

COLUMNS

3 steps for effective Facebook and Instagram holiday advertising

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By **Brian Bowman**

The beginning of November always brings to mind a classic scene from "Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch stole Christmas" (the Jim Carey version), in which Cindy Lou Who and her dad, Lou Lou Who, race from store to store to beat all of the other customers for that one, or in their case, many, perfect gifts.

Though this part of the movie clearly emphasizes on what it is like in the consumer realm, this competitive environment is no different for advertisers.

November signals the beginning of a mad rush from companies to get as many consumers into their stores, download their applications or onto their sites by running promotions and special offers.

This season is an advertiser's make-it-or-break-it time, particularly with Facebook, as it sells its ads based on a highly competitive bidding system.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are retailers' most profitable times of the year, and other businesses separate from retailers also have the chance to capitalize on the consumers' heightened attention during this time.

As an advertiser, it can be quite easy to get lost in the plethora of ads pushed to consumers during all this activity. However, there are a few easy steps advertisers can take to make sure their Facebook advertising dollars are going as far as possible and standing out against all the noise.

Spend early

The saying "sooner, rather than later" has not been truer than with fourth-quarter's Facebook advertisement placements results.

We have been keeping tabs on mobile app install costs and trends during the past years, and note that while Q4 costs continue to increase, there is a huge spike in costs beginning Dec. 10. For advertisers, this means increased profits if they spend ad dollars between Thanksgiving and Dec. 10.

Keep it fresh with creative

With this small window of reasonably priced opportunity, advertisers have to be proactive with their creative.

It is crucial for advertisers to stand out among all the advertising noise. The tricky part with Facebook ads is they appear within a users newsfeed, so brands should try to keep the feel of their ad as close to an original post to make sure users feel like they are organically engaging with a brand, just as they would with a friend.

Additionally, with Facebook's new carousel format, marketers now have multiple advertising "looks" they can use

within one ad placement. This is a new feature for advertisers this holiday season and another great opportunity to diversify the look of ads and stretch advertising dollars so long as you are willing to put a little effort in on the front end with creative.

Use Instagram

With 80 million photos shared everyday and growing, Instagram has become the hotbed for advertisers to reach millennial and iGen users, with more than 90 percent of their users under the age of 35 and ages between 16 and 24.

Instagram advertising has become key for marketers to reach these highly coveted users for the first time.

Since Instagram ads are new to this year's holiday advertising market, advertisers need to look into investing heavily in this platform for the holiday season and beyond.

ADVERTISERS CAN use these three simple steps to greatly increase their impact and efficiently use their budget during the hectic fourth quarter this year and next.

While the market is competitive, just like Cindy Lou Who and her dad were in terms of finding gifts, every brand and advertiser has the opportunity to reach their audience through Facebook and Instagram effectively and efficiently during this holiday season.

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