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Expert Summit

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Namecheap Expert Summit

How to reach your audience through paid social | Paige Lussier

- Today I'm joined by Paige Lussier who is our paid social expert at Namecheap and has over eight years experience prior to joining us. And I am your host, your interviewer, Emily Jacob. I work in our CRM team at Namecheap and I'm also organizing the expert summit. So Paige, thank you so much for joining me today to talk about how to reach your audience through paid social. It's something that I'm absolutely fascinated by and would really love to understand in more detail. So where do people start?

- So the best place to start is really by defining your audience. So, you know, you need to know who you want to reach first. A lot of people will start off by starting with the creative, which they have the creative made, it's there, it's available, and they're like, okay, how do we use it now? But a lot of times that's where you really run into the risk of not resonating well with your target audience. So it's really important to define your audience first.

Who are you trying to talk to? Who are you trying to reach? And then create the ad from there. Really customize it to that audience and a really good example is if you're trying to sell lunchboxes, who needs a lunchbox? Especially during a pandemic, where are they going? Teachers, teachers are still going to school in the US at least. So, you probably want to reach teachers, maybe nurses, frontline responders who are out there every day still going to work still they need to eat. So what are they keeping it in? And then start there.

So you have, say you want to reach frontline responders, nurses, so you position the ad, you create the copy that speaks directly to nurses and that gives you leverage to even do things that think outside the box. Like maybe you want to give back to first responders during the pandemic who've been working so hard. So you target people who have in their job descriptions, you know, it's labelled their job title is a nurse or EMT or a firefighter, and you offer them a discount code maybe but you can't, you know, that's not something you would want to offer to everyone if you had that created first. So defining

your audience first really allows you to customize that creative which will make it resonate more with your target audience and your odds are you'll do much better on your ROI.

- Okay, sorry, what would you say? If you just defined ROI, that would be great.

- Yeah, your return on investment. The money you're putting into your ads. You want to see that money come back more when that ad resonates more with people.

- Sure, sure, great. So you've got your audience, got your nurses, your EMTs, and how do you know which platform to put that creative to?

- Sure, so, yeah, all the different platforms, you know, there's definitely better platforms to reach different people. So Facebook is kind of our go-to, our standard. Everyone who's a millennial or older, pretty much has one and again it depends on your product but if you're trying to reach nurses Pinterest is a very female dominated platform. It's very DIY so if your lunchboxes can be customized that's a great platform to target nurses on. They're looking for that customization. They're looking for fun and it's largely a female profession right now.

Good way to reach nurses, reach out to Pinterest on top of Facebook. If your product is more visual, Instagram is a great place for that. Instagram is very visual-heavy obviously, it's focused on photography. So you want to use especially if you have very strong creative Instagram is fantastic. TikTok and Snapchat they're a younger, younger platforms, younger audience. So if you're trying to reach teenagers or you're trying to reach college kids, TikTok and Snapchat are probably an addition that you'd want to add on to Facebook.

- And is it wise to be on more platforms and not just focus on one?

- It depends on your budget as well as, you know, really what your goal is. You don't really want to spread yourself too thin but you want to make sure that you're on the right platform and it makes sense for your product and brand. So for example, Namecheap it's a great one. Twitter, we also use Twitter pretty heavily because it's a very tech driven platform. So if the platform makes sense, definitely try it out, test it if you have the budget to do so. But if it doesn't really seem to fit your brand or the product don't do it, there's no reason.

- What kind of budget do you need to test whether or not something will work?

- Also, it depends on your audience size.

- Is every answer Paige, going to be it depends on your audience.

- Yeah, it depends on the audience. So, another thing with budget, like I said, you don't want to spread yourself too thin. That's probably the biggest mistake a lot of people make is that they either try and go across too many platforms and have way too small of a budget to do so or they're trying to, their audience is way too large and they're really not moving the needle with the budget that they have. And that also is different by platform. So Facebook, Facebook typically has pretty large audiences. And again, this depends on who you're trying to reach, but because Facebook was kind of the first social media platform, a lot of people started there. It's naturally going to have a larger audience.

Twitter, depending on your product also has very large audiences and they have a slightly different targeting as well. Like each platform has slightly different targeting. They all have the basic interests, behavioral targeting, that you can use, demographics, gender targeting, age targeting, that's all across all the platforms, but where Facebook has interest targeting and behavioral targeting, Twitter also has conversation targeting, hashtag targeting. That creates a much larger audience than on Facebook in some scenarios depending on what conversation you're trying to reach or what hashtag you're trying to

use. Twitter is also really great for real time. So, if you're trying to use the Emmys or the Oscars, or some sporting event, Twitter is a great platform to kind of utilize that event targeting as well 'cause you can target by event on Twitter, and also on Pinterest you can use keywords.

So they all differ slightly and that kind of goes into your audience size and what capabilities you have there but you don't want to spread yourself too thin across any of the platforms. For example, on Facebook, the minimum audience size I would recommend is 250,000 people in order to, because you don't want to go too small. You want to make sure that you're not reaching too narrow of an audience because then you'll also increase your costs which is something to be mindful of because you have less of a pool of people to reach. Your CPMs are going to increase the cost to reach--

- Right, what's a CPM?

- It's the cost per impression. So cost per thousand impressions, sorry. And so that will increase the smaller your audience is most likely, and so it's just something to really be mindful of is that you don't, you're not trying to reach too small of an audience because you're not going to get the same volume, the same kind of result that you would if you went broader.

- But I guess that broad audience still needs to be one that wants your product. It's still got to be the right audience for you.

- Definitely, it needs to be relevant. So, you know, and on Facebook you can layer targeting. So a good way of narrowing too broad of an audience is to layer that targeting. So say you're trying to reach nurses, use nurses in the job title and then narrow that targeting to if you're just trying, if you can only ship within the US, add in the US. If you are trying to reach a specific region only use those regions, only target those regions but also you can add in other interests, like locations like hospitals, so you can play around with it and there's different ways to. You can also exclude. So on Facebook, you can add in exclusions. And so you can know you're not reaching people you're definitely not trying to reach.

- Awesome, awesome, that's really interesting, thank you. How would you, how would you decide which, if you've only got a small budget and you know your audience, how do you decide where exactly to spend that money. Which are the factors that you would take into account?

- Yeah, so it's definitely audience size. If you're trying to run across multiple platforms, take a look at the audience size on each platform because odds are it'll be different. So the amount of nurses you may reach on Twitter is going to be very different than the amount of nurses you may be reaching on Facebook.

- So go into each of the platforms, put in the criteria that you're looking at and then see what the audience size is that they're going to give you?

- Yeah, yep, and go with where, you know, the audience's at, that your audience is. If it's Pinterest, if you're adding in those nurse type criteria in there, and you're coming back with a great audience and maybe involves a bit of testing like say Facebook and Pinterest both have the audience size there, you know that's where they are, not so much on Twitter, Snapchat, you can throw that out the window, but if you're debating between Facebook and Pinterest, take a week, take a little bit of budget and test it out.

- Is that what a test should involve about a week, like a week's length?

- I would say a week to two weeks again depending on your budget and what the audience size if the audience is larger and you know, or you have more budget I would definitely give it maybe like two weeks. A big thing to remember is that the platforms do take do have a learning period, they have a learning phase. So whenever you launch a new campaign you have to be mindful of this learning phase because if you're trying to just run a campaign for three days across any of the platforms you're not going to get results. You're not going to see it really perform because three days is not enough time

for any of the platforms to really optimize and ramp up and learn the user's actions in regards to your ads.

- Oh, that's interesting, that's entirely different to what I'd heard a few years ago to be fair, that you could just take it, do something and try it for 24 hours and then pull it if it didn't work, but you're saying that that's not the case anymore at all.

- Yeah, and that was a thing a few years ago, micro-boosting was very popular. Small budgets for a couple of days, especially on Twitter but it really is not recommended anymore because of these learning phases because it does take the platforms a certain amount of time to learn how users are going to react to your ads to really ramp up. Facebook, for example, will tell you when an ad has exited a learning phase or an audience has exited a learning phase. It'll say learning phase exactly in the platform.

- That's helpful.

- It is, it is. But it's definitely something to be mindful of because if it's still in learning phase then you're not, the platform isn't optimizing how it was created to. It's still learning and you know it's hard to make any sort of determination when you, when the platform doesn't even know.

- Yep, yep, yep, and if you've got a very small budget, how would you advise someone go about starting to learn how to spend it? I guess one of the key worries might be that it suddenly kind of expands and suddenly you've spent more money than you actually had available. Are you able to make sure that there's a cap on the spending?

- Yeah, so across all the platforms there's different levers you can pull, a lot of them offer, Facebook offers lifetime spend or a daily spend. If you use daily spend on Facebook then you can add a max campaign cap to ensure that you

don't go over that amount. Twitter will spend by daily spends. You can also add a max campaign cap but it's very important to also include that daily spend because then the platform won't spend over that either. Same with Pinterest and they have those it's just important to remember to use them because that's where a lot of people get tripped up and they end up being like, whoa, how did I spend that much money? You know, It was only, I was only using \$10 a day or \$20 a day but then they forgot to add the cap. And so then all of a sudden it just keeps running.

- And when should a small business owner start thinking about using paid social? Should they be using it at the beginning or should they be waiting until they have built up their own audiences first?

- I mean, audiences should definitely come first, but paid social is the way to go these days. Since all of the platforms have adjusted their algorithms organic posts are not being seen as much as they used to be. Now it's just top of mind, you know, most popular whatever the platform decides to show you. So a lot of times organic posts don't get seen at all. The organic view rate has dropped significantly. So paid ads are really the main way of getting any social media content out there which is a bit unfortunate, but it's the way to go. If you have the budget right off the bat, I would say do it right off the bat. And at the very least it will build awareness. And then once you have that awareness especially if you're driving to a website then you can start using retargeting pools from that website. And retargeting is a great way to really reach and push people through the conversion funnel because you know they're already interested enough that they looked at the website, so then you send them another ad. I mean, I'm a victim of this as well so many times.

- Me too.

- Absolutely. When you just keep thinking about it and then you're like, oh, hey, here it is again. So definitely start from the beginning. You might not see the ROI immediately but you will see it. You just kind of have to keep up with it and don't lose hope. It's definitely the way to go though. And even from just a

brand awareness level especially as a small business just starting, it really helps grow that for you.

- So you've mentioned budget several times and I'm going to put you on the spot now if you are a small business and you were starting out and trying to build brand awareness through paid social, say your audience in you were on Facebook and you wanted to use Facebook as your challenge, what would be the budget that you would say, go test this campaign for two weeks and see how see if it works.

- So that would be unique to every business.

- I knew you were going to say that.

- Yeah, it's not a simple cut and dry answer it's dependent on lots of things. There's never a point where you can't like the platforms will take your money no matter what. So if you only have \$200 to spend for a week. You can still do it, they won't tell you no, they won't come back with saying it's not enough but this is where share of voice comes into play and making sure that you're reaching a certain percentage of the audience basically to move the needle. And so share of voice is really important in terms of determining that budget. So based on your audience size, you can take a look at your audience size and kind of estimate how much of that audience you want to reach, a minimum as best practice, is 25% if you really want to move that needle. But you can go lower, it's all, you know, there's never a point where they're going to say no, it's just a lot of paid social is about best practice and following those best practices and making sure that you have enough budget to move that needle and make a presence and have a presence on the platform for your audience.

- And then is retargeting a further budget or does it?

- Yes, yeah, it's completely separate and that's also dependent by platform. We can upload the same audience list for website visitors on Facebook and Twitter and come back with completely different audience sizes that they matched them. And you know and that's very on your business as well. So, you know, Facebook just because there is, that's been around the longest and a lot more people have Facebook than they have Twitter or are active on Facebook than Twitter, Facebook is typically a better platform for retargeting. Twitter also has it, but it's just the same as creating the audiences from the beginning. It's uploading the audiences, seeing where you're at with that match rate, and then moving from there.

- And you mentioned earlier that some of the younger audiences would be more likely to be on Snapchat and TikTok. I wasn't really aware that they do paid social. So, how does it work with those newer platforms?

- Yeah, so Snapchat actually has had advertising for quite a while and it's evolved over the years but they have everything from ads in between viewing your friends' stories, to you can have ads and they're kind of they have these like TV episodes now so you can sponsor that, you can have a whole kind of mini episode takeover in Snapchat. We'll see those are much more expensive and usually bigger companies do that but it is still an option and TikTok just launched their advertising platform. So it's still very new. Targeting there is probably very limited, and with targeting a younger audience below 18 you also have to be wary of certain caveats like absolutely no alcohol, no tobacco products. Like you have to be very aware of the limitations there and making sure that you're following them.

- Yeah, absolutely, and I guess then it's a case of waiting until that, until that platform comes a bit richer with how it works from a paid social perspective rather than necessarily getting in early?

- Yeah, it's always good to test out. Reddit is the same way. Reddit just launched their advertising as well. And it's still very new, it's a new platform. There are limitations to their targeting. It's not going to be as sophisticated.

Their reporting is not going to be as sophisticated as Facebook or Twitter, you know, but Reddit, new platforms like Reddit and TikTok they value that feedback and it is interesting to get in early, get a benchmark, and then if it's not working for you, then try again in a year maybe or six months when they've developed a little more and see like what it does for you then.

- Awesome, awesome, is there anything else that you'd like to add around paid social Paige?

- Yeah, I mean, I could talk about it for much longer but that's a good place to start.

- Awesome, awesome, thank you so much for your time today. That has been like mind bending for me part of my other business of where I will how I will maybe start to think about investing in paid social. So that's been really helpful to me. I hope it's been really helpful to our viewers. Thank you so much, Paige.

- Thank you.