

Brainlabs Guide to

Gaining the ***Social Edge***

• In partnership with  Meta

Introduction

Social media has evolved. And paid social advertising has undergone a major transformation. User behaviour has shifted dramatically, with the rise of vertical video and sound-on consumption, meanwhile ad platforms have become increasingly sophisticated, offering advanced targeting capabilities and automated campaign delivery.

At Brainlabs, testing and learning is in our DNA. We've been rigorously testing every facet of paid social as these shifts unfold, and capturing the insights in Hippocampus, our proprietary testing database. The result? A clear understanding of the strategies that drive high-performing campaigns. In this guide, we'll spotlight key takeaways from our findings, to equip you with the insights needed to gain the social edge!

Contents

- 04 Rethink your campaign setup
- 05 Go beyond in-market optimisation
- 06 Diversify your creative and messaging
- 07 Teach the platforms what success looks like for your business
- 08 In Summary



Rethink your campaign setup

Traditionally, paid social advertisers have relied heavily on hyper-granular targeting to reach specific audience segments. While this approach has its place in certain scenarios, it limits the platform's ability to learn and optimise at scale—resulting in weaker intent-based ad serving and reduced campaign performance overall.

Success today, and in the long term, relies on maximising audience liquidity. This allows the platform greater freedom to serve content to any user who is likely to engage and drive your selected objective.

Through Hippocampus, we've tested a number of approaches aligned with this theory, with two that consistently stand out when it comes to campaign structures.



What the data tell us



Consolidate your audiences

Combining audience targets into fewer, larger ad sets has consistently driven stronger performance towards achieving a campaign's target objective.

37%
Uplift



Leverage AI-generated campaign types

Using Meta's Advantage+ for Shopping Campaigns, where targeting is fully dictated by the platform, has been shown to increase efficiencies by up to 66% on average.

66%
Uplift



Go beyond in-market optimisation

We rely on bid strategies aligned with our core goals—be it reach, consideration, or conversion. These campaign objectives dictate not only who sees our ads, but also how much we pay for them. More intent-focused goals can drive up costs, as algorithms prioritise serving the highest intent audiences.

While advertisers may have varying perspectives on the role of social media in their marketing ecosystem, the reality is that only a portion of your target audience is actively in-market at any given moment and social exists at the intersection of performance and brand. The vast user base allows us to target activity towards users with intent today and potential for intent tomorrow.

Our testing has revealed that the most effective use of social is across the funnel.



What the data tell us



Target the full funnel

By layering reach-optimised activities onto traditionally performance-focused campaigns, we can achieve better incremental sales in the short term while simultaneously generating a higher volume of long-term intent signals. In simple terms, you will drive a greater portion of your target outcomes at the same cost.

11%

Incremental results



Diversify your creative & messaging

Today, users expect hyper-personalised, algorithmically suggested content. Therefore, ad platforms leverage the specific engagement from the audience first exposed to each creative variant, to determine who receives that variant, and how much you'll pay to serve it.

To maximise both exposure and recall of ad content, advertisers should shift away from creating a singular creative concept that is cutdown and adapted for different placements. Instead, focus on building an always-on collection of connected yet distinct creatives and messages that address every nuance of your target audience.

Our findings support this approach, proving that increasing the distinctiveness of creative leads to greater incremental lifts in long-term conversion signals and improved in-platform metrics.



What the data tell us



Collaborate with content creators

Incorporating influencer activity alongside traditional branded assets can yield 25% more of your target objective without increasing spend.

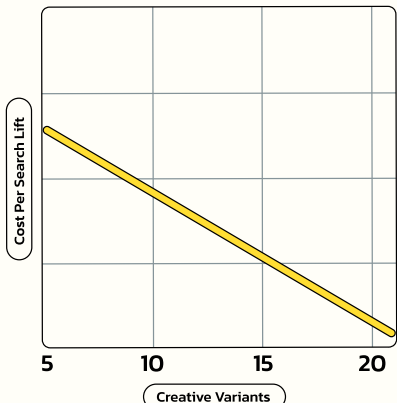
25%
Lift in results



Using 10 or more creative variants

Expanding your creative variation to include 10 or more distinct assets can significantly boost brand exploration.

3.7x
Search lift growth



Teach platforms what success looks like for your business

We've talked a lot about how platforms are in the driving seat when it comes to ad serving, and while they might be the ones navigating the route, you need to be in control of setting the direction. What we mean by this is: while ad platforms might be in control of serving your ads, you need to set the course for what success means to your business.

To achieve high-performance results, it's essential to feed the right signals into the platform. This begins with ensuring Pixel and Conversion APIs are correctly set up to track user behaviour and measure campaign effectiveness.

When Conversion APIs are integrated, the resulting growth in sales volume helps train the platform's bidding algorithms to better understand your target on-site objectives, making it more efficient at driving results.

But accurately tracking user actions on your site is just the starting point. The Conversions API also enables you to provide additional business context to your algorithms, such as weighting your conversion by lifetime value or by increasing the value of sales in regions where you're looking to gain market share.



What the data tell us



Integration of Conversions API

Implementation of Conversions API drove an average of a 30% lift in conversions across our clients.

30%
Lift



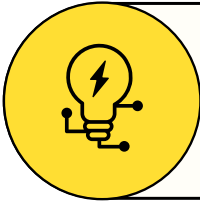


In Summary

With the rate of change that social platforms experience, the only way to get the edge in paid social is through continuous testing. Throughout this guide, we've laid out just a few of the insights from our testing over the last year that we utilise daily to drive incremental results for our clients.

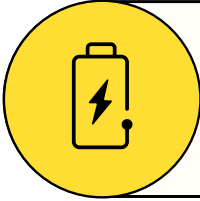
Ultimately, success comes from adopting campaign structures that empower platforms to optimise across your target audience, feeding those algorithms a breadth of creative that ensures the algorithm can adequately form connections between individuals in your audience to content they engage with, and guiding the algorithms to ensure they're finding those connections between audience and content that will drive value for your business.





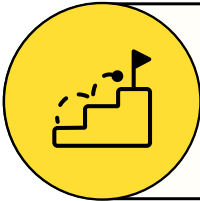
Empower

Empower the algorithms to test and learn across your entire target audience.



Fuel

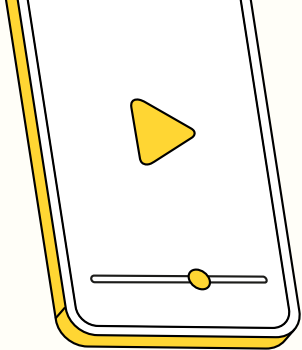
Fuel this learning with creative variations.



Guide

Guide the algorithms to what actual success looks like for you.





Insights provided by:

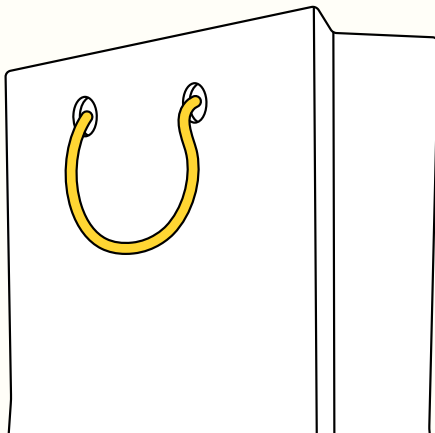


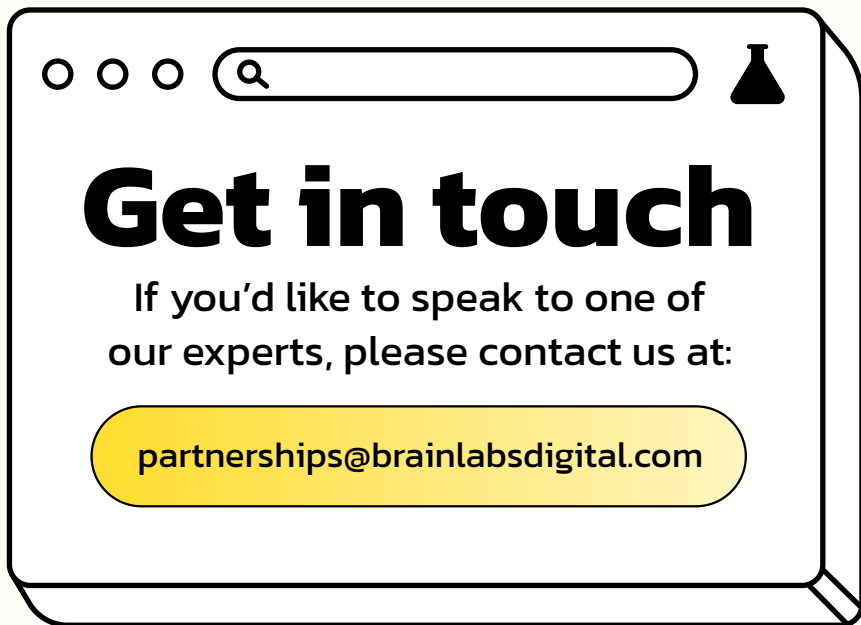
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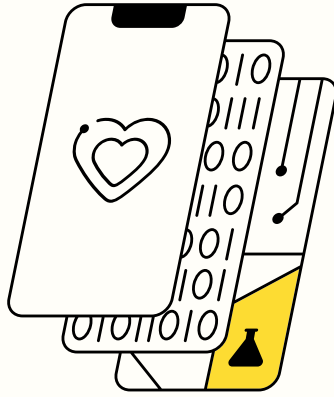
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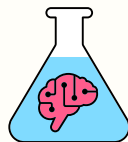






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