Retargeting Ads for Small Businesses

Have you had this experience while shopping online? You view a product, exit the website, and then notice display ads for that product following you around the Internet. That was one of the topics I was discussing recently with a SCORE group of small business CEOs who were trying to identify and use online marketing techniques.

For marketers, these retargeting efforts are a no-brainer, driving revenue if they only resonate with a small percentage of contacts. For many customers, though, the experience can range from invasive to annoying.

While traditional retargeting ads are often relevant, they become less effective the more times a person sees them. This is due to what psychologists call inattentional blindness — the failure to notice an object that’s in plain sight when focusing on something else.

What if you could help shift this paradigm by delivering ads that understood a contact beyond the product he or she just viewed, took into account everything you knew about that person, and changed based on built-in rule sets?

Well, the good news is that tools are emerging that enable marketers to retarget and nurture contacts in a more sophisticated fashion across more channels. Dave Faupel, VP of Marketing Communications for Silverpop tells me that “In 2016 and beyond, savvy marketers will no longer be limited to their emails and website when it comes to behavior- driven retargeting. Moving forward, you’ll be able to use display advertising and social advertising, as well as your mobile app, to extend your nurture efforts to show contacts contextually relevant content that helps move them forward in their customer journey.”

For example, let’s say you’re a sports equipment retailer and
someone browses hockey sticks on your website and then leaves without making a purchase. In the old display advertising model, this individual would see ads for the same hockey stick (or category of sticks) when they visited other sites, without any contextual understanding of who that person was.

In the new display ad paradigm, the contact is served ads based on where he or she is in the customer journey, such as:

✓ New contact who hasn’t bought yet: Ad for downloading “Guide to Buying the Right Hockey Stick for You” PDF
✓ New customer who recently made a purchase: Ad for watching “Tips for Caring for Your Hockey Gear” video
✓ Long-time customer with multiple purchases: Ad for clicking to “Join Our Loyalty Program and Get Exclusive Content and Offers”

To better position your company to take advantage of these retargeting opportunities, make it a goal as you design your marketing “redirect” strategies to revisit your lifecycle campaigns (nurture programs, welcome campaigns, etc.) to see how you might supplement these email campaigns with display ads (as well as social ads and rich in-app push notifications) triggered by behavior-specific rule sets.

For marketers, these new retargeting options present exciting opportunities in the future. Customers will have a better experience because they’re receiving helpful content rather than just nonstop offers to buy something, and you should see higher conversions and better use of your spend because you’re getting more personalized in your retargeting.

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