New Facebook Advertising Tools Can Maximize Social Marketing Success

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You're a small startup. You need to grow your business and expand your customer base quickly without spending a lot of money. Online marketing is definitely a great way to go, but the tried and true methods - display or search ads - vary greatly in cost, management time, targeting capabilities and results.

Another obvious target for online marketing is social media sites such as Facebook. With more than 700 million active users, Facebook can be a potential goldmine for small businesses to reach new customers. On any given day, more than half of its users log on to interact with friends, play games and post content, which translates into more than 11 billion hours a month spent on the social network.

This article is not going to focus on Facebook 101 - that is, setting up a static page, building up your friends list, posting content and blasting out information and offers to your followers. These can be effective, but they really only target people you know or who know you, and maybe a small percentage of people beyond your immediate circle.

In order to reach a broader audience, you should seriously consider advertising on Facebook. Recent improvements in Facebook's advertising platform have made it more powerful than before and even easier to use - all the while giving you greater control over audience targeting and ad spend.

Facebook has great targeting capabilities and allows advertisers to reach people based on gender, geography, marital status, time of day, education and basic profile information. However, the secret sauce behind Facebook's ad platform is a "Suggestion Tool" that allows advertisers to reach people based on other interests and information that its members share. It works by analyzing and cataloging mountains of data generated by the entire Facebook community, giving you superior targeting power and the ability to drill down deep. It also blows the doors off Facebook's previous attempts at targeting (e.g., generic filters such as "18 to 24 males"), which could quickly burn through your budget and not deliver the audience you need.

How Do I Begin?

First you have to ask yourself - who is my audience? What types of people am I trying to reach, and who would be most interested in my business? Targeting and timing are critical for success, and that's where the Suggestion Tool excels.

For instance, a good friend recently started a personal chef business on the side, targeting busy working families in Silicon Valley. For $50 plus the cost of groceries, she would prepare and serve a gourmet meal at the client's house. Initially, she started with a simple Facebook page and began reaching out to her friends, acquaintances and former colleagues.

However, she soon realized that she needed a little more reach and started advertising. Using Facebook's Suggestion Tool, she targeted married, career-oriented women ages 35 and up who lived in more affluent areas of Silicon Valley. She timed her ads to appear in the mid- to late-afternoon, when these women began thinking about dinner plans for the family. On the very first

day her ads ran, she acquired two new customers and eventually she quit her day job to pursue her newfound career full-time.

To read the rest of the article **click here**.