and other search engines.

One example showing the potential of such tools is the Facebook Campaign Wizard on SearchForce. With this module you can define your targets, re-use them later as needed, and set up campaigns and ad groups targeted to various locations, demographics, and interests. And because ads on Facebook have a brief shelf life, you can also create multiple creative executions and set up ad rotations to keep campaigns fresh.

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About SearchForce

Industry-leading search platform, integrated for Facebook

With SearchForce, you can eliminate tedious manual processes through one customizable bid optimization, campaign management, and reporting platform that offers:

- Centralized user dashboard to manage multiple campaigns
- A set of flexible bidding strategies to meet virtually any goal, with complete synchronization across all major search engines
- Customized and consolidated reporting plus cross-channel conversion tracking across all channels
- Social media tools to make the most of advertising opportunities on Facebook
- Advanced reporting and analytics to streamline campaign management

Plus SearchForce offers a wide range of additional high-performance features that make online advertising far more effective with much less cost and complexity.

Contact SearchForce today to find out more about to put our Facebook platform integration to use to meet your business and marketing challenges.

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