How to build the perfect TikTok ad campaign, according to TikTok

Article

The best ad practices for Facebook, Snapchat, or even Instagram Reels won't convert to TikTok, which has its own ad creation tools, bidding process, and attribution metrics. We've analyzed TikTok's new Web Auction Best Practices Guide and pulled out the most important advice for advertisers.

Use a nurtured account strategy.

- A nurtured account strategy is TikTok's name for focusing on upper-funnel conversions and moving down the funnel.

- TikTok advised using one ad account per region (TikTok doesn't define what it means by region, but we interpret this as by language or by continent) and using it to create all campaigns so everything is hosted under one profile.

Set up campaigns for success.

- Each campaign should include three to five ad groups, TikTok said. ad groups define placement, creative type, audience, budget, schedule, and bidding method for a campaign.

- The guide suggested using campaign budget optimization—which optimizes budget at the campaign level rather than the ad group level—when working with more than two ad groups that have different goals.

- It also suggested operating with a daily budget instead of a lifetime budget for each campaign.

- After campaigns are set up, advertisers should allow one to two days to observe KPIs before scaling, TikTok noted.

Evaluate bidding strategy. TikTok supports two recommended strategies:

- Maximum delivery is spend-based bidding, which is useful for achieving volume goals.

- Cost cap is goal-based bidding, which is useful for upper-funnel advertising. Cost cap is beneficial when cost per action (CPA) is more important than the number of conversions.

Take advantage of the learning phase.

- TikTok's first ad delivery stage is a learning phase. Its tech targets different consumers to determine the most relevant audience.

- The learning phase ends when ad groups achieve 50 conversions.

- TikTok advised using 20% or less of a campaign's budget during this phase and avoiding changes to budget, bidding, targeting, or creative assets. (Major changes down the road can also retrigger the learning phase.)

- Ad groups may struggle to exit the learning phase if targeting is too narrow. TikTok suggested avoiding narrow targeting unless it makes sense for a specific need, such as reaching certain

ZIP codes.

Put your best creative forward.

- Each ad group should contain three to five creative assets. Too many will result in a few overperforming and may cause ad fatigue.

- Videos should not be below 720p, according to TikTok. They should be vertical, include sound, and be between 21 and 34 seconds.

Optimize ad content.

- TikTok suggested varying ad groups to compare performance of creative.

- It also emphasized the importance of partnering with creators for ad campaigns.

- And TikTok suggested editing videos, either with its own CapCut software or with a third-party software or agency.

Avoid ad fatigue.

- Ad fatigue happens when ads have a high frequency but low reach.

- TikTok offers a fatigue index, which measures daily changes in CPA, reach, and performance. An index of 0.6 or above suggests ad fatigue.

- Counter fatigue by refreshing ad creative, even if that just means updating captions.

- Expanding audience targeting can also alleviate fatigue by showing the ad to new users.

Evaluate your attribution and measurement strategies.

- TikTok emphasized a holistic attribution strategy that analyzes clickthrough attribution (i.e., when an ad gets clicked) and view-through attribution (i.e., when an ad is viewed but not clicked).

- For further measurement, TikTok suggested using post-purchase surveys and conversion lift studies, which can analyze how an ad performs compared with a campaign's goals and how upper-funnel content performs compared with lower-funnel content.

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