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How Brands Should Adapt to Facebook's News Feed Refresh

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., March 8, 2013 - Facebook's announcement of their News Feed redesign yesterday represents an important milestone in their product evolution and headlines a major shift in social, as user experiences have become decidedly more visual and mobile-centric. Pinterest and Instagram have been the poster children of this trend, and Facebook recently declared themselves a mobile-first company with over 680 million monthly active users accessing the platform via mobile devices. Facebook's News Feed update is a step towards better aligning with how people share and consume content, and presents advertisers with an opportunity to take advantage, or get left behind. Here is a summary of the major changes:

- **Richer presentation of content:** In addition to removing much of the "clutter" on the homepage, designers have made images and video larger so they appear more vivid and easier to browse.
- **Content specific feeds:** The biggest change comes in the form of feed options: All Friends, Photos, Music, and Following (an option to view only the news from Pages you like and people you follow).
- **Multi-platform consistency:** The News Feed design is now ubiquitous across mobile, tablet, and desktop allowing users to jump to the top when a new story is loaded and access the left-hand menu from anywhere on the site.

Facebook's often stated mission is to develop better services for its users. With yesterday's refresh, advertisers should adapt their Facebook strategies to prioritize News Feed distribution and virality through rich content that is likely to be consumed and shared. Ampush coined the term Referred Intent to describe the concept of channeling the authentic voice and actions of Facebook users, both of which create stories that can be amplified with paid media to ignite word-of-mouth virality at scale.

To generate Referred Intent, advertisers have a suite of available options that can unlock News Feed access. Rich Page Post content such as photos and video can generate organic and paid impressions, while user engagement with posts and Open Graph applications create organic stories that can also be sponsored. Since users now have content-specific feeds to focus on music, photos, or friend activity, it is critical for brands to build fan connections in order to generate relevant stories and avoid being filtered out. As the redesigned News Feed rolls out in the coming weeks, advertisers who have already been doing this will have a head start over the those who have not.

In this new, highly visual, mobile-centric world of News Feed, we've outlined the following steps brands should be taking to position themselves for success on Facebook:

- Recognize the importance of fan connections and begin to implement campaigns in order to gain more of them. Likes provide an important social currency for advertisers to build a meaningful presence within News Feed, mobile, and eventually Graph Search. Likes are a major indicator for Facebook's EdgeRank and will be a major component of any recommendation engines being developed for Graph Search.
- Strictly adhere to Facebook's image policy, which dictates that all ads served in News Feed should contain no more than 20% text. Not only will they need to follow this in order to get an ad published, but it will help to make these photos more mobile-friendly and engaging.
- Educate their digital marketers on News Feed best practices by learning what kinds of content work most effectively and how users prefer to engage with them. Facebook has made this fairly easy through their Page Insights tool which allows admins to track the engagements of every post.
- Architect a layered, portfolio-based approach to their Facebook strategy which leverages their existing and growing fan base through rich Page Post content (e.g., video, photos, links), Likes, and, if applicable, integrating Open Graph into their domains and apps.
- Maintain a disciplined, real-time analytics framework for sponsored and earned promotion that scales in order to optimize audience targeting and maximize ROI.
- Promote their most engaging Page Posts through paid Ads and Sponsored Stories.
- Strategize their online content and experience around mobile by using high-quality images and simple, gesture-based navigation for distracted consumers who will be walking, talking, and commuting as they consume online content.

The important thing to remember is that as technology evolves, the basics still remain the same. People do business with people they know, trust, and like. Advertising on Facebook should be seen as an extension of that concept because Facebook was intended to extend our social behaviors online, and those habits will never change.

About Ampush:

Ampush is a social technology company helping enterprises unlock the viral potential of Facebook ads. An early member of Facebook's Preferred Marketing Developer (PMD) Program, our fully managed solutions deliver advertising performance by amplifying the power of authentic social recommendations with paid media. We have helped numerous Fortune 500 brands and performance advertisers achieve scale and efficiency across objectives ranging from product awareness, engagement, and customer acquisition. Ampush is based in San Francisco with offices in Chicago and New York.