

MEDIA BUYING 101

LEARN HOW TO MAKE WILDLY PROFITABLE MEDIA BUYS



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Introduction

Everyone would love an endless supply of free, high quality traffic.

The thought of this is one of the biggest scams on the internet, because without a huge amount of time and energy invested, it just doesn't exist.

That's not to say you can't get a lot of traffic without spending any money. You can. It just takes either a long, long time and lots of hard work building a foundation, or it takes dumb, blind luck because a post happens to go viral or get picked up by a major news outlet. It's not realistic for the average website owner.

Enter media buying...

You should obviously use free traffic methods in addition to paid methods, but media buying can help you get started making money while you slowly building your free methods like SEO, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Media buying can be very costly if you aren't careful, but with some wise choices, you can pull in a significant amount of traffic with very little effort at all.

In this guide, you're going to learn the basics of media buying, as well as some tips you can use to lower your costs and get more quality traffic.

Before You Buy

The very first thing you need to do before you buy is make sure your offer is the best it can be. This may sound silly, but too many people jump right into buying a ton of ads without running the first test to see how well their page converts!

Additionally, you need to be sure you know your demographic inside out. You need to know as much as possible about your target market in order to target your ads properly and save money.

These days, most places that sell ads on a CPC (cost per click) basis, give the buyer a lower CPC if their ad has a higher CTR (click through rate). Thus, the better your ad performs, the less it costs.

Sounds great, huh?

The best way to get low cost clicks, therefor, is to make sure as many people as possible click your ads. I know, it sounds crazy to even mention this, because everyone obviously wants to get the most clicks possible, right? But it isn't just about creating a great offer and writing good ad copy.

To get the best possible CTR, you need to make sure you're not only targeting the right keywords, but also the right demographics.

Demographics include factors like:

- Gender
- Age range
- Geo location (where they live)
- Income level
- Education level
- Family status (children, or no children)
- Marital status (single, married, cohabitating, domestic partnership)
- Ethnicity
- Religion

You may not need to know every single one of these things about your target market. For example, ethnicity is really only important if you're specifically targeting a market that targets one particular ethnicity.

But the more you can learn about your target market, the more effective your ads will be. Knowing your target market can mean the difference between paying a nickel a click on Facebook and paying a dollar a click!

(Yes, it can make that much difference!)

If you don't know your target demographic, you can either guess (not really a great idea), you can check your site's Google Analytics (only useful if you have it installed and have a decent amount of data to use), or by using a service.

Some places you can use for demographic research include:

<http://www.alexa.com> - Search for a website tightly related to your market and you'll be able to see its demographic information,

<http://www.quantcast.com> - Quantcast provides similar information to Alexa. Just search for the same type of website.

Some places sell ads not based on a CPC, but at a flat rate or even a CPA (cost per action, or a price for someone to sign up to your email list, give a phone number, buy a product, etc.)

You will have some room to negotiate with many places that offer a flat rate for ads, because you could offer to pay for a few months in advance to get a lower monthly cost, for example. This is a good bonus, but remember, you won't know how well ads perform there until you've actually placed your ad and watched the results for a while.

Direct Buy vs. Agency

You may be wondering whether you should use an agency to place your ads or just buy directly. An agency can definitely make your ad buys easier, and they might even be able to save you money in the long run, but they're likely to be more expensive upfront.

With agencies or ad networks, you'll be able to get set up quickly, and you'll have someone who will work with you to get you the best deals and best spots that will convert well for you. However, it comes at a price. You'll have higher minimums to get started, and if your rep doesn't do his or her job well, you could lose a lot of money.

You won't have the same connections to get better prices per click if you buy direct, but you won't have such high minimums to get started, and you can directly monitor your own campaigns to keep a tighter control on your CTR and your CPC.

So which should YOU do?

If you have a ton of money and don't mind leaving everything in someone else's hands, using an agency might be a good idea. Otherwise, buying direct is definitely the way to go. You'll have more control and you can get started without a bunch of money upfront.

Banner Blindness

Before we get started, you need to know about a little thing called banner blindness. Banner blindness is a phenomenon in which users get so used to ads on websites that they learn to tune them out. In fact, they may even specifically choose a browser like Chrome that can use an extension to block most ads altogether.

Because of this, the effectiveness of many ad types has waned over recent years. Banners and text ads (such as those presented on Google via the AdWords program) just aren't pulling clicks like they used to. People know they're ads, so they automatically ignore them.

Enter social media. Social media websites have tailored their ads to appear like standard posts. They do typically set them apart with some sort of tag like "Sponsored", but they look so much like the other posts on the site that people don't often notice the tag.

For this reason, we will focus heavily on social media buying as opposed to other types of media buying, because social media is usually more effective and more affordable for the average buyer.

If you're more worried about branding than clicks, other types of media can still work well. But for profitability, social media almost always wins.

Social Ads

Social ads are one of the most effective types of ads these days, because social users are often extremely active, and they can be targeted very well in most cases. You can often target not only by demographic, but by specific interests, too.

Let's take a look at some of the different social networks that offer advertising, and the basics of how they function.

Facebook

Facebook currently has three ad placements. By default, any ad you purchase is shown in all three, but you can choose specific placements if you prefer.

- **News Feed** – Ads show up in the desktop news feed on computers. Ads appear very similar to standard posts, so
- **Right Hand Column (RHC)** – Ads show up on the right side of a user's News Feed in a column that contains ads and other features.
- **Mobile News Feed** – Ads show up in the News Feed for mobile users, such as those using phones and tablets.

There are many different ad types to choose from. You can promote your website, get people to like, comment and share a post, build up your fan page with more likes, promote a mobile app, and other types.

You can find out more information about the specific ad types on Facebook here:

<https://www.facebook.com/business/ads-guide/>

One of the best things about the Facebook ad system is their wide variety of targeting options. You can target by geo location, demographics (age, gender, education, and others), interests (hobbies, interests, pages liked, etc.), behaviors (using certain operating systems, for example), connections (reach friends of your fans, for example), and even custom audiences to retarget your own customers.

The secret to getting a good price for Facebook ads is to get the best possible CTR. The higher your click through rate, the lower your CPC.

Instagram

Instagram has a pretty good system for ads. They let you see what your ad will look like as you create it, making it easy to know what users will ultimately see in their feed.

Unfortunately, Instagram ads are currently only available to larger companies, but they claim to be expanding soon.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn ads are primarily good for advertising in the business and marketing arenas, but you could, if you got creative, tie other types of markets into the system profitably.

You can target by a wide variety of demographics. You can target based on education, job function, industry, job title, and more.

They offer a variety of different ad types, including display media of various types:

- 300x250
- 260x600
- Text ads

They also offer LinkedIn Native Ads:

- Spotlight Ads – Show the member profile image and allow you to link to a landing page.
- Follow Company Ads – Lets you build your followers to your company page. People can follow your company from your ad with a single click. When they like your page, it's also shown to their network, giving you even more potential for additional followers.

Native Ads are available on two sizes (400x350 and 260x600) and are sold as CPM (cost per mille, or thousand), meaning you pay for the people who view your ad, NOT for clicks or results.

You can buy Sponsored InMail, so you can send emails directly to LinkedIn members.

You'll supply them with a subject header, text for the email, a call-to-action button, your choice of a 300x250 or 300x600 ad, and additional widgets, as desired.

This type of ad is available on its own, or you can buy it as part of a larger marketing purchase. You pay per recipient.

Sponsored Updates will let you reach people with links, images, videos, presentations and other types of media.

You can buy these ads on a fully managed basis, or you can sponsor your own updates through the ad system. You can bid on a CPC or CPM basis.

Standard ads are available on a CPC basis. You can buy them straight through your LinkedIn account, and you can run multiple accounts.

Learn more about LinkedIn Ads here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/ads/?src=mlc-sols-pg>

Pinterest

Pinterest ads are called Promoted Pins. That's exactly what they are. They're just like standard pins, only they're shown to a large audience on a CPC basis. Other people can pin these ads and like these ads, thus increasing your reach without additional cost.

Promoted Pins are in their infancy at the moment, so there aren't a lot of metrics available to judge the effectiveness, but they're definitely promising. Pinterest is widely known for having an audience of buyers.

Learn more about Promoted Pins here:

<https://ads.pinterest.com/>

Other Networks

There are other social networks that have different types of ads available, as well. Tumblr, for example, has several ad formats to choose from. Twitter currently has five standard types of ads, and you can also create your own custom campaign.

You might even search for social networks that are within your market. For example, there are social networks devoted to weight loss and fitness, relationships, and many more. Ads there would generally have less competition and thus cost less, and would also be more targeted to your market.

CPC Ads

CPC ad networks such as Google AdWords make it easy to advertise, but costs can quickly spiral out of control if you aren't careful. Many advertisers have seen the CPC of AdWords ads at \$5 per click and higher in some markets, making it completely unaffordable for the average business owner.

That's not to say they don't have their purpose. CPC ads can definitely work in some cases, especially if you know how to keep costs down.

For example, Google AdWords will give you a lower CPC and show your ad more often if you have a high Quality Score, which is a measure of how relevant your landing page and ad are to your chosen keywords. This makes it especially important to carefully lump keywords into various campaigns, and perhaps even use specific landing pages for each one.

You can learn more about Quality Score here:

<https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2454010?hl=en>

And here:

<http://www.ppchero.com/ultimate-guide-to-adwords-quality-score/>

AdWords isn't the only game in town for CPC ads. There's also Bing and others.

Here are some other CPC networks to try:

<http://bingads.microsoft.com/>

<http://www.adroll.com/>

<http://www.advertising.com/advertiser/sponsored-listings>

<http://www.infolinks.com/>

Direct Ads

You can also buy ads directly on websites. Many high traffic websites have a media kit you can download that explains their demographics, traffic levels, and the cost for various ad positions. If they don't, you can usually find a contact form on their website to inquire about advertising rates.

The biggest benefit of buying ads directly on websites is the ability to be certain you're reaching your target market. You can advertise on sites that perfectly match your demographic and are perhaps even your direct competitors, thus ensuring you get the type of traffic you need.

Perhaps the biggest drawback is the inability to tailor ads on the fly. You won't usually get instantly updated stats, meaning you can't see how well your ad is performing based on impressions, so you have no idea what your CTR might be until it's too late to change anything.

When you find a site that works for you, there's a good chance you can negotiate a lower monthly fee for your ad by purchasing multiple months in advance. This will help keep costs down and you'll continue to get the traffic you've already seen converts well for you.

There are ad networks you can use to reach various websites, including:

<https://buysellads.com/>

<http://www.adsharemarket.com/>

<http://advertiise.com/>

Many publishers prefer to run their ad space through networks so they don't have to manage everything themselves. Sometimes using a network is the only way to get your ads on a certain site.

The biggest benefit to buying ad space through a network instead of directly is that they usually have statistics, so you can make changes to your ads on the fly to increase CTR.

With direct placement, you usually won't know how many impressions your ad receives until much later, and you have to contact the site owner to ask them to manually change your ad if it isn't performing well.

Conclusion

Social ads are the biggest trend in media buying these days. It's something anyone can do with very little upfront investment, and you can see your results immediately in most cases. You can adjust ads on the fly to decrease your CPC and increase your CTR.

CPC networks like AdWords have been the standard in media buying for many years. They are quickly becoming outdated as CPC rates explode due to massive competition, and their effectiveness has waned drastically due to "banner blindness".

Direct media buying can be profitable, but unless you buy through an ad network, you typically don't have a way to track your results and respond quickly to raise your CTR.

Any type of media buy can work for you if you're willing to put in the time and money to really fine-tune your ads, but if you're looking for quick results with less money upfront, social ads are probably a safer bet.

I wish you the best of luck with your media buying, and I hope your campaigns are very profitable!

Resources

Here are quick links to the resources mentioned in the guide:

Alexa for Demographics Research:

<http://www.alexa.com>

Quantcast for Demographics Research:

<http://www.quantcast.com>

Facebook Ads Guide:

<https://www.facebook.com/business/ads-guide/>

LinkedIn Ads:

<https://www.linkedin.com/ads/?src=mlc-sols-pg>

Pinterest Promoted Pins:

<https://ads.pinterest.com/>

BuySellAds:

<https://buysellads.com/>

AdShareMarket:

<http://www.adsharemarket.com/>

Advertiise:

<http://advertiise.com/>

Google AdWords Quality Score:

<https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2454010?hl=en>

An Article on Quality Score:

<http://www.ppchero.com/ultimate-guide-to-adwords-quality-score/>

Bing Ads:

<http://bingads.microsoft.com/>

AdRoll:

<http://www.adroll.com/>

Advertising.com”

<http://www.advertising.com/advertiser/sponsored-listings>

Infolinks:

<http://www.infolinks.com/>

Landing Page Monkey:

<http://landingpagemonkey.com/>

Catcha Monkey:

<http://catchamonkey.com/>

Social Share Monkey:

<http://socialsharemonkey.com/>

Pop Up Monkey:

<http://popupmonkey.com/>

Countdown Monkey:

<http://countdownmonkey.com/>

Attention Monkey:

<http://attentionmonkey.com/>