

How to Get a Client to Buy Digital Advertising From You For the First Time: 5 Steps to Success

For many small businesses, digital advertising is new territory. Advertisers tend to stick with their tried-and-true marketing mix, whether that's TV and radio or postcards and billboards. They know that digital advertising exists, but for whatever reason it has never seemed right for them.

It's time for that to change. Digital advertising can benefit nearly any business, delivering immediate results to a wide audience at a relatively low price point. Use these five strategies to introduce digital products to your advertisers in a way that makes the introduction easy for you to deliver and for them to understand.

- 1. Do your research.** Begin any new digital advertising sale by researching the business's online presence. Their website and social media accounts will tell you how digitally savvy the organization is, and by extension where to start the conversation.

Start with Google — but don't stop there. Click through the website to get a sense for the company's messaging and audience. Go beyond the homepage to see how they are positioning their products or services. Visit the site from your phone to see how mobile-friendly it is. Check Facebook, YouTube and Twitter for social media activity. Do they post once a day, once a month or almost never? Are they using social channels for promotions and engagement, or do they feel like an afterthought? Is the look and feel of the brand consistent from website to Facebook and beyond?

If the company has a slick, professional website and active, engaged social channels, they are already a great candidate for digital. They obviously understand the power of online communication and speak the language of internet advertising. For this client, you can create a proposal with a more sophisticated product mix and prepare to hit the ground running. Just make sure to not overestimate their knowledge; you may need to help them untangle the difference between professional digital advertising and their daily Facebook posts.

If, on the other hand, the website feels dated and social media is barely there, you need to start simple. For this client, digital advertising will likely feel confusing and intimidating. Start with the basics, educating them on what digital advertising is, how it works and why it's so effective. Talk through the steps of a successful campaign, which may require a website refresh before launch so that users have a good experience when they click through on an ad. Keep your proposal straightforward and avoid getting into the weeds with more complex strategies or products.

- 2. Set the tone.** Whether your advertisers are experienced digital marketers or starting from virtual scratch, it's helpful to begin the conversation with an overview of how digital advertising can benefit their business.

Explain what makes digital advertising unique, such as:

- *Reach.* Digital advertising can reach more people in a more targeted way. Demonstrate how digital campaigns can help businesses communicate with their specific audience at scale and/or determine who that audience should be.
- *Precision.* With digital, advertisers can target particular people taking particular actions with a particular message. It's also easy to change any of those levers if and when necessary.
- *Speed.* Businesses can launch a digital campaign in days, not weeks; no more waiting for the printer or the post office. Once the campaign is live, they can see results quickly and monitor the data to determine if they want to make any changes.
- *Data.* Digital advertising allows for unprecedented insight into how advertising campaigns are performing. Show clients how metrics and KPIs can be easily tied to their marketing goals for a clear view into what's working and what's not.
- *Cost.* With digital, companies can start relatively small and scale with their budget. Digital tactics offer a lower cost per impression and significantly higher ROI than most other advertising options.

- 3. Start with goals, then talk about products.** Resist the urge to jump right into products. Before you start discussing display vs. video vs. geofencing, ask what the advertiser is hoping to achieve. Is it a new business that wants to grow name recognition? Are they struggling to identify their target audience? Do they have a new product or service that they want to promote? Are they trying to increase online sales or in-store traffic? Do they know where their target audience spends the majority of their time? There is a digital product and strategy for each of these objectives and more — but you won't know which one is right for that advertiser until you understand what they want to accomplish.

Spend some time before your meeting mapping products to objectives. If the client says that they want to advertise their upcoming yearly sale, what will you propose? If they want to show off their new location, what does that entail? It's important to understand when to use which product and strategy so that you know what to suggest and can clearly articulate why that's the right approach to the advertiser. A great place to start is our document *14 Questions Advertisers Ask About Digital Advertising*.

- 4. Prepare to discuss money.** At some point, every advertiser will ask precisely how much digital advertising costs. This is not the time to be vague. Go into the meeting with an educated guess on their objectives, probable products and likely budget and present the advertiser with a detailed cost proposal. Explain minimums — how they work and why they're there — as well as any additional optional costs, like graphic designers, videographers or updates to their website. Make it clear what they're paying for and how you will measure success. Most importantly...

5. Emphasize ROI. At the end of the day, almost every business decision comes down to return on investment. ROI is perhaps the most powerful number you can use to convince a client to move forward, and luckily it's an area where digital advertising shines.

Showcase how digital advertising analytics and reporting enable you to see how every campaign is performing, so you can make adjustments at the appropriate time and ensure that every dollar is money well spent. Describe how the data and analytics allow clients to learn from each campaign, refining their targeting, offers and messaging for continual improvement. Share case studies from other clients that demonstrate strong ROI and illustrate how they achieved it (with your help!). Compare digital advertising to their current marketing tactics and emphasize that with digital, you will always have more information with which to make better decisions — and that leads to money better spent.

Selling an advertiser their first digital products starts with solid research and ends with hard numbers. Follow the steps above to ensure that your clients see the upside and opportunity of digital advertising for their organizations in a clear and easy to follow way.