

# How brands are leveraging search data for social results

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[With plans to increase digital marketing budgets](#) in 2016, marketers are under the gun to get worthwhile returns on their investments – which explains the increasing popularity of **marketing** tools like **Facebook** [Custom Audiences](#) and [Google Shopping Campaigns](#).

But when marketers utilize paid search or **social** in silos, they miss out on the significant benefits — according to [Kenshoo](#), when paired with paid search, **Facebook advertising** delivers a [30 percent better return on ad spend](#) (ROAS) than the ROAS for paid search alone.

To maximize cross-channel campaign effectiveness, marketers have started leveraging the *intent* of consumer searches by applying it to **social marketing** campaigns.

The theory goes: when a consumer searches for a product or service on a search engine, they're expressing intent to purchase. By taking that expressed intent and serving ads for those products/services on **social** networks to re-engage consumers, marketers increase the likelihood of consumers completing the transaction. There's strong evidence that approach works.

## **Search intent + Facebook Custom Audiences = success**

For example, consider Belk, a mainline American department store company with nearly 300 stores in 16 Southern states that teamed up with [iCrossing](#), a **marketing** engagement agency, to significantly increase conversions among customers who already showed interest in its products through paid search on **Facebook**.

Belk and iCrossing **designed** campaigns with the following parameters:

- Targeted fans of its **Facebook** page as a baseline to compare to consumers who searched for the Belk **brand**
- Utilized IDA to automatically create and update Custom Audiences based on the triggered search keywords
- Used **Facebook's** targeting capabilities to find more high value customers
- Leveraged **Facebook's** entire ad inventory, including mobile, as well as **Facebook's** advanced filtering capabilities to further refine targeting on top of consumer search intent

data

By all measures, Belk's results were amazing. In targeting consumers based on their searches, a sale campaign delivered a 545 percent increase in conversion rate for versus targeting fans of its **brand**. A beauty campaign scored a 240 percent increase in conversion rates for Belk cosmetic searches versus fans of its **brand**. Meanwhile, Belk's cost per acquisition (CPA) dropped by 67 percent and its conversion rates when consumers were searching for Belk specifically (as opposed to non-**brand** terms) skyrocketed by 400 percent.

**Jon Pollack**, Belk's evp of **marketing**, sales promotion and e-commerce, commented on the campaign:

We utilized insight from our search campaign to inform our **social** strategies, which produced even greater results. This moves beyond **remarketing** and helps identify top **brand** loyalists based on their previous actions searching for the Belk **brand** and the products we sell online.

## Learning from Belk

The increasing sophistication of **social marketing** technology is allowing marketers to improve the performance – and increase the ROAS – of their campaigns. More than ever before, marketers can identify and target customers in terms of the *who*, *what*, *where* and *how* they search – by leveraging consumer intent, the *why* enters the mix.

Marketers might want borrow a page from Belk's playbook. Although there's no guarantee that they'll be able to duplicate the retailer's success, they should consider this: Research shows that on average, [every \\$1 spent on Facebook yields \\$2.19 in return](#) across paid search and paid **social** channels.

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