A search marketer’s guide to using paid social media



The battle between those who specialize in certain marketing practices is prevalent throughout the industry. Individuals, departments and indeed agencies are all involved.

After all, they are often competing for the same budget, beating their chests and promoting their own channel as the most valuable. It is understandable. We all need to make a living.

But in reality they should all be working together to deliver economies of scale. Fully integrated campaigns can deliver far better results than the sum of its component parts.

SEO and social media would at first appear to be very different practices, especially when taking into account paid social advertising. However, there are significant SEO benefits to be gained from utilizing social media advertising as both an outreach platform and also as an analytics platform. Let’s jump straight into it.

We are assuming a certain level of knowledge when it comes social media advertising. For those not ‘in the know’, you can be pretty darn specific in regards to your demographics when advertising on major platforms such as Facebook.

Make the most of your content

For years now content has been one of the major focal points of SEO campaigns, giving birth to potentially the most irritating and overused saying in SEO: “Content is King”! Jayson Demers noted back in 2015 that SEO is now synonymous with content marketing and that as a result SEO teams are

investing *heavily* in content creation.

Let’s assume you are doing all the right things. You have a solid grasp of your buyer personas and inbound funnels. You have thoroughly researched content opportunities within your specific market, using this research to help influence your strategy. You’re also ensuring that your on-site optimization for each article is top notch so that you attract that ever growing portion of traffic from long tail keywords.

This is great, genuinely it is. Although are you missing a trick by not integrating additional marketing channels into your content strategy? Email is awesome at disseminating content to both prospective and current clients, but what of social media advertising?

To paint an industry with an awfully large brush, content creation is sometimes too heavily focused on gaining traffic *directly from search engines* due to the user intent associated with those actively searching, and the fact that often this is what the client is basing payment of their invoice on!

However, taking a quick step back, if this content is aligned to your conversion funnel then surely getting in front of as many eyes as possible (via other channels) should therefore still have a significant benefit. SEO teams can utilize social media advertising platforms to push this content to users that fall within their buyer persona profiles which should ultimately produce conversions (it may require a few more touch points, but you get the point).

Of course the advertising spend would have to be included in your cost per acquisition calculations but hopefully the following points show how you can use social media advertising to make your investment into content pay a higher rate of dividends.

Keep them coming back

Inbound marketing often works best through multiple touch points during the buyer's journey. If your traffic is converting to customers directly from a single piece of content then that's awesome, good for you! For the rest of the world that aren't unicorns we need to keep our readers coming back in order to help them find their way down our own sales funnels.

Re-targeting the traffic to your website via social media with awesome content is one such tactic to keep your traffic returning. Use retargeting tools on social media to maintain your touch points with users, building brand authority and trust.

Some friendly persuasion

Sometimes people just need a little nudge. Ultimately you don't want people clicking on your retargeting posts, consuming your content and then leaving time and time again. That can be a costly ego boost. Eventually you want them to convert!

Assess how your content strategy aligns with your sales funnel. Do you have set pieces of content that lead on from one another which will help you become more specific with your retargeting? Does this pathway eventually lead to a conversion?

Your conversions may not be in monetary form. They may involve the user providing some additional contact information in order to download a brochure or them signing up to a free trial. Whatever that conversion looks like, don't be afraid to ask the question. If you don't ask, you don't get. When the time is right, your social retargeting campaigns should include conversion related posts that relate to said

individual’s status in your sales funnel.

We all love a good link

We covered the benefits that social media provide for a link building campaign in a recent article, so jump over there for a deeper look.

Suffice to say that again, if you are investing heavily in content, then why not use social media to spread the net even wider and potentially earn links? Paul Shapiro had an interesting tactic for Marketing Land of targeting employees at specific publishing companies as a link building tactic!

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Gain analytics insights!

When it comes to analytics tools for SEO, data from the website and SEO specific platforms steal the limelight. The likes of Google Analytics, Search Console and those offered by Moz, SEMrush and Majestic may be the first ones off the tongue but we should also be using analytics gained from other channels in our decisions. You guessed it, social media advertising can be particularly useful in this respect.

In fact, you don’t even need to be using social advertising to get these insights but the specific demographic targeting within social advertising should help provide a higher level of actionable data.

Understanding how to drive clicks

In much the same way as Google Adwords, via Facebook Insights or other social media analytics tools, you can view your click-through rate per post. Whilst this is also influenced by other factors such as time of post, engagement or demographic targeting, you can also draw insights into what content is proving most popular with your audience.

- Is the subject matter performing or does the content strategy need to be revisited?
- Are titles really attention grabbing or lack the ability to drive enthusiasm?

This type of data can be used to influence your content strategy, even if it is as simple as creating article titles that increase click through rates.

Just starting out?

Some content pieces can be spectacularly well researched and written but receive far less traffic than expected. There are additional factors that will dictate the ability of your website's content to rank in search engines including the overall authority of your website, the link profile of that article or load speed.

More often than not a lack of traffic will mean that the analytics associated with that content piece becomes less reliable, subsequently preventing you from really fine tuning your content strategy.

Social media advertising can be incredibly valuable in driving 'pay per play' traffic to your content and therefore allowing you to capture that all important data. It doesn't need to be specific to your content either. Conversion rate optimization is an important part of any digital marketing campaign so you can also capitalize on social traffic to help identify

opportunities within your website’s user flow.

So there you have it. Yet another reason to make sure that your social media and SEO teams are working together.

Of course, you don’t need to try to implement of the above points at once – in fact we would advise taking them one step at a time. The most important point? Move away from marketing channels operating within their own silo.

Integrate your marketing, share data, use content across multiple channels and collaborate to increase your results across the board!

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