

Like It or Not: Facebook Advertising Triggers

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Abstract

Nowadays, Facebook is considered to be the most important social network worldwide, becoming a part of many people's daily lives. Some users might find Facebook advertising very useful and easy to use and others might find it disturbing and they are tired of seeing it everywhere or some might not even notice it. And is known that how the customers perceive advertising is strongly related with whether or not they would click on a Facebook advertising. So, what triggers the consumers exposed to Facebook advertising? Our research aims to find out what makes the customer click on a Facebook advertising, what elements attracts the customer. The outcome of the research will show us if people enjoy Facebook advertising and if they are attracted by emotional triggers, offers or photos.

Key words: online advertising, Facebook advertising, Facebook advertising triggers, offer ads, photo ads

J.E.L. classification: L86, M30, M31, M37

1. Introduction

Embellished or straightforward, with nice stories, original, funny, memorable songs, with messages remembered from the first contact, advertisers try many combinations in their online advertisements, trying to reach the so wanted "consumers mind" (Caples, 2008, p.13). Advertising agencies and marketing departments try daily to find the magic formula to the perfect advertisement that will surprise with its creativity to also guide the consumer in buying the product, trying to find what the consumers want in an advertisement, what elements makes the consumer buy and how important is the frequency of broadcasting. With the help of digital advertising you can reach the right person with the right message at the right time (Zarella, 2011, p.37).

Here, in this research the mission is to find what is the consumer's perception of Facebook advertising and what triggers the customer to click on a Facebook advertisement.

In the last few years the advertising environment had a rapid evolution from traditional advertising to online advertising. More and more people migrated towards the online environment and the websites and social networks took advantage of this change (Pulizzi, 2013, p.11). Also, today people are in a continuous rush and the online environment offers the rapid pace to do things that they desire. The consumers' attention is hard to obtain, and their attention is also limited, you need to catch their attention in a matter of seconds or else they will just scroll further on the webpage (Wittkower, 2010, p.56).

Our research aims to find out what makes the customer click on a Facebook advertising, what elements attracts the customer. The outcome of the research will show us if people enjoy Facebook advertising and if they are attracted by emotional triggers, offers or photos. This result will help us determine what triggers the customer to click on an advertisement in order to help the companies get into the consumers mind and therefore find out what they like and how their advertisements should be shaped in order to attract the consumer.

2. Theoretical background

As Facebook becomes more entrenched in people's lives, marketers seek to engage with Facebook users through an increasingly complex ecosystem of ads, fan pages, news feeds, applications, and events (Wittkower, 2010, 5).

In the literature on Internet advertising, a wide range of antecedents regarding consumer responses to Facebook advertising have been identified (Cho & Cheon, 2004, p.89; Ducoffe, 1996, p.21; Keyzer et al., 2015, p. 124) Among many other factors, the consumer's attitude toward Internet advertising has been identified as a strong predictor of his or her behavioral response to advertising (Kirkpatrick, 2011, p. 11).

Since social media and customer preferences are in continuous change and expansion, when it comes to online advertising, the business have to keep up with the customers and fulfill their needs in order to obtain a positive outcome.

On the same idea, this thesis will try to identify what triggers the click behavior of a consumer on Facebook. There would be 3 chosen triggers that will be analyzed in order to identify if they play a role in the click behavior of the consumer.

Emotional Triggers. Any advertising agency would like to read the mind of the customer if possible, to find out what expectations has from a specific brand, and also to get a spot in its heart.

Emotions are essential for advertising effectiveness and our decisions are influenced, sometimes even conducted by emotions that we feel when we see an advertisement. Furthermore, according to the same source, advertisements that got the best emotional feedback generated an increase in sales up to 23% (Cho & Cheon, 2004, p.93).

Consumers are attracted by a reality presented as it is, by advertisements that transmit strong emotions, but which does not affect or exceed ethical principles. The audience generates an emotional response and a profound connection with the brand. It is what we name empathy such that people get to identify with what it is presented to them and even to recognize themselves in the advertisement content.

Offer Ads. When people see that a certain product or service is on offer they tend to access the ad advertising the offer more rather than just a usual advertising. In online offer ads customers who save an offer will get Facebook notifications reminding them to use it when they switch devices (like from a phone to a computer) and again before the offer expires.

There are 3 main triggers generated by offer ads and those are substantial discounts, engaging image and a reasonable expiration date (Surmanek, 2003, p. 79)

Photo Ads. No matter in which sector a business is, nothing describes better the product or the activity of the business as an image, it is even said that a picture is worth a thousand words. A photo ad on Facebook is a great way to increase awareness of the product or business and what it does. A photo ad gives you a clean, simple format to use with inspiring imagery and engaging copy. When advertising space is limited, using a picture to advertise a product or service is a great idea. Any piece of advertising only has a few seconds to grab a potential customer's attention, so it is important for the image to be an eye catching one to attract to consumer to stop by. Pictures help potential consumers visualize the product or service being offered and they capture attention better than a slogan or headline.

3. Research methodology

The entire research is focused to answer the research question, which is: What triggers the consumer to click on a Facebook advertising? Therefore, the aim is to identify what triggers influence the click behavior of the consumer when it comes to Facebook advertising.

We organized the research around eight objectives:

- O1. To identify the Facebook user type the respondent is.
- O2. To identify mental spontaneous associations generated by Facebook advertising.
- O3. To identify to what extent consumers like Facebook advertising.

- O4. To identify to what extent consumers click on Facebook advertising.
- O5. To identify to what extent consumers find Facebook advertising useful.
- O6. To identify the emotions generated by Facebook advertising in the consumers mind.
- O7. To identify the response to Facebook Offer Ads.
- O8. To identify the response to Facebook Photo Ads.

As a method, we chose an online survey, on various Facebook groups, to a wide range of people, with mixed ages and interests. The questionnaire gathered 100 responses. We had a sample composed of 74% people aged between 18 and 24 years old and only 26% aged between 25 and 49 years old. When it comes to gender, the sample was formed of 67% females and only 33% male.

4. Findings

We wanted to see the expertise as Facebook users of our respondents. It turned out that 77% of them have had their Facebook account between 5 and 10 years, and 5% for more than 10 years. This period of time is a significant one in order to have some experience with the platform and to be able to create an opinion about Facebook advertising.

The majority of 34% says that on a daily basis they access the platform between 1 to 2 hours which is not a big amount of time, but it is enough to catch up with the latest news and to be able to acknowledge what is showing on your Facebook wall. What is interesting is that there is a tie between the next percentages which are the same (23%). The interesting factor is that they are the exact opposite of each other. One extreme is people that spend between 0 to 1 hours daily on Facebook and the other that spends more than 3 hours a day on the platform. This only means that people have different preferences when it comes to Facebook and how much time they decide to spend on it daily.

Also, the results showed us that a big percent (59%) of people access Facebook more than 5 times a day. This can explain the previous finding of how people spend in majority between 1 and 2 hours on Facebook. If people spend more time on Facebook it is clear that they access the platform multiple times a day.

When it comes to Facebook advertisement, 92% of the respondents said they noticed it on their Facebook wall which means that they are already familiar with the subject and might already have an opinion created about it.

We wanted to identify spontaneous mental associations generated by Facebook advertising, to see what is the first word that people think of when they hear "Facebook advertising". The respondents could write down their answers without having any answer options to choose from. In the table below we included only the responses that appeared more than once.

Table no. 1. Spontaneous Mental Associations Generated by Facebook Advertising

Answer	Frequency
Too many	17
Annoying	13
Money	6
Boring	4
Games	4
Clothes	2
Cookies	2
Interesting	2
Social network	2
Spam	2
Targeted	2
Useless	2
Zuckerberg	2

Source: Authors' contribution

If we see all the responses, we can say that the perception is rather negative than positive. The top 3 answers on this question were: too many, annoying and money. By giving these answers, people seem to be annoyed with Facebook advertising and are tired of it. On a quick search on google on “How to get rid of Facebook, advertising” there hundreds of pages where people ask how to get rid of Facebook advertisements as they find them unbearable anymore. The third most used word is money. That is maybe because it is known that advertisements aim is to convince the consumer to buy the product or service presented in the advertisement. Today, driving sales with Facebook ads is one of the fastest ways to make money.

We also wanted to find out how much people like or enjoy Facebook. This is the starting point to see what triggers the consumer to click on a Facebook advertisement, if they don’t enjoy it, it is more probably that they will not click and vice versa. On a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1=not at all and 10=very much), the overall average response for this item is 3.99. This value is on the lowest side of the scale, meaning that on average people dislike Facebook advertising but not on the highest degree of dislike since this value is close to 5 which is the neutral point of the scale. When analyzing by gender, there a difference in what males and females enjoy/like. It seems like females enjoy, on average, more (4.21) Facebook advertising than males (3.55). For the same question we analyzed the average results based on age categories. The younger respondents aged between 18 and 24 years old enjoy more Facebook advertising (4.07) than people aged between 25 and 49 years old (3.77).

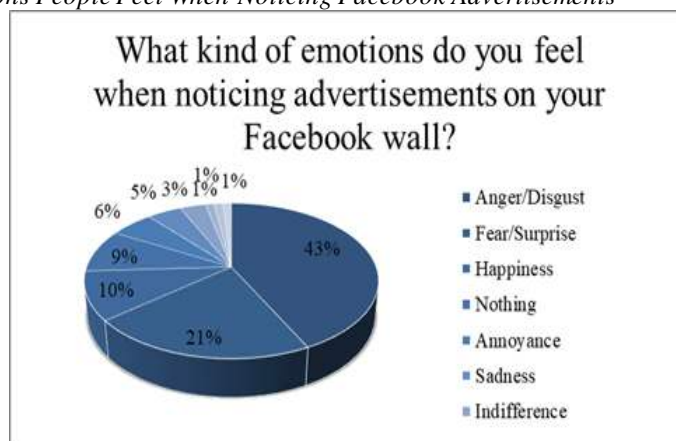
Then, we aimed to identify what the probability is, on a scale from 1 to 10 (1-the lowest), with which people would click on Facebook advertising. This question was put with the purpose of finding out the overall intention on clicking on a Facebook advertisement. The overall average response is 3.84. This means that the scale is on the lowest side and people would not click on Facebook advertising. When it comes to gender comparison, it seems like females are the ones who are more likely to click (4.07 vs. 3.36 for men) on a Facebook advertising. When it comes to the age difference perception, it seems like the younger generation (aged between 18 and 24 years old) are more likely to click on Facebook advertising (4.16 vs. 2.92 for the older users).

Also, when it comes to identify to what extent respondents find Facebook advertising useful, on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1=not at all and 10=very useful), we can observe that overall, on average the answer was 3.99. This means that people don’t find Facebook advertising particularly useful. Females find Facebook advertising more useful than males, but the number is still on the negative side of the scale. Which means that both genders don’t find Facebook advertising useful, but males (3.39) have this opinion stronger than women (4.28). On the age side, the young generation find Facebook advertising more useful (4.15) than people aged between 25 and 49 (3.54). Though, both results are on the side on which people think Facebook advertising is useless.

We chose to identify what emotions are generated by Facebook advertising. The majority of respondents (79%) said that Facebook advertising don’t trigger any emotions on them.

The figure below shows what specific emotions people feel when they notice and view Facebook advertisements.

Figure no. 1. Emotions People Feel When Noticing Facebook Advertisements



Source: Authors’ contribution

As we can see, people had the chance to type down other emotions as well, not only to choose from the fundamental emotions. When it comes to what people feel when they notice an advertisement on their Facebook wall, the majority of 43% said they feel anger and disgust. This only means that people are not really happy with Facebook advertisements, we can even deduct this by analyzing the words they freely chose to type in, in order to express what they feel when they see such Facebook advertisements: Nothing, Annoyance, Indifference.

We were interested to know how much more drawn consumers are to click on a Facebook advertisement if it gives them a certain emotion. We can observe that people are maintaining their negative attitude towards Facebook advertising. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1= not at all and 10=very much drawn), the overall average response is 4.22 which is on the negative side of the scale resulting that people are not drawn to click on Facebook advertising if they impact emotionally the customer. As we have seen before, it seems like the average response generated by women is greater (4.72) than men response (3.21). When it comes to make a difference between the age samples, the younger generation has a average response close to the neutral point (4.65) meanwhile the generation aged between 24 and 49 years old are definitely more on the negative side (3.00) where they are more likely not to click on a Facebook advertisement that gives them a certain emotion.

It is known that people are drawn to click on an advertisement if a product or service of interest is on sale. Therefore, we want to analyze if people respond to Facebook Offer Ads.

On a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1=not at all and 10=very much), the results show an overall average response of 4.05 which is, again, on the negative side of the scale but close to the neutral response 5. This shows that people are not that interested on a product or service that is on sale. We believe it is not important for them if it's on sell, as if they really need the product or service, they will buy it anyway if they need it. As expected, women are more likely to click (4.22) then men (3.70), and the younger users (4.39) then the older ones (3.08).

We also aimed to identify if people are familiar with the Facebook Offer Ad concept, to see if they clicked before on such advertising. Most of the respondents (42%) clicked before on Facebook Offer Ads. The result of this question is promising to the research, showing that people have used before Facebook Offer Ads and have knowledge about this subject and therefore most of the provided answers are a reliable source. But we have to also take into consideration that another 40% which is a big percent didn't use Facebook Ads before and 18% don't what this is. This means that maybe this kind of advertisement should be more visible.

We tried to identify to what extent the respondents find Facebook Offer Ads useful. If people find a certain advertising useful it is more likely they will click on that particular advertisement. Analyzing the responses, we got to the overall average response of 3.76 which is, again, on the lowest side of the scale. People don't seem to find Facebook Offer Ads useful. Women tend to find Facebook Offer Ads more useful (3.99) than men (3.30), even though it's still on the lowest side of the scale. When it comes to age categories, the younger generation find Facebook Offer Ads significantly more useful (4.05) than the generation aged between 25 and 49 years old (2.92).

In order to attract a consumer and make them stop scrolling for your advertisement, you have to attract their visuals. You have only a few seconds to catch their attention. That's why we will further analyze how people respond to Facebook Photo Ads or even if there is a response for this type of advertising. On a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1= not at all and 10= very much), the overall average response on this question is 5.07, which is in the middle considered as neutral. It is also shown that women prefer Facebook advertising with photos more than men (5.66 vs. 3.88). While men remain in the lowest sphere, women seem to enjoy Facebook Photo Ads. When it comes to differences between the age categories they remain close to each other, having the average response on the same interval (4.12 the younger users vs. 4.05 the older ones).

People prefer Facebook advertising with photos over other types of advertising because they perceive Facebook advertising with photos as a better representation of the product or service presented. On a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1=Not at all and 10=Very much), the overall average response is 6.35 and means that people tend to think that advertising with photos is a better representation of the product on Facebook. Women agree more than men (6.93 vs. 5.18) about how Facebook advertisements with photos are a better representation of the product or service presented, leaving men more on the neutral side.

The younger generation also agrees more (6.76) with the statement rather than people aged between 25 and 49 years old (5.19).

As this being the last trigger analyzed, we wanted to see to what extent people are attracted to click on a Facebook advertisement that contains photos. We observed that the overall average result is 4.76 which is rather neutral. Taking a look on the numbers we would say that people are not willing to click on Facebook Photo Ad. As usual, females have a bigger average result (5.18) than men (3.91) and the younger generation a bigger average result (5.04) than the ones aged between 25 and 49 years old (3.96).

In order to identify if there is a relationship between variables we made further a correlation test for each trigger.

Firstly we analyzed the relationship between how useful consumers perceive Facebook advertising and if they are more drawn to click on a Facebook advertisement that gives them a certain emotion. There is a medium direct relationship between the two variables (0.541, sig. 0.000). If people don't perceive Facebook advertising useful there is also the probability they would not click on Facebook advertisements that give them a certain emotion.

Up next, we analyzed the correlation between how useful people perceive offer ads on Facebook and if they tend to buy a product or service if it is on offer. There is also a medium direct relationship between the 2 variables (0.593, sig. 0.000). This does not mean that they are influenced by each other but that they are related. This means that if people tend to buy a product that it is on offer, they will also find Offer Ads on Facebook useful.

And lastly, the third trigger analyzed was Photo Ads on Facebook. We tested the correlation between how much people like advertising that contains photos and the probability with they would click on Facebook Photo Ads. There is a strong correlation between the two variables (0.725, sig. 0.000) and there is a direct relationship between them. This shows us that if people like advertisements with photos the probability to click on Facebook advertising increases.

5. Conclusions

Facebook is one of the biggest social networks on the market. Today, Facebook has become part of our daily lives and it keeps us constantly connected. Since this happened, businesses had to step their game and take advantage of the situation, so there appeared advertisements to Facebook. What easier way to attract customers than placing advertisements on the platform they access daily? As a bonus, you can also aim to your target audience since Facebook uses information about user activity to improve your advertising.

What seems very easy to do, changes when you take look into the depths of Facebook advertising. Facebook ads now come in several varieties and you have to make sure you use the right one in order to attract the response you want. Facebook advertising is an essential part of any ecommerce entrepreneur's plan to grow a long-lasting online business.

That's why we felt the need to analyze what triggers a consumer to click on a Facebook advertising. On a quick search on google we can see that people are tired of advertising invading their pages and mostly about banners. It is important to offer variety in advertising; if people see the same type of advertising and same message every day or every time they access their Facebook page, they will get tired of it and generate anger emotions.

The triggers we analyzed we considered to be important in choosing whether to click or not on a Facebook advertisement. But it seems like people are so tired of Facebook advertising that these triggers don't seem sufficient to attract their attention and for them to respond on a positive way.

When we wanted to see the spontaneous mental associations with thinking about Facebook advertising, people wrote "too many" and "annoying". We believe this is the real reason why people don't like Facebook advertisements anymore. They are too many to the extent that they annoy the users and make them angry. Thus, there is no way these advertisements will get a positive response if the customer's attitude towards them is negative.

In conclusion, none of the triggers we analyzed make the customers click on Facebook advertising.

Research limitations. Although this research was carefully prepared, I am still aware of its limitations and shortcomings. First, results of this study may not be completely generalizable because the sample was restricted to the 100 answers I could gather. Therefore, to generalize the results for larger groups, the study should have involved more participants at different levels.

The second limitation was the lack of previous studies in the research area. It is hard to conduct a research without a base, trying to create everything from the scratch. There is plenty of information about Facebook advertising and advertising in general, however there is not much about what triggers a consumer to click on a Facebook advertisement.

Managerial implications. When it comes to managerial implications, it is not hard to determine why we need to know what triggers the consumer to click on Facebook advertising. Nowadays, most businesses promote their activity on Facebook or by Facebook advertising. Since Facebook has become a part of our daily lives it is known that placing advertisements on Facebook would have many people noticing them. In order to get a positive response to their businesses, the managers need to know what attract the customer in order to click on their advertisement. If managers know what triggers the audience, they have a greater chance to get a positive response to their businesses.

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