



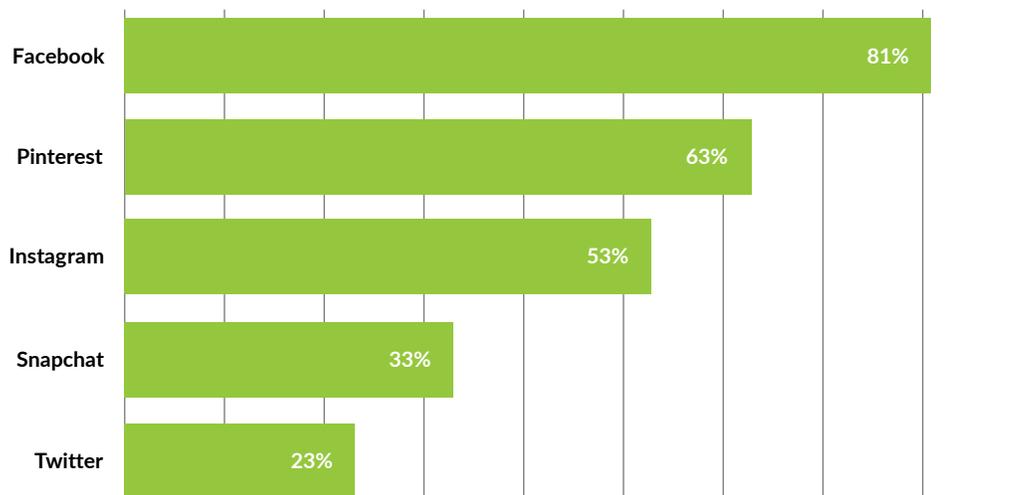
4 Ways Food & Bev Marketers Can Amp Up Their Social Media Efforts

Overview

Social media networks offer an excellent opportunity to reach and engage the target audience coveted by food and beverage marketers. Moms are often the household decision maker when it comes to food and beverages for themselves and their families. According to a recent survey conducted by Edison Research, 81 percent of moms use Facebook, 63 percent use Pinterest, and 53 percent use Instagram. These social networking sites can be used to build awareness with high reach potential, preference through brand ambassadors and influencers, and trial through incentives and engagement. The platforms are powerful tools for marketers. You've probably promoted some posts and pins and seen some success. Here are four additional ways to take your social media marketing to the next level.



Social Media Platforms Used by US Mothers, 2019



Using brand awareness as the advertising objective

When you set up a standard advertising campaign in Facebook and Instagram, you're given the option to choose from different objectives. It's very tempting for marketers to use auction buying and "Post Engagement" as the objective. This will maximize the number of interactions your ad will receive. Sounds great, right? Wrong.

When “Post Engagement” is the selected objective, the system runs the ads in a manner that will achieve as many reactions (likes, loves, laughs, etc.), shares, and comments as possible. That means it runs in the newsfeed of users who have reacted to your posts in the past or who have a history of responding to similar posts. This dramatically shrinks the number of users your ad will reach.

Facebook has said that this objective, as well as “Traffic,” might reach fewer than 10 percent of the selected audience.

Your advertising objective should align with your business goal - sales. The best way to accomplish this using social media advertising is by using the “Reach and Frequency” buying type and “Brand Awareness” as the objective. This allows you to achieve optimal reach (total number of people exposed to the ad) and frequency (average number of times a user is exposed to the ad). Optimal frequency is four to eight times per month. Fewer exposures won’t be enough for your message to stick. More than eight exposures can result in diminishing returns.

To achieve effective reach and frequency, you’ll need to purchase enough ad impressions that allow for everyone who you’re targeting to see your ad multiple times. This can become cost prohibitive when dealing with large audiences. Pro tip: narrow your audience down when the budget doesn’t allow for effective reach and frequency. You might want to exclude people who have already shown interest in your brand, narrow the age range, or select certain geographies. Note: excluding fans of your products will lower your engagement rate but could potentially lead to more sales as new customers are introduced to your product. Most digital marketers will be afraid to do this because it might appear that the advertising isn’t as effective. It’s important to keep in mind why you’re advertising. It’s to drive sales, not to pile up likes and comments.



What's your marketing objective? Help: Choosing an Objective		
Auction	Reach and Frequency	
Awareness	Consideration	Conversion
Brand awareness	Traffic	Conversions
Reach	Post engagement	
	App installs	
	Video views	

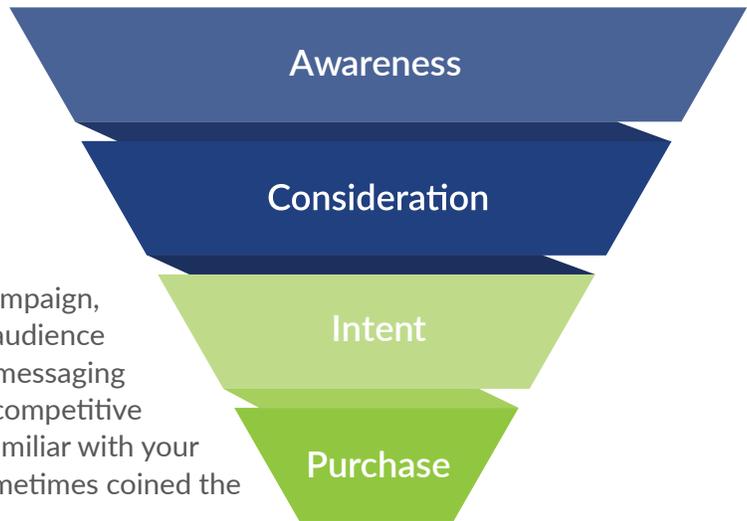
Sequential messaging strategy for product introductions

If you have a new product or are introducing it to a new market, sequential messaging is an excellent way to drive consumers down the marketing funnel from awareness to consideration to purchase.

When you first launch your social media campaign, introduce the product to the entire target audience you want to reach. Use product shots and messaging that communicates the key attributes and competitive differentiation. Remember, people aren't familiar with your product so tell them the what and why, sometimes coined the "reason to believe."

Once you've had this message exposed to a large enough audience, you can retarget just those people who were exposed to the ad. Now that they're familiar, you can use a messaging strategy that showcases your brand's personality. Content is key on social media so put together a video or other creative elements that are compelling. You can use emotion, humor, or entertainment to engage this audience and connect to their values and sensibilities.

After you've had this running for some time, it's time to drive sales. Retarget the audience who has been exposed to this second message and provide a strong call-to-action. Let them know about a rebate offer or send them to a page on your site where they can search for stores that carry your product. You'll find a much higher response rate for these ads than you would have if that was the audience's first exposure to your brand or the product.



3 Optimization through experiments



Social networking ad platforms make it very easy to test different variables. You can test different headlines, calls-to-action, images, audience targeting, and more. Set up tests where you run two or more campaigns simultaneously (often called A/B testing) to determine which is more effective. There are two very important aspects of this you'll need to incorporate to set up and evaluate the results effectively.

Test one variable at a time

In order to learn from your tests, it's important to test a single variable at a time. If you use different creative, messaging, and audience targeting between two different campaigns, you won't learn why one performed better than the other. If you don't learn what works better, you can't use the data to inform future initiatives.

Choose the key metrics before running the experiment

When you run experiments, you'll have dozens of metrics to compare. You might find in a test of two audiences that Audience A had a higher engagement rate, posted more positive comments, and were more likely to watch the video to completion. Meanwhile, Audience B had a lower cost per 1,000 impressions (CPM), had more clicks to the landing page, and were more likely to share the post with friends. Which audience performed better? Understand what you want to achieve and align that with metrics that correlate to the objective.

In any experiment that you run, it's important to first construct a hypothesis. For example, you might think a BOGO coupon offer will get more clicks than a dollar off coupon. Then you'll test the hypothesis by running the two offers and keeping all other variables consistent. It's important to not allow bias to affect how you run the experiment or analyze the results. The goal is to learn the truth, not prove your hypothesis was correct.

4 Influencer marketing

Social networks offer a great way to connect with friends and family online, sharing images and staying in touch. When users on sites like Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube amass a large following of people who they don't have a personal connection with, we refer to them as influencers. They've achieved a level of celebrity status within the network (and some are actual celebrities).

Influencer marketing is a form of social media marketing that involves endorsements and product placements from these influencers. It accomplishes two things for the product - 1) a testimonial for the product from a trusted source and 2) an engaged and potentially large audience.

Influencer marketing has exploded over the past few years. Some of the biggest names are endorsing so many products in their story videos and updates that they may be losing their effectiveness. Based on this, as well as potential budget restraints, you may want to find a lower tier of influencers for your products. There are software solutions that allow you to search for influencers based on their interests, their followers' demographics, and their total follower counts. These platforms also provide a way to reach out directly to influencers to negotiate terms.



Measuring performance is key to determining whether or not you want to continue working with influencers. Not all follower counts are created equal. You may find that influencers with fewer followers actually receive more engagement.

An important note for influencer marketing - it's much more difficult to target geographically. This is a tactic that should be used by brands with wide scale distribution.

Conclusion

You've probably already discovered the power of social media marketing. This is a technology that will continue to evolve. New platforms, new ways to advertise and connect, and more advanced ways to measure performance are just around the corner. As a marketer or marketing team at a growing food and beverage company, it's important to keep up with the trends and technologies. At Mason Digital, we've successfully partnered with food and beverage companies to successfully drive sales using social media marketing.

If you'd like to learn more about how we can be your strategic partner, contact us! <https://masondigital.com/contact/>