

A Six-Step Blueprint for Brand Advertising on Facebook

Taking Marketing on the Social Network Beyond Cost-Per-Fan

As brands continue to increase their ad spending on Facebook, there is an ongoing conversation on how to most effectively deploy those dollars. Below is a six-step ‘Blueprint’ for effective brand advertising on Facebook. It combines the most efficient advertising medium (marketplace right-hand-column ads) with a splash of user engagement and re-targeting. These steps are not exclusive -- you should not skip No. 1 and move on to No. 2. Rather, these should be added to the campaign one at a time, and by the end, all 6-steps should be running concurrently.

1. Standard Marketplace Ads

Objective: Grow your fan base

After you have built out the framework for your fan page -- an attractive image, a thorough set of information, images, videos, as well as some custom tabs as you see fit -- your initial marketing spend

should focus on growing your fan base through standard marketplace ads. These ads pointing to your fan page will allow users to either “like” your fan page directly within the ad unit or click on the ad and “like” from the actual fan page. The goal will be to drive as many fans as possible at the lowest Cost Per Fan (CPF) rate possible while staying within your core target market. Ad copy should be kept short and effective (i.e., “If you like Cars, Like X”) and should be very direct in asking the user to like your page. Ideally, give the user a reason to like your page, effectively reducing your CPF rate (i.e., by liking X, your fans get access to exclusive content).

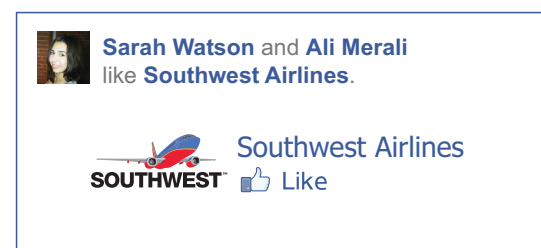


2. ‘Page Like’ Sponsored Story

Objective: Grow your fan base

A “Page Like” sponsored story is very similar to the standard marketplace ads. The difference is that it will be shown exclusively to friends of your fans and you have less control over the copy. For the user

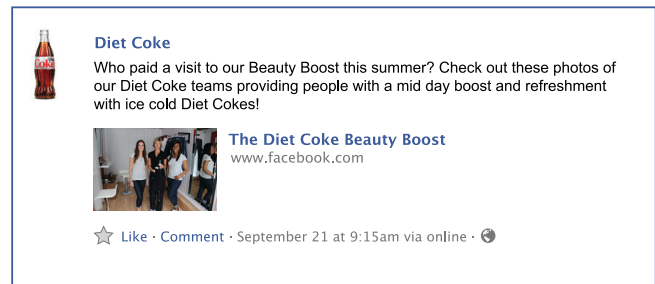
seeing this ad unit, he or she will specifically see some friends who have liked your page. The idea is that if one of my good friends has “liked” the page, I should also be interested. This ad unit becomes more effective as you grow your fan base. This is why it is important to first build up your fan base through standard marketplace ads before introducing “Page Like” sponsored stories.



3. Post Frequently

Objective: Engage your fan base

This is not an ad unit but it is crucial to mention posting strategy as part of brand advertising. Ensuring that you are engaging your fan base with regular posts will give you the ROI from steps 1 and 2 -- and is essential for steps 4, 5, and 6. Since there is a load of literature on fan page posting frequency and strategy, I will just provide a few quick tips. Post at a minimum once a day. Keep your posts short (under 80 characters is ideal). Post when your audience is there (it may not always be during 9 to 5 working hours, depending on your brand). Provide clear instructions if you want them to engage. (i.e. 'I think X is amazing. 'Like' this post if you agree!). Pose questions when you post to your fan page -- these typically drive responses and a higher level of user engagement. If you do not engage your fan base with frequent and effective posts, you will be wasting your marketing dollars.



4. Page Post Ads

Objective: Engage your fan base

This ad unit specifically leverages your hard work posting frequently in step 3 by taking the posts you make on your fan page and turning them into ad units which are shown to your existing fans. Here is the idea behind it: If you post to your page, it is quite likely that your fans may not even see it. They may log in several hours or days after the post has been made, and miss that post altogether.

The page post sponsored story will convert that post into an actual ad unit and display it on the right-hand column -- resulting in a much higher chance that your fans will see and engage with the posts that you make.



5. 'Page Post Like' Sponsored Story

Objective: Grow your fan base

This ad unit again leverages frequent posting to your fan page and is a hybrid of the page like sponsored story and the page post sponsored story. This ad is "created" when one of your existing fans likes one of your posts. It is then shown to the friends of your fans who liked your post. The concept is similar to the page like in leveraging the fact that a users' social circle will influence their actions. This can be an extremely effective way to grow your fan base as the social context is there and the content is something much more engaging than simply your page alone. The content is leveraging a post on that page that can have a strong statement opinion, or question. Friends of your fans will be very likely to want to jump into the conversation if the post is powerful enough.



6. Standard Marketplace Ads

Objective: Leverage your large and engaged fan base

One of the biggest mistakes that brands make is feeling that growing their fan base and engaging them within the Facebook fan page is as far as this platform can go. This is not true. By growing your fan base and keeping them engaged you now have a phenomenal opportunity to direct these users elsewhere. By creating standard marketplace ads specifically targeted to your existing fan base,

you can drive your fans to an external page. To give you an idea of how effective this can be, we ran a contest for a large telecommunications company that was looking for contest entries. When we targeted the brand's existing fan base, we were able to get contest entries at 10% of the cost compared to advertising to the general public. These savings can become very significant as your fan base continues to grow and you can come up with effective ways to re-target your fan base. You can leverage your fan base for contests, market research and even promoting a sale and driving them directly to your e-commerce website to make a purchase. Be sure to use unique tracking links when targeting your existing fan base versus advertising to the general public and you will then be able to directly measure the difference in performance. This final piece is crucial for brands because it allows them to see a real and direct ROI on their entire Facebook ad spend.

