

## MARKETING, PROMOTION &amp; DESIGN

BY JOHN SMIDDY, *columnist*

## Holy Grail...or Waste of Time? Facebook post boosting under the microscope

Small companies with slim budgets might think Facebook is the holy grail of cheap, effective marketing. But is having likes and boosting posts working?

According to smallbiztrends.com, a marketing and business resource website, 62 percent of Facebook ad campaigns run by small businesses fail. Depending on the industry, conversion rates can be as low as 4.11 percent (apparel), or as high as 13 percent (fitness facilities).

Most business owners don't know how a results-driven advertising funnel for social media works. A common belief is that boosting a post to people who like their page is going to impact sales. Even if a post is boosted, Facebook algorithms will need it to become relevant to be seen by "friends." That means it needs engagement in the form of likes, comments, and shares.

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In other words, it has to be something people actually like.

Consider who you are trying to reach, how many of them are on the platform, and how often you want to be seen by

them. In traditional media buying, this is called reach and frequency and it's no different in the digital world.

TV and radio can cost big bucks because of the number of people you're reaching. The outlets charge you a cost



for every thousand people who see or hear your ad (CPM). With social media platforms like Facebook, you pay a cost per click (CPC). However, you will still need to reach a significant amount of people to get enough of the right clicks. If you're only spending \$20 on your Facebook ad, then you're not going to reach many people. If you haven't built a proper audience, then you're not reaching the right people.

### So how much should you be spending?

As an example, if you have a conversion rate of nine percent (industry

average), a revenue goal of \$15,000, and your average unit sale is \$100, then you will have to spend approximately \$4,886. This would need to be seen by 16,287 people in order to get 150 sales at a nine percent conversion rate.

### Know your customer.

Marketing tactics are changing, but marketing fundamentals will always stay the same. You need to create a promotion that will interest your ideal customer, put it into a message that will grab their attention, and place that message where you know this specific type of person will see it. That's where having a "mix" comes into play. Facebook and social media are great tools to add to your mix, but they also need to be respected by your ad dollars. Facebook is not a cheap alternative to traditional media. It's just a new tactic.

### Have a plan.

If you're marketing without a plan, you are just merely using tactics. Without a plan, you waste money trying different tactics until you find which ones will work. When you have a plan, you know what tactics to use, therefore eliminating wasteful spends.

Having a plan starts with research. Know your customer's goals and challenges so you can put a message together that will speak to those challenges and get their attention. Know where they go for information and enter-

tainment so you can place that message in front of where it will be seen at the right time by the right people.

The options we have to get our message in front of buyers has expanded. It's ever-changing but marketing hasn't changed at all. We're still using Marketing 101 tactics. Research the customer, design a deal that addresses their need and place it where they will see it. Include a message that will grab the attention of these specific people, generate a sale, gain a customer and turn that customer into an evangelist of the brand.

### Conclusion

Social media advertising is a powerful tool when it is used correctly. Your TV, print and radio ads are all still important when it comes to delivering your message. You want to be seen by your prospective buyers often and you don't want all of your eggs in one basket. Your marketing mix should be represented by who your customer is and should be as precise as possible.

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