

THE TOP 5 MISTAKES STARTUPS MAKE WITH FACEBOOK ADS



Empiric Marketing

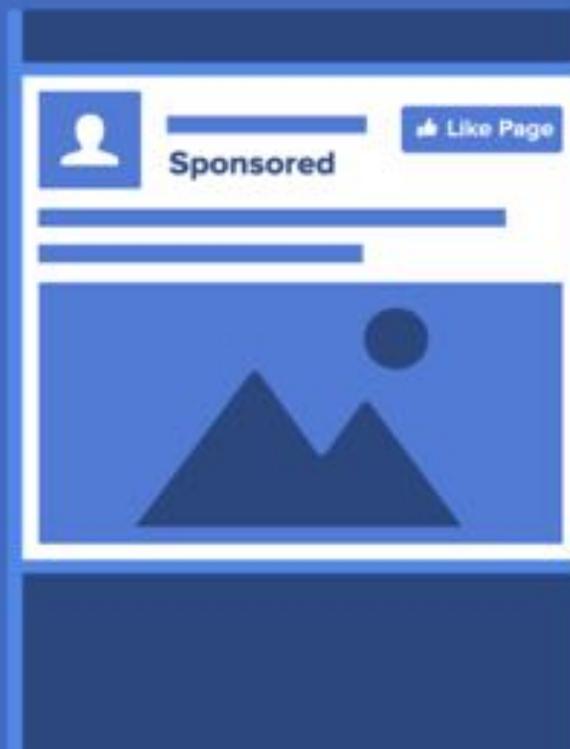
THE TOP 5 MISTAKES STARTUPS MAKE WITH FACEBOOK ADS

Lead generation is the primary ingredient that fuels startup growth. Regardless of industry or product, inbound marketing can be an effective source for these leads. However, anyone who has been a part of a venture-backed enterprise knows that exponential monthly and quarterly growth can't be achieved through one often limited source. Many marketing teams at startups will resort to costly email list buys, sponsorships, and pay-per-lead programs. The issue with these tactics, quite frankly, is that nine times out of ten they suck.

With these subpar methods, the leads you'll receive will most likely lack quality. Whether the generic targeting or lukewarm brand recognition is to blame, the result is the same: extremely inefficient return on investment and a sales team chomping at the bit. Companies often look to expand paid search and paid social to construct another viable source to feed their hungry sales teams and capitalize on lead generation for growth. The problem is that these channels require experience and expertise to successfully implement and manage. Without this knowledge base, these channels will inevitably fail to produce quality leads, fail to satisfy your sales team, and fail to make an impact on revenue. In this post, I'll confront the paid channel that almost every startup executes poorly: Facebook.

As a marketing tool, Facebook is deceptively challenging. It is exceptionally easy to use as a social media channel; everyone and their grandmother uses it with ease. This leads most businesses to assume that advertising on Facebook would be equally simple to execute. Unfortunately, this just isn't the case.

In this ebook, I'll go over the top 5 mistakes that startups make when attempting to incorporate Facebook advertising into their marketing mix.

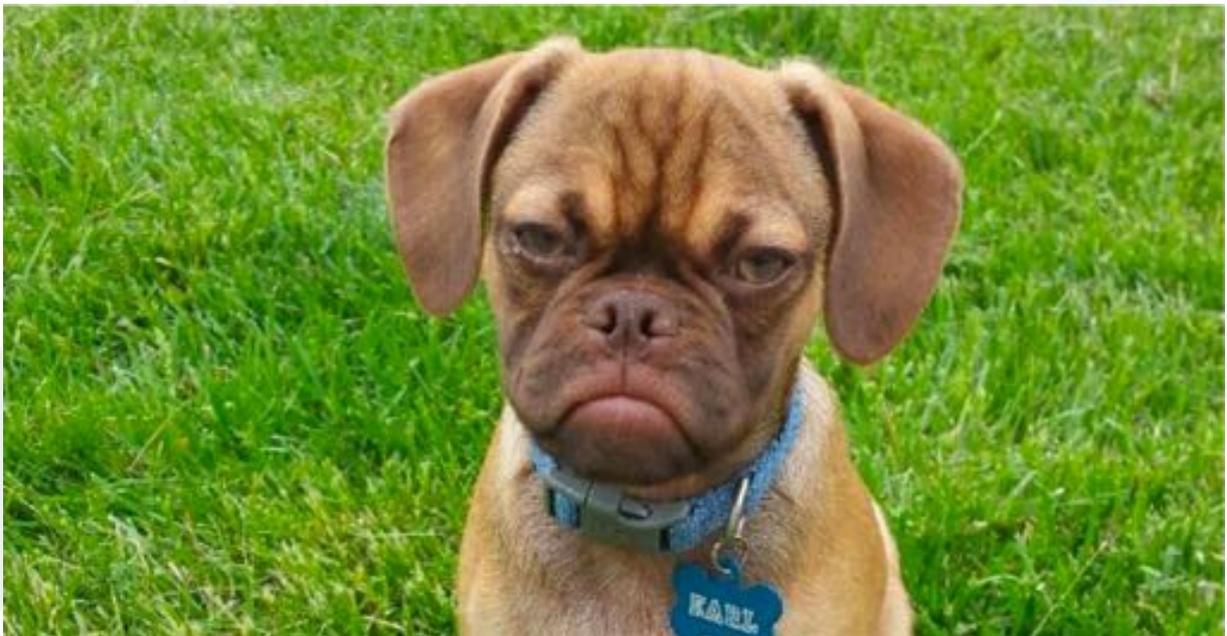


Contents:

- Mistake #1: Attitude
- Mistake #2: Post Boosting
- Mistake #3: Lack of Infrastructure
- Mistake #4: Ambiguous Goals or Strategy
- Mistake #5: Poor Execution

MISTAKE #1: ATTITUDE

One common mistake I see trip up new advertisers is the simplest of all: attitude. Many companies have preconceived notions of what the platform will deliver prior to even setting up one ad. These preconceived notions often prevent companies from taking advantage of sophisticated marketing tools, which means they're ignoring potential outlets for lead generation.



(Bad Attitude)

Here are the most problematic attitudes that prevent companies from successfully using Facebook:

- 1. "We're a B2B company, and people aren't in a business or work mindset while on Facebook. We're better off advertising on LinkedIn."**
- 2. "We aren't trying to drive likes and engagement, we want leads and revenue"**
- 3. "There is no intent on Facebook."**

Let me clear the air on these real quick:

1. **“We’re a B2B company, people aren’t in a business or work mindset while on Facebook. We’re better off advertising on LinkedIn.”**

You might be targeting businesses, but there is simply no easier way to reach “people,” including the people who run these businesses, than through Facebook. For most modern day humans, the incessant dopamine rush delivered from scrolling through a newsfeed is insatiable. Most of the folks who make business decisions are checking their phones constantly throughout the day. Just because they aren’t on a business website or in their company email doesn’t mean they aren’t subconsciously consumed or pressured by work.

As someone who has extensively advertised on both Facebook or LinkedIn, I’ll tell you right now that Facebook is far superior return on investment. LinkedIn advertising is prohibitively costly and most often ends up a waste of resources and energy. I always advise clients to refrain from LinkedIn in favor of the cheaper and more efficient platform.

2. **“We aren’t trying to drive likes and engagement, we want leads and revenue.”**

Countless businesses with this particular problem attitude don’t understand the sophistication the platform offers. These advertisers are unaware of the ability to track specific actions throughout their website and optimize campaigns and costs accordingly, and they end up missing out.

I have made my career driving leads and revenue through Facebook where “likes” and “engagement” were rarely a factor in the process. If you construct your account properly to cater to your specific marketing goals, superfluous metrics will fall by the wayside as the business-driving ones will be showcased.

3. “There is no intent on Facebook.”

Paid Search purists like to exclaim that AdWords is the superior marketing tool because users have intent with their search queries. Although this can be true for some cases, these purists underestimate the value of “push” marketing.

“Push” is the ability to reach individuals who aren’t actively searching. These individuals still may have a need for your particular product or a specific problem that your service may solve. Facebook allows you the capability to reach audiences far beyond the limitations of search queries; with Facebook, your marketing strategy can be personalized towards individuals not keywords. You find these individuals likely to need your product or service, and in return they become customers. Think of Facebook in this way, as a referral platform rather than an index.

Facebook harbors both the valuable attention and the personal data of almost every individual who could provide value to your business. If marketers from the 1950s had this type of power, their brains would melt. Getting bogged down in semantics, whether it’s disdain for “likes” and “engagement” or need for explicit intent, means your company misses out on an immense opportunity.



MISTAKE #2: POST BOOSTING

Facebook encourages advertisers who have business pages to consistently “boost posts.” For those who have limited knowledge, this may seem like an opportunity to advertise on Facebook, which it is - kind of. The problem with post boosting is that it’s Facebook’s attempt for the casual business owner to pay some money and get a few extra eyeballs on their content. It doesn’t allow you to strategically pull all of the strings necessary to actually derive scalable return.

A graphic illustration featuring a hand holding a megaphone. Overlaid on the megaphone is a dark blue rectangular button with the text "Boost Post" in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background is a light blue gradient with faint geometric shapes and a grid pattern.

Startups marketing on Facebook need to know that there is an ad manager platform. Here, you can create and manage campaigns, all of which can have different marketing objectives. For many advertisers that aren’t aware of this platform, post boosting can be a gateway to those negative preconceived notions and attitudes that I outlined above. Post boosting emphasizes metrics that may fuel the pushback on what Facebook has to offer in terms of true lead generation. It focuses exclusively on reach and engagement metrics that, while interesting, ultimately have nothing to do with your overall business objectives.

MISTAKE #3: LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE

I've helped multiple companies rehabilitate their Facebook marketing strategy. In most cases, I've found that they skipped over the most basic and critical step in the process: website tracking.

Facebook allows every advertising account that is created a universal tracking pixel. The universal tracking pixel is a piece of javascript code that you place within the header tag on EVERY page associated with your website or business. This tag is critical: it allows you to track users who visit your website so that you can remarket to them on Facebook. This alone makes the universal tracking pixel an incredibly powerful marketing tool, but there's even more you can do with this short piece of code.



Conversion Tracking - You can track conversions and return on investment through Facebook by simply specifying events or web pages that users complete to become a lead. Example: You are promoting a free ebook on Facebook to generate leads. On the "Thank You" destination page where users download your content, you can tell Facebook that users who click through your ad and reach this page are leads. You are able to designate these visitors as leads by ensuring that the pixel is on every page.

Custom Conversions

Create Custom Conversion			
Name	Category	Rule	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy ID: 946358608837208	Lead	Event FormFill Type equals Strategy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Design ID: 394000174326803	Lead	Event FormFill Type equals Design	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition ID: 205919166201864	Lead	Event FormFill Type equals Acquisition	

You've created 3 of 40 Custom Conversions allowed for this ad account.

Audience Building - You can create specific audiences by leveraging the pixel over time. This specific audience can be website traffic or a more targeted segment, such as users who only visit specific web pages. This will allow you to not only create audiences for remarketing, but also create audiences to exclude. If customers log in to your website, then you can seamlessly create a customer audience to exclude so that your ads do not show to them. On the flip side you can create upsell promotions and serve it to this hyper-relevant audience.

Create a Custom Audience ✕

How do you want to create this audience?

Reach people who have a relationship with your business, whether they are existing customers or people who have interacted with your business on Facebook or other platforms.

 **Customer File**
Use a customer file to match your customers with people on Facebook and create an audience from the matches. The data will be hashed prior to upload.

 **Website Traffic**
Create a list of people who visited your website or took specific actions using Facebook Pixel.

 **App Activity**
Create a list of people who launched your app or game, or took specific actions.

 **Engagement** UPDATED
Create a list of people who engaged with your content on Facebook or Instagram.

This process is secure and the details about your customers will be kept private.

Cancel

Lookalike Rendering - Once you have the pixel in place to track users, you can then create what Facebook calls “lookalike” audiences. The platform’s powerful algorithm takes the source audience you provide and finds users who are similar on a variety of complex levels. This ability showcases the power Facebook has over the information of all of its users, and its potential for targeted marketing.

The screenshot shows the 'Create a Lookalike Audience' dialog box. At the top, it says 'Find new people on Facebook who are similar to your existing audiences. Learn More'. Below this, there are three main sections: 'Source', 'Location', and 'Audience Size'. The 'Source' dropdown is set to 'Website Remarketing'. The 'Location' dropdown is set to 'Countries > North America' with 'United States' selected. The 'Audience Size' slider is set to 1, resulting in an audience size of 2.1M. Below the slider, a table shows the resulting audience and its estimated reach.

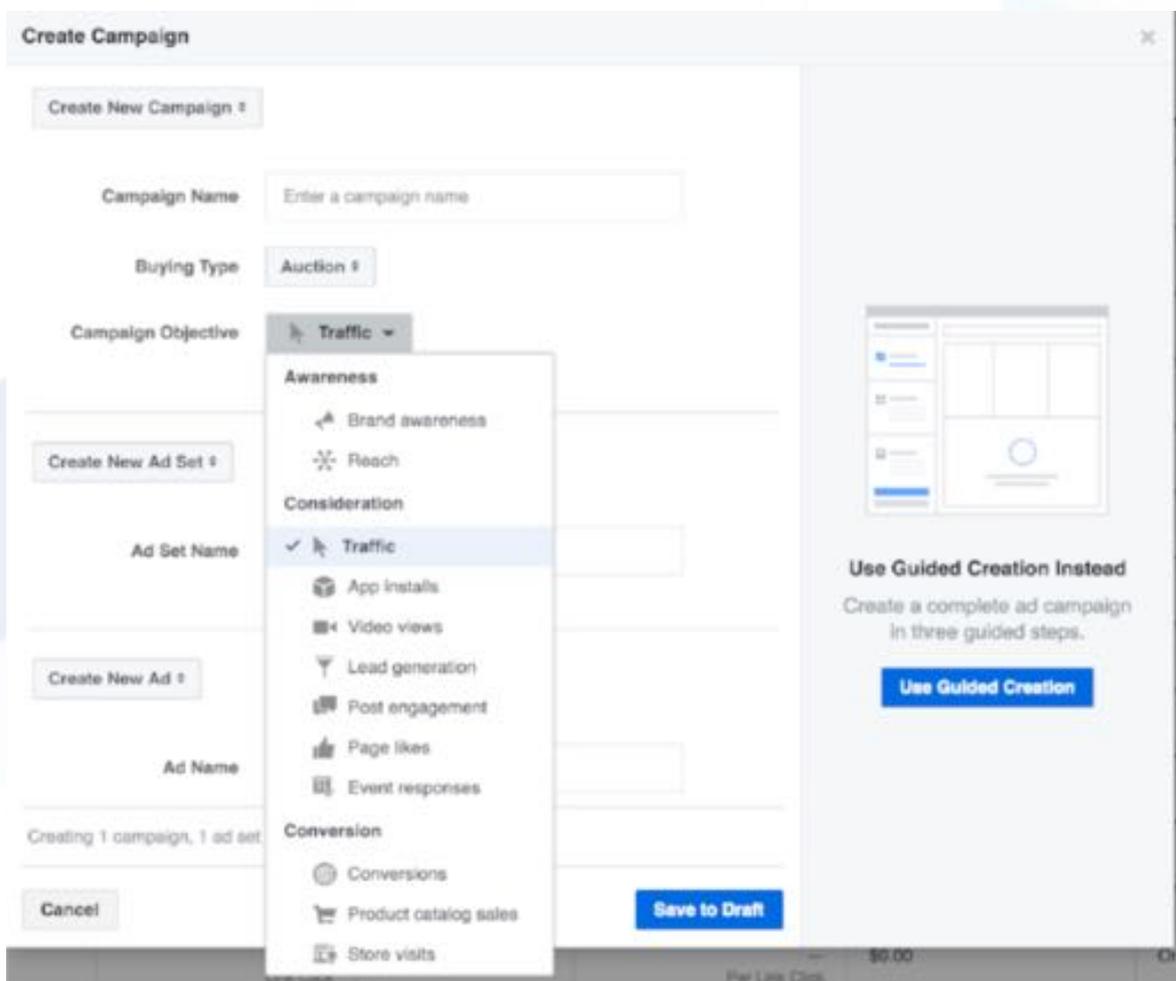
Resulting audiences	Estimated reach
Lookalike (US, 1%) - Website Remarketing	2,100,000 people

Audience size ranges from 1% to 10% of the total population in the countries you choose, with 1% being those who most closely match your source.

Buttons: Cancel, Create Audience

MISTAKE #4: AMBIGUOUS GOALS OR STRATEGY

Once advertisers successfully create a Facebook ad account, they often become overwhelmed by the amount of options available to them in regards to campaign objectives and targeting capabilities. This totally understandable, especially considering the platform:



Narrowing down the options above looks daunting, but it's crucial. You must have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish from advertising on Facebook, because this goal will dictate the structure of your account. This specificity also makes the process of determining what isn't working a lot easier than just saying it wasn't the right channel for your company. For most companies that I work with, two primary campaign objectives work best: traffic and conversions.

Traffic will be favorable when a company wants to either amplify their blog content or drive volume to specific areas of their site for consideration and branding. Conversions campaigns, on the other hand, will allow a company to carefully construct a lead generating machine through specific tracking and optimization. The ability to differentiate these two strategies within an account is a prime example where post boosting just isn't an effective method.

For a comprehensive advice on determining your goals and formatting your account accordingly, read this guide to [structuring your Facebook ad account](#).



MISTAKE #5: POOR EXECUTION

There are a plethora of mistakes that companies can make when attempting to run Facebook ads, and I've narrowed it down to the top five here. This final mistake plagues those who have a general understanding of PPC more often and more alarmingly: **execution**.



Let's assume you have all of your ducks in a row when it comes to the four mistakes listed above. Now comes the hardest part of advertising on Facebook: the promotion. To pull together an optimal promotion plan, you need to consider the major variables:

- **Audience size**
- **Messaging/ creative - psychological**
- **Placement**
- **Funnel stage**
- **Value proposition**

Often times identifying the target audience for promotion is the stage of execution where I see companies go wrong. They try to force an errant pass into double coverage and wind up getting burned.



Sometimes they believe that certain promotions will work based on historical data from other channels, perhaps email or partner programs. While these promotions may work, keeping every element the same across channels may prove to be detrimental.

My suggestion is to take into consideration all of the factors that I listed above. Truly identify the audience you want to derive action from and adapt your strategy accordingly.

Try your best to delve into the psychological element of marketing. How are your audiences seeing your ad? What devices are they using? You have a very short window of time to grasp their attention. Are you deriving an emotional response within a three second registering of the ad? If you were in their position, would you click through?

Unlike search, Facebook is a visual platform. Clever headlines and precision targeting are half of the battle. Paid search is much like boxing, whereas paid social is similar to MMA. You are going to have to have a firm grip on a variety of tools at your disposal in order to make it work. The upside of this is that Facebook gives you the ability to be very creative in how you use those tools, so you can launch that targeted roundhouse kick with more power instead of being confined to a jab-uppercut-jab. By following through on execution with Facebook marketing, you can produce intent by striking the core value proposition of your promotion in the most concise way possible.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brett McHale has built his career managing advertising budget for tech startups across various industries. He specializes in a full-funnel approach to optimizing paid marketing channels and founded Empiric Marketing to help businesses use PPC to drive meaningful growth and substantial return on investment.

FREE ASSESSMENT: Interested in a one-on-one personalized assessment of your paid advertising strategy? Follow this link and Brett will reach out to you: <https://empiricmarketing.com/free-assessment/>