

13.3: Understanding social media advertising

Social media advertising should be considered as part of an overall social media effort. While brands can start a Facebook page and share engaging posts, those posts would be seen only by a fraction of the possible audience. Even if they have already liked your page. Paying to promote your posts is necessary to ensure that you reach a much larger percentage of your target audience.

Social media advertising is a form of online advertising that takes place on social media networks. Many platforms offer extraordinarily detailed targeting options that match users whom advertisers have identified as belonging to specific purchasing groups, making it a great way to reach exactly the right group of users with your ads.

While more traditional forms of advertising are arguably somewhat inefficient, the targeting offered by social media platforms make it stand out even from other forms of online advertising, such as search or display ads. Social also tends to have higher clickthrough and engagement rates at a lower cost (Hootsuite, 2015).

While it is possible to use social media advertising without considering any other aspect of your digital marketing strategy, it should be considered holistically. The [Social media strategy](#) chapter discusses how social media in general can fit into other channels. Social media advertising can be used to:

- Draw attention to products and drive sales
- Drive traffic to websites and other online properties
- Encourage foot traffic
- Encourage other activities offline.

Used well, given the targeting options and access to consumers it offers, social media should be an essential part of any paid media campaign.

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