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- Converting Social Media Traffic - It Works!
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Letter from the Publisher

I know a lot of affiliate marketers who are bored with social media. They view it as an expensive distraction, sucking budget away from things that actually make money. Sure, having a full-time social content person on staff may build up followers and subscribers, but where’s the payoff? All too often, finding ROI on social media is regarded as difficult, if not impossible.

The problem with this kind of mindset is that it is hard to argue with because it is self-fulfilling. Approach social media in a half-hearted, distracted fashion and the results will reflect it. But treat it as a new, exciting channel with the potential to change your business dramatically, and then it might actually do just that.

My view is that many people don’t take social traffic seriously because they don’t pay for it. These are the folks that will spend days aligning their SEM search terms with multiple, layered landing pages, followed by pop-ups, shopping cart anti-abandonment tactics and retargeting, all to maximize ROI from $8-a-click inbound traffic. But give those same people 500 visitors a day from content posted on a social network and they just throw it into the same sales funnel and then are confirmed in their lack of belief when it fails to convert.

This is all predictable, and avoidable. Our article on page 3 looks at the impact social media should be having on your bottom line - this is important stuff because social is only going to become more prevalent, not less.

Also in this edition, on the outside back cover, we provide your personal link to the BLUE BOOK survey for the 2015 Top 20 network rankings. If you are an advertiser, an agent or an affiliate, please follow the links and give us your views. They matter!

And if you are a network, please contact us to make sure you are represented in the survey in the right way - we take pride in the quality of our work, but it’s not easy trying to keep track of hundreds of ever-evolving performance marketing networks.

But that is the essence of our industry: always changing, always finding new ways to race towards success.

Remember, you can’t win if you don’t run.

Chris Trayhorn
Founder & Publisher

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Social media traffic is cost-effective and highly scaleable but only if you know how to make it convert. The social media conversion funnel is different to the one that many of us are used to but, if it's executed properly, a conversion-centered social media strategy can yield real ROI.

The idea that social media traffic doesn’t convert is so widely held by now that many companies don’t even test it. The phrase, “there is no ROI in social” has become almost a cliche. But like most cliches, while there may be a kernel of truth to it, there is also a much more nuanced - and profitable - reality.

Of course social media traffic converts. It is made of people, after all, and the last time I checked people are what you need in order to get conversions. So the question isn’t whether social media traffic converts. It is, how do we get it to convert profitably and predictably? How do we turn those reading-viewing-sharing people into buyers and form-fillers?

In order to do that, we need to think about the difference between short and long conversion funnels. As an example, paid SEM represents a classic short conversion funnel: you advertise, and someone who is already in buying mode clicks on your ad and goes to your landing page. This works because search engines attract people who are already at near the end of their buying process – they’re just looking for the best posible deal.

Social media by its nature isn’t normally targeted at people near the bottom of the conversion funnel, but there’s no reason why your particular social media content shouldn’t be. Think of it this way: a large percentage of people on social media platforms at any given time will also use Google or Bing on the same day. They are buying stuff all the time, even if it’s not top of mind when they are on Facebook or YouTube.

What that means is that there is an opportunity to reach people with the right kind of content at the right time, and in doing so, to bypass the big search engines. Video product reviews on YouTube, for example, can lead a prospective customer by the hand, create trust and then maximize conversion on a subsequent landing page, better than any 95 character text ad. The key is to treat social media traffic differently - although this often simply means treating it with the same level of respect you normally give to paid search traffic.

Let’s summarize six takeaways on this subject: the secrets of social media conversion.

• Focus on the right social networks. There are lots of them, but unless you have a good reason to choose one of the smaller ones, stick with the giants. Facebook, of course. Twitter, although some find that there’s too much poor traffic. YouTube, best of all for product reviews and traffic quality. And Google+, just because its Google and so you will probably benefit from better search rankings and any number of other, hidden algorithm-related goodies.

• Use a proper landing page and make sure it matches the social media traffic source. If you were running a paid search campaign on Google you would probably create a dedicated landing page and ensure it was optimized for the search terms on which you were bidding. You might even have multiple landing pages, each optimized for a different search term group. So why wouldn’t you do the same for your social media traffic? Make the effort to create a sales funnel that feels “right” and you will reap the benefit.

• Use social media widgets and testimonials on the page in order to establish authority and trust. In social, popularity can often function as a substitute for reputation, meaning that even if potential customers don’t know your brand personally, they are more likely to give you the benefit of the doubt if they can see that you are popular.

• Optimize for mobile, the whole way through the sales funnel. Mobile social media traffic is huge, so if you’re serious about making it convert, ensure the your landing pages, shopping carts and forms all work beautifully and seamlessly across a wide range of mobile devices.

• Include a strong call-to-action in all of your social media content. It doesn’t have to be as in-your-face as “buy this now!” but it should at least encourage the reader/viewer to be an active participant in the sales process.

• Encourage sharing. If, on average, each visitor to your squeeze page finds just one thing that’s worth sharing with their friends, then your marketing reach has just been increased exponentially. Make sharing as easy as possible, on as many platforms as is practical.

Social media traffic really does convert. But it can’t be treated just like paid SEM traffic, or even display. Treat it with respect and profitable campaigns will follow.

Video product reviews on YouTube can lead a prospective customer by the hand, create trust and then maximize conversion better than any 95 character text ad.
There is often confusion about whether the Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) or the Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) possesses enforcement authority when a company is marketing nutraceuticals.

In brief, the FTC possesses primary enforcement responsibility for claims made in advertising, while the FDA has primary enforcement responsibility for claims made in labeling and packaging. The confusion can arise when considering the difference between labeling and advertising.

The term, “labeling” has been interpreted by some courts to include any visual, audio or other material that bears a strong contextual relationship to the product and is distributed at the point of sale. Section 201(m) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (the “FDCA”), as amended by the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act, defines “labeling” as all labels and other written, printed, or graphic matter (i) upon any article or any of its containers or wrappers, or (ii) accompanying such article at any time while a device is held for sale after shipment or delivery for shipment in interstate commerce. The term “accompanying” is interpreted liberally to mean more than physical association with the product. In certain circumstances, information about FDA-regulated products that is disseminated and purchased over the Internet can be considered labeling.

It has become increasingly difficult for the FTC and the FDA to keep up with the intersection of authority between the two agencies as a result of the constantly evolving nutraceutical promotion landscape. Blogs, social media, mobile applications and infomercials are now common purchasing methods that muddy the advertising or labeling distinction. Both the FTC and the FDA treat social media as advertising.

Despite the FDA’s jurisdiction over labeling and packaging, the agency has actually sent warning letters to dietary supplement companies regarding representations made on websites. In some instances, FDA warning letters have actually cited FTC advertising standards.

For example, after citing alleged violations of the FDCA, such letters state that “it is unlawful under the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 41 et seq., to advertise that a product can prevent, treat, or cure human disease unless you possess competent and reliable scientific evidence, including, when appropriate, well-controlled human clinical studies, substantiating the claims are true at the time they are made.” Interestingly,
such correspondence requests that the recipient respond to the FTC regarding alleged violations of the FTC Act.

The FDA has also recently issued warning letters to dietary supplement companies for “liking” an unapproved claim regarding its product. This suggests that the FDA considers Facebook “likes” as endorsements and that the agency is policing activities traditionally within the purview of the FTC.

Courts have recently acknowledged that statements not actually printed on a label can, in fact, be considered “labeling” if the statements serve the purpose of labeling by explaining the product. Website language can be considered “labeling” if consumers are told that that website will inform them of nutritional facts.

The FDA and the FTC have expressed a renewed commitment to interagency collaboration. In fact, it is not uncommon for the two agencies to issue press releases announcing simultaneous investigation of specific companies or to concurrently issue warning letters to the same company. It is also not atypical for FTC orders to require marketers to acquire FDA approval prior to making certain advertising claims. The overlapping authority of the agencies regarding the labeling, advertising and promotion of nutraceuticals is readily apparent when considering issues such as whether social media promotion is labeling or advertising.

One thing is for certain, the agencies’ increased cooperation likely means heightened regulatory scrutiny of nutraceutical product websites and social media pages. The symbiotic relationship requires assessment of potential liabilities for those whose websites or other product-related promotional vehicles make health-benefit claims.

Manufacturers and marketers of nutraceuticals should proactively confer with experienced legal counsel to create compliance programs designed to satisfy FTC and FDA regulations, as well as business requirements.

About Richard B. Newman

Richard B. Newman is an Internet marketing compliance and regulatory defense attorney at Hinch Newman LLP focusing on advertising and digital media matters.

Information conveyed in this article is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute, nor should it be relied upon, as legal advice. No person should act or rely on any information in this article without seeking the advice of an attorney.
The Simple Solution to Eliminating Wasted Money on Fraudulent Traffic

By Rich Kahn, CEO, eZanga.com

There are quite a few third-party traffic analytics companies in the advertising industry that you can choose from. They’re new (or simply have a new name), have advanced technologies, and are filled with PhDs throwing around big words and buzzwords, but what are they doing for you?

Here’s what they can do: they can look at where your traffic is coming from. They can tell you their opinion on whether or not it’s fraudulent. They can show you fancy charts and graphs and give you their suggestions on where to go from there. Of course, this is after you sign a contract, pay a hefty annual fee, and have already been charged for that fraudulent traffic.

Unfortunately, they can’t take action for you. They can’t actually do anything to improve the quality of your traffic, other than tell you how good or bad they think it is. Your contracts with them won’t stop the bad traffic from landing on your website. So you’re spending money on the bad traffic, and to rub salt in the wound, paying someone else more money for them to tell you it’s bad.

At the end of the day, all you’re getting is their opinion. The information you get from them still leaves you with a lot of work. And since there’s no industry standard, the different companies you work with will probably come back to you with different opinions. Who’s opinion should you trust?

You’re left to analyze, interpret, and figure that out for yourself. Going through the data they give you and figuring out a course of action to improve your traffic is a lot of legwork for you. Do you really have time to clean up another mess?

eZanga.com®, however, does take action for you. We do the analyzing, implementing, scoring, and blocking bad traffic in real-time. If a click appears to be fraudulent, we stop it before it hits your website and before you spend a dime.

Why? We do this because we have a vested interest in seeing your campaigns succeed. Unlike third-parties, we have skin in the game. Since we don’t make you sign a contract, you can stop your campaign and start one somewhere else if you’re not happy with the traffic we’re sending you.

Third-party analytics companies usually all tell you something different, but they generally agree on the quality of our filtered traffic. Instead of paying one company for the click and several other companies to score it and give you their opinions on it, get your click and your score in the same place with eZanga. If the score is low, we’ll take care of the click for you before you waste any ad spend on it.

eZanga’s Traffic Advisors® Infinity, our click fraud protection platform, redefines publishers’ opinions on how a traffic acquisition platform should operate. Publishers witness a platform that has been built for publishers by publishers, consistently relying on feedback from clients to fine-tune our systems to ensure fraud does not make its way onto your website. Traffic Advisors Infinity does all the heavy lifting for improving traffic quality, allowing you to focus on your new customers and growing your business. It’s been doing that heavy lifting since 2005, while those PhDs at the analytics companies were still partying it up in undergrad.

Traffic Advisors Infinity is integrated with our advertising platform, so you’re automatically protected when you advertise with us, at no additional cost and with no contract.

eZanga.com has the experience, too. Sure, not a single member of our team has a PhD and we aren’t trying to impress you with big words. Instead, we use words like these: eZanga has over 40 years of combined experience in the industry and give you results, not opinions.

We’re not setting out to razzle and dazzle the industry with years of academic experience. We’re just people who are passionate about doing what is right for our clients, using our experience and battles to help you overcome yours.

We’ve never changed our name, and never plan to. Why? We stand behind our product and don’t feel the need to hide behind a new name. The industry needs a solution they can trust to have their best interests in mind, not one that is here today and gone tomorrow.

If you want to stop paying annual contracts and start getting actions instead of opinions, let’s talk. Call us at (888) 439-2642.

About Rich Kahn

Rich Kahn is the CEO of eZanga.com, an online advertising firm specializing in pay per click and pay per call advertising since 2003. eZanga has appeared on the Inc. 500|5000 list for five consecutive years and has been recognized as one of Philadelphia’s fastest growing companies by Philly100, Deloitte, and SmartCEO Magazine.
Every day, thousands of bots produce millions of unwanted clicks, wasting advertisers' budgets. eZanga uses TRAFFIC ADVISORS INFINITY, which detects and eliminates multiple forms of fraudulent traffic, before it hits your budget. For more information, visit us at: WWW.EZANGA.COM, or call us at 888-439-2642.
The growing popularity of CPA payment models in online advertising has been noticed by nearly everyone working in the industry. Unlike CPM and CPC campaigns, where impression volume and clicks seldom have a clear correlation with the number of conversions (e.g. sales, downloads, generated leads, etc.), CPA campaigns are obviously much easier to analyze. Linking a concrete conversion to the performance of an ad allows for better analysis of an ad campaign’s performance and received ROI.

However, the increasing popularity of CPA campaigns does not necessarily resolve all the problems that companies (both publishers and advertisers) can have with their online advertising campaigns. In fact, there is quite a wide array of common issues which can prevent businesses from running effective and profitable online campaigns based on the CPA payment model.

1. **Lack of precision in targeting**

   The wide variety of available desktop and mobile-specific targeting options is astounding, and yet many businesses still find it difficult to use them to their full advantage in their CPA campaigns. By choosing only a few targeting features for their campaigns (e.g. geotargeting combined with demographic and mobile OS targeting for mobile CPA campaigns) and leaving the crucial “customer behavior” factor aside, they automatically reduce the potential effectiveness of the ads. Thus, the overall revenue is lowered for all parties involved: the publishers, advertisers, ad networks, ad agencies, etc.

   **The solution:** an enormous amount of data is collected daily on the Web, so it is possible to target online ads only to the most responsive and high-value audience segments. The key task for an advertiser is to build a complex and thorough customer image, using the resources of first-party and third-party data and finding corresponding “supply-side” partners.

2. **Lack of clarity and interactivity in landing pages**

   Even if a business works with the top publishers in their vertical, the efficiency of a CPA campaign can still be low if the landing pages are poorly designed and executed. They may not display well on all platforms, load slowly, lack a visible call-to-action and easy-to-grasp guidelines for viewers, or have other major drawbacks.

   **The solution:** there are several crucial features necessary for a high-quality landing page:

   - The landing page should display well on all platforms and device models.
   - It should load fast, even if the Internet connection slows down.
   - It should display content that is relevant to the ad.
   - It should deliver a strong call-to-action and an intuitive guide for viewers on how to proceed with an action (e.g. purchase a product, download software, sign up for a service, etc.)

3. **Discrepancies in ad performance tracking**

   Clearly, the CPA model presupposes tracking particular customer actions (pixel tracking or s2s tracking, for example), which should increase the overall ad effectiveness and drive more revenue. However, the precision of the tracked conversion data is often insufficient, which takes a toll on campaigns’ performance results.

   **The solution:** the range of conversion tracking options has already expanded and evolved so much that it is now possible to reach the highest level of precision in reported data provided to all parties. Reputable ad networks are now using a “PiggyBack Tracking” feature, which allows the automatic sending of all tracked conversion data from a publisher to an advertiser, even if they use third-party or proprietary ad serving solutions.

   **It’s time for a change, right?**

   As mentioned above, the CPA model has already become incredibly popular in the international online advertising market and is gradually becoming one of the hottest niches in the sphere, as the latest surveys reveal. A well-planned and well-implemented CPA campaign on desktop web and mobile can drive incredible results and multiply the financial value of ads, regardless of the segment a company works in.

   As always though, the effectiveness of CPA campaigns depends greatly on the level of precision a company puts in its planning, set-up, ongoing optimization, and analysis. A lack of focus in any of the aforementioned aspects can lead to significantly lower ad performance rates and, as a result, low ROI.

**About Anton Ruin**

Anton Ruin is a CEO of Epom, the world-known global provider of innovative ad serving and ad management solutions. Founded back in 2010, Epom's flagship product, Epom Ad Server, is a cutting-edge online ad serving platform for advertising networks, publishers and advertisers.
Efficient Ad Serving For Prominent Results

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