

# 6 ways to drive social media advertising impact

While marketers are recognising the potential impact of social media advertising in customer-acquisition and sales, proving its value to the C-Suite can be tricky. **Joel Davis** of **Mighty Social** outlines six key techniques for measuring and improving social media campaigns which, in turn, will help drive performance and secure budget

**S**ocial media, which once focused on conversation and content, has now become an established channel for customer acquisition – something that astute marketers are increasingly exploring. According to a recent ClickZ Intelligence survey of advertising professionals worldwide, 61% expect an increase in social ad spend for Facebook and 40% on LinkedIn and Instagram.

We appear, however, to have reached a tipping point where marketers acknowledge the potential impact of social media advertising, yet are still challenged when it comes to proving the value of a social advertising campaign. To drive performance and secure executive buy-in and budget for social ad campaigns, marketers need to plan more strategically, building in measurement from the outset, while drawing on the latest data management and social monitoring and measuring techniques to define and establish true ROI, moving away from the traditional focus on clicks.

Here are six ways to improve and measure impact from social media advertising.

**1 KNOW WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE**  
Before you can measure and improve a social advertising campaign, you need to establish what success means to you. A 'satisfactory' ratio between ad spend and revenue will differ based on business size and objectives.

To do this, it's necessary to change the common mindset that social advertising is a 'cool thing to do' but won't cover costs.

Managed and planned properly, social will not only break even but can also generate a handsome profit, thereby meeting KPIs for a conversion campaign.

Start off by ensuring you have clear measurable objectives. These need to be well-defined as they will be the benchmark by which you will drive the entire campaign. Online advertising delivers accurate ROI, something that is more guesswork in traditional advertising.

With new social products, platforms and capabilities constantly emerging, it can be difficult for marketers to remain focused on their core social media strategy. Keeping primary business objectives front of mind will help you avoid the distractions that new platforms might cause.

Global cinema brand National Amusements recently used a social advertising campaign to promote the launch of children's movie *Thomas & Friends: The Great Race*. It set a clear objective of beating 2016's ticket sales, despite showing the film in 150 fewer cinemas. This ambitious goal drove the campaign, with every element focused on this target.

**2 DEFINE AND TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE**

With your objectives set, it's time to define the audience you want to engage with. The more accurately you can do this, the more successful your social campaign will be. The key factor, of course, is how you go about targeting your defined audience on social media. A hyper-targeted audience will enable you to gauge exactly who your most lucrative

segments are. There are varying degrees to which you can deep-dive into segmentation. Ranking the highest relevant audience segments will go a long way towards avoiding wastage – or worse, diluting or damaging the brand.

For its *Thomas & Friends* movie campaign, National Amusement first identified the most appropriate audience data segments, which included family demographics, age and number of children, geolocation through to socioeconomic status, interests and hobbies. This data was then cross-referenced with personality traits and behavioural patterns, then overlaid around purchase intent, life and family events through to device and channel preferences. Ranking the highest relevant audience segments helped National Amusements avoid waste.

**3 DECIDE ON THE RIGHT FORMAT**  
With your audience defined and key data segments identified, the most appropriate channel and ad format need to be decided upon. Google AdWords, for example, can be combined with Facebook to get in front of those people who are actively in the buying cycle. AdWords is one of the best sources for new customers who are already searching for a defined product or service, as it targets users actively looking for specific information. A good example of this would be a potential customer searching for car insurance.

Social advertising on the other hand targets new customers who don't yet know what they specifically want, but who display the right kind of purchase intent. In this case, a good example would be a potential

customer who is interested in purchasing a vehicle. From this starting point you can begin exploring suitable channels. Which ones you choose will of course be dependent on your product or service. Facebook has proved to be a highly cost-effective and scalable acquisition marketing channel, particularly for the entertainment sector.

Aligning with the popular Thomas & Friends UK Facebook page, National Amusements promoted a highly engaging movie trailer, and used website click ads to retarget the audience that watched at least 75% of the video, thereby ensuring high levels of interest were already in place.

#### 4 HYPER-TARGET THROUGH ESTABLISHING OPTIMUM DELIVERY TIME AND PLACE

The campaign can be further honed by then considering the best time to serve the ad to your audience to gain maximum engagement. To establish the right delivery times, your audience data can be refined into target audience 'modes'.

This kind of fine-tuning was crucial to National Amusements for its *Thomas & Friends* movie campaign, where the behaviour of parents and their children was analysed to establish the best time to engage. For instance, it was found that an ad served in the middle of children's dinner and bedtime could be lost in the chaos of the moment. However, serving it straight afterwards, when parents are in organising mode, was much more likely to lead to a purchase. Leave it too late and parents will be in wind-down mode and may not feel inclined to follow through.

#### 5 COMPLEMENT AND SUPPORT YOUR MARKETING ON OTHER CHANNELS

You can increase the impact of your social advertising by making sure it complements and supports any marketing across other channels, and vice versa. The messages you send out through marketing and advertising should be consistent no matter what channel you are using. What's more, any social media campaigns should support others running elsewhere to help widen the reach and strengthen the message. This can help to increase the effectiveness of the overall campaign.

However, it's important to avoid simply

*Thomas & Friends: National Amusements aligned with its Facebook page to promote the movie trailer and analysed the behaviour of parents and their children to establish the best time to engage*



sharing ad creative across different channels as different approaches are required in each case, particularly in social media. A common mistake, for example, is to run TV ads on social media. Consumers are in different mindsets when watching TV as opposed to using social media, where people have a much shorter attention span. Social video advertising, therefore, needs to be briefer and more immediate.

#### 6 MONITOR AND MEASURE PERFORMANCE

When running a social ad campaign, you should aim to carry out regular conversion uplift tests so that you are continually assessing performance and making any necessary adjustments to improve results. To do this, it's necessary to identify those engagements or sales – depending on the objectives set – that were down to the social campaign.

A home improvement brand benchmarked the percentage of sales that would have happened even if consumers hadn't looked at the social advertising, to establish incremental sales rather than cannibalising other existing channels. This was particularly effective as the relationship between different channels was complex. In this case, as their product had a long consideration period, attribution modelling helped define the contribution of each individual channel, from social search, offline and display.

Attribution modelling can help allocate a value to each channel based on analysis of the target customer's purchasing journey in order to measure and refine social

conversions effectively and ultimately establish cost-per-conversion.

Thanks to the latest native and third-party tracking tools, it's possible to define the entire consumer journey accurately, from awareness all the way to key business metrics such as sales and ROI.

Social media has certainly come a long way in a very short time. A decade ago, marketers would never have even considered leveraging social platforms the way they do today. Social advertising offers organisations of all sizes great returns on investment. However, without the expertise to navigate what still seems a relatively new advertising landscape to those outside the sector, it is easy for companies to rapidly become frustrated as the returns are scarce and their budgets get sucked dry.

By delivering great content targeted at the right audience at the best time and accurately measuring the results, National Amusement's *Thomas & Friends* movie campaign was shown to generate a 300% uplift from revenue target. The campaign also delivered an ROI of £12 for every £1 invested as well as over 6.8 million impressions, resulting in more than 480,000 video views and over 25,000 website clicks. It also had a highly positive impact on website traffic, with over 50% of users clicking the 'Book Now' button.

This shows the power of social advertising if planned, managed and measured effectively.

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