

HubSpot Case Study

Precise targeting and quality leads with LinkedIn Ads



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Dan Slagen, Head of Paid Marketing, HubSpot

Reaching their core audience

HubSpot, based in Cambridge, Mass., creates marketing software that helps businesses grow web traffic, generate inbound leads, and convert leads into paying customers. HubSpot’s software platform allows professional marketers and small business owners to manage search engine optimization, blogs and social media channels, landing pages, lead intelligence, and marketing analytics. Since its founding, HubSpot has worked with over 6,000 companies in 45 countries.

For its own lead-generation efforts, HubSpot provides white papers that demonstrate industry thought leadership and free educational resources to attract marketing professionals to its services.

The challenge for HubSpot, explains Dan Slagen, the company’s head of paid marketing, is finding advertising venues with the right mix of marketing professionals who respond well to HubSpot’s offers of free marketing materials. With LinkedIn Ads, “we create ads with personalized copy for each campaign,” says Slagen. “The highly targeted ads speak to the pain points for each particular audience, such as lead generation or maximizing SEO.” Clickthroughs are directed to a customized landing page, where prospective customers can supply their contact info in exchange for a free download or a product demo.

Challenge

- Reach a professional audience in specific industries, companies, and job positions
- Increase quality of leads
- Encourage downloads of thought leadership materials
- Improve CPC rates

Solution

- Launch self-service LinkedIn Ads campaigns
- Develop highly targeted campaigns for different audiences
- Offer free educational materials to prospects to capture lead information
- Test and adjust campaigns to improve results in real time

Why LinkedIn?

- Precise targeting ensures campaigns reach the right audience
- Professional members receptive to business messages
- Ad campaigns easy to launch and manage
- High clickthrough rates and high-quality leads compared to other social networks

Results

- CTRs of 1% to 3% – 60% higher than other social networks
- Average CPC of \$3, lower than other channels for categories they target
- Higher-quality leads that convert faster
- Valuable insights on prospect preferences for free downloads

Precisely targeting campaigns

HubSpot first experimented with ad campaigns on social networks other than LinkedIn, but the campaigns did not yield satisfactory results. "There's a lot of distraction on other social networks," Slagen says. "People are there for reasons besides improving their businesses, or networking with other professionals." HubSpot also needed to precisely target its campaigns beyond simply just location, keywords, and interests, drilling down into specific professional attributes of its potential customers – a capability that other social networks do not provide.

Slagen realized that LinkedIn, with its powerful targeting features and professional audience, would offer the ideal venue for HubSpot's campaigns. "We need to connect with B2B companies that are focused on lead generation, which means LinkedIn is the place for us," Slagen explains. In addition, LinkedIn Ads provide the targeting precision that HubSpot requires.

"Any pay-per-click program these days provides the functionality to target based on keywords, interests, gender, age and geo-location," Slagen says. "With LinkedIn, however, we're able to truly identify our core audience by going a step further and targeting by company, job title, job function and groups. This gives us the unique ability to tailor messaging and target the exact audience segment that we need. These are unparalleled capabilities not only within the B2B space, but within the entire pay-per-click space."

High clickthrough rates deliver quality leads

Using LinkedIn Ads, HubSpot has been able to achieve clickthrough rates ranging from 1% to 3% with an average CPC of about \$3, "which is actually a fraction of the cost of paid search advertising," Slagen explains. "On traditional PPC search engines, we've seen average CPC rates that are significantly higher – as much as three times higher in some cases."

"With LinkedIn Ads, we've been able to generate a clickthrough rate that is 60% higher than our average across other social networks – and at the same time, the quality of leads coming through LinkedIn is greater than through other social media channels," he adds. "There's no clutter on LinkedIn – members are there to do business."



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Slagen also likes the fact that he can continually test campaigns and make adjustments on the fly to improve results. "We're always testing new demographic segments and learning what types of offers B2B marketers find most relevant," Slagen says. "For instance, we've found that new prospects want to receive white papers and ebooks, while qualified prospects prefer software demos or free trials. Getting clarity on our customers' preferences gives us valuable insights into what offers are most appealing to particular segments."



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