Facebook Ads Strategy Guide

Expert tactics from brand awareness to conversion
Facebook advertising is a booming business with no sign of slowing down. Every year, **15 million companies spend billions** on Facebook ads.

But how hard are these dollars working? According to eMarketer, **96 percent** of marketers consider Facebook the most effective social media advertising platform based on proven ROI.

Why? Out of Facebook’s **two billion monthly users**, the average person spends a minimum of **50 minutes a day** on one of Facebook’s products—more than any other network.

Whether you’re trying to build brand awareness, increase sales and leads, or do all of the above, Facebook ads can help you reach your business goals at every stage of the customer journey. In this guide, you’ll discover:

- How to use ads efficiently to increase your brand’s reach
- The specific ways you can target and retarget audiences
- Crucial A/B tests every marketer should conduct to lower costs
- Common ROI metrics advertisers can’t afford to get wrong
- Expert techniques for taking your ad strategy to the next level

**Social media platforms that produce the best ROI according to social media marketers worldwide, March 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Platform</th>
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<td>Facebook</td>
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Note: n=456; respondent chose up to 3
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Before you earn somebody’s business, you need to get their attention. Facebook’s huge user community means your brand’s message has the potential to be far reaching—but you can’t rely on these big numbers to do all the work for you.

Only two percent of a brand’s audience actually sees their organic posts on Facebook. If you want to drive engagement, traffic, and conversions, you need a combination of paid and organic Facebook posts.
Help people find your products

Facebook has features developed specifically to help people discover your products and engage with your business including:

1. Brand Awareness Campaigns
2. Reach Campaigns
3. Unique Ad Formats
4. Brand Analytics
Brand Awareness Campaigns

Boosting discoverability is the first step towards building a strong brand and driving sales.

Facebook's brand awareness campaigns let you promote your business in the place where people find new things—and where they're already in discovery mode.

To increase discoverability, select the Brand Awareness objective in your Facebook ads dashboard. This optimization for brand awareness combines reach and attention to ensure your ads are delivered to the people most likely to respond - and to have higher ad recall.

Before you create an ad using the Brand Awareness objective, you should note:

- You can find the brand awareness optimization in Ads Manager, which is also supported by Hootsuite Ads
- Eligible placements include Facebook, Instagram, and Audience Network
- You can use image, video, slideshow, and carousel ad formats
- Like other optimized cost-per-thousand-impressions (CPM) bidding types, you'll be billed by impressions

**Facebook Tip:** To avoid overspending, use only one placement (Facebook Mobile News Feed, Instagram, etc.) per ad set and set a bid specifically for that placement. The CPM can vary greatly from placement to placement with the same audience, so stick to one location for your Brand Awareness ads.

Reach the right audience

If you want to reach a broad audience, Facebook makes it easy. Use their Reach Objective to influence the biggest audience at the lowest cost. (Learn more about it on Facebook's *Brand Awareness* page.)
Boost brand awareness and reach with eye-catching ad formats

Facebook’s multiple ad formats offer brands a solution for every business goal. When your primary focus is attracting customers at the top of your sales funnel, there are two key ad formats to consider:

- **Video ads:** With 100 million hours of video watched daily on Facebook, video ads are a powerful way to connect with people. Video ads can start playing as soon as they appear in a viewer’s News Feed, so they can engage your audience immediately.

- **Slideshows:** Create engaging slideshows with your photos in just a few minutes and capture your audience’s attention with motion. Slideshows give you the power of video without the cost and time associated with production.

Measure brand awareness and reach

Facebook suggests specific metrics for measuring the success of your brand awareness and reach-optimized ads.

- **Estimated Ad Recall Lift (people):** A new metric, estimated ad recall lift (people) gives you an estimate of how many people are likely to remember your ad after having seen it. It’s calculated by comparing the number of people you reach and the time they spend looking at your ads (attention) with historical information about the correlation of attention and reach to ad recall.

- **Brand Performance Metrics:** When running a brand campaign, metrics like reach, video views, and cost per video view (CPV) help you measure brand awareness, engagement, and the associated cost. These metrics are designed to be a better benchmark for brand awareness than metrics like clicks and page likes.
Not all audiences are created equal, so for best results you need a comprehensive Facebook ad strategy. Once you have had engagement with your Facebook content and previous ads, you have powerful data for optimizing your audience targeting.

Don’t forget: Always have your conversions setup and goals in mind before launching any campaign.
Track conversions and optimize ads with the Facebook Pixel

The Facebook Pixel’s targeting and retargeting capabilities can help you get the most out of your social ad budget.

A Facebook pixel—a line of code that you place on your website—helps brands track conversions from Facebook ads, optimize ads based on collected data, build targeted audiences for future ads, and retarget to qualified leads.

It places and activates cookies to track users as they interact with your site and Facebook ads.

See our blog post The Facebook Pixel: What It Is and How to Use It for more detailed information.
Target specific devices

As you build your audience targeting strategy, you must consider the devices (mobile versus desktop) that your target audience is most active on.

Device-specific targeting allows you to initially target ads to one device as part of raising brand awareness, then target a different device to drive conversions, and again to complete the sale. This sets you up for success at every stage of the customer’s buying journey.

Identify the type of device most likely to lead to conversions depending on your campaign goals. Consider your target audience and the devices they would be most likely to use based on their demographics and behavioral patterns.

For example, if you are trying to achieve app downloads, consider targeting mobile devices exclusively, since this is where your potential customers are most active and will be completing the desired conversion.

Drive sales with custom audiences

With Hootsuite Ads, you can use your existing audience data to create custom and lookalike audiences that will help you effectively drive revenue.

Custom audiences

Custom audiences let you find specific groups of people to target based on a set of data (such as email lists, data from CRM systems such as HubSpot or Salesforce, and people who have liked your Facebook Page).

Use a custom audience when you want to:

- Reach people who visited a product page but didn’t complete a purchase (to encourage them to go back and do so)
- Create an audience of everyone who’s visited your website in the past 30 days
Lookalike audiences

Once you’ve figured out what works for your custom audiences, you can create lookalike audiences from this data and show them similar campaigns and offers.

To begin, identify your top engagers. See who’s liking your posts, leaving comments or feedback, writing reviews of your brand, and sharing your page with their Facebook friends. These are the people you want to replicate in your lookalike audience when it comes to your Facebook ads.

To ensure you’re targeting the right people, make a list of your top converting customers based on transaction value, engagement with your brand, and lifetime value. Ideally you’ll want data from several hundred—or even a few thousand—customers to enter into Facebook.

You want to create brand awareness and reach only for your very best potential customers—the ones who have the highest lifetime value to your brand and will continually come back to purchase your products.

Use a lookalike audience when:

- Your main objective is brand awareness and acquiring new customers
- You want to grow in a new international market (for example, by creating a lookalike audience based on your local customers)

Suggested reading:

Find out how children’s education brand Little Passports used lookalike audiences to achieve 3X customer base growth in six months and realized a 60 percent decrease in CPA.
Use retargeting to stay top-of-mind with potential customers

If you've ever visited an ecommerce website and had a product ad follow you around for days, you know how effective retargeting can be.

Retargeting allows you to reach highly engaged audience members who are at the evaluation stage of the buying journey. These people have interacted with your Facebook Page or website in some way (for example, by putting an item in their cart but not completing the purchase), and so have shown engagement levels optimal for your business.

Retargeting is also effective for cross-device optimization. For example, if you are a company with a mobile product, consider targeting everyone who visited your website on desktop in the past month with a mobile ad featuring a persuasive call to action. When your audience is on the optimal device, they're more likely to convert.

Formats that are effective for retargeting:

Offer ads
When shown to audiences who are between the evaluation and purchase stages, offer ads are an effective way to encourage conversion. You can create offer ads for everything from free shipping on a customer's first purchase to a deluxe sample of a new product with each order.

Offers are a feature that must be enabled. You can find them under the Ad Set category when creating your Facebook ads.

Carousel ads
When using carousel ads to increase conversions with retargeting, you have a few options. You can use the carousel ads to highlight features that make your product superior, or show a combination of products or services that will be most relevant to users based on their past purchase history.

Did they buy a new computer from your ecommerce site? Use carousel ads to show them a wireless keyboard, Bluetooth speaker, laptop stand, and screen cleaner. By showing complementary products, you can both drive further purchases and increase the average purchase value.
3 Testing your ads at scale

Save time and money with strategic testing techniques

Every digital marketing strategy requires constant innovation and testing in order to achieve better results and stay ahead of the curve... especially as Facebook itself releases new products and features on a regular basis.

The strategies below are some great ideas you can apply to your current or upcoming campaigns to ensure you get the best results possible.
Use A/B testing to find top-performing ads

Facebook ads are the perfect venue for learning what resonates best with your audience, from format to image style to hashtags to length of copy and tone of voice. With the data you gather during testing you can better predict what ad content will convert.

There are many ad components you can test to find out what works best for your audience, and with Facebook ads you can do so at scale.

**Key areas to test include:**
- **Text:** Test your ad's length (number of characters), style (a question versus a statement), use of emoji, punctuation, and tone of voice.
• **Call to action**: Try out different ways of asking your audience to engage. For example, you could test whether “buy now” works better than “learn more.”

• **Visuals**: Test different images and video, text-only posts versus those with images, a regular image versus a GIF, images of people or products versus graphs or infographics, and different video lengths.

What test should I run first?

**Headline and image.** Because they’re so visible, the headline and image are key areas for quick testing. You can apply all the same tests mentioned for text to your article headline and description to see what works—and what doesn’t.

• **Format**: Test different formats against each other, such as carousel ads, canvas ads, app install ads, video ads, lead ads, collection ads, slideshow ads, and regular photo ads.

• **Target audience**: Test your ads against the different audience segments mentioned in the previous two chapters to see what works best for your business objectives.

Suggested reading:

*A/B Testing on Social Media: How to Do it with Tools You Already Have*

*5 Surprising Ways to Optimize Your Facebook Ads*
4 Optimize your ads like a pro

Paid attribution and the metrics you can’t afford to ignore

Optimize your mobile app ads

Facebook’s App Event Optimization lets businesses run mobile app install ads to people likely to take a specific action in your app.

For example, if you are looking to acquire customers most likely to actually make a purchase within your app, you can select mobile app install ads optimized for purchases. Or, if you want a user to “add to cart” from in your app you can optimize your mobile app install ads for this purpose.
Take the guesswork out of optimization with Hootsuite Ads

Optimize your campaigns in less time
Easily create and test hundreds of Facebook and Instagram ads in minutes, not hours. Get higher conversions through granular control over placement, timing, and custom audiences.

Save valuable time and resources
Stop draining your campaign budget on extensive—and unnecessary—trial-and-error testing methods. Use our experts’ battle-tested knowledge and expertise to optimize your campaigns in less time.

Better performance through automation
Automatically boost budgets—or start new campaigns—based on preset performance triggers. Improve ad performance with automatic daily recommendations.

Use lead ads to collect contact information
Lead ads are another efficient way for businesses to connect with customers during the acquisition stage of the buying journey.

When Facebook users click on a lead ad, a form pops up. Facebook automatically fills in this form with as much information about the user as possible (such as name, email address, and phone number, if provided), making it easier for users to make a purchase on both mobile and desktop.

As lead ads allow you to gain a customer’s contact information, you can then reach them with relevant email campaigns and retargeted Facebook ads.
To create a lead ad, select the Lead Generation objective when building your ad. This ad format is especially effective as part of a retargeting campaign for an audience already familiar with your business, such as past site visitors or those who have watched one of your videos. This will keep your relevance score and CTR high—and your CPA as low as possible.

You can use lead ads to:

- Offer deals, coupons and offers
- Simplify newsletter sign-ups
- Deliver information about new products, events, or updates
- Connect with prospects who express interest in your business
5 Measure ad performance

Paid social attribution and the metrics you can’t afford to ignore

You don’t have to sacrifice on cost to get results.
Measuring ad performance is the best way to optimize your Facebook ads budget effectively.

Learn how to get the most out of your ad efforts—and the key metrics you need to know to measure and prove results.
The key metrics every marketer needs to know

When it comes to your advertising costs, it’s critical to ensure you’re spending your Facebook ads budget as efficiently as possible. The following metrics will help you optimize your ad dollars without sacrificing any results.

**Return on Ad Spend (ROAS).** This metric refers to the total return on ad spend from website purchases. This is based on the value of all conversions recorded by the Facebook pixel on your website and attributed to your ads.

- If you have a purchase standard event implemented on your website, this metric counts when the Facebook pixel tracks that event, attributed to your ads.

Website purchases conversion value ÷ total spend = **ROAS**

**Relevance score.** Your relevance score shows you how relevant your ad is to your target audience. Facebook prioritizes ads with high relevance scores, lowering your CPC and the cost of your ads.

**Click-Through-Rate.** A better click-through-rate will boost your relevance score and lower your cost. Improve CTR by using Desktop News Feed ad placements (which generate higher CTRs), using appropriate CTA buttons, writing simple ad copy, and keeping your frequency (the number of times a user sees your ad) as low as possible.

**Cost per Mille (CPM).** This is the basic measurement for social media advertising success. Cost Per Mille (or thousand impressions) is a term used to denote the price of 1,000 advertisement impressions on one webpage. For example, if you spent $50 and received 10,000 impressions, your CPM was $5.

(Ad spend ÷ impressions) × 1000 = **CPM**
Cost per Acquisition (CPA). Cost per Acquisition, or Cost per Action, describes the amount an advertiser pays when an ad leads to a sale (or action). For example, cost per action on Facebook may apply to Page likes, offer claims, mobile app installs, and link clicks—you select actions that are the most relevant to your campaign.

- This is the best way to measure success if your goal is to have your audience take an action beyond a click. This is effective, for example, if you’re trying to get people to download gated content (which requires a form fill), sign up for a webinar, or redeem a code.

Cost per Lead (CPL). To report on the return on investment of a social ad campaign where the goal is lead generation, you need to calculate the cost to acquire a lead (cost per lead).

- To determine CPL, divide your ad spend by the number of leads generated during the campaign period. Your most successful campaigns will acquire high-quality leads at the lowest cost. Cost per Lead is a variation of a CPA campaign, whereas a lead is a person who is likely to make a purchase or complete an action.

Ad spend ÷ number of leads = CPL

Cost per Engagement (CPE). This means advertising impressions are free and advertisers pay only when a user engages with their ad unit.
Measuring results with Hootsuite Ads

**Analytics**
Uncover your top-performing ads at a glance. Measure real impact with engagement scores and action metrics. Manage multiple projects, brands, or campaigns with tagging.

Hootsuite Ads’ analytics tool gives businesses the ability to track and improve campaigns in real time by simplifying data provided by Facebook. These clear and defined insights can be used to manage campaigns and applied beyond your social efforts.

**Reporting**
Hootsuite Ads’ reporting tool gives you the ability to customize great-looking PDF reports in minutes. With drag-and-drop tools, you can display key elements and metrics in a format that makes sense for your business. These reports can easily be white-labeled and set up for automated delivery directly to your inbox.

**Benchmarking**
Get the most up-to-date Facebook and Instagram advertising metrics for your industry so you can make informed decisions around your advertising campaigns with real-world context.

The biggest Facebook ad mistake businesses make

One of the most significant errors social ad managers can make is forgetting to monitor their Facebook ads. If you forget—or don't know how—to monitor your ads properly, you can end up costing your business a lot of money.

When you closely monitor your ads, you're able to quickly make decisions such as pausing or stopping ads that aren't performing well. This lets you funnel that budget back to top-performing ads. Monitoring your ads gives you the opportunity to make adjustments that will ultimately drive better results.
You can also set up Facebook’s built-in optimization algorithm to automatically (and in real time) make changes to your campaign based on key performance triggers that you set. This allows you to easily:

- Stop underperforming ads and targeting
- Test for more accurate targeting options
- Automatically reallocate spend from one ad campaign to another

**Suggested reading:**

*Guide: Everything You Need to Know About Getting Conversions*
6 Advanced optimization techniques

Get industry best practices that you can apply to your campaigns

In partnership with Facebook, Hootsuite Ads can take your advertising efforts to the next level with advanced features and optimization capabilities.
Optimize ads manually or automatically

Hootsuite Ads offers advanced options to complement Facebook's optimization features.

**Auto optimization**

Hootsuite Ads' automatic optimization feature takes the guesswork out of Facebook ads for managers. This feature works with Facebook's native bidding system to ensure businesses achieve the best results possible and includes these built-in capabilities:

- Create optimization to promote your best ads to get optimal results
- Optimal budget allocation based on accounts (adjusted daily)
- Pausing automation to enable you to stop ads that are underperforming
- Frequency monitoring adjustments depending on the frequency of ads
- Time sensitivity allocates budget daily and stops ads based on at least a week's worth of data

You can turn on automatic optimization or custom rules within each campaign's dashboard, or upon campaign creation.

**Custom optimization**

Custom optimization gives ad managers options to create campaigns that work best for their specific business goals.

Ad managers have complete control over their campaign, ad set, and ads with rules they establish themselves. These rules give managers the ability to turn off campaigns and trigger an alternative one based on custom rules.

Custom optimization rules run every day at midnight in the ad account's time zone. Rules are grouped together in rule sets, and can be applied at the campaign, ad set, or ad level.

You can create as many rules as you want in each rule set. For example:

- If the ad has clicks greater than 100 and has a CPC greater than $5, the ad can be paused.
• If the campaign has an average frequency greater than 10, the campaign can be paused.

• If the ad has a cost per conversion lower than 10% of the campaign’s average, the bid can be decreased by 20%.

Do some initial research into your campaign’s performance to understand what type of rules would be valuable to you. Then once you create the rules, Hootsuite Ads takes care of the rest.

Sync contact data between multiple systems

Hootsuite Ads lets you seamlessly connect with your CRM to sync contact data generated from Facebook lead ads. You can also sync lead data from your CRM directly to a Facebook custom audience.

With this capability, you can sync Facebook lead ad data to AWeber, HubSpot, Infusionsoft, MailChimp, and Salesforce. You can also sync data to a Facebook custom audience from these same contact management systems.

Read this article to learn how to sync your data.
Manage your product catalog

Hootsuite Ads’ Product Catalog gives ad managers the ability to add and organize their catalog of products and create product sets. This is especially relevant for ecommerce businesses with a large amount of products they want to promote with Facebook Ads.

Create dynamic ads that do the work for you

Dynamic product ads (or DPA) let you promote an entire product catalog without having to configure individual ads for each item. DPA campaigns sync with your product catalog to deliver the most relevant ads to your audience.

DPAs are most powerful when used in conjunction with Facebook pixels on your website. Ecommerce businesses and retailers with high web traffic can use DPA campaigns to drive successful conversions. Based on audience interest data from your site, you can cross-sell or retarget audiences with dynamic product ads, no matter what device the audience was browsing on.

**Dynamic product ads are:**

- **Scalable:** Create only one DPA creative template, to be automatically populated with products from your catalog.
- **Always on:** Set up your campaigns once and then continually reach people with the right product at the right time.
- **Cross-device:** Reach people with ads on any device they use, regardless of their original touchpoint for your business.
- **Highly relevant:** Show people ads for products they are interested in to increase their likelihood to purchase.
- **Always up-to-date:** Update ads automatically with new products from the catalog, without requiring campaign adjustments.

*Suggested reading:*

Dynamic ads: Personalized Facebook ads without manual work
For larger organizations that need to manage multiple users and permissions

The User Management feature lets Hootsuite Ads account managers view all users in one convenient location. User Management enables collaboration, streamlined workflows, and efficient management of your Facebook Ads presence.

Managers can invite users to help manage Facebook Ads without having to share passwords. Additionally, account holders can assign permission levels to each user to ensure security and compliance.

User Management features can also be activated on the account level. For example, an international e-commerce site can assign different permissions to ad managers in different regions. This increases efficiency, as ad managers only see relevant information in their account dashboard.

Putting it all together

Create a winning social advertising campaign with Hootsuite and Facebook

Effective Facebook ads offer a way for customers to connect with your brand at every stage of their buying journey. By investing in finding out exactly what your target audience wants—and when—you open the door to better customer experiences and benefit from a competitive differentiator that will significantly grow your business.

With Hootsuite Ads and Facebook, you can better manage and optimize your social advertising campaigns—and drive real business results.

Hootsuite empowers advertisers with:

- Smarter optimization options for better results
- Time-saving solutions, including organic and paid social together in one place
- The analytics you need to track—and prove—your success

Request a demo today
About Hootsuite Enterprise
Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation

Hootsuite is the most widely used platform for managing social media, loved by over 16 million people around the globe and trusted by more than 800 of the Fortune 1000. Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organizations to execute business strategies for the social media era and scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and regions. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of social networks complemented by 250+ business applications and integrations, allowing organizations to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

Along with our channel and agency partners, we help organizations build deeper relationships with customers, stay connected to the needs of the market, grow revenue, and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help organizations pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through product training, group training and tailored organizational training, as well as security and compliance services.

Request a custom demo today by visiting hootsuite.com/enterprise.

Trusted by over 16 million customers