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# **Building a B2B Brand Online**

FOR  
**DUMMIES®**

**Learn to:**

- Reach a B2B audience with online advertising
- Use social media for B2B brand building
- Use audience targeting to influence your best buyers

Compliments of

**bizo**

Business Audience Marketing

**John Arnold**



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For more information, visit [www.bizo.com](http://www.bizo.com).

***Building a B2B  
Brand Online***  
FOR  
**DUMMIES®**

**by John Arnold**



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# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: B2B Brand-Building Basics . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
About This Book .....	1
Icons Used in This Book.....	2
Understanding Why B2B Brand Building Matters .....	2
Reaching the B2B Audience .....	4
Advertising throughout the Marketing Funnel.....	6
<b>Chapter 2: Placing B2B Targeted Display Ads. . . . .</b>	<b>9</b>
The Many Flavors of Targeted Display Advertising .....	10
Exploring Everything You Need to Know About Ad Creative...13	
<b>Chapter 3: Retargeting for the B2B Audience . . . . .</b>	<b>17</b>
The Basics of Retargeting .....	18
Setting Up a Retargeting Strategy .....	18
Retargeting Is the New Lead Nurturing.....	20
Advanced Retargeting Options .....	21
<b>Chapter 4: Using Social Media for B2B Brand Building. . . . .</b>	<b>23</b>
Understanding How Social Sharing Builds Brands .....	24
Using Paid Social Advertising to Build Brands.....	25
The Beauty of the Blog.....	27
<b>Chapter 5: Determining B2B Brand Impact. . . . .</b>	<b>29</b>
The Basics of Attribution and Cost Modeling .....	29
Brand Metrics .....	30
Action Metrics .....	32
Cross-Program Lift (or Measuring the Display Alley-Oop) .....	35
<b>Chapter 6: Ten Ways to Build a B2B Brand Online . . . . .</b>	<b>37</b>
Identify the Business Audiences that Matter to Your Sales Cycle.....	37
Establish Branding Goals and Metrics Before Launching Any Campaign .....	38
Create and Test Content and Ad Creative that Matter to Your Target Audience.....	38
Use Web Analytics to Monitor the Audiences on Your Website.....	38
Use Corporate Blogging to Support Thought Leadership ....	39
Use Display Advertising to Create Lift across All Marketing Channels .....	39
Measure the Value of Display beyond Clicks and CTRs .....	39
Target Display Advertising to the Entire B2B Buying Committee.....	40
Use Social Marketing to Build Brand Awareness .....	40
Incorporate Retargeting across Website, Display, E-mail, and Social Channels .....	40

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# Chapter 1

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# B2B Brand-Building Basics

.....

## *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Understanding why brand building matters
  - ▶ Reaching a B2B audience
  - ▶ Building a B2B branding strategy
- .....

**W**hy do the world's most successful brands continue to spend money on advertising, promotions, and marketing after their brands are household names? It's because building a successful brand isn't a project that has a beginning and an end. Building a successful brand is perpetual, just like a successful business is perpetual.

## *About This Book*

B2B online brand building has the advantage of automation and tracking, so you can fine-tune your strategy and deliver timely advertising messages to every influencer and decision maker in a company. In fact, you can even set up your strategy so your advertising follows the most engaged prospects as they browse the Internet and social media connections for solutions to their business problems.

This book helps you understand B2B brand building and explains how you can build your B2B brand online using a combination of advertising, social media, and audience targeting techniques.

## Icons Used in This Book

Icons are used throughout this book to call attention to material worth noting in a special way. Here's what each means:



Some points bear repeating, and others bear remembering. When you see this icon, take special note of what you're about to read.



This icon indicates technical information that is probably most interesting to techies, but you never know when you may need to talk to one.



This icon indicates a suggestion that will help you do something faster or avoid repeating someone else's mistake.

## Understanding Why B2B Brand Building Matters

The benefits of successful brand building can only be realized when you get beyond the idea that brand building is simply a matter of getting your logo or advertisements in front of a lot of potential buyers.

Top-of-mind awareness is a good thing, no doubt, but your brand-building activities should have a distinct B2B focus and avoid two common traps, as I explain in the following sections.

### *The difference in B2B branding*

You don't have to be involved in marketing a B2B product or service for long to notice that businesses make purchase decisions differently from individual consumers. The following list explains how business people make decisions differently from typical individual consumers:

- ✔ Businesses usually make buying decisions carefully, because multiple people inside the company have to live and work with the results of the decision. So, your brand needs to be highly credible and trustworthy.

- ✔ Business buying decisions often depend on agreement between multiple decision-makers or stakeholders inside the organization. Your brand needs to be both wide-spread and targeted to reach the right people inside of your target businesses.
- ✔ Businesses take more time to make decisions than individual consumers. So, your brand needs to be reinforced frequently over long periods of time.
- ✔ Business decisions almost always involve research and referrals online and through social connections. So, your brand needs to have a pronounced placement wherever your prospects and customers conduct research and connect with other business leaders online.

Your B2B brand strategy has to be effective during every stage of your target audience's buying cycle. I explain how to maximize the impact of your brand-building strategy throughout the rest of this book.

## *Deriving value from a B2B brand*

As your brand continues building and reaching new levels of impact, you're likely to see more revenue. That's because your successful brand is working to give you the following benefits:

- ✔ **Brand association within a category or industry.** People at other companies clearly understand what your business does and what it can do for them.
- ✔ **Brand awareness.** People at other companies are familiar with your company or feel like they have heard of you.
- ✔ **Brand recall.** People at other companies think of your business when they think of the products or services you sell.
- ✔ **Brand preference.** People at other companies prefer to try your business or remain as a customer instead of trying a competitor.
- ✔ **Purchase intent.** People at other companies feel motivated to buy the products or services you sell.

## Avoiding B2B branding traps

It takes time to measure the true impact of every good brand-building strategy. When charting a B2B brand-building course, avoid focusing on a series of time-sensitive campaigns or measuring success based on the number of times your ads may have been clicked. Both are short-term strategies that may give “instant

gratification” to the marketer because they’re easy to execute and measure. However, in the grand scheme of things, you miss out on the bigger picture of how your branding efforts have created heightened awareness, and changed the attitudes and preferences of people and groups of people over longer periods of time.

All of the aforementioned value ends up driving more revenue. However, the revenue you see from successful brand building probably won’t be directly attributable to clicks gained during a single advertising campaign or other direct responses. I show you how to attribute revenue to brand building in Chapter 5.

## *Reaching the B2B Audience*

Reaching an audience of influencers and decision makers at businesses might seem like it involves the same process as reaching any group of people. After all, you’re marketing to the people who work at businesses (who happen to be consumers, too), not to a building or a bunch of bylaws and articles of incorporation.

There are, however, several core differences between reaching a general audience of consumers and reaching a B2B audience for brand-building purposes. The next sections explain how to focus on the differences to reach your target B2B audience effectively.

## *Understanding online B2B audiences*

A company’s decision makers do just as much online research as do general consumers, but the difference is that a group

of people at a company are more likely to conduct the exact same research on totally different websites.

For example, a decision to buy new accounting software for a company could involve all of the following research:

- ✔ Someone from the accounting team researches on accounting related websites and social networks.
- ✔ Someone from the IT department researches on security related websites and social networks.
- ✔ Someone from the sales team researches on sales enablement related websites and social networks.
- ✔ Someone from the executive team researches on strategic management related websites and social networks.

Your brand, therefore, needs to have a strong and scalable presence on a variety of different websites and social networks as well as targeted messaging to reach all kinds of different buyers with different needs.

Fortunately, online marketing has the ability to give you scalable reach and a targeted message, and the entire process can be simplified using automated tools. I cover the tools and knowledge you need to be efficient in Chapter 2.

## *Choosing business segments and establishing reach online*

When you want to reach a lot of different people with targeted brand-building messages, it's a good idea to divide your audience into segments. *Segments* are groupings of companies or people with similar attitudes, interests, and other characteristics. The most useful segments for online B2B advertising are:

- ✔ **Company size:** The number of employees, revenue, or leadership position of a company.
- ✔ **Industry type:** The business category by industrial code or other identifier.
- ✔ **Functional area:** The job title or department title.
- ✔ **Seniority:** The level of the job title.

✓ **Location:** The postal code or other identifier of the branch or headquarters or the businesses within a geographic radius.

After you have decided which segments represent your target customers best, you need to establish the potential reach you'll have when you place your online ads.



Ask your advertising agency, network, or audience-targeting platform partner to provide you with a count of the potential users you can reach within your target B2B segments, or use an online tool to determine potential reach, such as the Bizo audience analytics tool.

## *Advertising throughout the Marketing Funnel*

One of the most compelling benefits of B2B branding is the ability for a branding strategy to have an impact in all stages of the typical sales and marketing funnel. The *sales and marketing funnel*, shown in Figure 1-1, is a graphical representation of the typical customer journey beginning with lots of people who are totally unaware (the top of the funnel) and ending with fewer people who make a purchase or become loyal customers (the bottom of the funnel).

The next sections explain how a good B2B branding strategy impacts all stages in the sales and marketing funnel.

### *Mutual attraction: Display's impact across all marketing channels*

Placing display ads online is known as *display advertising* or simply *display*. Display impacts all stages of the sales and marketing funnel. That's because people in all stages of the sales and marketing funnel can visit the websites and social networks where your display advertising is placed. I show you how to place display ads in Chapter 2.



**Figure 1-1:** The sales and marketing funnel illustrates a journey from awareness to a purchase.

## *Attracting new customers*

Display advertising works at the top of the sales and marketing funnel to attract new customers, because people who are unaware of your business can search and browse the websites where your ads are placed without knowing anything about your business.

Social media is also a good strategy for attracting new customers, because you can develop your brand by sharing relevant content on topics that matter to your target audience and by placing display ads in social networks. Both tactics can effectively remind people to connect their friends and colleagues to your business when they need referrals. I explain more about using social media for branding in Chapter 4.

## *Influencing and educating after awareness*

Display ads on websites and social media networks have influence after awareness sets in, because repeating the ads aids in recall and retention of your messaging.

Display ads can also help to educate your audience by altering the messaging across your ad placements, so your audience learns about your entire value proposition in bite-sized chunks.

Email and paid search are also good tactics for influencing and educating. In fact, when you combine those two tactics with display and social media, marketers typically see a lift in positive results from all four tactics over using one or two of them without the others.

## *Closing in on action*

Marketing throughout the entire sales and marketing funnel gives you the ability to ask for appropriate actions from your target audience at just the right time in the decision-making process.

For example, placing only ads that say, “buy it now” are only relevant to people at the bottom of the sales and marketing funnel. People who are at or near the top want to take more relevant actions such as viewing educational materials or reading testimonials and case studies.



For the best results, use a variety of messages and target each message to people in each stage of the sales and marketing funnel. I show you how to do that in Chapter 2.

## Chapter 2

# Placing B2B Targeted Display Ads

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Placing and targeting display ads
  - ▶ Understanding ad creative and ad unit sizes
  - ▶ Gaining an advantage with audience-targeting platforms
- 

Placing display advertising online used to be inefficient because it involved dealing directly with lots of individual publishers to negotiate advertising space on multiple websites in all kinds of non-standard sizes and formats.

Buying enough of the right inventory to reach an audience in those days was hard enough, but working with all those publishers also made it a laborious or impossible manual process to target a specific audience or determine your advertising performance across all your advertising placements.

Today, that direct-to-publisher process has become the exception, because a lot of online publishers now sell their inventory to advertising networks. *Advertising networks* are companies that purchase advertising space — known as *inventory* — so they can resell the advertising space to advertisers in efficient and targeted groupings.

As an advertiser, you can access a publisher's inventory either by going through an advertising network, or through an *audience-targeting platform*, which is a data-driven and technology-supported service that allows you to purchase the inventory, place your ads, target your ads to an audience, and track your results.

This chapter shows you what you need to know about online display ads so you can use an audience-targeting platform more intelligently for B2B brand-building purposes.

## *The Many Flavors of Targeted Display Advertising*

Running display advertising campaigns through an audience-targeting platform is easy, but it can also allow your advertising to become very sophisticated for little extra effort.

The following sections show you all the sophisticated targeting options available through a typical audience-targeting platform.

### *Site-based advertising*

*Site-based advertising* involves placing your advertising on specific websites by name. For example, if you want to reach golfers, you might assume that placing ads on the Golf.com website would reach your target audience.

### *Contextual advertising*

Some websites publish a wide variety of content that appeals to multiple interests. For example, About.com is a website that publishes content about almost everything people search for online.

*Contextual advertising* involves placing ads based on the content (or context) of a specific web page, regardless of what the rest of a particular publisher's web pages are all about.

An audience-targeting platform automates the placements by scanning the text of a website for keywords and returning advertisements to the web page based on what the user is viewing in real time.

Use contextual targeting when you want your advertisements to be highly relevant to what the web page visitor is reading about.

## Combining ad-serving with audience data

Business audience data is available through specialized data services that collect anonymous business demographic data including a business professional's industry, company size, job function, seniority, and more.

Non-personally identifiable information (non-PII) is collected through business publisher partners in the

form of subscription information, business registrations, and other online data sources.

Combining data with ad-serving enables marketers, agencies, publishers, and ad networks to understand the business demographic makeup of site visitors, and precisely target and engage business professionals online.

Contextual advertising is more powerful than site-based advertising, because you're targeting the actual words on a web page. For example, advertising to golfers using contextual advertising doesn't limit you to golfing websites. You could place highly relevant ads on any sites that contain content targeted to golfers.

## *Audience targeting*

Targeting your advertising toward the characteristics of an individual, rather than the characteristics of a website, is known as *audience targeting*. Audience targeting has a distinct advantage over site-based and contextual advertising, because you're targeting an actual personality rather than only content. For example, if you're using site-based or contextual advertising to target golf content, you might end up showing ads to college students doing research reports on golf techniques instead of CEOs who love to golf.

Targeting ads to an audience requires the use of ad-serving *cookies*. A *cookie* is the not-so-technical term for trackable text placed in a web browser that enables advertisers to anonymously follow and respond to the actions of an individual.

When you combine cookies with an audience-targeting platform, you can place highly relevant ads in front of any individual on any website in the network once the cookie is placed.



Use audience targeting when you want your advertising to reach your target audience regardless of which specific sites they visit online. For example, if someone fills out an online form indicating an interest in golf, you can enable audience targeting to show them golf-related ads on other websites, even if those websites have nothing to do with golf.

### *Geo-targeting*

*Geo-targeting* places advertising on a website only when the computer being used to visit the website is in a specified geographic location.

Geo-targeting works because every Internet connection is based on a network of local access points that can be detected and fed into your audience-targeting platform.



Use geo-targeting when you want to reach people who are physically present in your target geography. For example, if you want to reach people in Los Angeles with your display ads, geo-targeting in Los Angeles means that someone who lives in Denver won't see your geo-targeted ads when reading the *LA Times* website from Denver, but the same person will see your geo-targeted ads while reading the *Denver Post* website while visiting Los Angeles!

### *Retargeting*

*Retargeting* is the process of displaying a series of relevant ads based on a visit to a specific web page. For example, retargeting allows you to display your ads on other websites only after someone has previously visited your own golfing website.

Retargeting is similar to the aforementioned audience targeting in that it requires the use of cookies. I cover retargeting in more detail in Chapter 3.

# Exploring Everything You Need to Know About Ad Creative

Online display ads are actually graphics files of various sizes and formats. The collective design elements in a display ad are known as the *ad creative*.

The following sections give you the information you need to make decisions about the ad creative you use to build your B2B brand.

## Display ad unit sizes and placements

*Ad units* are fixed areas of space on a web page where ads appear when the space is purchased. Online publishers and advertising networks typically offer several choices of fixed-number or standardized ad unit sizes to advertisers. Here are the most common ad standards:

- ✓ 120x600 pixels for a *narrow skyscraper* ad, usually placed in a narrow column spanning the length of a web page and the width of a narrow column.
- ✓ 160x600 pixels for a *wide skyscraper* ad, usually placed in a wide column spanning the length of a web page and the width of a wide column.
- ✓ 300x250 pixels for a *medium rectangle* ad, usually placed in a column.
- ✓ 468x60 pixels for a *banner* ad, usually placed at the top or bottom of the main column of a multi-column web page.
- ✓ 728x90 pixels for a *leaderboard* ad, usually placed at the top of a web page spanning the width of the entire page.

Your ad creative has to include a slightly different design to accommodate each ad unit. For example, you may need to reword a headline or offer to fit in a smaller ad space while still maximizing the size of the text.

A typical ad-serving platform allows you to upload all of the possible ad units so that the platform can detect the appropriate ad unit sizes for a given placement and automatically choose the ad size that matches the ad unit and positioning on the page.

## *Creative options in various file formats*

In addition to sizing your display ads correctly, your ads need to have the correct file format. Depending on the publisher, your ad creative could be displayed as a static image or in a file format that allows animation of the ad creative. The following are standard file formats for most advertising networks.

For static image ads use

- ✓ .gif
- ✓ .jpeg
- ✓ .swf

For animated ads use

- ✓ .asf
- ✓ .mpeg
- ✓ .avi

For the best results, create your ads in all of the formats and then upload them to your ad-serving platform, so the platform can automatically select the proper format required by the publisher.

## *Maximizing brand impact with creative*



The goal of your display advertising is to build your brand, not to generate clicks. Nothing is more impactful than ad creative for building your B2B brand, aside from making sure your ads appear in front of your target audience.

## Branding on a budget

Display advertising inventory is available on a cost-per-click or CPC basis, as well as CPM or a cost-per-thousand impression basis. Although some advertisers think that paying on a CPC basis and trying to maximize the number of clicks is the best way to get instant results, the better strategy for B2B branding is to focus

on brand impact rather than clicks. That doesn't necessarily mean CPM is a better choice for branding goals, but it does mean you can focus your ad creative and display campaign success metrics on maximizing more valuable brand impact rather than trying only to attract the maximum number of clicks at the lowest cost.

Use the following tips when designing your ad creative to maximize brand impact:

- ✔ Include your logo.
- ✔ Use colors consistent with your corporate color palette or style guide.
- ✔ Include a tagline meaningful to your target audience.
- ✔ Make the call to action visually clear.
- ✔ Understand your key buyer personas and craft your messaging to address their demographics, needs, and interests for greatest relevancy.
- ✔ Differentiate your retargeting ad creative from the creative you'll use to reach a broader audience. Retargeting creative should take into account the previous interests your users have shown.

## *Testing and optimizing ad creative*

Testing and optimizing your ad creative is simplified when you use an ad-serving platform. Here's how to test and optimize your ad creative:

### **1. Create two or three slightly different versions of the same ad creative.**

For example, you could create one ad offering a 30-day trial, one ad offering a 90-day trial, and one ad featuring a customer success story.

2. Run all three ads for the same period of time.
3. Use your ad-serving platform's tracking system to compare each ad creative against a metric, such as clicks or conversions, as shown in Figure 2-1.
4. Stop running the worst performing ad and replace it with a new ad with a new variable to see if you can beat the top performing ad.
5. Repeat Steps 1-4 continuously until you are confident you have the best performing ad creative possible.

Ad Unit Size	Creative	Click-Through Rates	Total Conversions
728 x 90	30-day Trial	0.2%	2
	90-day Trial	0.7%	5
	Success Story	0.5%	15
300 x 250	30-day Trial	0.8%	1
	90-day Trial	0.1%	20
	Success Story	1.0%	12
1000 x 90	30-day Trial	0.5%	6
	90-day Trial	0.3%	14
	Success Story	0.1%	1

**Figure 2-1:** Compare ad creative against metrics such as the click or conversion rate.

## Chapter 3

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# Retargeting for the B2B Audience

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Retargeting basics
  - ▶ Utilizing retargeting for lead nurturing
  - ▶ Using advanced retargeting strategies
- 

**I**n a perfect world — also known as fantasy land — everyone showing enough interest in your company to visit your website becomes a customer on the first visit.

In the B2B world — also known as reality — even highly interested website visitors leave your website after the first visit without becoming a customer, because they aren't ready to buy right away or because they don't know enough about your business or don't trust you yet.

This is why one of the unquestionable basic foundations of effective marketing and lead generation is message repetition. The more times you can expose your brand and messaging to your prospects, the more your prospects will remember your brand and feel confident that your brand is credible during those inevitable periods of away time.

You could use your marketing budget to try to achieve some level of online advertising saturation. By doing so, you hope that your prospects run into your ads frequently as they travel across the Internet. However, there's a better method known as retargeting that will save you money and give you reliable repetition.

This chapter explains retargeting and shows you how to use retargeting to lower your marketing costs while boosting your brand impact at the same time.

## *The Basics of Retargeting*

*Retargeting* is a method of displaying highly relevant ads to people on other websites only after they have visited one or more pages on your website.

The main benefit of retargeting is that it helps to drive increased online conversions in two primary ways:

- ✔ People who have visited your website have already expressed an interest in your company, product, or service. Retargeting helps you stay top-of-mind with these people who are more qualified leads.
- ✔ Retargeting allows you to customize your advertising to specific website audiences based on a visit to your website. You can change the frequency, placement, and content of your display ads on other websites based on the context of a particular visit to your website. For example, people who visit your product web page see ads about your products when they leave your website, while people who visit your services web page see ads about your services when they leave your website.

(You can read about other forms of targeting in Chapter 2.)

## *Setting Up a Retargeting Strategy*

Retargeting from a strategic perspective just requires a little planning. Setting up a retargeting strategy on a technical level requires an ad-serving or audience-targeting platform and some special code placed on your website. A basic retargeting model is explained in more strategic and technical detail in the following sections.

## Choosing a retargeting focus

Because the basic idea of retargeting is to repeat or reinforce a particular marketing message after a website visit, you need to determine an approach to accomplishing that repetition. You have two basic choices that give an overall focus to your strategy. You can

- ✓ Cast a wide net by showing lots of retargeted ads to all website visitors without regard for the context of the visit or the types of websites visited after they leave your website. Choose this focus when you want to give the appearance that your advertising is everywhere and your brand is mighty.
- ✓ Retarget within a narrower context by being more selective about which visitors see your retargeted ads and where they are seen. Choose this focus when you want to influence people within a specific context, such as driving conversions from a specific, limited-time offer.

## The role of cookies and pixels

There are a few technical requirements to set up before you can start retargeting. First, your ad-serving platform needs to give you special html code called a *retargeting pixel* to place on any web pages where you want to trigger retargeting ads after a visit to those pages.



After placing the retargeting pixels on the appropriate web pages, the pixels allow the ad-serving platform to place cookies in every visitor's web browser application when visiting a page with a pixel. The combination of the pixel detection and the cookie placement enables your retargeted ads to appear to any visitors with a particular cookie in their browsers while excluding your retargeted ads from displaying to anyone without the cookie.

## *Retargeting Is the New Lead Nurturing*

B2B selling takes time because it involves educating customers, differentiating your business from the competition, and building a business case for a purchase decision. Typically, it isn't possible to do all of that in one website visit, one communication, or one phone conversation. So, your lead nurturing strategy has to involve multiple messages over time.

*Lead nurturing* is the process of marketing to people already in the B2B buying cycle in order to build strong, trusting relationships with them, regardless of their readiness to buy.

Because lead nurturing needs to be individually targeted to people after demonstrating interest or buying behavior, marketers have traditionally relied on emails and marketing automation systems to follow up with leads during the buying process.

One major challenge to traditional forms of lead nurturing is the fact that following up requires you to capture some form of contact information from people who show interest in your products or services. Moreover, e-mail nurturing is limited because it only reaches people within the confines of their inboxes.

That's precisely where a retargeting strategy has an advantage over other forms of lead nurturing. Here are some alternative ways to nurture leads by using retargeting:

- ✔ Instead of requiring an e-mail address to access research or information about your company, give it away freely and retarget ads to anyone who visits the web page where the information is placed.
- ✔ Train your salespeople to ask their prospects to visit a page on your website with a retargeting pixel related to the nature of the caller's interest so the caller will see retargeted ads after hanging up and get online to do more research or to compare the competition.

- ✔ If someone unsubscribes from your email list, place a retargeting pixel on the unsubscribe confirmation page so that you can activate win-back advertising.
- ✔ Use retargeting to change your messaging based on the type of website interactions. For example, when people visit your pricing web page, show them ads offering discounted pricing.
- ✔ Use your e-mails and retargeting together. When people click on your emails and visit the linked web pages, use retargeting to activate or change the ads those people see.

## *Advanced Retargeting Options*

Retargeting can get pretty sophisticated. The key is to balance the targeting needs with the ability to have scale. For example, retargeting 25 different types of behaviors means that you need to create and track 25 different versions of your online ads.

Before you get too sophisticated, get familiar with the advanced retargeting strategies in the following sections.

### *Audience retargeting*

Combining cookies with website audience reporting and analytics tools can help you further categorize your website visitors by industry, job function, and company size.

That way, you can show customized creative display ads designed specifically for each segment of your audience. For example, a company's CTO might see a display ad offering a white paper about software integration strategies, while a marketing executive could be shown an ad offering a white paper about generating sales leads.

### *Frequency capping*

Frequency is one important goal in retargeting, but there are two points of diminishing returns when it comes to the number of retargeting ads you choose to display in any given time frame. You can enable your retargeting cookies to limit

the frequency with which retargeted ads display to help avoid the following:

- ✔ **Over communication:** Retargeting with a frequency of three to five impressions per day keeps your brand top of mind and strengthens your image. If your audience sees your advertising constantly, however, it can seem “creepy” and might actually cause people to ignore your ads and eliminate your ability to make subtle changes to the messaging.
- ✔ **Paying for unnecessary exposure or clicks.** Whether you’re paying for impressions or clicks, you don’t want to pay for the same person to view your ads after a certain point. So, limiting your frequency to two or three impressions per day keeps your costs in line with the value of the exposure.

## *Using exclusion pixels*

Instead of using retargeting only to ensure that certain people see your advertising, you can also use retargeting to ensure that certain people won’t see your advertising. An *exclusion pixel* is a special type of retargeting pixel you can place on web pages to block your advertising from appearing. For example, if the people who visit your website in order to look for job openings aren’t good prospects for buying your products, place an exclusion pixel on your Careers pages to make sure you aren’t paying to advertise your products to job hunters who will probably never buy.

## Chapter 4

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# Using Social Media for B2B Brand Building

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Grasping social media brand-building basics
  - ▶ Sharing and advertising to build your brand
  - ▶ Blogging for your brand
- 

**Y**ou may think that creating a strong brand is all about your company's logos, colors, voice, image, and way of doing things. But, actually that's an internal and narrow way of thinking about a brand.

Externally, to your prospects and customers, your brand is all about perceptions, attitudes, likes, and dislikes. To be a successful brand, people have to have positive feelings about your brand when they encounter it. They have to like it.

Over a billion people are using social media. That's a lot of people who have the ability to like your brand and share it with their friends so they like you, too! Of course, you don't need to make them all into fans of your brand to be a successful company, but you simply can't ignore the fact that your audience is reachable through social channels.

This chapter shows you how to include social media in your brand-building strategy using content sharing, advertising, and blogging.

## Understanding How Social Sharing Builds Brands

If users have a positive experience or perception about your brand, they will want to share it with friends, but not because they like your brand. People share because they like their friends. If sharing helps their friends, they'll do it. The following sections show you how to take full advantage of this concept.

### *What makes a great brand-building tweet or post?*

Posting messages to Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn won't go very far towards building your brand unless your posts are focused on influencing the way your brand is perceived.



Don't use social media with the idea that you're being informative or valuable. Instead, use your posts with the idea that you're changing perceptions and attitudes.

For example, if you post a link to an article you wrote, you're only being informative. If the article you share demonstrates that you or someone from your company is an expert on the topic, then you're changing perceptions by showing people your credibility.

### *Getting the followers you want*

Building your brand by using social media is not only about building followers, but building followers *within your target audience*, and looking for opportunities to get involved in different social communities.

Social communities are groups of people with common interests discussing and sharing with each other. Examples include

- ✓ Business groups on LinkedIn
- ✓ Twitter hashtags that groups of similar people follow
- ✓ Business pages people *like* on Facebook

To start connecting with people, look for the groups with members that match your target audience. Then, start connecting with individuals. It also works the other way around. If you connect with an individual, see which groups that person participates in and join the community.

## ***The ins and outs of social retargeting***

When your branding is working well on social media, it can seem to your audience like they run into your brand in a lot of places. Their friends and colleagues might ask about your brand frequently, or see your brand in a post that includes information about the category your products or services are in, for example.

Retargeting through social media has the added benefit of making your brand appear even bigger, because you can include retargeting pixels in your social media posts and display relevant advertising when your prospects and customers leave their social circles and browse around the rest of the Internet.

I discuss retargeting in more detail in Chapter 3.

## ***Using Paid Social Advertising to Build Brands***

You can accomplish a lot of brand building on social media with time, creativity and a little money. Better still, is to combine your time and creativity with an advertising budget so you can market to people outside your direct connections and reinforce your brand in different contexts.

The next sections show you which advertising opportunities are available for brand building on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook.

## Twitter

Buying ads on Twitter can help extend your reach, so you can gain more followers and reinforce your brand's message. Twitter allows you to purchase the following advertising:

- ✔ **Promoted accounts** allow you to feature your brand in Twitter search results and within the Twitter recommendation engine that suggests people to follow.
- ✔ **Promoted tweets** allow you to place your tweets higher in search results and user timelines. You can target your own followers and users like your followers.
- ✔ **Promoted trends** allow you to insert your brand into trend discussions happening on Twitter.
- ✔ **Enhanced profile** pages allow you to improve the branding elements of your page as well as to feature your content by promoting tweets to the top of your page's timeline and include expanded media in your posts.

Twitter also provides analytics, so you can track and measure your advertising.

## LinkedIn

LinkedIn advertising consists of self-service ads called LinkedIn Ads, and customized ads called LinkedIn Marketing Solutions.

Display ads can be placed in the following LinkedIn content:

- ✔ **InMails**, which appear in user inboxes
- ✔ **Polls**, which appear in LinkedIn polls
- ✔ **Social Ads**, which appear in groups and timelines
- ✔ **Content Ads**, which appear in various content including the user's LinkedIn address book

## Facebook

Advertising on Facebook doesn't allow for too many creative options at the time of this writing, because Facebook ads are static designs that include:

- ✓ A still image
- ✓ A headline
- ✓ Plain text
- ✓ A link

Even though Facebook ads aren't super exciting to look at, you can still use them to gain a lot of brand-building territory because the ads are highly targetable and can include links to all kinds of memorable brand-building actions through your Facebook business page.

For example, you could run a sweepstakes on Facebook and then use your Facebook ads to drive entries.

The new Facebook Exchange is in beta at the time of this writing, but it's worth mentioning because it allows advertisers to reach audience segments for the first time using real-time-bidding and third-party data instead of only the data in a user's Facebook profile. Therefore, you can target users on Facebook who have browsed other websites and shown interest in certain types of content or users that fit certain demographic profiles.

## *The Beauty of the Blog*

Blogging to build your brand might sound at first like it's a lot different from running display advertisements or sharing things on social media sites. Actually, however, blogging is highly complementary to your brand-building strategy, as the following sections explain.

### *Why corporate blogging is a competitive differentiator*

Branding is about changing attitudes and perceptions. But that's not necessarily enough. You also need to differentiate your business from the competition and reinforce the thinking behind the way your company does business.



So, one of the best places to stake your claims and help your prospects and customers sort out the pros and cons of your brand over your competition's is your corporate blog.

## *The anatomy of an effective blog post*

An effective brand-building blog post has the following elements:

- ✓ Keywords that help attract your target search traffic to the post.
- ✓ Content that improves attitudes and perceptions about your brand when people read it.
- ✓ Retargeting pixels to ensure that your brand is reinforced after people who read your blog exit your website and browse to other websites. (You can read more about retargeting in Chapter 3.)

## *Getting new perspectives (and new audiences) through guest blogging*

Your prospects and customers need to see your business as an expert in order to have the confidence and trust to work with you. But, that doesn't mean you have to actually be the only expert.

Inviting guests to blog on behalf of your company is not only a great way to enhance the content of your corporate blog, it's also a great way to get new readers because your guest bloggers are likely to share their blog posts with their colleagues. Ideal guest bloggers include industry thought leaders, executives from companies that you may partner or work with, or even your own customers.

## Chapter 5

# Determining B2B Brand Impact

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Attributing branding success to your advertising
  - ▶ Tracking your advertising results
  - ▶ Measuring multiple combined strategies
- 

**M**easuring brand impact is a little different from measuring the number of clicks on an advertisement or an e-mail, because you can't tell by a click whether someone changed his attitude about your brand or remembered your company name when looking for a solution to a business problem.

This chapter shows you how to attribute your branding success to your B2B brand-building initiatives and measure your results. That way, you can track your progress against your goals and become more confident that allocating time and money to branding activities will give you a solid return on your investments.

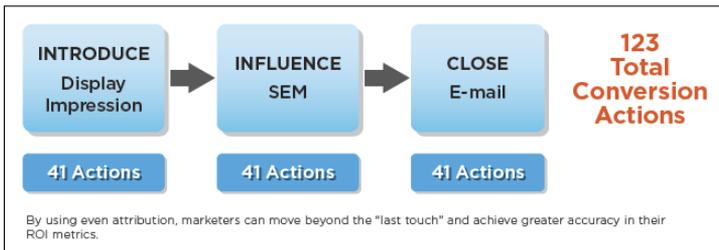
## *The Basics of Attribution and Cost Modeling*

Assuming that every B2B sale is a result of the last marketing campaign is misleading, because it may cause you to spend more money on the 'last touch' and less money on all of the other marketing activities that led your prospects to take that eventual 'last touch' action.

A lot of marketers take the “easy way” out and are satisfied with attributing success to the strength of the last marketing message in a series. For example, a marketing sequence that begins with display advertising, continues with paid search, and ends with e-mail, may look to a marketer as if the customer was the result of only the e-mail marketing campaign.

If all credit is given to e-mail marketing, and spending on e-mail marketing is subsequently increased, the shortage of budget in display and search is likely to impact the e-mail marketing results negatively because there won't be as many leads responding to e-mail offers.

Attribution modeling can get highly sophisticated, and is out of the scope of this book, but one way you can keep your B2B branding attribution simple and effective is to assign an equal share of attribution to each marketing initiative you use, as shown in Figure 5-1.



**Figure 5-1:** Use an equal share of attribution for simplicity.

In an equal share model, you can spread your budget evenly among all your marketing channels involved, and measure the impact by changing the amount of money allocated to each channel or emphasis on one channel.

## Brand Metrics

Nothing is more important to your advertising success than measuring the impact of your advertising on the value of your brand and the associated gains in revenue. *Brand metrics* are data points that allow you to determine whether your advertising is having a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviors of your target customers.

The following sections explain the most important brand metrics and show you why they are meaningful measurements of B2B branding success.

## *Reach metrics*

The most rudimentary measurement of your brand impact is the amount of advertising space your brand occupies compared to the amount of advertising space your target audience may possibly be exposed to. There are two important reach metrics:

- ✓ **Ad impressions:** The total number of times your ads are displayed to all website visitors where your ads are targeted. The more ads you display, the more chances your ads have to be noticed.
- ✓ **Ad frequency:** The total number of ads displayed during a given period of time. The more frequently people see your ads, the more likely they will remember your brand.

Your ad-serving platform can keep track of ad impressions and ad frequency for you and show you the data over time. For the best results, as long as your display campaign is highly targeted, set the number of impressions and the frequency as high as your budget will allow.

## *Share of voice*

Your brand doesn't necessarily need to become a household name in order to help you become a more successful B2B company. One of the best ways to measure the relative impact of your brand is to determine your share of voice, which is the number of people you reach with your branding initiatives compared to the number of total people in your target customer base.



Your audience-targeting platform can usually help you determine your total possible reach within your industry or a specific demographic. A simple way to determine your share of voice is to see how many unique impressions your advertising receives compared to the total addressable audience in your target.

### *Brand lift*

Assuming your ads are targeted to appear in front of the best possible audience, nothing is more impactful to your branding success than your ad creative and the trends you see from the impact of your ad creative.

Strong creative over time creates a trend known as brand lift. *Brand lift* is a measure of the change in your brand's value over the course of a specified period of time. To measure the impact of brand lift, compare your revenue and brand value at two points in time. (You can read about the elements of brand value in Chapter 1.)

Brand lift is influential to your revenue, but it also has a positive impact on your revenue from other marketing tactics. Include the following in your brand-lift measurement to get the full story:

- ✔ **Lift in branded search:** You should see an increase in the number of people searching for your company by typing your company name into a search engine, rather than searching for a product or category.
- ✔ **Lift in targeted traffic to your website.** Your website analytics tools should show you an increase in the number of people in your target audience, as opposed to people who are unlikely to become customers.
- ✔ **Lift in form conversions.** When you include a form for people to fill out on a landing page, you should see an increase in the number of people who fill out the form compared to the people who exit the page without filling out the form.

### *Action Metrics*

*Action metrics* are the result of tracking the actions your target audience takes when exposed to your ads. Examples include:

- ✔ The number of clicks your ads receive, known as the *click-through rate*

- ✓ The number of people who do not immediately take a desired action (for example downloading a white paper, signing up for a free trial, or buying) from an ad, but eventually perform the desired action, known as *post-impression conversions*
- ✓ The number of people who take a desired action immediately after clicking on your ad, known as *post-click conversions*

The next sections show you how to use action metrics to build the value of your brand in the most profitable proportion to the size of your spend.

## *Optimize-to-revenue*

A common misunderstanding is that the value in tracking the clicks your ads receive comes from comparing the amount of money you spend to the raw number of clicks you receive, and then to compare the raw number of clicks to the raw number of actions.

For example, if you spend \$1,000 for advertising that results in 1,000 clicks and 10 purchases, your cost per click is \$1 and your cost per action is \$100.

The problem with this thinking is that you'll end up trying to optimize your advertising to get the lowest cost per click and the lowest cost per action.

Great brands didn't become great by continuously slashing their marketing budgets! The more valuable approach to tracking clicks is actually to use your click metrics to help you find opportunities to increase your spending by allocating budget to the clicks that drive the actions that result in purchasing decision momentum.

For example, a click may result in prospects downloading whitepapers or filling out lead forms. It's those conversion actions, not the clicks themselves, that end up driving the decision-making process forward in a B2B sales cycle.

## Post-impression conversions

Post-impression conversions are those that occur when a user views an ad, does NOT click on the ad, but returns to the site later and converts. By placing a conversion pixel on various places on your website, your ad-serving platform can track whether a user downloading a white paper, or signing up for free trial saw a display ad within a specific time period (for example, the last 30 days).

Post-impression conversions demonstrate the influential roles that branding and display advertising play in B2B conversions, which, because of the complexities of the B2B sales cycle, do not often happen right away. To get at the true value of your display ads, be sure and trend your display metrics over time, and measure your post-impression conversions. Doing this will help you more accurately gauge the impact that your display ads — and your brand — have had on specific conversion actions within a specific window of time.

## Measuring retargeting impact

Figure 5-2 shows a simple way you can compare your action metrics before and after retargeting. (If you need to review the basics of retargeting, read Chapter 3.)

	Impressions	Clicks	Click-through Rate	Total Conversions	Post-Impression Conversions	Post-Click Impression Conversions	Media Cost	CPM	CPC	Cost per Lead
<b>Reach Campaign</b>										
Industry: Finance/ Functional Areas: Marketing/ Seniority - Executives	2,000,000	1,500	.075%	12	4	8	\$1000	\$ .50	\$ .67	\$83
<b>Retargeting Campaign</b>										
Audience Visiting Website	100,000	800	.8%	20	15	5	\$500	\$5.00	\$ .63	\$25

**Figure 5-2:** Measuring the impact of retargeting.

The top of the table shows the metrics from a reach campaign without retargeting, and the bottom of the table shows the results from retargeting those users who have visited this company’s website.

The reach campaign returned 2,000,000 ad impressions, while the retargeting campaign returned only 100,000. That's because the goal of the reach campaign is to reach the broadest audience possible, while the goal of the retargeting campaign is to repeat and reinforce the messaging from the reach campaign as efficiently as possible.

The results of the retargeting campaign are clear in this example. The number of impressions in the retargeting campaign is lower, but the number of conversions increases while the cost per lead decreases.

## *Cross-Program Lift (or Measuring the Display Alley-Oop)*

In basketball, an alley-oop happens when one player passes the ball to another player who catches the ball in the air and scores a basket before landing back on the ground.

It may not score any more points than a regular pass followed by a regular basket, but it sure sells a lot more tickets to the fans when two teammates do it frequently!

The same thing is true when you allow your display advertising to work together with your other marketing efforts effectively, because adding display advertising to your marketing mix can produce more revenue from your other marketing efforts than they could otherwise produce on their own.

Here are some examples of how this “ally-oop effect” can work for your B2B brand.

- ✔ Display advertising can increase the number of people who search for your company by name, also known as *branded search*. When people use your company name in a search engine, you're more likely to be the top result on the search page, and buying keywords with your company name are typically a lot less expensive than category or product keywords.

- ✔ Display can help you attract e-mail subscribers. People are much more willing to share an e-mail address with a company they trust. Because display advertising builds credibility, you can increase the amount of information people are willing to share with your company earlier in the sales cycle.
- ✔ Display can help increase the return on investment of your offline event marketing efforts. People who see a quality targeted display ad numerous times are more likely to stop by your trade show booth.
- ✔ Display can help you trigger more social media sharing, because you can use your display ads to reach people before, during, and after visits to social media sites.
- ✔ Display *pulls* when your customers don't want to be *pushed*. E-mails and social media posts tend to be invasive because it's difficult to deliver those messages at exactly the same time a prospect shows interest. Display ads only appear when people are showing interest by browsing the content your ads are targeting.

## Chapter 6

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# Ten Ways to Build a B2B Brand Online

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Finding and measuring a B2B target audience
  - ▶ Building your B2B brand throughout the marketing mix
- 

**T**his chapter gets down to business quickly by showing you ten ways to build a B2B brand online. Use the list to get a sense of the opportunities and to help you prioritize your activities once you get up and running.

## *Identify the Business Audiences that Matter to Your Sales Cycle*

Placing online display ads involves choosing predefined business audience segments provided by audience-targeting platforms, so you can get to the people that matter most to your business without a lot of groping around with inefficient mass marketing.

Analyze your existing customer database and talk to your sales team to determine which audience segments represent your “ideal” prospect and use your findings to inform your display advertising strategies.

## ***Establish Branding Goals and Metrics Before Launching Any Campaign***

Online branding is not a set-it-and-forget-it form of marketing. In fact, there's no such thing. Use your goals to inform your campaign strategies and tactics. That way, you'll not only have a better chance of achieving your goals, you'll also know why you ended up short and what to do about it so it doesn't happen that way again.

## ***Create and Test Content and Ad Creative that Matter to Your Target Audience***

Were you going to create content and ad creative that doesn't matter to your target audience? Of course, you weren't. However, it can happen even when you don't try if you aren't willing to test your ad creative and content using smart analytics.

The process is simple. Create two ads with one variable, run them both, then kill the underperforming ad and try to beat the other one with a new variation.

## ***Use Web Analytics to Monitor the Audiences on Your Website***

Don't waste your time or money marketing to people who end up on your website shopping for a career or people from an industry that has a track record of taking all of your sales people's time and energy.

Web analytics help you determine which marketing programs convert customers at the highest rates, so you can invest more in the channels and tactics that matter to your business and your customers.

## ***Use Corporate Blogging to Support Thought Leadership***

Branding is all about establishing credibility and trust and then cashing in on your promise to use that trust to help your customers get what they want.

Use a blog in conjunction with your brand building to reinforce the fact that your company is a thought-leader and not just another marketer with deep pockets.

## ***Use Display Advertising to Create Lift across All Marketing Channels***

When you place display ads, it betters the results from your search marketing, e-mail marketing, and social media. Why? Because it builds your brand, and a familiar brand increases branded search, e-mail subscriptions, and confidence when sharing on social sites.

## ***Measure the Value of Display beyond Clicks and CTRs***

Paying for clicks is the old way to effectively measure the return on investment of online display, that is, if it ever was a way.

Smart marketers (that's you) measure everything possible to attribute success across multiple marketing initiatives, including brand metrics, action metrics, and overall lift.

## ***Target Display Advertising to the Entire B2B Buying Committee***

Cast a wide net, and then build in targeting for efficiency and higher returns. It doesn't work the other way around, because you need to track the results you get from a wider audience before you can determine which subset is most profitable.

## ***Use Social Marketing to Build Brand Awareness***

Over 1,000,000,000 people use Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter alone. Enough said.

## ***Incorporate Retargeting across Website, Display, E-mail, and Social Channels***

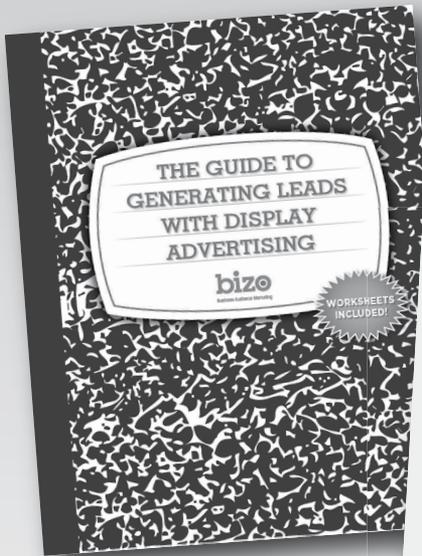
Targeted advertising works better than advertising that ignores the interests of the audience. Retargeting starts with your targeted advertising and then adapts your messaging, frequency, and placement to the precise interests of your target audience at the exact time their interests are at their peak.

Your return on investment will be handsomely rewarded, and your customers will love you for staying relevant while you compete for their business.





# Looking for More B2B Insights? We've Got You Covered.



The Guide to Generating Leads  
with Display Advertising



Retargeting is the New Lead Nurturing

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# Reach and influence a targeted B2B audience of buyers and build your brand online

B2B advertising isn't the same as advertising to the average consumer. Businesses make decisions over longer periods of time with more than one stakeholder involved in the purchasing process. Your B2B business needs a brand-building strategy that includes B2B audience targeting, smart social media content sharing, and actionable measurement of your return on investment. You also need to generate B2B leads and establish a strong brand presence online because that's where the B2B audience is looking for solutions to their business problems.

- *How B2B brand-building works — and how to build a B2B brand building and lead generation funnel*
- *How to target your advertising to the B2B audience — and how audience targeting can improve your return on investment*
- *How to run advanced display ad retargeting — and how you can personalize your advertising based on audience interests and behavior*
- *Using social media for B2B brand building — and how to use its capabilities to share content and drive qualified leads*
- *How to reach your goals — by measuring your results and improving based on high-quality data on your target customers*

**John Arnold** is an under-the-radar sales and marketing trainer and the author of several marketing books, marketing columns, and sales training guides. He has helped many B2B companies find their way to a position of brand dominance through genius-simple sales, marketing, and product alignment. If you can find him, you can find these materials.

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## Open the book and find:

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- Why audience targeting gives your brand the boost it needs to reach your revenue goals
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- How online brand building lifts all your marketing results

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