How to Build Your Facebook Customer Acquisition Machine
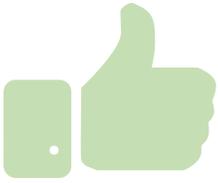
Facebook ads don't work like AdWords.

So they don't convert like AdWords, either.

There's no intent. No one looking for something specific to buy.

Which means you have work to do.

Because you can't just throw up a simple, single 25-character text ad. Calling it a day.

Instead, it takes a careful choreography of campaigns; different objectives all working towards the same end goal.

Add up the different ad types they offer for each objective on multiple devices though, and you're quickly looking at hundreds of combinations.

Start here to help you cut through the clutter.

How to Structure Your Facebook Ad Campaigns

High-performing Facebook ad campaigns mix a careful blend of objectives.

Some are designed to increase awareness with potential customers to build out a carefully-tailored audience.

Next you build engagement and trust with that audience, while filtering out those with potential interest to buy.

Before finally introducing introductory offers or opt-in incentives that are too good to pass up.

Does all of this sound familiar? Ringing any bells?

It should, because it's the same customer journey you know and love that plays out across all of your other channels and devices.

Awareness	Information	Evaluation	Purchase
• Buyer doesn't have need or want for your product/service yet.	• Buyer has developed want or need and actively searches for solution.	• Buyer begins considering and comparing alternatives.	• Buyer commits to taking action.
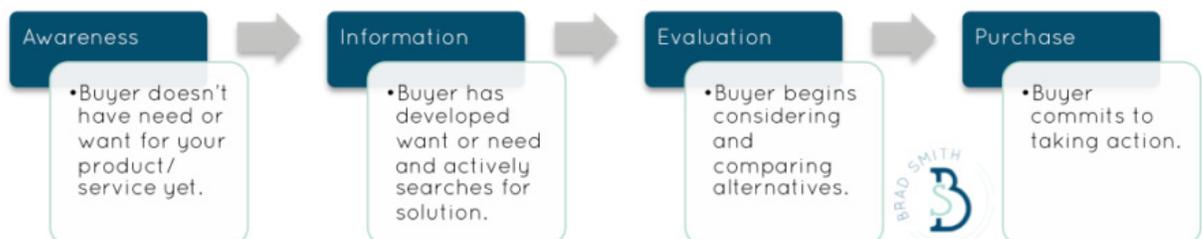
'Cept this time, we're going to recreate the entire thing inside of Facebook's ecosystem.

Thankfully, Facebook makes this recreation process easy. Each time you fire up a new campaign, you're asked to select an objective that perfectly aligns with said journey.

What's your marketing objective?

Awareness	Consideration	Conversion
Boost your posts	Send people to a destination on or off Facebook	Increase conversions on your website
Promote your Page	Get installs of your app	Increase engagement in your app
Reach people near your business	Raise attendance at your event	Get people to claim your offer
Increase brand awareness	Get video views	Promote a product catalog
Increase your reach	Collect leads for your business	Get people to visit your stores

Facebook campaigns offer a myriad of options:
- ~15 different objectives
- ~5 different advertisement styles
- ~5 different placements and sizes
- ~3+ different networks

The point? Your options are seemingly endless. Which makes starting, tough.

Because the best way to drive down costs (while simultaneously driving up results) is to create laser-focused campaigns that string together perfectly aligned variables for a *singular* objective.

Get just one of those variables incorrect and you risk overspending; wasting precious ad dollars in addition to countless hours that can't be recovered.

Here's how you can avoid a similar fate, starting with audience-building efforts at the top of your Facebook funnel.

Step 1. Awareness

Most people skip this first step.

Which comes back to bite them later, when trying to drive conversions without the proper audience size (and reach) in place.

You're not just building Likes, but instead filtering out those who have some interest around what you do, talk about, and sell.

You're getting people to raise their metaphorical hand; identifying themselves so that you can later use Facebook's secret weapon, custom audiences, to drive conversions at cost-effective prices.

Contra-competitive timing refers to sending email messages, for example, over the weekends when you have less competition to go up against.

Similarly, you can start audience-building on Facebook by specifically targeting mobile devices, where discovery and initial engagement can often be had for much cheaper (than desktop).

According to Massimo from AdEspresso, "Users will discover your product on their phones... then buy it the next day on their desktop."

Perfect. That's what we want. Use mobile, awareness-building campaigns to create an audience that we can later target based on previous website visits or Facebook page engagement.

Here's where to start with audience targeting.

Audience Targeting

In later sections, setting up audience targeting for your middle or bottom of the funnel objectives becomes incredibly simple. You just rely on custom audiences to do the trick for you.

It's a different story at the top, though.

Because there's no pre-built audience to tap. Instead, you'll need to get creative and find out who's *interested* in what you've got.

Literally. Like, start with their stated *interests* including someone's job title, vocation, or a popular media brand they follow. You can also set-up *exclusions* to narrow down a large audience to only focus on a subset (like experts vs. novices).

The goal is to shoot for an audience size of around 500,000 to a million. Which means you'll need to do a little trial-and-error on who or what to include (and exclude).

For example, let's say you want to sell a B2B product to service providers. So you can start with people who identify as "Consultants", and then layer in people who follow Inc., Entrepreneur, Harvard Business Review or Fast Company.
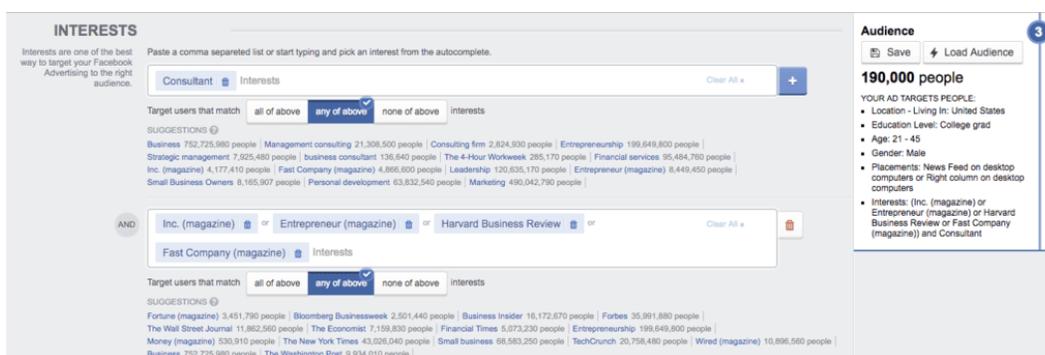
Now you know these people are relatively sophisticated. BUT, maybe you don't want anyone who works for an ad agency because they might have a competitive product or service.

So your exclusions can rule people out to make sure only the best possible fit is filtered to the top.
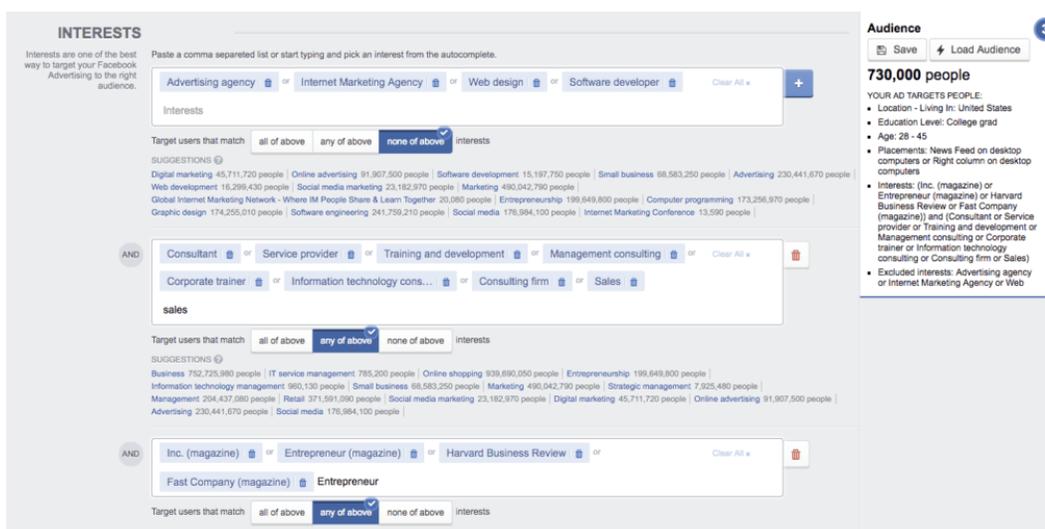
Audience targeting and 'fit' is everything in Facebook advertising, dictating the costs you pay, the amount of people you can reach, and the eventual ROI (or lack thereof) you see.

Placements

Facebook offers three primary placements. When building awareness is your goal though, steer clear of the more expensive Desktop space and instead start with mobile placements (which are generally cheaper and easier with content-based promotion).

Mobile advertising often trips people up when your site isn't optimized properly. Sure, the smushed design can be an issue. But more importantly, page-loading issues can sink conversions.

For example, Facebook came out with an estimate that put the average mobile site loading time to 8 seconds.

What's the problem with that? Nearly three-fourths of your traffic has already bounced within five seconds!

That's where Facebook Instant Articles come in. Similar to Google's AMP project, Instant Articles help content-based pages load ASAP (reportedly 10X faster than typical mobile sites).

(image source)

That massive speed upgrade delivers impressive results according to (an unbiased) Facebook:

- 70% decrease in site abandonment
- 30% more shares
- 20% mobile CTR lift

Instagram is another cost-effective, brand-building channel that's currently less competitive (read: expensive). Assuming you do it right. Once again, buying Instagram followers can only hurt you more in the long run.

Creative

Awareness-building involves promoting unbranded, newsworthy and interesting stuff. You're baiting a hook, chumming the waters, and stepping back to see how many people respond.

We already covered the nitty gritty Facebook ad creative details before.

So instead, let's talk about the different types and format options to try.

Facebook marketing baller, Andrea Vahl, recommends video as an excellent (and inexpensive) awareness builder.

Facebook recently released a custom audiences option for page engagement.

Create a Custom Audience

How do you want to create this audience?

Reach people who have a relationship with your business, whether they are existing customers or people who have interacted with your business on Facebook or other platforms.

Customer File
Use a customer file to match your customers with people on Facebook and create an audience from the matches. The data will be hashed prior to upload.

Website Traffic
Create a list of people who visit your website or view specific web pages

App Activity
Create a list of people who have taken a specific action in your app or game

Engagement on Facebook [NEW]
Create a list of people who have engaged with your content on Facebook

This process is secure and the details about your customers will be kept private.

(image source)

These custom audiences will soon be used on our 'middle of the funnel' campaigns. However we need to build them out first, and the addition of a page engagement audience means you can collect all users who view your video.

Andrea recommends starting with people who view at least 10 seconds of the video (so that the audience quality is higher). And getting your video views up into the 1000 range might only set you back $10-20 she says (which equates to only a few cents per view).
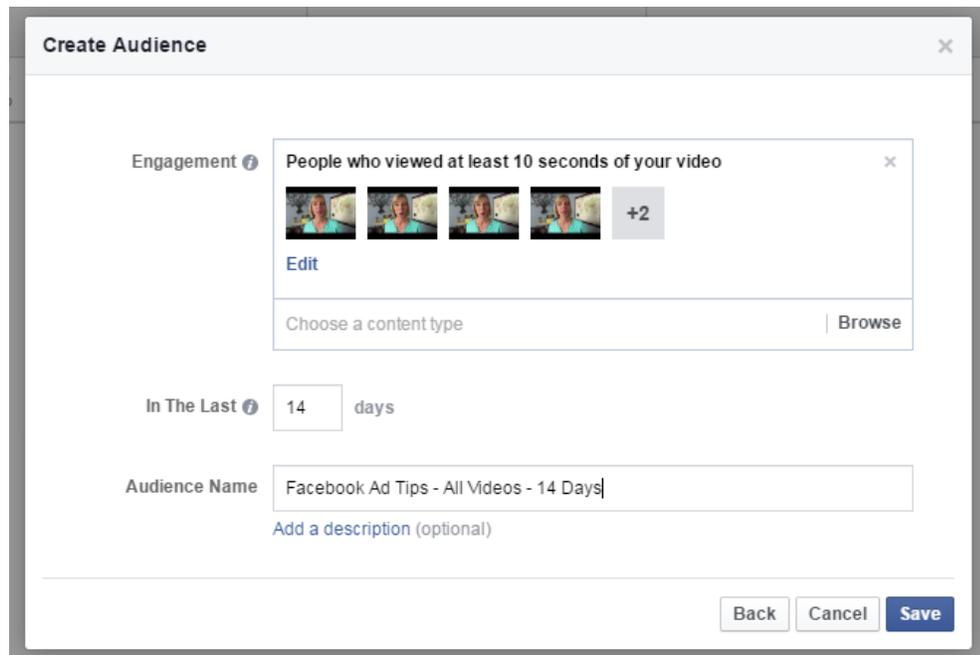
(image source)

The Carousel format is like multiple ads in one, showing off multiple content pieces or pages that viewers can cycle through. That means you can try different topics and ad 'hooks' to see which converts best.
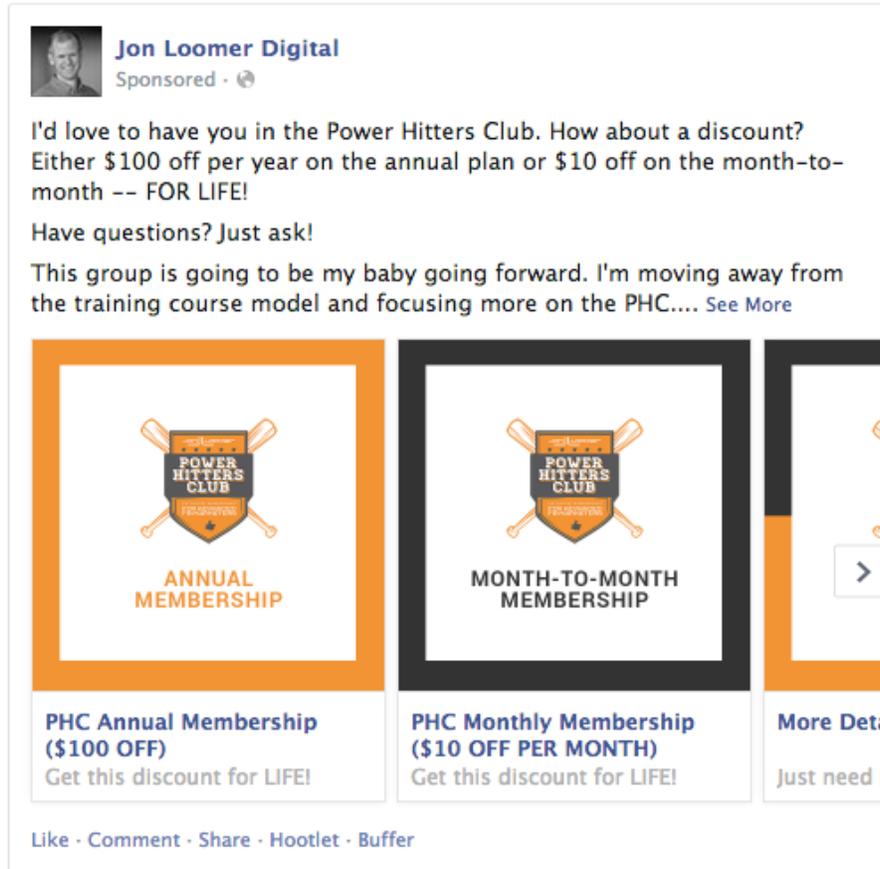
([image source](#))

Facebook has another new-ish format called [Canvas ads](#).

Like their name, these are highly visual, interactive pieces of content that can include video, maps, and all other types of interactivity. (They're also powered by the same Instant Article infrastructure so they're lightening fast.)
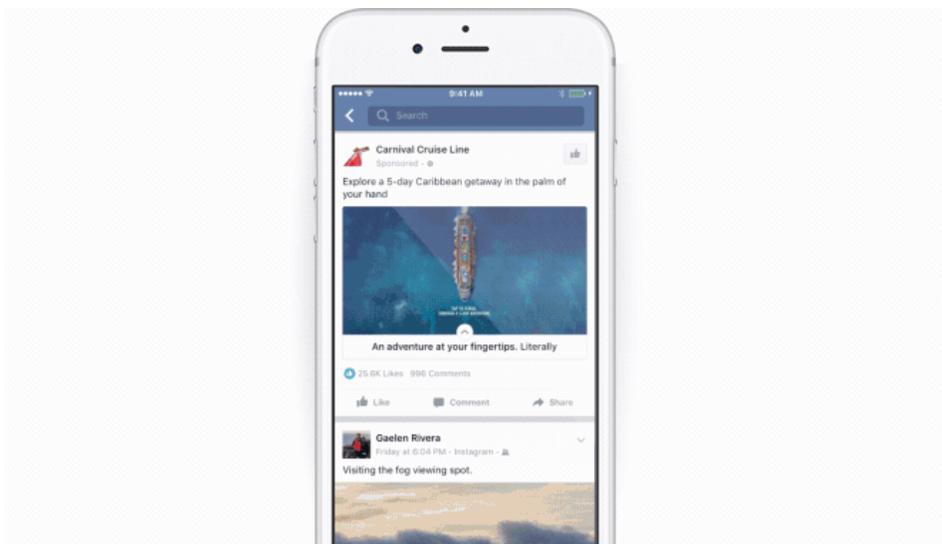
([image source](#))

"53% of Canvas users view at least half of it, while the average time on site is 31 seconds", according to TechCrunch.

Last but not least, another creative outlet for reaching new audiences is Facebook's Branded Content option.

This creates an official, structured (and measurable) relationship to work with influencers that can expose your messages to highly targeted communities. One study pegs the ROI from influencer marketing at 11x higher than other forms of digital marketing.

Facebook's Branded Content creates a relationship between the brand and influencer, so you'll be able to see exactly how much reach, engagement, clicks, shares, and purchases stem from your investment.

(image source)

Step 2. Consideration

At the 'top of the funnel' you're building an audience.

In the middle, you're building leads.

You're following up with all those who've expressed at least a passing interest along the way, sending them introductory offers to filter out the people who recognize they have a need and want to solve it soon.

Here's how you identify those people.

Audience Targeting

Your audience targeting for 'middle of the funnel' peeps just became incredibly simple. Because you're simply going to show these ads to the people you just reached in the previous step.

That typically means (1) people who interacted with your ad or Facebook page, (2) people who watched your video, and/or (3) people who visited your website (typically over the past ~60 days).

You can even get fancy and segment between people who visit your site and join your email list vs. those that don't (so you can tailor ad messaging accordingly).
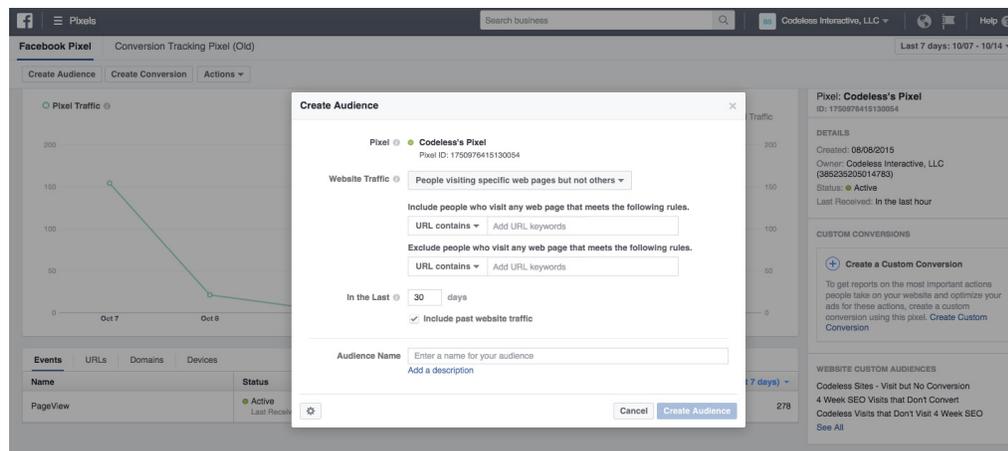
Despite Facebook ads being all images and video, your audience targeting is arguably more important.

Advertising to custom audiences of people who've already been to your website isn't just logical, but it also reduces the costs you have to pay and increases the amount of potential people you can reach.

Because: Relevance Score.
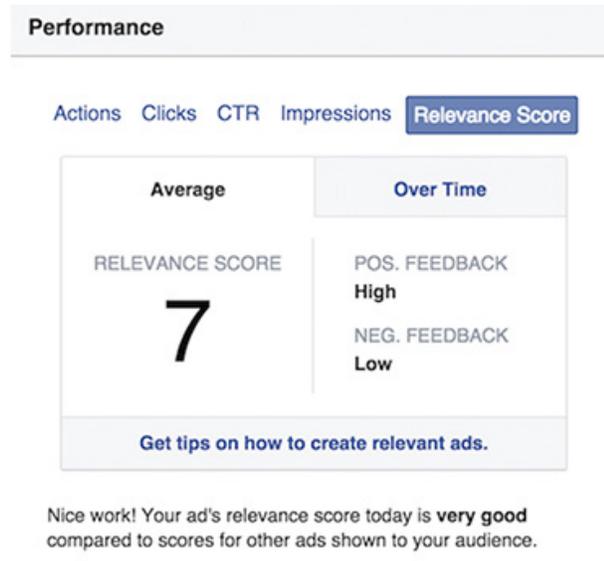
(image source)

This metric works similar to the AdWords Quality Score, where higher scores correlate with lower Cost per Conversions.

But instead of grading things like your ad text, they're looking at how interested this particular audience might be in your overall message.

TL;DR? Custom audiences will always provide higher relevance scores, and outperform in driving conversions, untargeted audiences.

Placements

The Desktop News Feed is the crème de la crème for driving conversions.

Problem is, competition's higher and showing up here is (generally) more expensive.

Mobile is great for getting clicks and views, but less so for driving conversions (unless you're using their special Lead Ads format).

The Desktop Right Column placement is like the redheaded stepchild. Images are tiny-weeny. And you can barely make out the text in some cases.

But.

If someone already knows your brand because they just visited your site or interacted with your page, a recognizable image on the right-hand side can still grab their attention.

So it's a great option for these 'remarketing' or 'retargeting'-style ads that you're sending to custom audiences.

Creative

'Middle of the funnel' objectives all revolve around one thing: getting that email address.

These people might not be ready to give your entire life history and set-up a sales call ASAP. But they know they need help, are looking for solutions, and are willing to part with the basics.

Your job as advertiser is to test many different intro-offers to see which appeal the most (and convert the highest) for the least amount of money.

But we ain't talkin' no miniscule A/B test. We ain't got time for that.

Instead, think broader. Bigger.

Test topics and personas and content types.

Listen to Larry Kim. The 'unicorns' topping 10% conversion rates aren't doing so by focusing on button color.

Distribution Point	All accounts	Ecommerce	Legal	B2B	Finance
Median CVR	2.35%	1.84%	2.07%	2.23%	5.01%
Top 25% CVR	5.31%	3.71%	4.12%	4.31%	11.19%
Top 10% CVR	11.45%	6.25%	6.46%	11.70%	24.48%

(image source)

There is literally no limit to the amount of variables you test.

For example, Jon Loomer segmented users with different webinars aimed at sophistication and experience levels (using the aforementioned Carousel ad so people could self-select).
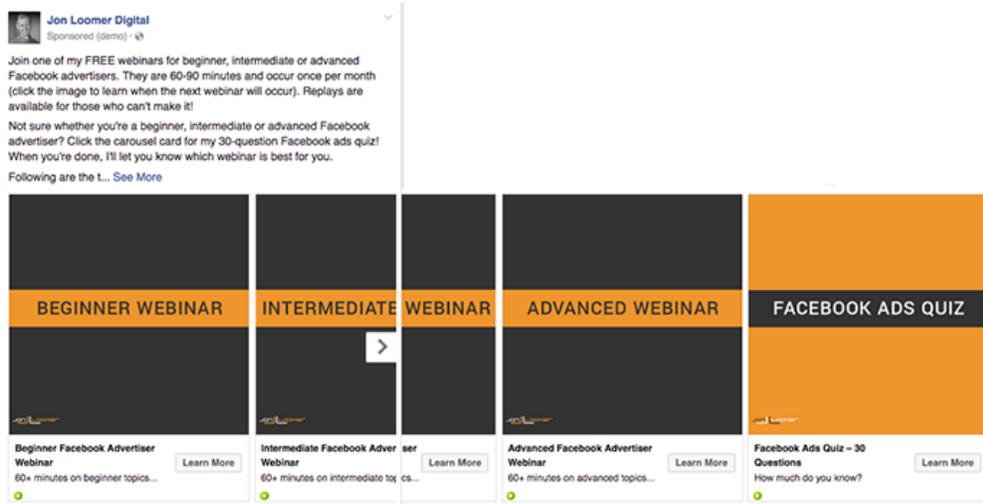
(image source)

Step 3. Conversion

You're nearly there.

You've done all the hard work up to this point.

Now all you need is to provide a simple and straightforward offer at the right time, to the right people. And then magic happens.

Except... how?

Audience Targeting

Once again we're going back to custom audience.

But this time, the key difference is purchasing intent.

That starts with all the people who've recently downloaded eBooks or attended webinars over the past 30-60 days.

But that can also include those who've just looked at specific product pages or Pricing information on your site.

Facebook's Dynamic Product Ads are exactly what they sound like: ads that become customized automatically with specific product information.

Think of these like AdWords Shopping Campaigns, complete with a similar product feed ad that pipes in product names and details including pricing or SKUs.

These ads are 'templated', so a generic placeholder is used to start with.

Then when someone visits specific product pages (or even adds them to their cart) but doesn't purchase, an ad for that product will remind them the next time they login to Facebook.

PICTURE	PRODUCT NAME	CLICKS ⬇	CPC ⇕	CTR ⇕	IMPR. ⇕	SPENT ⇕
	The Spa Kit 3901742342 🌐 View product	1	0.28 USD	1.20 %	83	0.28 USD

You can (and should) even introduce scarcity and urgency to motivate someone to take action before it's too late.

When done right, these dynamic ads can deliver a 20% conversion increase over regular Facebook ads (in addition to reducing the amount of creative and management overhead required to monitor).

Placements

Desktop News Feed ads might be a little more expensive on the face of it.

But that larger captivating image, longer copy and extra link description can be worth the cost.

Right-column desktop ads also work, especially when retargeting images with Dynamic Product ads where someone might instantly recognize the same product image they were just looking at a few minutes, hours, or days ago on your site.

Mobile, generally speaking, isn't your best bet for driving conversions. Although they are being used for more purchasing events and small transactional orders, it's still common for people to discover products on mobile and purchase later on their laptop or desktop.

For example, Business Insider reports that while people spend more time on mobile vs. desktop (59% to 41%), only 15% is spent on mobile with the balance (85%) spent on desktop devices.

With one exception: Lead Ads.

Let's say you're a service provider and prospects need to fill out a long form to kickstart the sales process. Tapping a bunch of little form fields smushed together with a fat thumb isn't likely to happen.

But Lead Ads will help a Facebook user automatically submit their account details with just the push of a button.

([image source](#))

[One test](#) showed that while landing pages predictable performed better on desktop, lead ads delivered a similarly strong Cost Per Conversion on mobile.

Creative

Once again, no need to reinvent the wheel.

Just deliver a strong ad creative that lays out what you've got to offer, and as long as your audience targeting is as good or better, the results should take care of themselves.

Emotional: Benefit

Rational: Great Features

Emotional: Happy and relaxed, +more time

Rational: No risk, it's free to try

Social Proof: 10 million users!

(image source)

Specifically, that starts with a strong value proposition that's easy to understand. Images are the first thing we notice on Facebook ads, so a captivating hero image will help users immediately grasp the emotional impact conveyed by subtle body language.

When you've got all that lined up, all that's left is to click an appropriately leading call-to-action that tells the user what to do next.

Conclusion

This is the end of the guide. But only the beginning of a customer relationship.

The fun is just getting started once that person purchases an introductory product or signs up for a consultation.

They should be synced with your CRM. Hit in other channels with onboarding emails and SMS. Even little surprises sent through the mail can turn a newly acquired customer into a lifelong brand advocate.

That long journey is multifaceted and complex.

Facebook's own little sales funnel is similarly nuanced. It doesn't work like AdWords. Hell – nothing else in the known advertising world does.

But with a solid game plan to follow and good execution (not to mention a healthy dose of trial-and-error) you should be able to focus its endless options to produce results.

Properly Track Each & Every New Facebook Customer Today

Get access to 'full-funnel' reporting that will help you track sales back to Facebook marketing campaigns and finally give an error-free ROI to your bosses and clients.

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