Connecting with customers through social ads

When they're done right, social media ads are an effective way to connect with potential customers.

They appear as display ads or promoted posts on social networks, and can reach very specific audiences based on things like occupation, interests and location.

To get the most out of these ads, you need to use them strategically by researching your target audience, setting goals, developing creative and measuring ROI.

Let's take a look at each of those steps in detail.

Setting goals for your social ads

Decide on the one thing you want each ad to help you do. Do you want newsletter signups? More followers? More sales?

Stick to just one goal per ad - trying to do too many things can hurt your ad's performance.

Researching your target audience

Look at who you want to follow you on platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn, and set up ads to target those people.

Invest your time and money in the platforms that are most popular with your target audience - you can use Google Analytics to find out which ones drive the most traffic your way.

Developing your ads' creative elements

- Look back at your most popular posts to date. Take a lead from them in terms of what content and tone works well.

- Keep your ad messaging on-brand, goal-oriented and focused on benefits.

- Don't be too vague - you pay per click, so you want to avoid clickthroughs where people leave your site right away because it's not what they expected.

- Stay true to your brand's look and feel and keep the ad in-line with the landing page

- Track the performance of creative elements using tools like Marketo to see what works best.

Measuring your ROI

- Once your ads are up and running, it's time to measure how effective they are.

- If your goal is conversions or sales, you can use UTM-coded URLs to measure which site visits came from social ads, and how much those visits were worth.

- If your goal is generating leads, you can measure your ROI by working out your cost-per-acquisition.

Your social ads checklist

- ☑ I know what I want my ad to achieve
- ☑ I have defined my target audience
- ☑ I know which social platforms are most popular with my audience
- ☑ I know what I want my ads to say
- ☑ I have a plan for measuring my ads' performance

Once you've got all this in place, you're all set to go ahead and start creating great social ads.

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