

IDEAS

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THE TECH BEAT | BY JAMES HARDING

THE FACEBOOK AD ADVANTAGE

How much time do you spend a day on Facebook? According to data Facebook has collected on its more than one billion users, the average person spends over six hours a month on Facebook. More than 60 percent of those users are viewing Facebook on a mobile device. That means that over 600 million people interact with Facebook on a device they carry with them at all times. To put that into perspective, these are more than double the engagement numbers for Google. In short, if you're not spending at least a little of your advertising budget on Facebook, you are missing a huge opportunity.

My company, Gist Piano Center, recently opened a new store, and we needed an inexpensive way to bring prospects through our doors. We didn't have time to wait for the new website to start performing, and we didn't have a lot of money to bring people in. Thus, we chose to focus our marketing dollars on Google AdWords and Facebook. Facebook let us create ads, gauge their impact and tweak our campaigns with nearly immediate feedback. After a couple of weeks, our Facebook ads were



'Facebook helped us find where our loyal customers came from.'

driving more prospects into our new store than we were seeing in the rest of our stores combined.

TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

The key to our success with Facebook was focusing in on the people who were most likely to be interested in our products. First, we created a website landing page for our new Facebook campaign to promote. That way we could track how many people came to our site from our campaign. Next, we selected a

number of targeted zip codes, languages and financial demographics that would help us identify the people who could afford our products and lived near enough to purchase from us. Finally, we added a number of "interests" that would help us find people who had posted something about music on their pages.

The next step was to define a daily budget. Though we could start for as little as \$5 per day, we chose to set our budget at \$10 per day and then make adjustments from there. We were also able to define a "pay per click" bid limit, but we decided to let Facebook do it automatically.

CREATE COMPELLING CONTENT

Of course, no ad campaign would be successful without a compelling image (something bright and alluring) and interesting, relevant copy to accompany it. Nowhere is this truer than Facebook. We knew our content was going to appear in the same news feed as baby pictures and pet videos, so we knew we had to offer something equally exciting. We were able to create six images that excited us, format them for the mobile and main news feeds (right column ads do not perform well) and post

our campaign.

TWEAK YOUR CAMPAIGN

We checked our Facebook insights page daily to see how customers were interacting with our campaign. After two weeks, it was obvious that some of the photos we were most excited about didn't excite our customers. We "turned off" the photos that weren't performing well and focused our budget on the successful images.

Before long, we were running multiple campaigns with different images and different copy, and, over time, Facebook helped us find images that made our campaigns pop and helped us find where our loyal customers came from.

Why not adopt a "let's try it" attitude when it comes to Facebook advertising? For about the price of a single newspaper ad, you can spend an entire month tweaking your social media message. Facebook advertising will help you bring in new customers, build your social media networks and increase your bottom line. **MI**

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