

Boosting Your Brand: How to Run Paid Social Media Posts

ALLIE JEKA



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If you've ever run a social media account, then you probably know the frustrating feeling of spending a long time crafting an important piece of content that ends up garnering little to no success with your followers. This is where paid content comes in – you can invest some money in your social media accounts to get your content noticed at the right time by the right people. If some of your organic content is not getting as much traction as you'd like, boosting it can amplify its reach and impact.

Before delving into the world of social media advertising, it will help to familiarize yourself with some common terminology. In the social media universe:

> **Organic content** is any content on a social media platform that hasn't been paid for. (Example: A business posts a status update without spending any money to expand the audience it reaches. The update will mostly be seen only by people already following that business' social media page.)

> **Paid content** means any post or series of posts (including text, image, and/or video) that an individual or company has paid a social media platform to promote to a specific type of audience. Individuals/companies can select the amount they want to spend on paid content, ranging anywhere from \$1 to \$500+. The individual or company paying for the content gives money to the social media platform in exchange for help achieving predetermined

objectives, such as reaching a larger audience, getting more engagements, or driving website traffic. (Example: A shoe store pays \$10 to Facebook so that more men aged 25-65 will see their photos of a new line of loafers.)

> **Boosting** means paying a social media platform so that your content shows up in a desired audience's news feed (based on geographics, demographics, etc.). This is a form of paid content. (Example: A business pays \$20 to Twitter to boost four Tweets about an upcoming sale to people living in the area.)

NOTE: Because social media advertising is both inexpensive and flexible, it is important to understand that your messages can be tailored to multiple audiences. You aren't limited to creating an ad campaign with a single message; rather, you can create several posts or messages and then adjust your campaign so that each message reaches the audience segment with which it resonates.

Now that we're on the same page regarding word meanings, and where you are spending money, it's also important to note that "spending money" on social media outreach is considerably less expensive than buy-

ing print or broadcast outreach. Social media outreach can cost as little as \$10-20, but with its ability to so specifically target a desired audience, it can reap tremendous results.

If you're spending money on a social media post, you'll of course want to take extra care when crafting its content. Get the most bang for your buck by promoting content that is engaging and highly shareable. What will resonate most with your audience? What will get them laughing, smiling or talking? What will entice them to take action? Be sure to include a visual element – an image or, better yet, video – to catch attention. Determine the desired outcome of your boosted post, whether it be obtaining more followers, getting the post shared among your customers, or driving people to your website to make a purchase, and match the tone of your content appropriately.

Consider carefully what type of audience your content will resonate best with to achieve your advertising goals. One of the great things about using paid content on social media is that

Detailed Targeting ⓘ

INCLUDE people who match at least ONE of the following ⓘ

Interests > Additional Interests	
Prom	
Add demographics, interests or behaviors	Suggestions Browse

Facebook's audience meter shows whether the selected audience will be effective based on the addition and removal of audience characteristics.



Your audience size is **defined**. Good job!

Potential Audience Size: 190,000 people ⓘ



Awareness

How it works

Promote your Tweets to maximize your reach and raise awareness of your brand's message.

What you pay for

Pay for the number of impressions (CPM).

When to use it

You want as many people as possible to see your Tweet.

[Return to original campaign form](#)

Twitter provides an explanation of Awareness, one of the campaign objectives that can be chosen for a boosted post.

you have a good deal of control over the audience your paid content will reach. Selectively choosing the optimal audience for your brand and message is crucial, because even a \$10-20 ad campaign can achieve significant results when aimed at a qualified audience.

Once you've defined your campaign goals, crafted your content, and thought about the ideal audience for your message, you can begin a paid campaign.

Boosting Posts on Facebook

On Facebook, you can either promote existing content or create a new post. To promote an existing post, click the blue "Boost Post" button in the bottom right corner of the content you want to promote. To start from scratch with new content, begin creating it as you normally would, and then click the white "Boost Post" button at the bottom of your content (next to the blue "Publish" button).

You'll see the Boost Post screen, which provides you with several options for achieving engagement from a specific audience. First, you'll need to select your objective – what you hope to accomplish with this post. You'll choose one of three options:

1. **Website Visits** – This is most likely the action you'll want your post to accomplish. Drive people to your website to learn more about your company, contact you, or make a purchase.
2. **Engagement** – If your primary goal is to garner engagement and get reactions, comments and shares on your post, then this is the option for you. Perhaps you want your loyal followers to help spread the word

about your brand by sharing your post, or you want to ask your audience for their opinion on a new product line. Select this option to get people interacting.

3. **Messages** – Choose this option if you want viewers to message you directly on Facebook. If you're selling online, this is a great way to get customers to engage with you and optimally make a purchase.

You can also select a "call to action" button that will appear on your post. Keep in mind, this button will link to whatever link you include in the text of your post. You can select from a list of pre-made button phrases such as "Learn More," "Shop Now," or "Book Now." Select the option that makes the most sense for driving traffic to your business.

Next comes the most important part — defining your audience. Facebook gives you the option to target "People Who Like Your Page," or "People Who Like Your Page and Their Friends." These are good options if your page already has a strong following, or if you want to reach people who may be similar to those already following you. However, if you want to be more specific with your reach, you can choose to create your audience.

Begin by naming your audience, which will come in handy if you boost a similar type of post in the future. Select the basics, including gender, age and location. Next you can choose to include specific types of people, and exclude others. For instance, if you're promoting a new line of shoes and accessories for prom season, you may include people who are students (or, more pointedly, attend high school), are interested in prom or prom dresses and even, depending on your content, their parents. To make audience selection more specific, you might choose to exclude college students, who are most likely not going to prom. As you add and remove audience characteristics, Facebook will let you know how many people you have the potential to reach – *and* help you determine whether your audience is too narrow or broad.

Once your audience is defined, determine your budget for the campaign and the amount of time you want the boost to run for. (Facebook will need to approve your content and will let you know when that's done, usually within a few minutes.)

Boosting Posts on Instagram

If you have an Instagram business account that is connected to your Facebook page, you can easily boost posts from your Facebook feed on your Instagram as well. Follow the same steps as you would for boosting a Facebook ad, but on the Boost Post screen, be sure to check the "Run Promotion on Instagram" box (it's below your audience selection and above your budget). You can use the Instagram tab on the top right of the screen to see how your content will appear on this platform.

Boosting Posts on Twitter

Before you start boosting a campaign on Twitter, note that

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you'll be promoting content that you have already Tweeted. Be sure to post your Tweet(s) before taking the next step.

To get started, click on your logo in the top right corner of your screen, which will expand a drop-down menu. From here, select "Twitter Ads." If this is your first time running paid content on Twitter, you'll be asked to enter your location and time zone. Next, you'll need to select the objective of your campaign. Twitter does a good job of explaining each of your choices for objectives, including Awareness, Followers, Website Clicks, and more. Name your campaign, and then determine your budget. First, you'll have to decide how much you want to spend on your boosted content each day. If you'd like, you can also set a total budget for the duration of the campaign, which your ad spend will not surpass. You'll also need to choose a timeline for the campaign's length.

NOTE: On the right side of the screen, Twitter offers an extended explanation of the campaign objective you chose earlier. This description will tell you what specifically your advertising budget is going toward.

Next, Twitter will prompt you to "Choose Your Creatives." This is where

you select the Tweets you want to promote. Twitter recommends promoting 4-5 Tweets per campaign, and suggests selecting Tweets that have strong calls to action to make a big impact.

You'll then need to select the target audience for your campaign. Similarly to Facebook, Twitter allows you to specify the gender, age and location of your desired audience. You can also select the specific device on which you want to appeal to users (desktop, mobile, etc.). Then, get more precise by selecting Audience Features. You can target people based on their interests (for example, women's shoes) or behaviors (such as households that are women's shoes buyers). You can even choose a Follower Look-Alike – your campaign will target people with similar interests to the "look-alike" follower that you choose. Selecting an influencer or satisfied returning customer as a Follower Look-Alike can help you target the right people.

Twitter will next prompt you to select your "Bid" and "Budget." If you're just starting out, you'll probably want to set your Bid type to Automatic, meaning that Twitter will use your bid to get you the best results at the lowest possible price while staying within your budget. Twitter will also give options for your optimization preference, such as "Maximum Reach," or "Reach with Engagement," to determine

which results are most important to you. Finally, you'll be able to review all of your details before confirming your post.

Dedicating even \$20 each month towards boosting your social media posts can be a worthwhile investment, especially if you're savvy when creating your content and selecting your audience. Paid social media content will help you get your message to significantly more people, including potential followers (read: customers) that you wouldn't usually be able to reach with an organic post. Boosting your posts can also help you get more engagement, resulting in followers interacting with your brand and ultimately becoming more brand loyal. Your followers will share more of your content, igniting word of mouth for your brand. One of the best parts about investing in paid social media is that it's a great strategy for quickly seeing what works and what doesn't when it comes to reaching and influencing your audience. If you notice that your paid content isn't performing as well as you'd like, you can always tweak the campaign part-way through, altering messaging or targeting to achieve the best results. ■

Allie Jeka is social media manager and marketing assistant at Retailworks, Inc., an award-winning design and consulting firm specializing in retail, corporate and hospitality spaces. For more information, visit www.retailworksinc.com.