THE FACEBOOK ADS EXPERIMENT
12 Tips to **Crazy** Engagement

JON LOOMER

AN INTRODUCTION TO "THE EXPERIMENT"

I recently conducted a Facebook ads experiment, and this ebook is a collection of tips that resulted from it. I wrote a blog post that provided background on why I conducted the experiment titled "An Experiment: Facebook Ads Don't Have to Suck." I felt that post was the best possible way to introduce what would follow...

As a visitor to my website, you may have recently seen a Facebook ad from me inviting you to participate in an experiment.

The results I'm seeing so far from this experiment are incredible, so I wanted to briefly break down what it is I'm doing and the thought process behind it.

ADS DON'T HAVE TO SUCK

Late at night on December 30, I was wide awake in bed. For whatever reason, I was grappling with the perception of Facebook ads and ads in general.

Ads intrude. Ads sell. Ads push. Ads are seen as a necessary evil to use the Facebook platform.

But what if people wanted to see my ads? What if it was a pleasant surprise to them? What if they felt they had to click? What if these ads served them content they couldn't see anywhere else?

Creating a Facebook ads campaign that works is all about reaching the right people with the right message at the right time. But what if we took that a step further?

Facebook ads, in general, exist to show you something you may have otherwise missed. They behave as a reminder to buy that product, opt in to that offer or click that link.

These ads don't truly provide value.

I'm guilty of this, too. I promote the content you may have already seen (though I do exclude those who already read a certain post when promoting it). I push to make sure that you didn't miss it the first time. And I promote products or opt-ins you may have otherwise known about.

FACEBOOK ADS VS. EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

Let's think about ads the way we think about our email newsletter. No one wants to sign up for your stupid newsletter if all it does is remind you to read a post.

I have work to do on this personally. I email every time I publish a new blog post. The hope is that I can provide value, background or a different angle within the email version.

Still, that's boring. That's why you should provide lead magnet content in exchange for the email address.

People are no longer opting in for a boring email newsletter. They are giving you an email address to see content that they couldn't see anywhere else.

## ADS CAN SERVE EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

At 1:10am, I sent the following series of texts to John Robinson, my Backup CEO:

> *Crazy idea: Facebook ads Easter egg course…*
>
> *Each lesson delivered via a Facebook ad. You only see the next lesson if you clicked on the previous ad.*
>
> *Completely free but unique. People would want to click my ads.*

I was tired. It may not have made the most sense at the time. But the idea was very clear in my mind. It was a huge, shiny lightbulb that was keeping me awake.
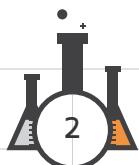
Facebook ads don't have to suck. If done right, people may look forward to seeing them. They don't have to push you to see content you may have seen otherwise.

Facebook ads, like an email opt-in, could be a benefit to the user.

THE EXPERIMENT

I had very little time. I knew that by noon of that day (11 hours away), my family and I were heading for the mountains for a little New Years vacation. I needed to get working.

So I created the ad you saw at the top. I targeted fans and website visitors.

The concept was simple:

1. Click the ad to opt in (using a Website Custom Audience)

2. Get served an EXCLUSIVE Facebook advertising tip

3. Those who viewed that tip would be served another (and another...)

4. There's a surprise for those who make it to the end

The audience was highly relevant. Those who participate would be the most engaged members of my fan base and website visiting community. Those who participate SHOULD be extremely engaged.

I decided to add a wrinkle to up the engagement even more and lower the waste: **An opt-out.**

I am running a second ad that looks like this...


Jon Loomer Digital
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Lately I've been showing you ads about a Facebook ads experiment I'm running. If you no longer want to see these ads, there's a very simple solution: CLICK THE LINK!

Bottom line is that I don't want to waste money on ads that you don't want to see. So if you click this link, you'll be added to an exclusion list.

Thanks for understanding!

NO MORE EXPERIMENT!

Facebook Ads Experiment: NO MORE!

I've been targeting you in ads for a Facebook ads experiment. If you don't want to see these ads, I don't want to spend money showing them to you!

WWW.JONLOOMER.COM

Like · Comment · Share · Hootlet
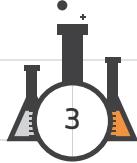
If you don't want to participate, I don't want to waste money showing you the ads. This goes not only for the initial pool of people, but I also allow those who initially opted in to change their minds.

I know. This is beginning to sound a bit nuts. *I am spending money to show exclusive content to a small number of people. I'm also spending money to ask people to opt out of seeing my ads.*

But I have a theory. These are my most engaged users. The audience may not be huge, but they are the ones most likely to opt in and buy.

I'm not pushing anything in these tips. But each tip will include ads in the sidebar for my free ebook, Power Editor training course, one-on-one service and Power Hitters Club.

I'm tracking conversions for all of these things. I'm also using UTM parameters to track further in Google Analytics.

I am going to dump more than $3,000 into this experiment. Will it be worthwhile? We'll see...

EARLY RESULTS

So far, so good.

Here are the early stats on the people viewing Tip #1...

Campaign Name	Reach	Website Clicks	Cost per Website Click	Click-Through Rate (CTR)
--	1,535 People	583 Total	$0.02 Per Action	29.462% Per Impression
Facebook Ads Experiment – Tip #1 – Clicks to Website	1,535	583	$0.02	29.462%

And here are the early stats on the people viewing Tip #2...

Campaign Name	Reach	Website Clicks	Cost per Website Click	Click-Through Rate (CTR)
--	440 People	236 Total	$0.01 Per Action	52.982% Per Impression
Facebook Ads Experiment – Tip #2 – Clicks to Website	440	236	$0.01	52.982%

What's even crazier about Tip #2 is that the CTR on mobile is 68%!

I know. It's a small sample size. While I'm spending the bulk of my budget just getting people to participate, I've spent only a few dollars to drive participants to content.

But this is eye opening. We're still talking about a total of 819 website clicks for about $15. That's freaking ridiculous.
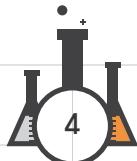
The entire campaign has also resulted in 213 conversions worth $1,041 (Editor's Note: as of the second tip being published). Most of those conversions are free opt-ins, but we know there is long-tail value there, too.

AND HERE ARE THE TIPS

Okay, so now you understand what this experiment was all about. Once a user opted in to participate in the experiment (by clicking a particular link) they were served a constant stream of tips.

Following are those tips…
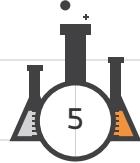
TIP #1: AN OVERVIEW OF WEBSITE CUSTOM AUDIENCES

I created the experiment with no strings attached. I did not require an email address to see the tips. I didn't use the exclusive tips to sell anything (although, like all of my content, ads for my products were in the sidebar). I was simply looking to do something different.

Those participating in the experiment were part of an exclusive club. Those who continued to click on the ads within the experiment remained in the club.

Over the course of the next several tips, I am going to explain in detail what I did and how you can do something similar. Easy enough? Let's go...

WHAT WEBSITE CUSTOM AUDIENCES ARE

Facebook advertising veterans are quick to detect that I used Website Custom Audiences as the engine to make this experiment run. But know that I used WCAs differently than most advertisers – or even how I tend to use them.

Website Custom Audiences allow you to build an audience of people who have visited your website. Variations can be created based on the following:

- People who have visited any page of a particular website

- People who have visited specific pages of a website

- People who have visited certain pages but not others

- People who have visited during the past 180 days but not recently

- People who have visited during a recent number of days
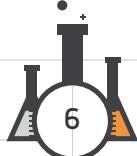
This is done with the help of a pixel that you place between the head tags of the template of your website(s). You do this only once.

ADDING THE PIXEL TO YOUR WEBSITE

Access your audiences from either your Ads Manager or Power Editor.

From Ads Manager, click "Audiences" on the left…
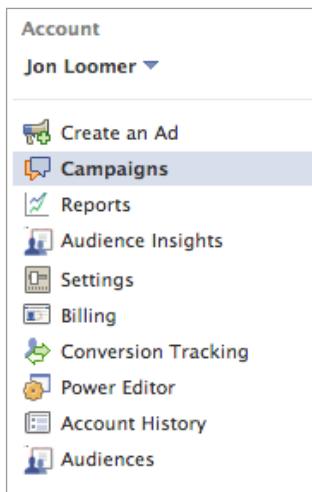
Or from Power Editor, select "Audiences" from the Manage Ads drop-down…
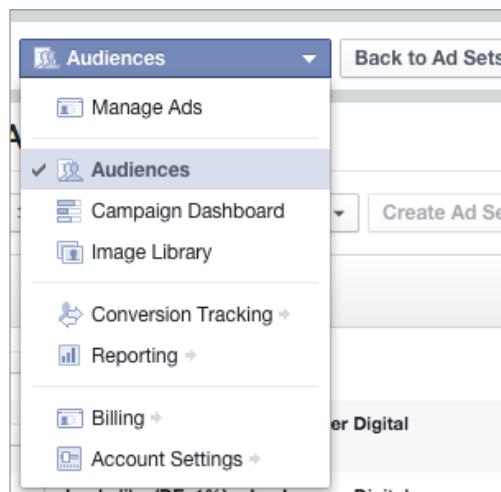
If you've never created a Custom Audience before, click the "Create Custom Audience" button…

Otherwise, click the green "Create Audience" button at the top right and select "Custom Audience."

Select "Website Traffic"…
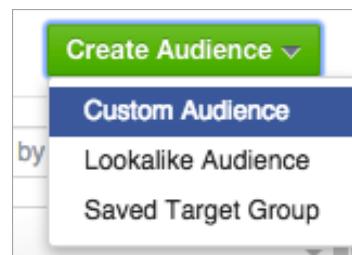
Check that you've read and accepted the terms for Custom Audiences (if you haven't read them, do so!). Then click the "Create Web Remarketing Pixel" button...
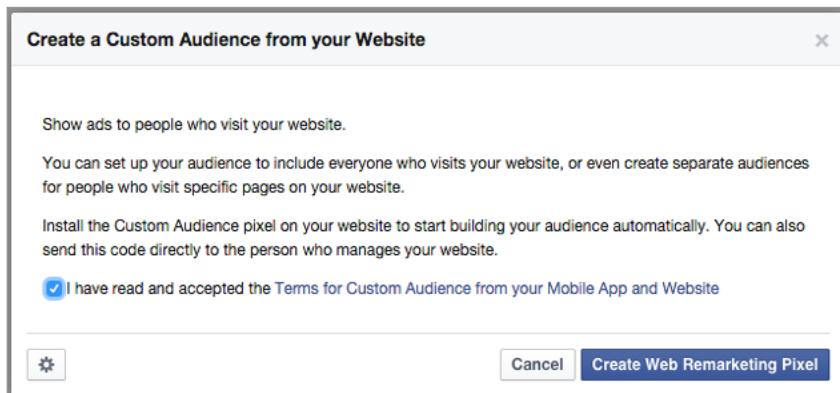
You'll then be given a snippet of code that looks like this...

Within this code is a pixel ID that is unique to your advertising account. No one else will get that code.

This entire code needs to be pasted between the HEAD tags of the template of your website. It is placed there so that every page of your website that exists will include this code. You'd either need to do it this way or paste it manually on every single page (which you'd never want to do).

If this confuses you, hopefully you have a web person on staff. Send this to them. Otherwise, there are several plugins you can use that will make it easier to access the HEADER of your website.

Understand that you only need to paste this code once. This is the only code you will get for a single ad account. Many advertisers think that they need to paste a different code for each Website Custom Audience they create. That's simply not the case.

By placing the code within the template of your website – and therefore every page of your website – Facebook will then know every time someone visits any page of your site. That way, you can then create rules that allow Facebook to generate lists based on the specific pages and time periods those pages were visited.

Those rules are created when you create a Website Custom Audience.

CREATING A WEBSITE CUSTOM AUDIENCE

After copying and pasting the code from the last step, click the "Create Audience" button. You'll then see something that looks like this...
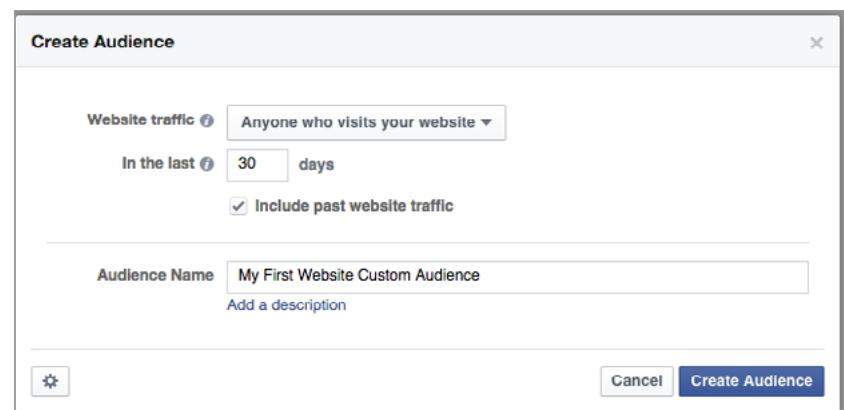
By default, you'll create a WCA for anyone who has visited any page of your website during the past 30 days. That's a really good place to start, and you should create one of these.

But you can also create WCAs based on the specific pages someone did or didn't visit, as well as some other options. First, select the option "People who visit specific web pages."
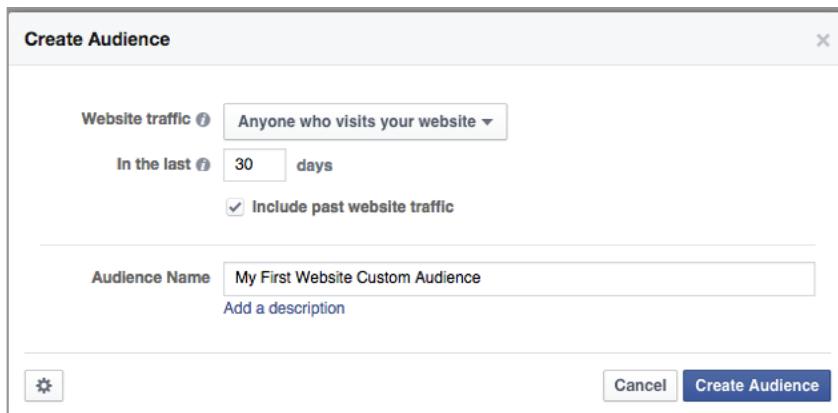
If I wanted to create an audience of anyone who visited this particular article, for example, I could do it a couple of ways. I could create an audience of anyone who visited a page where the URL contains…

http://jonloomer.com/tip-1-an-overview-of-website-custom-audiences

Or I could focus only on everything after the domain…

tip-1-an-overview-of-website-custom-audiences

Just keep in mind that either one would also pull in other URLs that contain this information within the URL (if those pages exist). You may want to include the domain if you have the same pixel on multiple sites. You could also use "URL equals" to be safe.

Note that you can include several qualifiers here. For example, I could create an audience of people who visited a page that included ANY of the following:

facebook-ads
power-editor
organic-reach

In this case, it's an OR statement – someone would have needed to visit any of those pages to be added to the audience.

You could also create an audience of people who visited specific web pages but not others…
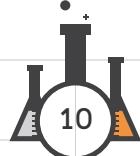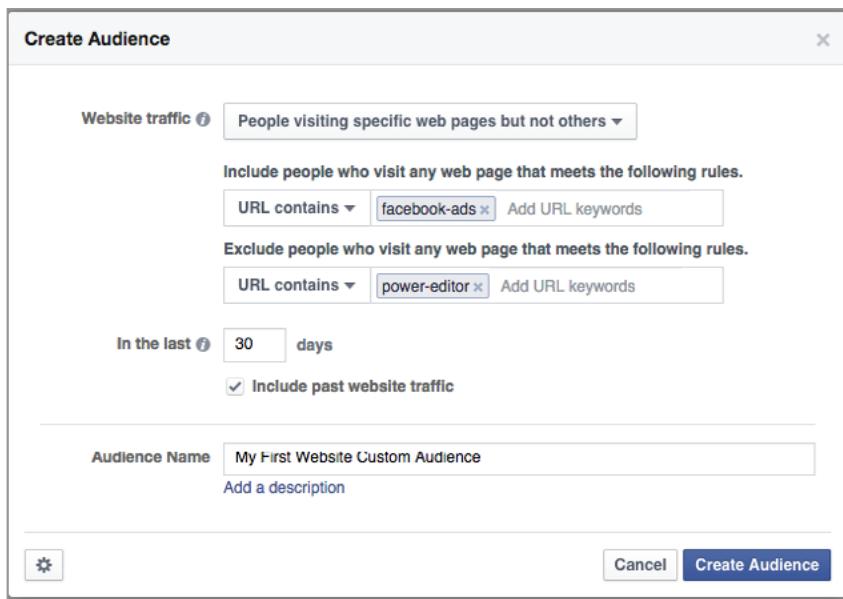
An example of when you'd do this is when creating an audience of people who have visited the landing page for a product, but didn't convert. So you might include...

jonloomer.com/my-product

but exclude...

jonloomer.com/my-product-thank-you

You can also create an audience of people who have visited your website during the past 180 days, but haven't been back lately...
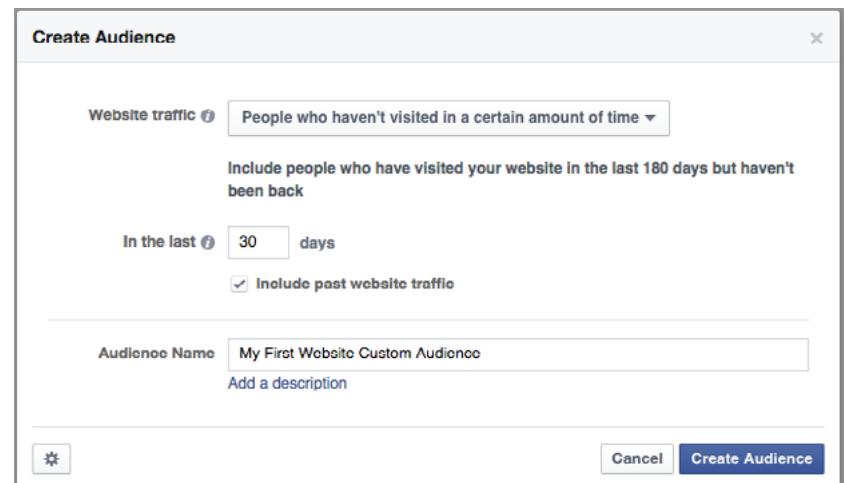
In the example above, I'm building an audience of people who have visited my website during the past 180 days, but not specifically during the past 30.

TARGETING WEBSITE CUSTOM AUDIENCES

Of course, the reason you'd create these WCAs is so that you can target these people with ads. When creating an ad set in Power Editor, simply enter the name of the Website Custom Audience within the Custom Audiences text box when editing your audience...

In the example above, I'm targeting the people who viewed the page for my first Facebook Ads Experiment ad while excluding the people who visited the page that indicates they no longer want to see the ads.

We'll get to way more on that in a later tip!

BASIC WAYS YOU CAN USE WEBSITE CUSTOM AUDIENCES

There are limitless ways that you can use Website Custom Audiences. Note that even if you use WCAs at a very basic level, you can have enormous success. Build an audience of anyone who has visited your website lately, and that will be a very relevant audience.

1. **Build a Fan Base.** Which people would be most likely to want to like your Facebook page? Those who visit your website, of course! Ditch the interests, and go straight to your website visitors!

2. **Drive Relevant Website Traffic.** Every time I publish a new blog post, I promote it with a Facebook ad and target people who have visited my website during the past 30 days. But you could get even more relevant, and target those who have read similar articles.

3. **Build an Email List.** Have a white paper, ebook or some other type of lead generating opt-in? Target your website visitors to build your list. Or you could target those who have read articles directly related to the subject matter of that piece of content.

4. **Sell Products.** When I sell something, there are two groups of people who are most likely to buy: Fans and website visitors. Make your ads even more effective by targeting people who have read content that is connected to the product you are selling.

5. **Exclude Current Customers.** If your product can only be purchased once, stop wasting money on those who already bought it! You can do this by excluding both email Custom Audiences and the Website Custom Audience of the success page following a purchase.

6. **Create a Funnel.** Show unique advertising and funnel people along based on the specific pages of your website they've read – rather than requiring an email address up front.

Of course, what I'm doing in my experiment is a bit unique. It's not truly a funnel, though it's closely related to it. I will be using bits and pieces of multiple strategies by the end of this experiment.

TIP #2: STARTING WITH A WIDE NET

Since you've read the first tip, you have a general understanding of how I ran my experiment. Or, at least you can start making some basic assumptions.

You know that I used Website Custom Audiences. Yes, this is true. But it's far more complicated than that.

THE INITIAL POOL

My goal for this campaign was to find the select number of people who would be willing to participate in an experiment with me from start to finish. I expected attrition, and I needed to account for that.

This is similar to a membership. Let's say that 100 people agreed to take on the initial challenge. I'd expect some to drop off with each new step. With 13 total steps, how many would be left at the end? Going into this, my guess is that out of 100, it would be in the neighborhood of 20.

This is okay. I wanted it to be an exclusive group. I wanted it to be an accomplishment that you made it to the end. But what I didn't want was for the initial group to be so small that the group participating disappears before the conclusion.

I budgeted about $100 per day for this campaign that ran about 60 days. This includes a "ramping down" period where I shout off the initial ad to let those in the funnel work themselves through.

The vast majority of the campaign was spent on attracting the first group (the individual remarketing groups for each tip was small). If the targeting is good enough, I expected about 3% of those who saw the initial ad to click the link to participate.

If we assume about a $5 CPM, that's about 20,000 people targeted each day resulting in 600 new daily participants. Of course, we'd expect that number to drop every day as those who click are no longer targeted and those who don't become fatigued by the ad.

That's a lot of math, right? Hang with me...

For that first ad, I had Facebook optimize for the website click, allowing Facebook to automatically bid and optimize (formerly referred to as oCPM). I'll get to more on bidding in a later tip – expect my approach to change in other ads.

Understand that when Facebook optimizes for an action, they won't show it to everyone within your potential audience. You don't want them to do that at this point. You don't want to waste money on people unlikely to act.

I've even found this to be the case even when you have a highly relevant audience. Facebook's auto-optimization is fantastic.

But since Facebook doesn't show that ad to everyone, I needed a starter pool of people far bigger than 20,000 people. It's up to you how big you go, but I'd recommend at least 200,000 (you could easily go well beyond 1 Million).

It may be a personal preference, but I like to keep that initial pool as relevant as possible without branching off into Lookalike Audiences. And if I do use Lookalike Audiences, I want that targeting to take up a minority of my budget.

We'll get to the groups you should be targeting in a minute (and the groups I targeted for my experiment). But first...

MY INVITATION AD

Here is the ad I created to invite people to participate in my experiment...

You may have seen this. It's possible, though, that you haven't since some reached my tips due to friends participating in and engaging with the experiment.

This same ad was shown to three different audiences. I created three ad sets, one for each audience.

I first started with $25 budgets for both fans and my website visitors during the past 30 days (who aren't fans). Fans performed extremely well, so I doubled the budget.

I also experimented with Lookalike Audiences (based on my fans) because I wanted to get greater volume. Lookalikes didn't perform at the rate that fans and website visitors did, however, so I eventually deactivated this group.

TARGET YOUR FANS

I chuckle whenever I hear someone say that likes no longer matter. That there's no value in page likes anymore, and that you should certainly never run ads to increase that audience.

I know that I'm increasingly in the minority of people who disagree with this stance, but I disagree because of the results I see. Not only does organic reach still exist, but this is an extremely valuable group of people to target with ads.

Let's assume for a moment that organic reach no longer exists at all (it does, but hang with me). Even then, there would be value in a like.

Why? Because by liking your page, a user is separating themselves from the herd. You previously saw that user as one of hundreds of thousands or millions with similar interests. That group, by itself, has limited expectations for performance.

By liking your page, that user is placed into a bucket. I then target that group to drive website traffic, build my email list and sell products.

You know what? I have more success targeting fans than any other group. So, yes. Fans (high quality fans, of course) really do matter!

So when I started that first campaign, it was a no-brainer that I target fans. However, since I can't target all fans regardless of country (you can do this with Custom Audiences), I focused on eight main countries to start.

This, in addition to Facebook's optimization, significantly limited the size of the audience that saw my ad. So while I may have started out with 75,000+ fans I could target, I reached closer to 27,000.

Depending on the size of your fan base – and the budget you want to spend – you may be able to stop here. But you may need to expand the net further...

TARGET YOUR GENERAL WEBSITE VISITORS

It should be no secret that driving website traffic is extremely important to me. By driving website traffic, I can remarket using Website Custom Audiences in order to build my fan base, drive more website traffic, build my email list and sell products.

It's what made this entire experiment possible!

I advise that you create dozens – if not hundreds – of Website Custom Audiences for targeting purposes. Even when it comes to "all website visitors," I've created many variations based on duration, going from one (smallest audience, but most relevant) to 180 days (largest audience, but least relevant).

By targeting users who have visited my website during the past 30 days but aren't fans (I'm already targeting those people in a separate ad set), I can reach another 125,000 people. If I limit my targeting to eight core countries, that number falls to about 75,000.

For this experiment, I was looking for the happy medium between large audience and hugely relevant, so I chose to limit by country. But this filtering was eliminated later in the experiment.

Maybe you don't get much website traffic, or maybe you're looking to spend far more than I did. In that case, you'll need to expand the net even more…

NEED MORE? TARGET LOOKALIKES

Whenever I start a new campaign, I will always start with fans and website visitors. They are most relevant and most likely to act. It's why I work so hard to build those audiences.

But Lookalike Audiences are a great way to reach a larger audience. This is appropriate for anyone who is starting an audience from scratch or simply can't get enough out of fans and website visitors.

When you create a Lookalike Audience, Facebook will look at the similarities between the people who are within an existing audience of yours. Facebook will then build a list of users most similar to them.

This essentially automates the process that is otherwise done manually when you sit down to determine the best interests, age groups, demographics and more to target. Some advertisers have found this to be hugely effective.

I find Lookalike Audiences to be a nice next step. They are a decent group to target for "light" actions (page likes, post engagement and website clicks). But I don't rely on them for "heavier" actions like opt-ins and sales.

Since my experiment relied on traffic, I figured I'd mess around with Lookalike Audiences. However, I was also skeptical I'd get much return since I needed a certain level of time commitment to participate (later confirmed).

Facebook can create Lookalike Audiences based off of any of the following:

- An Existing Email List

- Your Website Visitors

- Other Custom Audiences

- Your Facebook Fans

- Those Who Fired a Conversion Pixel (Customers)

What you use may depend on the situation. If I were trying to sell something, I may focus on the conversion pixel. But what I wanted to do for this experiment was drive traffic.

In this case, I chose to use a Lookalike Audience of my fans because this group (fans) generated the most efficient website clicks.

NEED MORE? TARGET INTERESTS

Of course, you can also generate an audience the hard way – by manually entering interests.

Before doing this, I strongly recommend that you dissect your current audiences using Audience Insights. From there, you can determine the ideal ages, countries, interests and more that you should be targeting.

TIP #3: TARGET THOSE WHO VISITED A PARTICULAR PAGE

In Tip #2, we talked about casting a wide net so that you could attract relevant people (Facebook fans, website visitors and even Lookalike Audiences) into your funnel. Now it's time to start building your funnel by serving content to people who viewed a particular page.

We'll start with the basics of how to do this before moving on to how I used this type of targeting for my experiment.

HOW TO TARGET BY PAGE VISIT

While you're on the Audiences page within Power Editor or Ads Manager, click to create a Custom Audience...
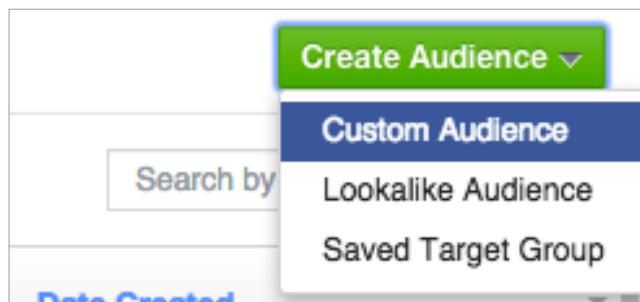
Then select "Website Traffic"...
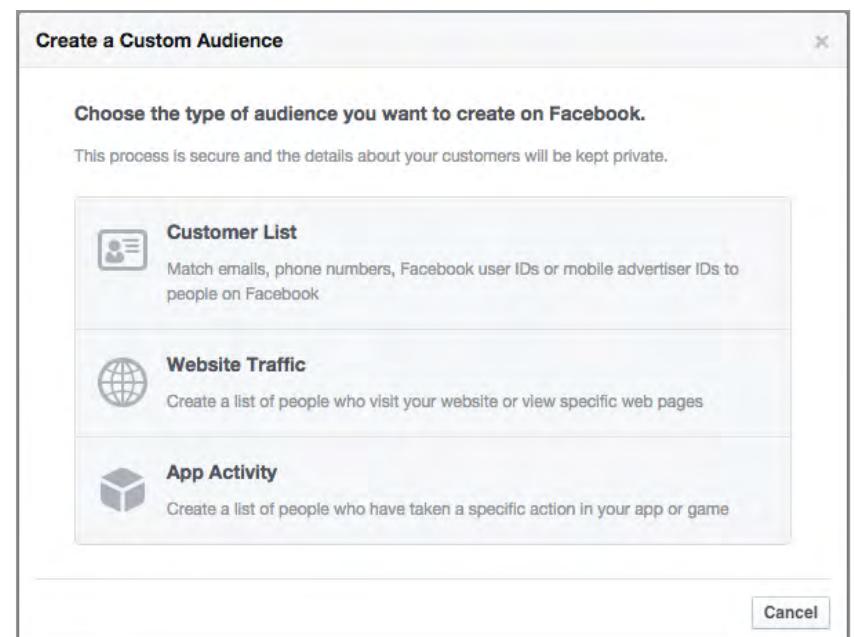
I am going to assume that you've already installed your ad account pixel across your website.

First, select the "People who visit specific web pages" option...

Make sure to name it something very descriptive so that you'll know what it is later. You will have duration options of 1-180 days. By default, Facebook chooses 30 days.

Also by default, the audience will be based on "URL contains" whatever you place into the text box. In the example above, I pasted the entire URL for a particular article.

You could also include only a portion of that URL...

Or you could select "URL equals" and enter the entire URL...

Just keep in mind a few things:

First, if you use "URL contains" and enter only part of the URL, it's possible that multiple pages of your website will contain that same URL segment.

Second, if you use "URL contains" and enter the entire URL, it's still possible that more than one page would qualify. Think of the following as an example:

http://jonloomer.com/my-product
http://jonloomer.com/my-product-thank-you

If I used "URL contains" and the full URL of http://jonloomer.com/my-product, there would be two pages that would qualify.

Finally, just make certain that if you use "URL equals" that you use the same URL that everyone will use. For example, can some people access via http and some via https?

Once you've created this audience, you can target it within the Custom Audience text box when creating your ad set.

We'll get to excluding later!

AD THAT WELCOMES PARTICIPANTS

I first created a campaign that invited people into my experiment.

As discussed, I primarily targeted my Facebook fans and website visitors during the past 30 days, but I also experimented with Lookalike Audiences.

I then create a second ad that welcomed any new participants into the experiment.

The Website Custom Audience that I created and targeted for that ad looks like this:

Note that the duration in this case is only 1 day. That way I wouldn't spend money welcoming someone to the experiment days after they've joined.

I also excluded audiences, but we'll get to that later!

AD THAT PROMOTES TIP #1

I also had an ad running that promoted Tip #1 to the participants of my experiment...

Jon Loomer Digital
Sponsored ·

Welcome to my Facebook ads experiment! In the coming days, you will start seeing exclusive content only available to you. In order to continue seeing that content, you'll need to click on each one and follow directions where applicable.

Along the way, you will also have the opportunity to opt out. If you no longer want to see this stuff, I want you to opt out! There's no reason to spend money showing ads to people who don't want to see it. Wanting otherwise completely defeats... See More

EXPERIMENT!

Like · Comment · Share · Hootlet · 30 6

In this case, targeting was nearly identical to that of the welcome ad. I again wanted to target people who clicked the first invitation ad and viewed that article. In this case, though, I wanted the duration to be longer than 1 day.

I chose to keep the duration at 14 days. I certainly wanted to show the ad for longer than a day after entering the experiment, but I worried about cutting it off too soon. I wouldn't reach everyone initially with the ad, so I wanted it to run longer to give people the chance to continue.

At the same time, I didn't want to waste too much money on people who didn't want to participate any longer! Ultimately, my ads were most efficient on the first day and the cost per website click would go up over time, but that was the price I'd pay to make sure everyone who wanted to participate had a reasonable chance (in this case 14 days) to see the ad.

TIP #4: EXCLUSIONARY LOGIC

In Tip #3, we talked about targeting people based on the specific page they visited. But what if you want to exclude people from your targeting based on the pages they've visited?

EXCLUDING AN ENTIRE CUSTOM AUDIENCE

Here's a brief summary of how I made this experiment work...

1. Show invitation ad to wide audience (Exclude opt-outs and those who already read the invitation page)

2. Show opt-out ad to same wide audience

3. Show Tip #1 to those who viewed the invitation page (Exclude opt-outs and those who already read this tip)

4. Show Tip #2 to those who viewed Tip #1 (Exclude opt-outs and those who already read this tip)

5. Show Tip #3 to those who viewed Tip #2 (Exclude opt-outs and those who already read this tip)

6. Show Tip #4 to those who viewed Tip #3 (Exclude opt-outs and those who already read this tip)

And so on...

Here's an example in action for promoting Tip #3...

In the example above, I targeted only those people who read Tip #2 during the past 14 days while excluding those who read either the opt-out request or Tip #3 during the past 180 days.

I targeted those who read Tip #2 for a 14 day duration because I figured if they haven't clicked my ad within 14 days, they no longer wanted to participate. I also wanted to allow as much time as possible for people to have the ad served to them. There

is never a guarantee regarding when – or even if – an ad will be served, so I needed to leave that duration as long as possible without wasting too much money (ultimately, some money is wasted with each passing day, but that's the price I paid to reach as many people as I could).

I excluded those who read the post already within the past 180 days because if they already read it, there's no reason to spend money to show it to them again. That's also why I made the duration the limit of 180 days.

And finally, I allowed people to opt out of the experiment by visiting a particular page. Again, if they ever visited that page, there's no reason to show them another ad related to the experiment. Therefore, I set the duration at the limit of 180 days.

SOME PEOPLE STILL SAW THINGS THEY "SHOULDN'T"

While the experiment was a huge success, there were clearly some holes in this logic. I would love to show certain content to only specific people. Things don't always work out that way.

First, some people were served ads and simply didn't see them. We've been trained to ignore ads, and I'm sure that some who claimed to not receiving my ads were simply missing them.

Second, as mentioned earlier there was no way to guarantee that EVERYONE would be served my ad. And if they were, I couldn't guarantee that it would happen quickly. It may have been within a few minutes or a few days. Or maybe not at all. I controlled that as much as I could with bidding and budgeting.

Third, I imagine that those who clear cookies, block cookies or surf incognito weren't being targeted or excluded properly. I'm not positive on this, but I assume that it caused problems.

Finally, there was an issue of organic distribution that I never considered before starting this experiment. I did not distribute any of these lessons – or the initial invitation – via an organic post. I only served them with ads.

Yet, I received lots of organic distribution. An insane amount of organic distribution, of course. Take a look...
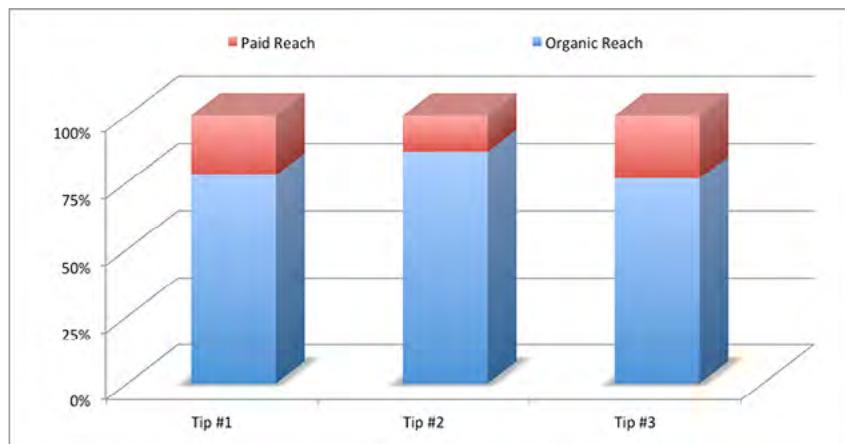
At this point, more than 80% of the reach of my Tips "ads" had been organic. Since I was not publishing these ads organically, this could only be due to the insane engagement on the ads – comments, likes and shares – that were then attracting other people.

Note that Facebook stops counting a person as being reached organic once they've been reached as paid, so that actually deflates the way they report organic reach. So in reality, I reached even more than this number organically.

A future tip will take a closer look at how organic distribution impacted this experiment.

Something else that seems to have happened is that Facebook is more actively surfacing content when a page you like comments. So it's also likely that a decent chunk of the organic distribution is due to me replying to the dozens and dozens of comments I had been getting.

PEOPLE VISITING SPECIFIC WEB PAGES BUT NOT OTHERS

I wanted to show you how I ran my experiment, but I also want to include a few bonus tips.

When creating a Website Custom Audience, you also have this option...
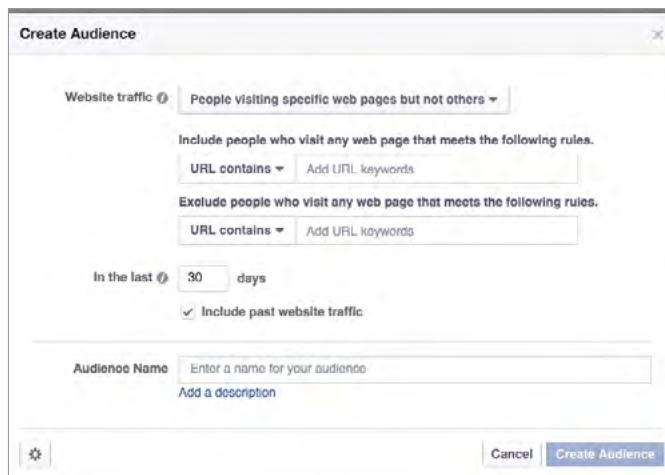
While I created individual Website Custom Audiences for each page visited and then targeted or excluded accordingly, you can also create a Website Custom Audience that includes people who visited one page but not another.

In reality, I could have used this method to create a Website Custom Audience for those who visited Tip #3 but exclude those who viewed Tip #4 or the opt-out page.

I chose not to because the Website Custom Audiences for individual pages are then more flexible and can be used for multiple purposes. I could use a single WCA to target or exclude. Additionally, the method of combining "include" and "exclude" within the same WCA removes the flexibility of different durations for each page.

I guess it also comes down to personal preference, but that's how I chose to run my experiment.

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE EXCLUSIONARY LOGIC

This experiment already outlines some pretty obvious reasons why you'd use exclusionary logic. But let me hit a couple more use cases that I use in particular...

1. **Promoting a Blog Post.** Within seconds of publishing a new blog post on my site, I'll create a Website Custom Audience. There are two reasons for this. First, I may want to promote something related to that post later, so I'll want to reach those who read it. Second, when I promote that blog post, I'll want to exclude those who already read it since there's no reason to spend money to show it to them again.

2. **Promoting a Product.** This especially comes into play when promoting a one-time-purchase product. If someone has already bought my training course, for example, there's no reason for them to buy it again (might not be the case for physical products, however). So I'll create a Website Custom Audience for the "thank you" page that they see following the purchase. I then exclude the people who visited that page during the past 180 days when promoting the product.

Of course, I also exclude the email list of those who bought, but that may not be dynamic (you can use third party tools to help with this), and it's often not the same email address as used for someone's Facebook profile. That's why I exclude both.

TIP #5: ALLOW FOR THE OPT-OUT

In Tip #4, you were introduced to exclusionary logic. While Website Custom Audiences are great for remarketing to people who have visited specific pages of your website, they also allow you to exclude people based on their activities, too.

We've broken down how you can use this for **excluding people** who bought a previous product, opted in to an offer or already read a blog post you are promoting. But we can take this a step further!

THE OPT-OUT

One of the ads I showed for my experiment looks something like this:

On the surface, this seems a bit insane. I spent money to show people an ad that asks them to remove themselves from targeting of future ads. But I did this for a number of reasons.

First, it allowed me to better focus my ad spend on people who wanted to see my ads. Granted, it didn't do anything about those who just ignored me, but this made the other ads I ran more efficient.

Second, it allowed my audience to see the things they want to see – and not see the things they didn't. While they certainly could have blocked me, this allowed a more civil removal. And made it less likely they'd be annoyed by future advertising – and more likely they'd act on it.

Finally, it's very likely that by taking this approach, I improved trust among my audience. By allowing for the opt-out, they knew that I respected their news feed. This may have helped the general perception of my ads in the future.

Note that while I didn't run the opt-out campaign throughout the entire duration of the experiment, I did include the link to opt-out within each tip.

HOW THE OPT-OUT WORKED

Someone could have opted out of my ads by visiting a specific page of my website. So I could then exclude anyone who visited that page in my ad targeting.

Of course, I understand that people are curious, so I knew that a single click opt-out was probably a bad idea. So I made it a two-step process.

When someone clicked on the opt-out ad, they were directed to a page that looked like this...

Here is what the final page said...

> *Okay, now you've done it! You will no longer see ads related to this experiment from me.*
>
> *Trust me, you aren't hurting my feelings. I don't want to spend money on ads you don't want to see.*
>
> *Thanks for participating!*
>
> *Jon*

If you saw that page, you would no longer see the ads associated with my experiment.

EXCLUDING THE OPT-OUT

To make this work, I created a Website Custom Audience for that final opt-out page with a 180 day duration.

Then for all of the ads I created within my experiment, I made sure to exclude that WCA.

That way, my ads didn't reach anyone who had viewed that opt-out page within the previous 180 days.

[NOTE: They still could have seen that content organically, which we'll get to in a later tip!]

THE IMPACT OF THE OPT-OUT

There weren't a ton of opt-outs. While there were more than 250 clicks on the initial ad, only about 100 followed through with the opt-out.

Of an initial pool of 1,880 people who had opted in for the experiment through Tip #4, 40 opted out (the other 30 opted out from the invitation, too). In other words, that's about 2% of the initial audience that I would no longer target.

That may not seem like a huge deal – and really, it's not – but that's still 2% that I no longer had to spend my money on.

Granted, I was still spending money to get other people to opt out (for a while, at least), so it was probably a wash at best. But that doesn't consider the long-tail impact of making sure I continue to target the right people in my experiment – and in the future.

By trimming this list, it became a far more efficient group to target – and one that I can use later.

THE WEAKNESSES OF THE OPT-OUT

There are certainly weaknesses in this, particularly when the ads receive a ton of engagement like those in my experiment.

Even if a person opted out, they may continue to see my ads organically when I or someone else interacted with them – particularly if they chose to interact with them previously.

Here's an example on the right...

As you can see, there is no indication of this being "sponsored." In fact, I received several reports of this from people – to the point where I believe it's a new emphasis from Facebook to show more content in the news feed when users and pages comment on it. Even ads!

So even if you opted out, you still may have seen some of this content. I just wasn't spending money to reach you with it anymore!

TIP #6: USE OF DURATION

When you create a Website Custom Audience, you must indicate a duration...
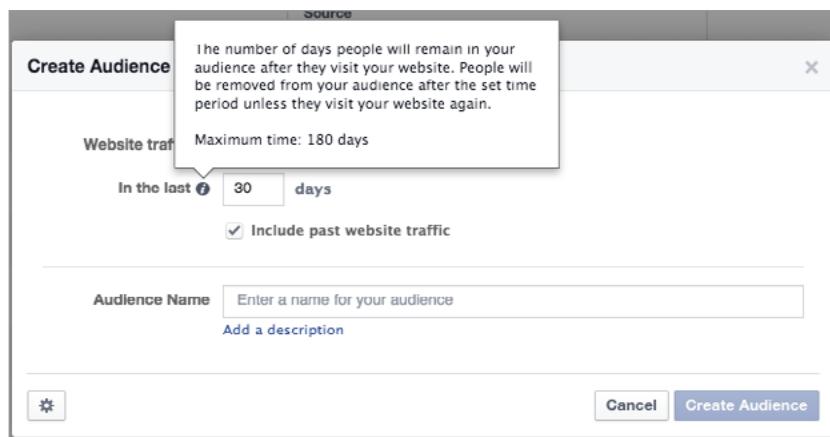
As the helpful tooltip says, this is "the number of days people will remain in your audience after they visit your website. People will be removed from your audience after the set time period unless they visit your website again."

In this tip, let's dive into what that means, how it was used for my experiment and how you can use it, too!

AN OVERVIEW OF DURATION

When you create a Website Custom Audience, Facebook will generate a dynamic list of people you can target based on the page(s) of your website they have visited between 1 and 180 days.

Let's say, for example, that you set duration to 1 day. That means that the audience will first start building for 24 hours before it's "full." It updates in real time, so after that 24 hours, people will continue to be added while others – who haven't been back within 24 hours – will drop off.

Now the obvious: The longer the duration, the bigger and less relevant the audience. You have more opportunities to reach people, but it's also less likely they'll have a close connection to you. They may not remember visiting your website, for example.

The shorter the duration, the smaller and more relevant the audience. You can do some pretty amazing things when you target people who visited your website today. You are fresh on their minds. But it's also likely that this audience will be very small.

Luckily, there are plenty of options between 1 and 180 days to choose from to find that perfect combination!

MY EXPERIMENT: DURATIONS OVERVIEW

First, I created many WCAs based on various durations for my experiment. The reason for that is that you never know when you're going to need a particular audience, so I create them just in case.

For each new tip, I create a WCA for the following:

- 180 Days
- 14 Days
- 7 Days
- 6 Days
- 5 Days
- 4 Days
- 3 Days
- 2 Days
- 1 Day

Name	Type
Viewed Facebook Ads Experiment - Tip #5 (1 Day)	Custom Audience
Viewed Facebook Ads Experiment - Tip #5 (2 Days)	Custom Audience
Viewed Facebook Ads Experiment - Tip #5 (3 Days)	Custom Audience
Viewed Facebook Ads Experiment - Tip #5 (4 Days)	Custom Audience
Viewed Facebook Ads Experiment - Tip #5 (5 Days)	Custom Audience
Viewed Facebook Ads Experiment - Tip #5 (6 Days)	Custom Audience
Viewed Facebook Ads Experiment - Tip #5 (7 Days)	Custom Audience
Viewed Facebook Ads Experiment - Tip #5 (14 Days)	Custom Audience
Viewed Facebook Ads Experiment - Tip #5 (180 Days)	Custom Audience

I never ended up using many of these, but it's smart planning to have them just in case. Otherwise, if you decide you need a WCA you don't have, you need to create it and then wait the entire duration until it's complete (you can use it in the meantime, though it will do limited backdating).

What I mean by backdating is that there is an option to "Include Past Traffic" when you create a WCA. In my experience, this does get some people, but it's far from a complete list.

MY EXPERIMENT: 180 DAYS

I used the 180 days duration many times throughout my experiment. In almost all cases, it was to exclude a group of people.

The WCA above was for anyone who visited the Tip 6 page or the second opt-out page during the prior 180 days. In both cases, I wanted the duration to be as long as possible so that there was no chance I'd target these people in the case of promoting Tip #6.

MY EXPERIMENT: 14 DAYS

I also used a 14 day duration repeatedly in my experiment. It was what kept everything moving along.

The example above is the targeting for the promotion of this tip (Tip #6). In this case, I was targeting anyone who read Tip #5 during the prior 14 days while excluding my Tip #6 Exclusions WCA (those who read Tip #6 or visited the second opt-out page).

Why 14 days? Well, for a couple of reasons.

First, I didn't want to spend money forever showing you an ad if you weren't going to click on it.

That said, even though I did all I could to show every ad to everyone who wanted to see it, I couldn't guarantee it would happen quickly – or at all. Many people saw their ads immediately. Some complained that they never saw them.

So I figured the happy medium here was 14 days. If after 14 days you still hadn't clicked my ad, I stopped paying to show it to you. And if you still hadn't seen it after 14 days, I basically gave up on showing it to you – and you likely gave up, too!

MY EXPERIMENT: 1 DAY

Now, there's one more way I considered using durations in this experiment, but I chose against it. It would have required the use of a 1-day duration WCA.

I considered spacing out the surfacing of tips more. I know that some people told me they'd immediately see Tip #2 after viewing Tip #1. And some had said they'd then seen three or more tips in a day.

On one hand, that could be kind of cool. On the other, it may have been better to space it out a bit.

So I could have decided to exclude any of the following when creating the Tip #6 Exclusions WCA:

- Viewed Tip #6 (180 Days)

- Viewed Second Opt-Out (180 Days)

- Viewed Tip #5 (1 Day)

So in this case, my ad for Tip #6 wouldn't reach anyone who already viewed it, opted out, or viewed Tip #5 within the prior day. Once it had been more than 24 hours since they'd viewed Tip #5, though, they might see it.

The main reason I didn't do this was that I worried about people who went back and read a tip again. That would restart the clock for them, and they may have then been stuck in a perpetual waiting pattern.

EVERYDAY USAGE OF DURATION

Two of my favorite durations are 1 day and 30 days.

First, there is nothing more relevant than targeting people who visited my website today. I'll create Page Like ads that say, "You see this ad because you visited my website today. Want to see how I did it?" Or I'll create abandoned shopping cart ads for people who visited a product landing page and didn't convert, asking if they have questions about the product.

Those can be hugely effective, but they also target small audiences. So you can't expect to spend much on those groups.

The duration I use most frequently is 30 days. I'll promote a blog post, run a page likes campaign, promote an opt-in or promote a product, and one of the main groups I'll target is anyone who visited my website during the past 30 days.

Why 30 days? Well, it's just a nice, round number, I guess. It's the default duration that Facebook creates. It gives me a large number of people I can target. And I also assume that 30 days is recent enough where you should remember who I am.

For you, it depends on how much money you want to spend and how much traffic you get. I could very reasonably lower my duration to 14 days for the things I just described – and I might – because I get the traffic to support it and my budget isn't ridiculously high.

Personal preference!

TIP #7: BIDDING STRATEGIES

Something that many Facebook advertisers disagree on is bidding strategy. This is okay because in most cases there is no clear "right" or "wrong." You use whatever works best for you.

In this tip, I'm going to help you understand what the various bidding strategies are, when you might use them and how I used bidding for my experiment.

TYPES OF BIDDING

Optimized for Objective (formerly oCPM): When you select your objective on the campaign level, by default Facebook automatically chooses "Optimized for" your objective.

OPTIMIZATION & PRICING

Optimize For ⓘ   [Clicks to Website ▾]

Pricing ⓘ   ● **Get the most website clicks at the best price**
You will be charged for impressions
○ Set the amount a click to your website is worth to you ⓘ
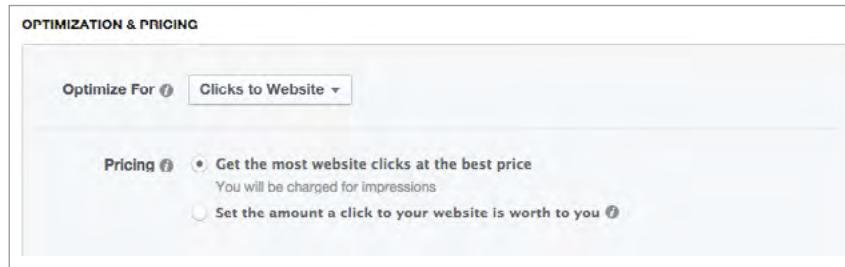
Examples are...

- Clicks to Website
- Website Conversions
- Page Post Engagement
- Page Likes
- Mobile App Installs
- Mobile App Engagement

- Desktop App Installs
- Desktop App Engagement
- Offer Claims
- Event Responses
- Video Views
- Local Awareness

When this is selected, Facebook will show your ad to select people within your chosen audience who are most likely to perform that action.

By default, you do not set a bid. You pay for impressions to people most likely to perform your desired action, and Facebook will bid whatever is necessary to reach them. As a result, CPM tends to be highest when using this, but that's usually also as a result of a higher action rate.

I've found that this method is most effective in almost all cases – particularly when targeting a larger audience. However, keep in mind that Facebook is selective about the people your ad is shown to within your audience, so if you desire to reach everyone targeted this is not the ideal bidding method.

Optimized for Impressions (CPM): Also known as Cost Per 1,000 Impressions. When this is selected, Facebook will show your ad to people within your target audience as many times as possible.
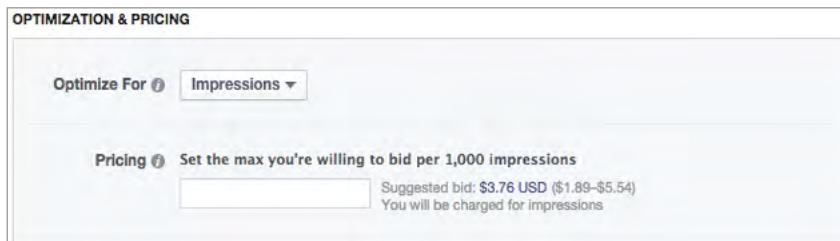
You will need to set a bid for the limit you are willing to pay to reach 1,000 people within that audience.

When this option is selected, Facebook no longer optimizes for a specific action. They are looking to show your ad to as many people as many times as they can within your budget.

As a result, I suggest that this be used when you know you have a highly refined audience – when you have a high confidence level that anyone reached with your ad will be likely to perform your desired action.

In other words, this tends to be best for small audiences, not broad ones. It can also be used for awareness, rather than wanting targeted users to perform an action.

Optimized for Clicks (CPC): Also known as Cost Per Click. When this is selected, Facebook will show your ad to people within your target audience most likely to click.
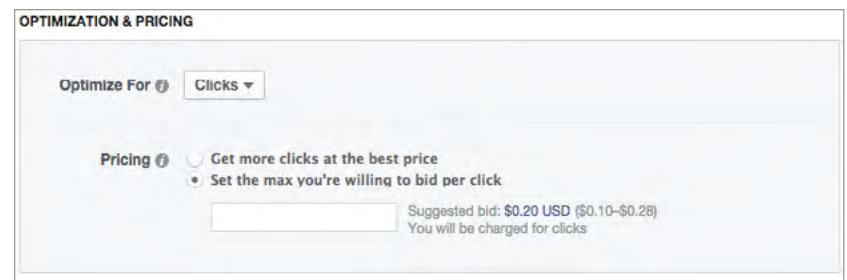
In this case, you will pay for the click rather than the impression.

You can either have Facebook "get more clicks at the best price" (Facebook will automatically bid what is necessary to reach people likely to click) or set a manual bid. When setting a manual bid, you will tell Facebook the maximum you are willing to spend per click on your ad.

This is a popular bidding method, but I believe many of those using it are not aware of the difference between a "click" and a "click to website." When using CPC, Facebook will show your ad to people most likely to click on it – but that could be any click at all, not necessarily a website click.

This bidding method could be worth using when looking for a combination between post engagement and awareness. It also can be worth using when running ads in a difficult industry where you otherwise waste money by paying for impressions.

If you want a very specific action, however, you're usually better off optimizing for that action.

Optimized for Daily Unique Reach: This method is similar to CPM, but with a twist. Facebook will show your ad to as many people within your target audience as possible, but no more than once in a day.
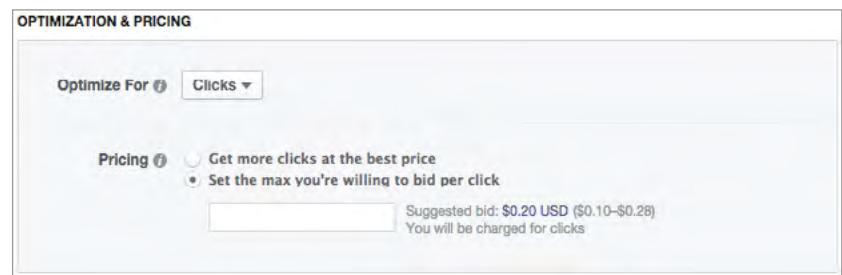
When using Daily Unique Reach, you will need to tell Facebook what reaching 1,000 people is worth to you. Approach this similarly to how you'd approach CPM, though you may want to bid a bit higher.

Similar to CPM, this is a method to consider when targeting small, very relevant groups, where you know that anyone who sees the ad is likely to engage. This method should be used, though, if frequency is a concern.

MY EXPERIMENT: THE FIRST AD

The bidding methods I used in my experiment differed whether it was my first ad (the invitation to participate) or an ad promoting one of my tips.

This is the ad I ran that invited people to participate in my experiment...

I initially targeted three main groups, though I eventually focused on the first two:

- Fans

- WCA 30 Days (non-fans)

- WCA 30 Days Lookalikes (no longer targeted)

In each case, we're looking at an audience of at least 50,000 people (in the case of the lookalikes, more than a million). As a result, I did not have high confidence that anyone within the Lookalikes audience who saw the ad would want to click and participate – particularly for the long-term.

I used the "Clicks to Website" campaign objective and I had Facebook automatically optimize to show my ads to people within my target audiences who were most likely to click my link.

MY EXPERIMENT: THE TIPS

While reaching everyone in my target audience wasn't desired for the first ad, that was not the case for the individual tips. I wanted to reach as many of the people who were participating as possible.

Note that the tips were targeted at people who read the preceding tip (or in the case of Tip #1, clicked the first ad). As a result, my audiences were very small – typically anywhere from 1,000 to 4,000 people (closer to 1,000 for most of the tips after Tip #2). I didn't want Facebook to optimize in this case. I wanted the ads to be shown to everyone in the target audience (if possible!).

As a result, I initially optimized for impressions (CPM). Of course, I also needed to bid high enough so that I outbid my competition since every user was important.

I had ad sets for each placement (more on that in a separate tip), and following were my bids:

- Desktop News Feed: $20

- Desktop Right Column: $10

- Mobile: $20

In each case, this was well over the suggested bid range.

Keep in mind, of course, that I was not spending these amounts overall per 1,000 people I was reaching. These were just my

maximum bids. Up through promotion of Tip #6, following were the CPMs I was paying to promote the tips of my experiment:

- Desktop News Feed: $9.48

- Desktop Right Column: $1.48

- Mobile: $9.63

Note that up until that point I was also using CPM. From Tip #7 going forward, I changed my bidding method…

MY EXPERIMENT: DAILY UNIQUE REACH

Midway through my experiment I decided to experiment with Daily Unique Reach. The reason for that is that frequency tended to be high overall since I was showing many different ads to people over a short period of time. This particularly impacted the sidebar.

Beginning with promotion of this tip, I started using Daily Unique Reach exclusively for three different ad sets (more on that in the next tip). This allowed me to reach people up to once per day per ad set. It still allowed me to reach as many people within my audience as possible (as was the case with CPM), but allowed me to drastically cut frequency and limit waste.

TIP #8: AD SET BY PLACEMENT

I'm a big believer in Facebook's auto-optimization. Give Facebook an objective, and let them bid accordingly to reach the right people in the right places to get that objective.

That applies to placement, too. I usually will create one ad set for all placements and allow Facebook to distribute impressions how they see fit – not necessarily evenly between desktop news feed, mobile and right column.

However, that's not always the best approach. I found that for my experiment in particular, where I chose to create a different ad set for each placement.

OPTIMIZATION AND VIEWING PERFORMANCE BY PLACEMENT

Let's say that you are looking to spend $10 per day to get clicks on your link. You are targeting a broad group of people (we'll say at least 50,000), so your primary goal isn't to reach everyone but to get as many of those link clicks as you can.

In this case, you should optimize for Clicks to Website. And given your low budget (you'll never get close to reaching all 50,000 of those people with $10 per day), there's no good reason to water down your results by splitting it up into three different ad sets.

Many (maybe most?) advertisers don't realize this, but if you create one ad set for all placements, you can still view performance by placement within your custom ad reports.

In the below example, I am promoting a post that drives traffic to my website at $.17 per website click...

Campaign Name ⓘ	Amount Spent ⓘ ▼	Website Clicks ⓘ	Cost per Website Click ⓘ
--	**$93.28** Total	**535** Total	**$0.17** Per Action
Facebook Ads Don't Have to Suck – (	$93.28	535	$0.17

When I created this campaign, I created two ad sets – one for fans and one for website visitors. In each ad set, I wanted to reach both the mobile and desktop news feed (no right column).

When you do it this way, Facebook will spend your money how they see fit by placement. They will not distribute your ads equally between placements. The priority will be effectiveness.

But you can see how your advertising is doing by placement by clicking "Breakdown" and selecting "Placement"...

Breakdown: None ▼ | Clear

DELIVERY
✓ None
Age
Gender
Age and Gender
Country
Placement
Placement and Device

ACTIONS
✓ None
Conversion Device
Destination
Video View Type

TIME
✓ None
Daily
Weekly
Biweekly
Monthly
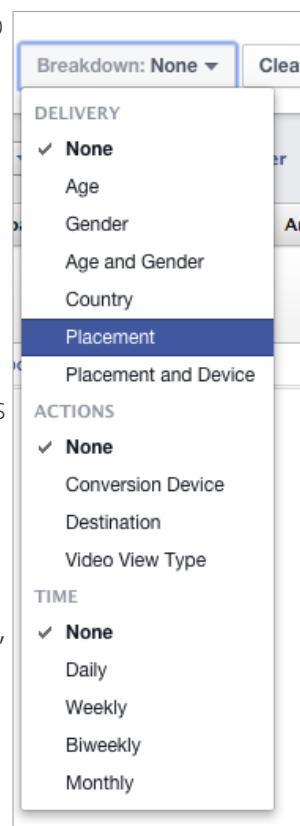
In this example, performance between desktop and mobile news feed is actually quite similar...

Amount Spent ⓘ ▼	Website Clicks ⓘ	Cost per Website Click ⓘ	Placement ⓘ
$93.28 Total	**535** Total	**$0.17** Per Action	--
$51.00	284	$0.18	News Feed on Desktop Computers
$42.15	251	$0.17	News Feed on Mobile Devices
$0.13	0	$0.00	External Ads on Mobile Devices

As a result, distribution was also quite similar. But that won't always be the case.

MY EXPERIMENT: AD SETS BY PLACEMENT

You'll recall in the last tip I talked about bidding strategies and that I had been using CPM and was going to experiment with Daily Unique Reach. That approach worked so well that I switched all of Tips ad sets to Daily Unique Reach.

Quick reminder of what Daily Unique Reach is. When you select this bidding option, Facebook will show your ad up to one time per day (by ad set). This is great for helping make sure your frequency doesn't get too high, and it also helps make sure you reach as many people within your target audience as possible (which was important in my experiment).

Let's assume, though, that I was only using one ad set. For the example of promoting Tip #8, that one ad set would target only those people who viewed Tip #7.

If I only used one ad set and used Daily Unique Reach, I know I wouldn't reach people more than once in a day. Considering things get missed – particularly on the sidebar – that was something that I didn't think would work.

But by creating three ad sets – one for each placement – and using Daily Unique Reach for all three, I was then able to reach each user **UP TO** three times per day (once per ad set), but no more.

That's precisely what I did...

Ad Set Name	Delivery
Viewed Tip #6 - Desktop News Feed	● Active
Viewed Tip #6 - Mobile	● Active
Viewed Tip #6 - Desktop Right Column	● Active

I even went back and changed all prior campaigns to consist of separate ad sets by placement and bidding using Daily Unique Reach.

EARLY RESULTS

This change was made midday on January 15 for promotion of Tip #7 and soon after for the other tips. Early on when this tip was initially published, there wasn't much to report. My initial plan was to only use Daily Unique Reach for desktop news feed and mobile, and left the right column on CPM. As a result, the changes were minimal.

Tip #4 started running on January 10. Before making the change to Daily Unique Reach, that campaign reached 1,055 people a total of 10,878 times for an average frequency of 10.31.

When I promoted Tip #7 for approximately the same amount of time but with Daily Unique Reach for desktop news feed and mobile, that campaign reached 760 people a total of 6,266 times for an average frequency of 8.24 (reach is always less for each new tip).

On the surface, that difference may not seem like much, and that's actually true. When promoting Tip #7 using Daily Unique Reach, I was getting an average frequency of 1.52 on mobile, 1.14 on desktop news feed and 9.06 on right column (which had been using CPM). When promoting Tip #4 using CPM only, I was getting a frequency of 1.85 for mobile, 1.60 for desktop news feed and 12.86 for right column.

It was clear much of my frequency was spent on people who simply didn't click the link within the first few days, so I needed to show it day after day – particularly within desktop news feed and mobile.

Note that for the promotion of all old tips in my experiment, I moved to Daily Unique Reach across the board. However, those weren't initially a good comparison here since results change significantly after the first few days they run (after which time the most active people who click will be excluded).

While this isn't a perfect science, let's look at the average frequency of Tip #4 by day, from the first day it ran (January 10) through January 18.

1/10: 3.42 (537 reached)
1/11: 5.23 (381 reached)
1/12: 6.51 (359 reached)
1/13: 7.12 (302 reached)
1/14: 9.06 (283 reached)
1/15: 6.82 (282 reached)
1/16: 3.90 (249 reached)
1/17: 1.60 (194 reached)
1/18: 1.66 (203 reached)

Recall that I implemented Daily Unique Reach on the 15th, though I believe it was very late in the day for everything other than Tip #7. Not sure how to explain the 3.90 frequency on 1/16 as you'd assume that would be under 3.00.

Note that the number reached should drop naturally, with or without Daily Unique Reach because I excluded people from targeting as soon as they clicked the link – and the most engaged would do so during those first couple of days.

LESSONS LEARNED

While this tip seems focused on Daily Unique Reach, creating separate ad sets was important to making it work. This allowed me to limit frequency while still reaching people more than once – and not wasting that single impression on the right column.

First, it seemed using Daily Unique Reach made very little impact within desktop news feed or mobile. Second, it's clear I was wasting money hitting the same people repeatedly who aren't clicking during the first two days.

After this tip, I began use Daily Unique Reach for the promotion of these tips from the start across all ad sets – desktop news feed, mobile and right column. The result was a significantly reduced frequency and waste while still doing as much as possible to reach people.

SHOULD YOU USE SEPARATE AD SETS BY PLACEMENT?

My experiment shows an example of how this was used, but I'm not convinced that creating separate ad sets by placement always makes sense.

Normally, you shouldn't care about how your money is distributed by placement. Normally, you shouldn't care whether you reach everyone within your target audience. Normally, you should use Facebook's optimization and trust it!

The main two times I'd consider this would be:

1. You have a high budget and doing so doesn't water down results

2. You use along with Daily Unique Reach to help reach a larger percentage of your audience

TIP #9: TRACKING FOR ALL CONVERSIONS

When running Facebook ads that lead to a conversion, it's a must that you use conversion tracking. Otherwise, you're often just guessing regarding the effectiveness of your advertising (and no, using Google Analytics isn't enough!).

However, you should also strongly consider using conversion tracking even when not running a campaign with the Website Conversions objective. I used conversion tracking for my experiment, and I want to give you an example of how I used it.

WEBSITE CONVERSIONS VS. CLICKS TO WEBSITE OBJECTIVES

When you create a campaign with the "Website Conversions" objective, Facebook requires that you provide an optimization pixel. This is the conversion you want Facebook to optimize for when running the campaign.

However, you shouldn't limit your use of conversion tracking to when you use the Website Conversions objective only. While a conversion may not have been your priority with a Clicks to Website campaign, for example, you should still monitor how many conversions resulted.

CONVERSION TRACKING WITH AD CREATE TOOL

First, many people reading this may be using the main ad create tool to design their campaigns. If you are, you won't be able to do what I did with my experiment.
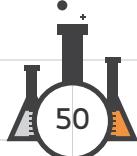
When creating an ad with the ad create tool, whether with the Website Conversions or Clicks to Website objective, you'll have an option of selecting a single tracking pixel.

This may be fine if you're driving people to a specific page to perform a very specific conversion. But what if you are sending people to a general blog post where one of any number of conversions might occur?

In that case, you have to pick a single conversion to track – of course, if you're using the ad create tool. In this case, that's pretty much worthless.

CONVERSION TRACKING WITH POWER EDITOR

Within Power Editor, of course, you do not have this restriction. If using the Website Conversions objective, you will need to provide both a single optimization pixel and one or several tracking pixels.

Even when your objective is simply clicks to website, you can track multiple conversions within Power Editor...

Note how the button is for "Use Existing Pixels" – PLURAL? Click that button...

You can select as many of these pixels as you want! I recommend you select at least all of your active pixels that received any activity during the past 24 hours.

SET CONVERSION VALUE

When you track pixels, it's also helpful to assign a conversion value so that you can get a better idea of the money coming in as a result of your advertising – even if that revenue wasn't the priority when running your ads.

You do this by making some tweaks within your conversion pixel. When you create your pixel, you'll notice two locations where you'll need to set the value.

By default, the conversion value is "0.00." You'll need to change that to whatever is relevant to the product you are selling.

If you have conversions that don't have a dollar value – you probably do – feel free to leave that at 0.00.

VIEWING CONVERSION RESULTS

It's not always easy getting to conversion results, particularly if you aren't optimizing for a website conversion. That's why you need to make sure you use the custom ad reports!

Click the "Customize Columns" buttons, and make sure you include the following:

- Website Clicks

- Website Conversions

- Conversion Value

You'll also want to select "Destination" from the Breakdown menu.

You may want to use the filters to focus on specific campaigns.
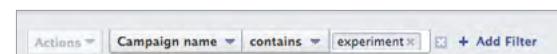
In the above example, I'll get results for any campaign that has the word "Experiment" in the title.

Finally, you'll need to be sure you have selected a date range that will capture all activity within the campaign.

Here's an example of results for one of my campaigns...

All Destinations		386	$1,388.00	322	5	59
9 Ways Ebook				322	0	0
FB Mastery Workshops: Ad Reports				0	1	0
Facebook Ads Experiment: Click to Participate!				0	0	0
Infographic Registration				0	0	25
Jon Loomer Digital				0	0	0
Newsletter Conversion Pixel				0	0	5
Power Editor Course Bundle				0	4	0
Power Editor Webinar Nov 2014				0	0	29

Note that not all destinations qualify as a conversion. But I can see that this particular campaign – though conversions were not my priority – led to the following conversions:

- 9 Ways Ebook - 322

- FB Mastery Workshops: Ad Reports - 1

- Infographic Registration - 25

- Newsletter Conversion Pixel - 5

- Power Editor Course Bundle - 4

- Power Editor Webinar Nov 2014 - 29

This campaign generated a total of 386 conversions for a value of $1,388. These are things most advertisers won't be tracking on this particular type of campaign.

PIXEL TRACKING FOR MY EXPERIMENT

For my experiment, I tracked the same pixels for every campaign.

- 9 Ways Ebook

- Newsletter Conversion Pixel

- Power Editor Course Bundle

- Power Hitters Club

There are probably a few others that I could have tracked, but these were the most likely conversions to occur. As of this moment, the experiment has generated more than 1,200 conversions even though no conversion was a focus of any of these ads.

TIP #10: THE ORGANIC DISTRIBUTION OF ADS

This experiment fascinated me for many reasons. But possibly the most fascinating was the organic distribution of ads.

When I started the experiment, the priority was to surface content to people who wanted to see it. The vehicle used for this was ads. I never considered the impact that could result – both positive and negative – from organic distribution.

VIEWING ORGANIC VS. PAID AND ACTIVITY

First, research for this is painful. Since content was distributed via ads only – not a post to my page – Facebook's Insights won't list these ads to break down organic and paid distribution. I had to get creative, and some data is left out.

When I receive a notification from my page on the desktop about activity on an ad, I'm redirected to the permalink for that ad. That way, I can take a closer look at total reach, organic reach, paid reach and see how people have engaged with the ad.
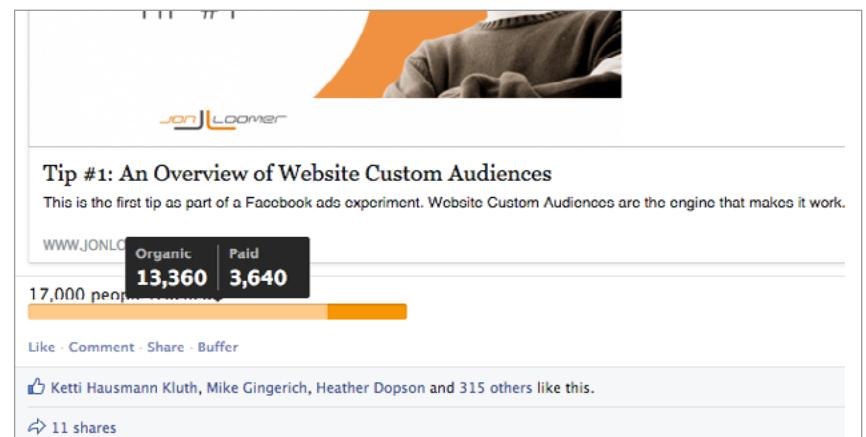
However, the desktop doesn't report on total number of likes, comments, shares and website clicks when viewing these permalinks. I can figure out the likes quickly and I could add up the comments (that would be a lot of work in some cases), but the shares shown here are only those who did so publicly.

Thankfully, the Pages iPad app provides more info. It provides an overview of all comments, likes and shares...
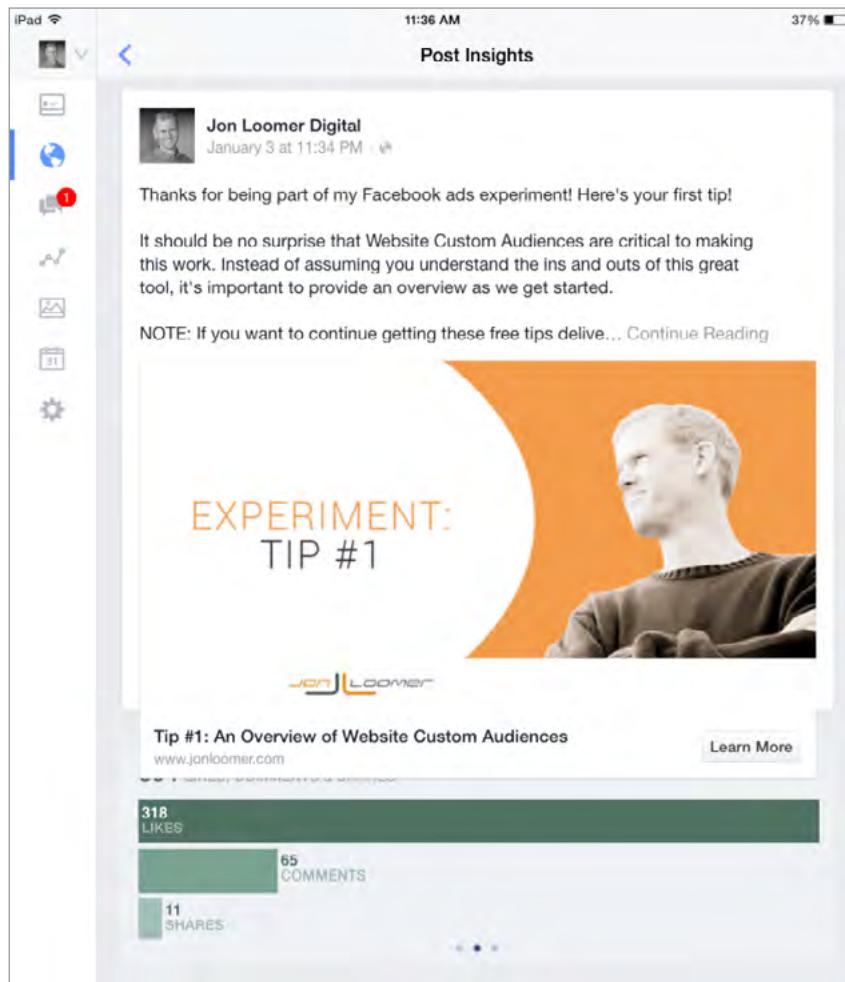
And it breaks down link clicks and other clicks...
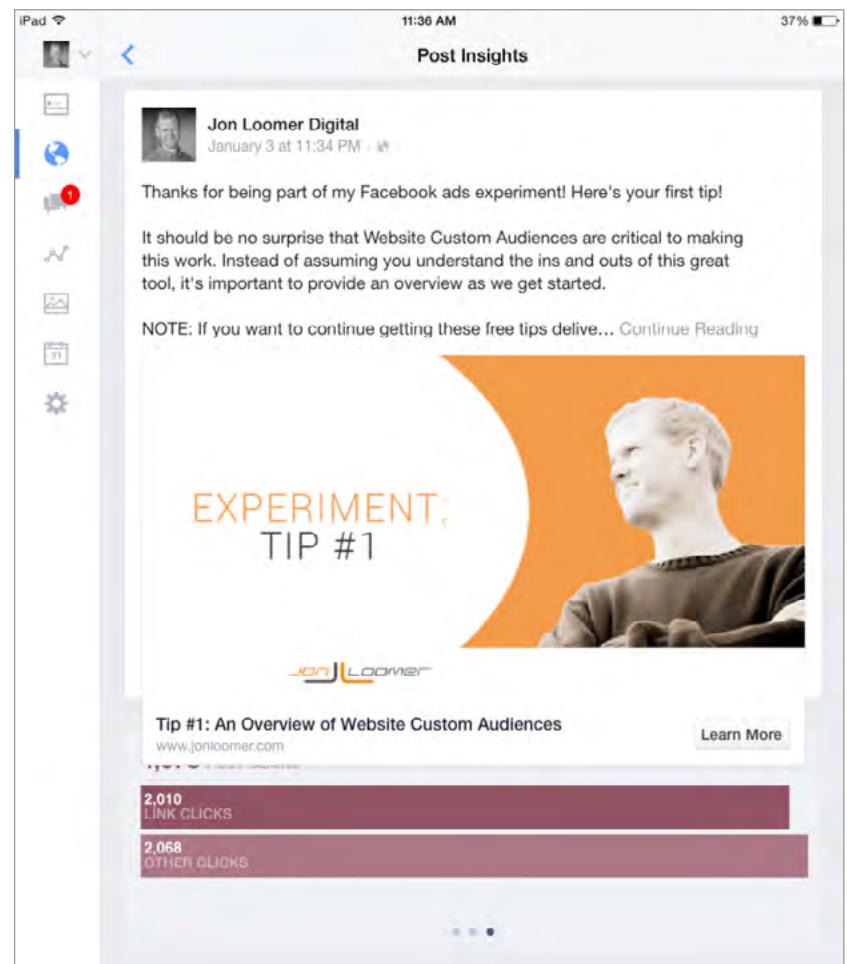
I was limited in the results I was able to pull. There's currently a bug in the Activity Log, so I was not able to view that. I was only able to view notifications from the past seven days. However, that still gave me enough data to look at 17 total ads.

I also am unable to accurately match up these ads to the info found in custom ad reports. Data must be updated at different rates, and it just ended up being too much of a hassle.

But that doesn't really matter. The main point of this tip is to help you understand what can happen when an ad that was intended to be only an ad gets distributed organically.

ORGANIC VS. PAID DISTRIBUTION BY TIP

Here's an overview of organic vs. paid distribution of ads through the first nine tips. Keep in mind that this is an incomplete list for the reasons described above.

- Tip 1 (Ad 1): 13,360 Organic vs. 3,640 Paid (78.6% Organic)

- Tip 1 (Ad 2): 360 Organic vs. 1,834 Paid (16.4% Organic)

- Tip 2 (Ad 1): 7,208 Organic vs. 1,628 Paid (81.6% Organic)

- Tip 2 (Ad 2): 1,006 Organic vs. 1,010 Paid (49.6% Organic)

- Tip 3 (Ad 1): 4,200 Organic vs. 1,312 Paid (76.2% Organic)

- Tip 3 (Ad 2): 315 Organic vs. 645 Paid (32.8% Organic)

- Tip 4 (Ad 1): 3,408 Organic vs. 956 Paid (78.1% Organic)

- Tip 4 (Ad 2): 768 Organic vs. 574 Paid (57.2% Organic)

- Tip 5 (Ad 1): 262 Organic vs. 364 Paid (41.9% Organic)

- Tip 5 (Ad 2): 258 Organic vs. 420 Paid (38.1% Organic)

- Tip 6 (Ad 1): 331 Organic vs. 212 Paid (61.0% Organic)

- Tip 6 (Ad 2): 80 Organic vs. 227 Paid (26.1% Organic)

- Tip 7 (Ad 1): 1,961 Organic vs. 961 Paid (67.1% Organic)

- Tip 8 (Ad 1): 2,416 Organic vs. 872 Paid (73.5% Organic)

- Tip 9 (Ad 1): 443 Organic vs. 230 Paid (65.8% Organic)

- Tip 9 (Ad 2): 212 Organic vs. 242 Paid (46.7% Organic)

- Tip 9 (Ad 3): 270 Organic vs. 385 Paid (41.2% Organic)

A couple of points are in order here...

First, just a reminder that this is an incomplete list. For each tip, there is data for at least one ad missing, sometimes more. So don't look into the variations of reach too much since an important ad may be missing (though the number participating will indeed drop with each tip).

Second, it's important to understand how Facebook now measures organic and paid reach. Let's say I reached you with an ad. You later saw that organically. Facebook only counts you as having seen it paid. As a result, I consider the organic reach numbers to be under reported – which makes it even more amazing!

Nine of these 17 ads had more organic than paid reach even though I published them only as ads (one was basically 50/50).

The average distribution was 70.4% organic. Of course, that's heavily weighted by the first ad for Tip 1 which received a ton of organic distribution. The median organic reach is 57.2%, which is still amazing!

I feel like I have to keep repeating this over and over because it's important to remember: These ads were only published as ads. The organic distribution was a bonus, yet they drove the majority of eyeballs.

WHAT DRIVES ORGANIC DISTRIBUTION?

The easy answer is that it's engagement. When someone comments, likes or shares it, others – who may not be part of the experiment – will see it.

However, what isn't clear is which actions drive the most organic distribution of ads. Let's take a look at post like rate, comment rate, share rate and link click rate...

Post Like Rate (Post Likes/Reach)

- Highest: Tip 9 Ad 3 - 3.5% (41.2% Organic Distribution)
- Lowest: Tip 6 Ad 1 - 0.9% (61.0% Organic Distribution)

Well, post like rate sure doesn't seem to matter. Tip 2 Ad 1 (which received 81.6% organic distribution) had a post like rate of 1.7% for reference, which is right in the middle.

Comment Rate (Comments/Reach)

- Highest: Tip 8 Ad 1 - .70% (73.5% Organic Distribution)

- Lowest: Tip 5 Ad 2 - .15% (38.1% Organic Distribution)

There could be a connection here. Although Tip 2 Ad 1 has a comment rate of .33%, which is again in the middle.

Share Rate (Shares/Reach)

- Highest: Tip 1 Ad 2 - .50% (16.4% Organic Distribution)

- Lowest: Tip 3 Ad 1 - 0% (76.2% Organic Distribution)

There are actually several ads that didn't receive a single share, but I focused on Tip 3 Ad 1 because that clearly didn't hurt organic distribution. Three others without a share received at least 50% organic distribution.

In other words, not a strong correlation.

Link Click Rate (Link Clicks/Reach)

- Highest: Tip 3 Ad 2 - 94.5% (32.8% Organic Distribution)

- Lowest: Tip 4 Ad 1 - 2.4% (78.1% Organic Distribution)

Now this is just insane. Website clicks clearly have no impact on organic distribution.

Something else to consider is that engagement rates may be higher for posts early in the campaign. In fact, I guarantee that they are. So that could be part of the reason those rates are low for the earlier tips – and could throw off my numbers.

Something else to think about that may be a major factor: When I replied to a comment on an ad, people routinely told me that they were seeing the ad organically.

It's not clear if a page's interaction with a post is weighted more heavily, but that is a very real possibility. And it's motivation to engage with ads!

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ORGANIC DISTRIBUTION

It's rare that this will be a problem, but organic distribution created some very real issues for this experiment. Keep in mind that I have very strict controls on this – I want to show specific ads to specific people and I want to exclude specific people as well.

When organic distribution is over 50%, some chaos can ensue. And that happened.

People would repeatedly tell me that they were seeing an ad multiple times even though they had already read that tip – something that should have excluded them. In all likelihood, this was due to organic distribution.

People would tell me that they opted out of the experiment but were still seeing the ads. This is also likely due to organic distribution.

People would tell me that they were seeing tips out of order. Very likely due to organic distribution.

And finally, there was the issue of the occasional troll. This was rare – particularly within the tips themselves – but it will happen due to organic distribution.

LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, I learned several things here.

First, it's very difficult to put tight controls on who sees your ads. While you will pay to reach the right people, organic distribution will throw that off.

Second, while the jury is still out on this, I'm convinced that one of the most important contributing factors to organic distribution of an ad was my participation in the comment thread. If you want to reach more people – whether it's an ad or an organic post – engage more with users in that post!
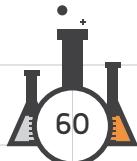
TIP #11: WCA VS. EMAIL CUSTOM AUDIENCES

When I started my experiment, I had a general idea regarding how it would be pulled off, but it was definitely fluid. I expected my approach to change, and it did. Several times.

All along, the goal was to keep this going for a while with the intention of having a small audience that makes it to the end. Initially, I planned on using email custom audiences to help limit that final group.

I was still going to use Website Custom Audiences as the engine of this experiment. But once people made it to a particular step, I was going to require people to provide an email address to continue.

After careful consideration, I abandoned this approach. The reason can be found within the differences between WCAs and email custom audiences – in particular the strengths and weaknesses of both.

WEBSITE CUSTOM AUDIENCES

Defined

Website Custom Audiences allow advertisers to remarket to people who have visited their website before – either targeting all website visitors generally or those who visited specific pages of the site.

These ads appear on Facebook (or within partner mobile apps using Facebook Audience Network) and can reach those who have visited the advertiser's website within the past one to 180 days.
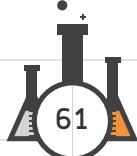
Strengths

First, these audiences are updated dynamically – in real time as users visit the site. An ad can be served immediately upon leaving your site and visiting Facebook. No updating is needed as users are constantly added and removed from the audience based on rules the advertiser created.

Second, targeting is based on browsing activity and not reliant on matching up an account to a Facebook profile, which isn't 100% reliable.

Finally, the amount of targeting that can be done based on specific pages visited – without requiring a purchase or opt-in – can result in incredibly relevant advertising.

Weaknesses

First, users won't exist within the audience forever. Since there is a maximum duration of 180 days, visitors need to remain engaged to continue to exist within the audience.

Second, since WCAs work with the help of a pixel, reliability can be hurt by clearing or blocking cookies.

EMAIL CUSTOM AUDIENCES

Defined

Advertisers can upload a CSV file of customers to Facebook to create an audience for targeting purposes. In this case, advertisers can create Facebook ads that target those on their email list.

Strengths

First, create very relevant ads based on the products a customer has bought or opt-in they have requested.

Second, unlike a WCA, this audience does not have a limited duration. With no expiration date, you can continue targeting a user on Facebook as long as they remain on your email list.

Weaknesses

First, you are limited only to those who have provided an email address (or phone number or Facebook UID, depending on the Custom Audience). This limits the size of the audience, unlike a WCA.

Second, advertisers can expect anywhere from 30-70% of email addresses from their list to be matched up to actual Facebook users. Keep in mind that the email address a user provides to you when they purchase a product or opt-in to something is not always the same as the email address they associate with their Facebook profile. As a result, you won't be able to target many of the people on your list.

Third, there's a matter of flexibility. While WCAs offer a great deal of flexibility, email Custom Audiences do not. Example: I can easily surface more content to people dynamically based on content they have read recently using WCAs. I need an email address for each step using email Custom Audiences.

Finally, an email Custom Audience is not updated dynamically (at least without a third party tool). To remain current, it needs to be uploaded every few days.

WHY I ABANDONED EMAIL CUSTOM AUDIENCES FOR THIS EXPERIMENT

As I said earlier, I considered requiring an email address late in the experiment to continue getting ads surfaced to you. The thought was to further limit the audience to make it more of an accomplishment to finish the experiment.

There is a very major flaw in this approach, per the weaknesses mentioned above. People are opting in to get this content – many are very excited to do so! – and I'm able to serve a very large percentage of those who want that content using WCAs.

But the problem is that when they provide an email address, the likelihood of me reaching them drops significantly. They may provide an invalid email address by mistake or they may provide an address that is different from that on their Facebook profile.

As a result, their time within the experiment would come to an end, and they would not be happy!

WHY WCAS AREN'T PERFECT FOR THIS EXPERIMENT

I love WCAs. I think they are as close to perfect as we can get. But there are a couple of issues here.

First, whether I use WCAs or anything else, I can't guarantee I'm going to reach everyone. I've gotten creative to the point where I think I reach most people, but it's not perfect.

Second, some people never get the ads served to them, likely due to technical hurdles. It's not 100% clear why this happens, but it is often very likely due to blocking or clearing cookies.

Finally, there is a matter of expectation. Once you read Tip #1, you should see Tip #2. The problem is that WCAs do not control who sees content organically, and as I stated in the last tip, more people are seeing content organically than paid. As a result, much of this content is served out of order and that results in quite a bit of confusion!

TIP #12: REACH, ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRITION OVER TIME

I was very curious about how this experiment would play out. In particular, how many of those who opted in to the experiment would last until the end?

While the following data isn't complete, I wanted to provide an overview of what I saw through 11 tips. This can provide an inside look at user commitment and fatigue.

TOTAL REACHED AND WEBSITE CLICKS
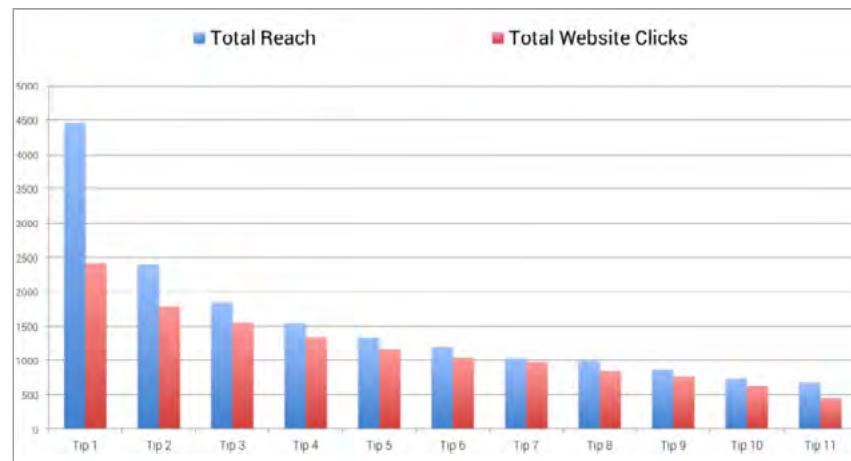
One of the main goals of this experiment was to see how much participation would drop off over time. So I would need to have enough tips to intentionally fatigue some in the group.

As you can see in the chart above, there were about 4,500 people who were interested enough to participate in the experiment. Those 4,500 or so people were those who initially clicked my first invitation ad – or the link from my blog post about the experiment.

But were they excited to participate? It would look like only half were all that excited. The rest can probably be classified as "curious" since fewer than 2,500 of those initially targeted for Tip #1 actually clicked the link.

That first tip did the best job of separating the curious from the engaged. I wasted more money serving ads on that tip than any other since there's a large group who had no plans to click (I stopped serving them ads after 14 days since the initial opt-in). On the flip side, the vast majority of those served the other tips ended up clicking (as can be noticed by the similarities in bar size for reach vs. clicked).

Let's look at that in a different way...

PERCENTAGE CLICKED
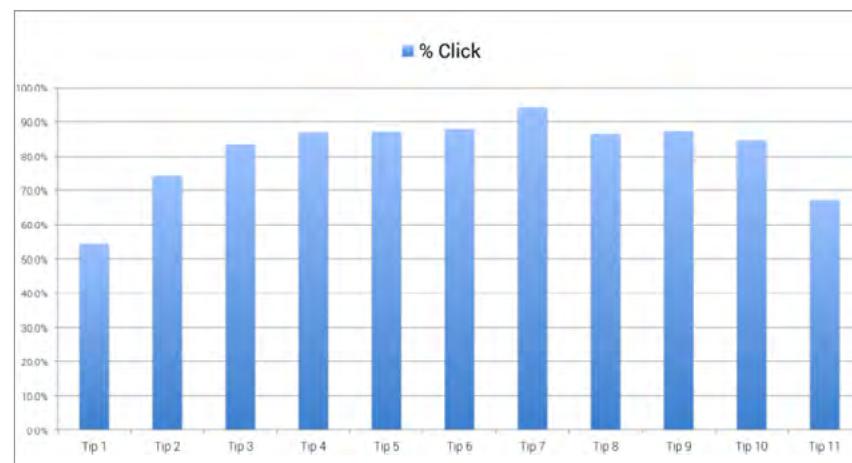
As you can see, just over 50% of those who were served Tip #1 clicked on it. That's kind of ridiculous since it's ran for more than a month. Lots of waste there.

But more than 74% of those served Tip #2 clicked it, and from that point forward more than 80% of those served any tip other than Tip #11 clicked. In fact, an astounding 94% of those who were served Tip #7 ended up clicking it.

Note that this doesn't mean that those who served the ad immediately clicked it. I'm instead looking at total website clicks over total reached – so many of these people were shown their ads multiple times. This also doesn't include website clicks on ads served organically (a phenomenon covered previously).

I see very little fatigue here. You may say that Tip #11 is evidence of fatigue, but the stats I'm showing here cover only two days of activity. Those results are not complete, and I expect that bar to continue to grow for a few more days.

Instead, we are seeing natural attrition. We lost about 45% of the audience with the first tip and an additional 26% for the next. After that I lost anywhere from 6-17% per tip. So over time, the audience did continue to shrink, but not at the same rate as it did in the beginning.

That leads us here...

PERCENTAGE REACHED
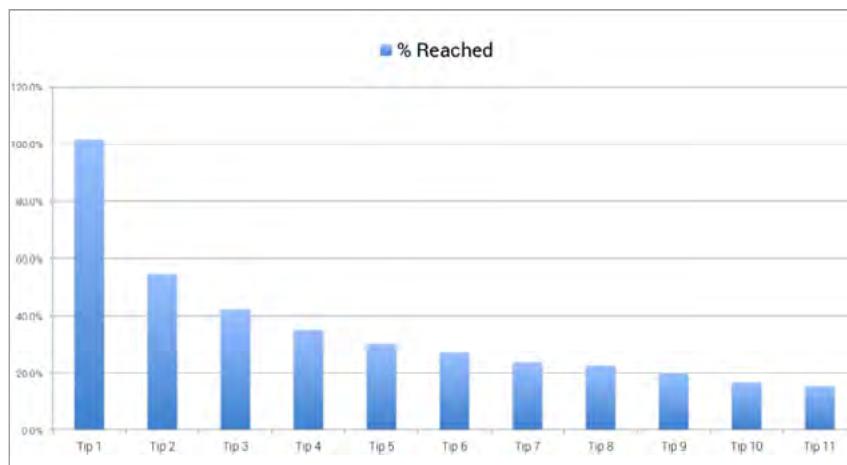
I want to be clear about what this chart represents. While I know there were some complaints from participants saying that they aren't seeing the ads, the percentage of those who should see a given tip (Reach vs. Previous Tip Clicked) is close to 100% for every tip. That's not what we're looking at here.

Instead, we're looking at that natural attrition that I referred to above. Of the initial group of about 4,500 people who wanted to participate, how many people were reached for each tip? This gives us an idea of the size of our audience at each stage compared to the beginning pool.

The number reached for Tip #1 was actually slightly over 100% because of my blog post about the experiment. But as you can see, it dropped off quickly from Tip #1 to Tip #2.

Things did level off – and the experiment isn't complete heading into Tip #12 – but I was reaching a number of people that was between 15-20% of the initial participant pool.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

I think this is just interesting data in general. It means a lot of things and nothing at the same time. But a few things strike me...

First, there is something to be said here about putting too much value on an impulse action. Yes, I got 4,500 people to agree to participate in my experiment. However, nearly half of them never clicked on a single tip and only about 40% made it beyond Tip 2.

We get excited about initial actions. Some marketers use tricks and shady practices to get users into their funnel. But some of those people acted impulsively and hold very little value.

What I see above is that I have a core of 600-1,000 really valuable prospects. I may even use this group for future targeting – or for the creation of Lookalike Audiences.

Second, it appears that once you shave away the "I'm not really that interested after all" group, what's left is a group that is pretty darn committed and loyal. In fact, I'd say that fatigue was non-existent here for the most part – and that will be limited if you continue to provide value.

And that's the underlying lesson here. Use ads in unique and exciting ways to surface content that the target audience values. When you do that, some pretty amazing things can happen.

THE EXPERIMENT: WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

After Tip #12, my experiment effectively ended. Well, at least I was done creating tips.

The truth is that the experiment lived on. I created another ad inviting those who made it through all 12 tips to a free webinar...
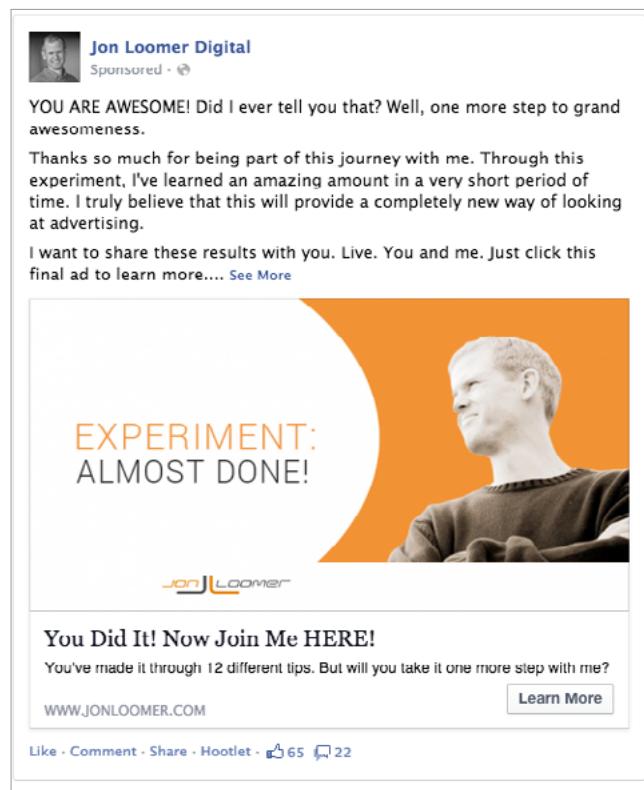
The results – as I write this – have been insane.

That ad targeted the 750 or so people who had clicked the ad for Tip #12. The results so far:

- Reach: 740

- Website Clicks: 762

- Webinar Registrations: 634

- Total Spend: $13.64

That's right. There were more clicks than people reached with the ad. That was undoubtedly due to people clicking it multiple times.

These two things underscore the bottom line here:

- Cost Per Website Click: $.018

- Cost Per Registration: $.022

That's right. Approximately $.02 for either a website click or a registration. That's *TWO CENTS!*

I typically get around $.15 per website click on a popular blog post. But driving to an opt-in page? Often closer to $.50. I know it can be even tougher for many industries.

When it comes to getting an email address, I expect to spend in the neighborhood of $1. You can expect to spend more in most industries.

But we're talking two cents here. I can typically expect to spend $634 to fill that webinar. Instead, I spent less than $14.

Incredible.

That webinar was the first "free gift" offered in exchange for participating in my experiment. But those who made it through were also given a special deal for my private membership, the Power Hitters Club.

Those who made it through are "my people." They are clearly passionate about Facebook ads. So they are precisely the kind of people I want in my group!

If you didn't participate in this experiment, I will also be offering a special webinar and package for those curious about what I discovered and instructions on how you can do something similar. As someone who subscribed to this ebook, you'll be hearing more soon!

Thanks for your interest in my experiment! Let's continue thinking creatively in the never-ending quest to create ads that don't suck!