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PLAYBOOK / **SOCIAL**

The Social Media Marketing Playbook for Maximizing Returns on Facebook

Facebook marketing is a lot more elusive sounding than it actually is. With the right tools and the following four-step process, it's easier to show a return on your investment in social media marketing.

As we dive into the Social Playbook, it might help you to think about social marketing in this light: Facebook is the new database marketing; Fans are 100% opt-in subscribers comprised of customers and potential customers; Ad units are your email campaigns; Apps are your landing pages; the Fan Page is your website.

STEP 1. ACQUIRE FANS

In the beginning of your Facebook marketing plan, you'll focus on fan acquisition. To start building a fan base, drive organic awareness at no cost by making your fan page badge or Facebook URL prominent on other web properties such as blogs, twitter, websites and editorial content. Offline, you can use events and seminars to let people know you're on Facebook. Word of mouth can go a long way and most of your initial fans will be existing customers, but always give them a reason to visit your page. The number one reason a customer becomes a fan is to receive special offers or discounts, so create incentive with promotions.

If you're considering digital advertisements, Facebook ads are a highly effective medium for acquiring targeted fans and building a solid fan base.

Unlike traditional pay-per-click, more is not better with Facebook. The broader your reach the less relevant your ad units will be. Cold call targeting averages a .05 percent click-through rate (CTR) whereas targeted ads reap a .35 percent CTR. That's 7X greater. Facebook is a social space after all, so it's no surprise that Facebook users will be more inclined to click on your ad if it's personally relevant to them.

Using ads to acquire fans is extremely easy thanks to Facebook's ad interface which allows you to drill down to the demographic profile of an audience you want to target, including interests, age, sex, location and education level. You can even target people who are friends with people who already "like" your Facebook page.

Another paid option is Sponsored Stories on Facebook, which are similar to Facebook ad units in appearance. The difference is that Sponsored Stories promote organic user activity such as Page updates, Places Check-Ins, Likes and Apps activity.

It is a better use of advertising dollars to let your fans tell their friends about you rather than trying to reach those friends on your own. (For more information about Facebook ads, go to Webtrends.com and download the whitepaper, Ads for Fans are Facebook's Best Kept Secret.)



Ads for Fans target your fan base, and Sponsored Stories attract friends of fans on Facebook.

STEP 2. ENGAGE FANS

Once you have a fan base you're probably wondering "now what?" It's time to monetize and to do so you need take into consideration the nuances of Facebook and adjust your efforts accordingly. Facebook has an algorithm called EdgeRank that makes relationships with your fans the highest priority. This means that if your fans aren't actively engaging with your page, then your wall posts aren't making it to their newsfeeds.

The Truth About Wall Posts

Page Size (fans)	Approximate % of Fans Seeing Posts Daily	Total Daily Impressions per Fan	Unique Page views Per Fan
1,000 – 10,000	9.38%	0.6846	0.03191
10,001 – 100,000	6.02%	0.8347	0.06297
100,001 – 1,000,000	6.11%	0.5706	0.02333
1,000,000+	2.79%	0.5664	0.009506
Overall Average	7.49%	0.1401	0.001492

Actively engaging with your fans will in turn bring you more fans as the viral awareness arises. After brand invites/ads, your current fans are the number two reason other Facebook users become a fan.

To encourage Facebook engagement and sharing, and not be shunned by Facebook's EdgeRank filter, it is necessary to increase the "fun to talk about" factor in posts and ads. This is known as the Sociability Index. Some industries naturally have a high sociability index, like travel, media, sports, fashion, luxury goods, beauty products, cars, tabloids and blogs.

If your brand or business doesn't happen to fall into one of those categories you can still exercise a few best practices to encourage engagement from your fans and their social networks. Conversations with fans who share what they like get the highest engagement.

- The most effective wall posts are those that are touching or contain emotional stories. Provocative posts or posts igniting a passionate debate will also solicit the highest engagement rates - 2-3x higher.
- Receiving only a slightly lower engagement rate of 1.5-2x more are posts about sports wins or that ask the audience simple questions. For example: "What do you think of Facebook's new Timeline?"
- Additionally, the content that you post doesn't always have to be on brand. You can talk about anything from current events to seasonal greetings. If content is interesting to your fans, you'll receive the engagement that keeps your posts prominent in their newsfeeds.
- Consider keeping status updates "short and sweet." Posts that are 80 characters or less have a 27% higher average engagement rate.
- When using photos consider using photo albums rather than photo status updates. Albums provide more of an experience for the viewer because of the diverse array of images fans can browse.

Basic Do's & Don'ts of Facebook Wall Posts

DO

- Add fun content
- Post simple Questions
- Upload great pictures
- Add photo albums for promotions

DON'T

- Update status with promotions
- Complicate engagements
- List top 10 tips
- Repost your blog to your wall
- Post the same content sequentially

- Targeting by state doesn't impact click-through rate, but educational targeting does.
- And of course, staying in real time with your wall is important. If you receive comments on your wall, images or other Facebook assets, be sure to respond quickly so as to continue the conversation and increase fan replies.

To solicit fan engagement and increase click-through rates of ads, avoid using sales-type language such as "limited time offer" and instead ask fans for their opinions or preferences. Since your fans already know your brand they'll be more likely to click on your ads and in turn, lower your cost per click.

Advanced Facebook Engagement

Now that you've spent time and energy building a fan base and keeping content in your fans' newsfeeds, you should consider an advanced use of your fan page. After all, Facebook is a destination site. While your fans may click-through to your website, data shows they return to Facebook. You will experience higher conversion rates if the initial landing page experience stays within Facebook. After context is provided there, then fans are more willing to take action on your website.

So how do you keep the entire experience on Facebook? Employ the use of the "Custom Tabs" feature by creating Apps. Apps can be anything from a contest, game or registration form. Apps allow you to create fully branded experiences within your fan page so that you can build brand recognition with fans. Brand recognition increases the likelihood they'll click on your ads, convert on promotions and consider your brand in future purchasing decisions.

One example of an app would be to use Facebook as a registration destination for an upcoming webinar. If you use a wall post or ad to promote a webinar, you'd be best served to have it link to an app designed as a registration form on your fan page. Not only will the sign-up flow be experienced entirely on Facebook, it will also help promote your fan page. In addition, it will aid in increasing your fan base and the viral sharing of the webinar beyond your existing fan base.

Whenever you deploy an app, be sure to use an ad or status update to notify your fans. If you don't, it's like creating a landing page for an email campaign but then never sending an email.

STEP 3. NURTURE

As is true with all database marketing, your list will never completely convert. You'll have to consider nurturing those cold or cool leads (in this case, fans) along until they're ready to convert.

Like any nurture campaign you'll want to establish an editorial calendar with coordinated ad campaigns. The editorial calendar should include offers that help you attain your nurture goals. Keep in mind that goals of Facebook nurture campaigns are similar to those nurture goals for your website. You can use nurturing ads to point fans to your website or to an app on your fan page. Most importantly, you want fans to take an action that's relevant to your pipeline goals and the action needs to be measurable. You should closely monitor your nurturing ad campaigns because if they aren't converting the click-throughs you receive, it's time to cut those ads.

Using fan-targeted ads as lead nurture campaigns helps you reach out to your fan base during slow periods. Fan targeted ads are typically less expensive and receive higher click-through rates thanks to brand recognition.

Create offers for every stage of the nurture process and track results. Also be conscious of the fact that Facebook ad creative has a quick burnout rate. Be ready to rotate a creative every 4–6 days, as CTR tends to start dropping off after the 3rd day.

STEP 4. ANALYZE AND OPTIMIZE

Lastly (and this is a re-occurring theme), you need to know what works! Analysis and tracking are critical to knowing what tactics are effective with your audiences so you can improve your campaign strategies through every step of the Facebook marketing lifecycle.

Whether you drive ads to another Facebook page or to a website, it is important to track activity with campaign ID URLs. It is important to use an analytics solution that allows you to track conversions through Facebook's unique framework. Typical conversion goals may include white papers, case studies, webinars, download trial software, Ecommerce, coupons or trial products, depending on the industry.

The analytics tool you choose to track, test and tweak Facebook campaigns must be able to support passing app data, allowing brands to track a Facebook campaign, just as is done on a website. And to follow a Facebook visitor through to another property, such as a website, the analytics solution has to support cross-domain tracking. Webtrends is an end-to-end solution that:

- Tracks conversions through iFrames, an HTML structure that allows an external page to be embedded within another page.
- Measures post-level analytics
- Maintains visit history across domains
- Collects Facebook-specific data
- Measures all your digital channels
- Offers an open, flexible analysis for visual reporting

In addition, Webtrends allows you to create and manage Facebook ad spend, segment with micro-targeting and set up ad rotation of fresh ad creative all from the same interface.

In summary, Facebook marketing has similar processes to traditional digital marketing with a focus to acquire prospects, engage customers (fans), and nurture and analyze in order to create long-term relationships. Knowing how fans engage and how to maximize efforts on Facebook will help your company achieve its social media goals.

Digital Marketing Integration

Just as marketers do with websites, Facebook ad campaign performance can be measured, tested, targeted and optimized to gain better results and fan engagement. But it is also important to know how the results of advertising in Facebook compares to and fits into your overall digital marketing strategy. This is one the major challenges of the new digital landscape.

Advanced analytics solutions, such as Webtrends, allow data to be compared and unified across all channels – web, mobile and social. This offers the senior marketer the best business case for justification of investment, a path for achieving marketing performance, and a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

For more information on Webtrends solutions for social marketing, visit <http://webtrends.com/solutions/social/>

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