

COLUMNS

## Stop treating retargeting and digital advertising like Tinder

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Tinder is good at what it does. You build out a profile with copy and pictures that grab attention. You swipe left, left, left, with that occasional right, which will hopefully lead to a match. Many relationships have developed from this mobile dating application. Side note: my husband and I are a Myspace romance.

However, marketers should not be borrowing attention-grabbing techniques from dating apps as they create their online ads.

So, for all of the marketers out there, here are some words of advice: stop treating digital advertising, especially retargeting, like Tinder.

As I surf my way across the Web, it is a safe bet that I will come across an Amazon.com ad for new Converse sneakers or an ad for a new pair of Warby Parker specs. It is not an accident that these brands have found me. I have been retargeted.

It is commonly accepted that retargeting can be the most effective targeting strategy, which is why advertisers apply attention-grabbing techniques to ensure their high-value Web site visitors convert into customers.

What is retargeting?

Retargeting is a form of targeted digital advertising and sometimes also a part of a search advertising campaign.

When you, the user, visit a site that is running a retargeting campaign, the site drops a cookie into your browser. That cookie then tracks your activity as you move around the site. The cookie stores information about you.

After you leave said site, you continue to bump around the Web inside the display network's partner sites. You are then served an ad for the retargeted site.

Simple, right?

Wrong. This is where you are probably mistaken.

As a consumer browses the Internet, he or she will visit many different sites. Every time she leaves a Web site, this is the equivalent of swiping left. However, the difference is that on Tinder when you swipe left, you never see that profile again.

But with retargeting, it seems that the ad will follow you like a crazy stalker who is just so desperate to have a chance with you.

With the dramatic increases in technology available nowadays, it is time for marketers to use these tools to ensure that they are not a clingy Tinder connection who cannot handle rejection.

However, this is a double-edged sword.

Creepy crawly?

While seeing an ad for a Web site you visited could prompt a conversion, it can also become annoying and even creepy just like that weird person you keep rejecting.

That is why you need to make the content you are serving relevant. Meaning, you need to analyze why the customer decided to swipe left and then offer her something that makes up for it.

For example, if she filled an online shopping cart but never went through with the transaction, you can show an ad that gives her a little nudge to do that. Maybe an ad that gives her 10 percent off on her order. This can be likened to changing your Tinder bio to make yourself sound more appealing to the person you are trying to impress.

Another tactic is using frequency caps. This means that the ad will only be shown to a consumer a certain amount of times.

Although the mere exposure effect states that seeing an ad more will make a person like it, overexposure will have the opposite effect.

Prospects might begin to completely ignore your ad or, even worse, will form a negative association with the ad.

Finally, use a burn code.

A consumer will stop seeing retargeting ads once they reach a certain conversion point. This is done by having a burn pixel on "thank you" pages that untags users from your retargeting campaign.

Not only is this helpful because it is less annoying for consumers, but it also saves money. No need to waste impressions on people who have already converted.

WHEN USED properly, retargeting can dramatically increase your brand's success.

For this to be the case, you must use all the tools available to you and optimize your campaign to see what works the best.

Just remember: do not be a weird, clingy Tinder person who refuses to leave prospects alone.

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