

Meeting Patients at their Time of Need: Facebook Targeted Ads for Urgent Care



We've all browsed products and services online, then began noticing advertisements for those same things, or something similar, suddenly pop up all over our Facebook page. Like children who discover that the moon is "following" them, those ads make you feel like they're stalking you across the web, right?

Relax, you're not being cyber-spied on. Those ads that seem to read your mind are in fact Facebook targeted ads, and they're quickly changing the way consumers and companies interact in today's digital marketing landscape. So if your urgent care has a Facebook page – and it should – it can utilize those same targeted ads to drive awareness of your services right when your potential patients are searching for them – even if they're searching off the platform.

Interest-based Advertising

If you think Facebook users don't click ads, you're definitely mistaken. Last year alone, Facebook hauled in \$27 billion dollars in total revenue, with several billion of that coming from ad revenue alone. Advertisers are fully aware that Facebook's billion-plus active daily users are clicking those ads, which is why they have no problem allocating marketing dollars to reach that huge, engaged market.

But how does Facebook know what you're searching for when you're not using the platform? The social media giant (along with many other companies) uses what's called online behavioral or interested-based advertising to gather information about your visits to different websites, helping them to predict your preferences and show you relevant ads. Facebook gathers this information through several channels, including:

Your browser history

Tracked information from websites that are part of Facebook's advertiser's network

Websites and apps that display Facebook "Like" and "Share" buttons (whether you click them or not)

Indeed, we're all leaving digital footprints across the Web. And Facebook is using them to track our online behavior towards laser-focused targeting to show us the products and services we're interested in.

Creating an Urgent Care Facebook Campaign

When it comes to digital marketing targeting tools, Facebook has some of the most powerful of any online advertising program. Not only can the platform target the information on your profile, including interests and likes, but it will serve up ads based on your activities across all your devices. So how can urgent care use these tools to drive patient acquisition, engagement, and loyalty? Through creating ad campaigns.

Campaigns can have a variety of objectives, such as driving website traffic, generating leads, or creating brand awareness. Through Facebook's robust Ads Create Tool, you can browse and choose from the many targeting options available. The tool allows you to customize your campaign to fit your objectives and marketing budget, while delivering relevant and timely messages to your target audience. Facebook calls this called Audience Segmentation, through which you target users based on factors like:

Location

Demographics

Interests

Behaviors

Because the Ads Create Tool has so many options and variables to play with, it may take some planning to customize and fine-tune your campaign. For users who get overwhelmed, Facebook provides several Help tools and video tutorials to guide you along the way.

Facebook Ad Targeting At Work

If you begin searching online for, say, a new TV, rest assured that it won't be long before Facebook begins showing you ads for TV's, electronic brands, and accessories (like speakers). It's Facebook's ad targeting at work, and it can work the same way for urgent care. For example, when folks in the surrounding community do web searches using keywords such as flu shot, sports physicals, ear infection, sprained ankle, diabetes management, or STD treatment, their Facebook can serve up ads for your urgent care center. Likewise, if people search for terms "urgent care in Boston," or "walk-in clinic within 5 miles" there's a good chance an ad for your center will appear in their News Feed. With Facebook's ad targeting tools, you can define just about any variable imaginable, including how much you want to spend per campaign.

Conclusion

There's a reason marketers are shelling out billions of dollars annually to advertise on Facebook; it's where their customers are, and those customers are highly engaged. The urgent care patients you want are there as well, so it behooves operators to learn about Facebook targeting advertising, and start leveraging the massive power of social media to drive awareness of your center. Not only can it effectively target web users who are searching for your services, but a properly executed campaign can realize a substantial ROI in the way of likes, shares, foot traffic, and new patients.

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