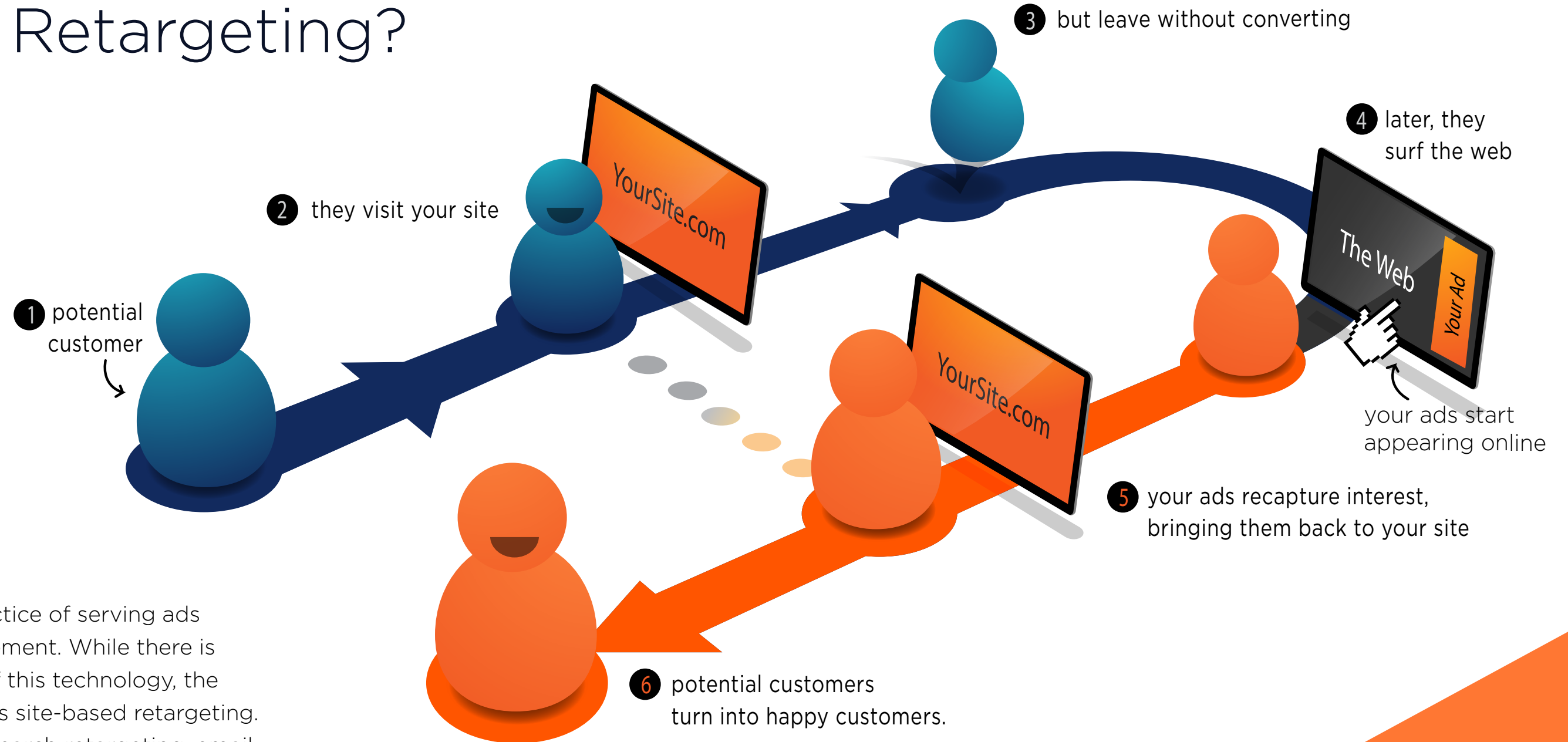# A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO
RETARGETING

ReTargeter

A Comprehensive Guide To Retargeting

Interested in setting up and launching a retargeting campaign, but don't know where to start? Allow the following beginner's guide to help you approach retargeting:

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What Is Retargeting?

1 potential customer

2 they visit your site

YourSite.com

3 but leave without converting

4 later, they surf the web

The Web

Your Ad

your ads start appearing online

5 your ads recapture interest, bringing them back to your site

YourSite.com

6 potential customers turn into happy customers.

Retargeting is the practice of serving ads based on prior engagement. While there is more than one form of this technology, the most frequently used is site-based retargeting. (Other forms include search retargeting, email retargeting, facebook retargeting, and CRM retargeting.)

Site-based retargeting is the practice of serving ads to people who visit your website after they leave. These ads appear on a variety of other sites around the web, keeping your brand in front of your bounced site visitors in an attempt to bring them back.

Retargeting is the practice of serving ads based on prior engagement.

1

How Retargeting Works

Site-based retargeting uses cookies to stay in front of previous site visitors. When someone visits your website, a few lines of code provided by your retargeter will drop an anonymous browser cookie. This cookie is a small file that stores information. The cookie will store the site visit, but does not store any sensitive information, such as the site visitor's name, address or any other piece of information that might personally identify the visitor.

The cookie will store the site visit, but does not store any sensitive information.

When someone comes to your site, a cookie is dropped, and eventually, they leave and visit another site. The cookie lets your retargeting provider know when one of your bounced visitors appears on another site. If there is available ad space, your retargeting provider will bid on that space in real-time, aptly named real-time bidding or RTB, and if they are the highest bidder, will secure the ad space before the page loads.

This entire process is automated and occurs within a fraction of a second. By the time the page loads, the ad space will have been purchased and your ad will appear alongside the page content.
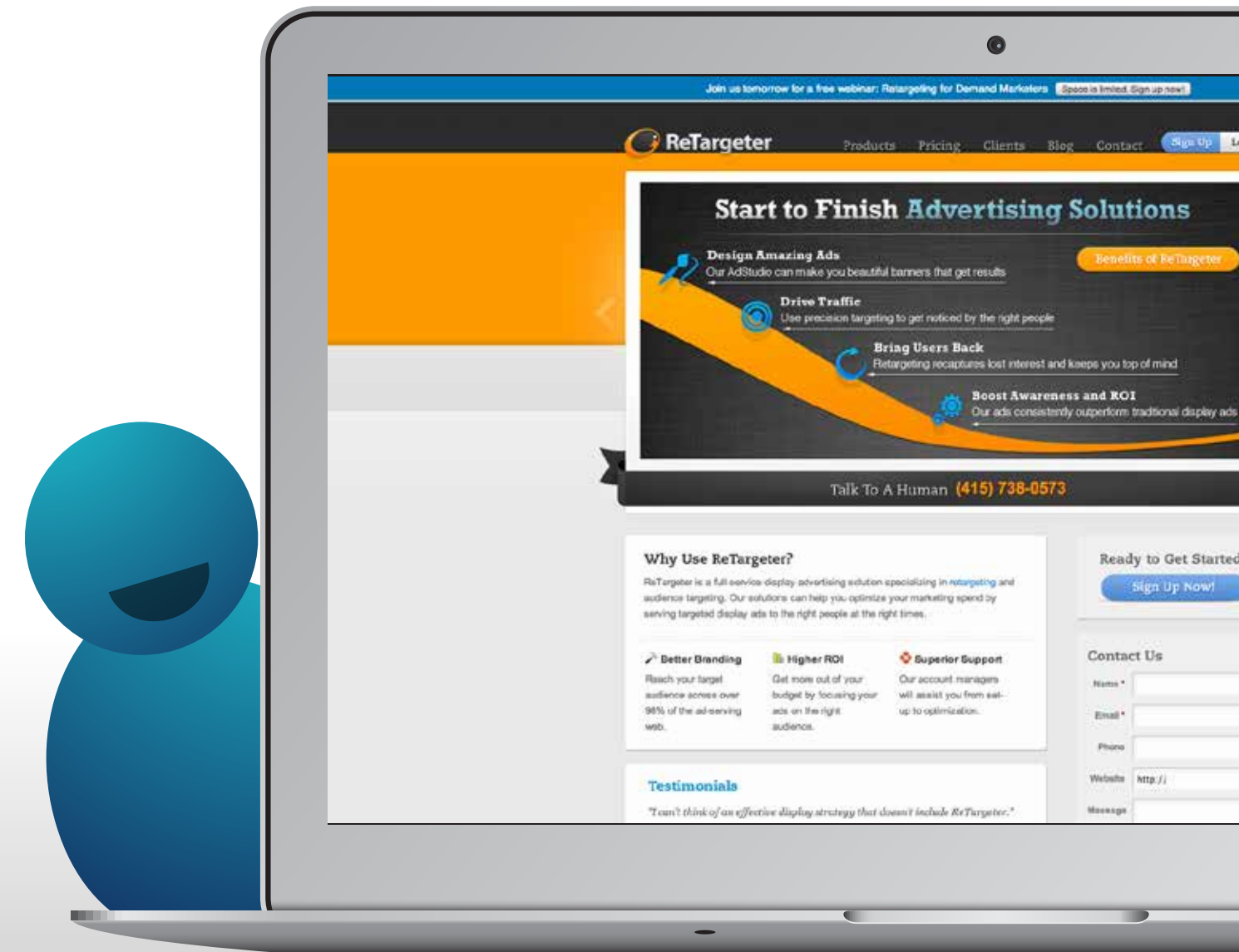
Retargeting Technologies

TYPES OF RETARGETING

SITE RETARGETING
The practice of serving ads to people who visit your website after they leave.

EMAIL RETARGETING
The practice of serving ads to people who open your emails.

CRM RETARGETING
The practice of serving ads to people with nothing but an email or mailing list.

AUDIENCE TARGETING
The practice of using demographic, geographic, behavioral, contextual, interest, and intent-based data to target your ideal audience all over the web.
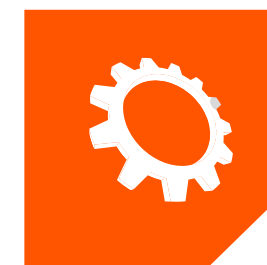
SEARCH RETARGETING
The practice of serving ads to users who search for one of your keywords while browsing the web.

FACEBOOK RETARGETING
The practice of serving ads to users on Facebook who have visited your site.

DYNAMIC RETARGETING
The practice of serving ads for specific items based on browsing behavior.

3

Can You Benefit From Retargeting?

Retargeting is very commonly used by ecommerce companies, and rightfully so, as it is one of the most effective ways to bring back bounced traffic and combat shopping cart abandonment. However, ecommerce companies are certainly not the only businesses that can benefit from this technology.

B2B companies are often the perfect candidates for retargeting, as it can help them stay in front of leads during longer purchase cycles. Schools, particularly higher education, can use retargeting to increase enrollment and donations. Recruiters can use retargeting to keep their companies in front of qualified applicants and increase application completion rates. Events or entertainment brands can use retargeting to increase ticket or merchandise sales.

B2B companies are often the perfect candidates for retargeting.

Retargeting can be applied in numerous ways; ecommerce and B2B serve as just two examples out of many. In fact, if you have a website and you're not seeing 100% conversion rates, you're a good candidate for retargeting.

Retargeting For Direct Response & Branding

DIRECT RESPONSE

Retargeting is often associated with direct response campaigns. Banner advertisements have long been used to urge people to "Click Now!", or take advantage of a timely deal. When a user visits your site, or engages with your brand in some way, and leaves without converting, retargeting provides you with an invaluable opportunity to encourage them to come back. Based on the goals of your retargeting campaign and how a user interacted with you, you can serve them advertising with highly targeted and relevant messaging. For example, if a user abandoned a shopping cart immediately after shipping costs were calculated, you can serve creative that offers free shipping if they complete the order within 24 hours.

BRANDING

Digital marketing, and specifically display advertising, can be about more than just generating immediate clicks. Marketers can develop retargeting campaigns for the purpose of branding. Data regarding demographics, search history, and past purchasing information can all be used to craft effective branding campaigns—an opportunity not to be missed.

When it comes to retargeting, and display in general, most return visits come through direct visits or through search. One comScore study found that brands saw up to a 1046% increase in branded search, or users searching directly for the brand name, during retargeting campaigns. This massive increase in branded search is a clear indicator that retargeting is highly successful in building brand awareness, and isn't only effective for direct response campaigns.

Creatives For Branding

Banner design is one of the most important pillars of any online display campaign. A good banner ad employs simple design and concise messaging. When a marketer sets out to create an ad focused on brand awareness, the tenets of simplicity and succinctness are easy to incorporate: simply add a logo and a slogan and incorporate your brand's colors and fonts. Here are tips to winning banner ads:

AVOID DISTRACTIONS

One of the most common mistakes in banner design is over-inclusiveness. Often, advertisers will attempt to jam pack as much information as possible into a single ad in a misguided attempt to get the most out of each impression. Prima facie, this may appear to be a good tactic, but attempts to include too much information often end up conveying no meaningful information at all. With any banner ad, you have only a moment to grab the attention of your viewer and make an impression. Additionally, banner ads offer extremely limited real estate. Packing information in tiny, unreadable text will neither effectively relay that information nor make a lasting impression. Including too many images or overly complex graphics will have the same negative effect.

There can only be one call-to-action, and it should be simple, declarative, and bold.

Due to limited space and the small window of opportunity to catch the viewer, your goal should be to make a lasting impression. Eye-catching backgrounds should be paired with short taglines that explain your product or value proposition as effectively as possible. There can only be one call-to-action, and it should be simple, declarative, and bold.
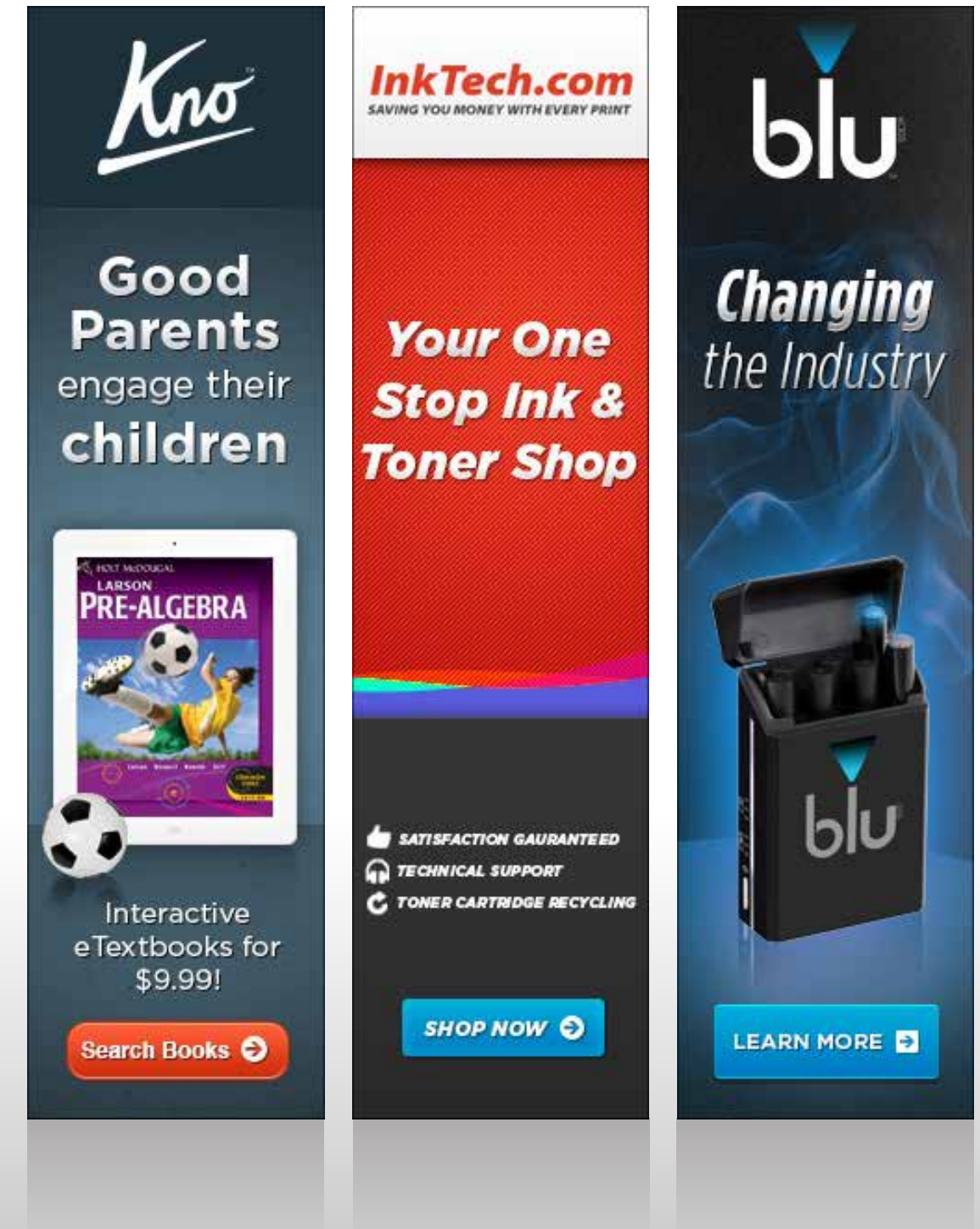
USE PHOTOS ONLY WHEN APPROPRIATE

It is often assumed that ads featuring a photo of a person will always perform better than ads without a photo. Sometimes this is the case, but just as often, photos can backfire. The mere inclusion of a person's photo far from guarantees a high-performing ad. Haphazard inclusion of seemingly arbitrary photos will do nothing to explain your product and is another of the most common mistakes made in banner design. It is often assumed that, because you have such a brief window to secure attention, ads without photos will be overlooked, but a well-designed ad with a brightly colored background or simple artwork can also do the trick. In fact, bright colors and vibrant artwork are often more eye-catching than a photo.

Bright colors and vibrant artwork are often *more* eye-catching than a photo.

However, when appropriate, photos can help the viewer to feel more of a connection to your product or the benefits it provides. This is best accomplished if you can show someone using your product or service. Given the limited space available within a banner, and depending on your product or service, this use case may not be a viable option. For example, at ReTargeter, there is not a good way to show our desired audience, marketers, using our online advertising products. You may also be able to use photos to express a benefit of your product or service, such as convenience or peace of mind. If you can effectively demonstrate your benefits using a photo, then it can be a highly effective tactic.

The bottom line: keep you banners simple, beautiful, and readable, don't include any elements that are not strictly necessary, and don't over-complicate your testing.

Where Retargeting Fits in the Funnel

Search   Audience

Awareness

Search   Site

Interest

Site   CRM   Email

Evaluation

Site   CRM   Email   Dynamic

Commitment

CRM   Email

Referral

**Repeat**

Retargeting Best Practices

Retargeting is a powerful digital marketing technique when campaigns are run correctly. We recommend the following best practices to help ensure you craft retargeting campaigns that result in the brand lift and ROI you may have heard about:

1. Use Frequency Caps

2. Use A Burn Code

3. Segment Your Audiences

4. Use Demographic, Geographic, & Contextual Targeting

5. Set Proper View Through Conversion Windows

6. Use A Single Retargeting Provider

7. Optimize Your Creatives

1. Use Frequency Caps

You want to be visible, but you don't want to overexpose yourself, which is why it's almost always advisable to use a frequency cap. One or two visits to your website doesn't mean prospects want to start seeing your ads everywhere they browse. Overexposure quickly results in decreased campaign performance. Prospects may ignore your ads completely, a phenomenon known as banner blindness, or they may begin to think of your brand as creepy and stalker-like.

A frequency cap will limit the number of times a tagged user will see your ads and will prevent potential customers from feeling bored, overwhelmed, or stalked. Be strategic with how and when you serve ads as many prospects are still researching, window shopping, or just not ready to buy. We typically recommend 17-20 ads per user per month, but you can work with your retargeting provider to determine what makes most sense for your campaign.
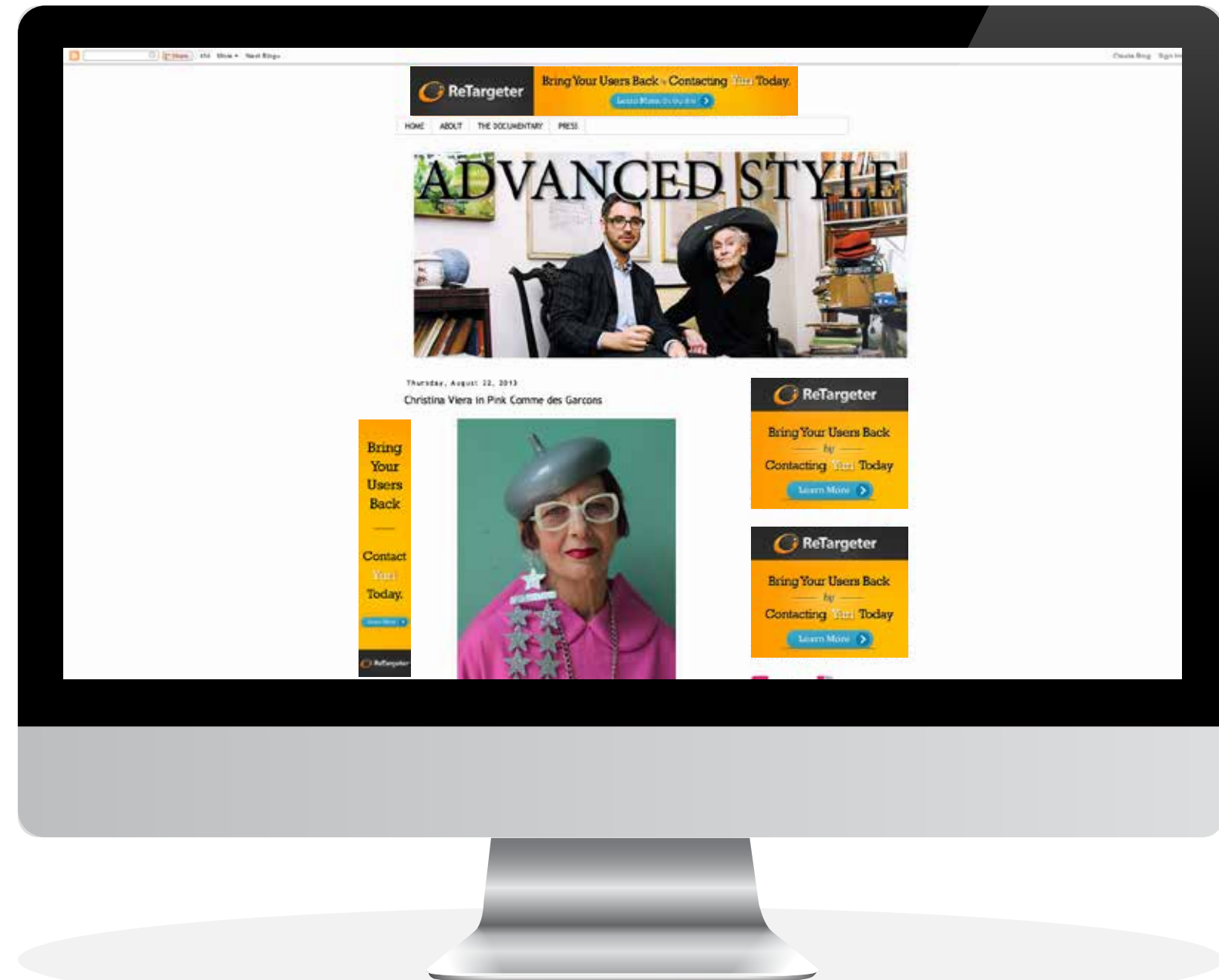
2. Use A Burn Code

Have you ever made a purchase online only to find you're still being inundated with advertisements for that company or product? If that's happening, the company hasn't recognized you as a current customer. By continuing to serve ads to converted customers, companies are only serving to annoy people.

Don't make the same mistake. Luckily, there's a very simple solution: use a burn pixel. This snippet of code, placed in your post-transaction page, will untag any users who have made a purchase, ensuring you stop serving them ads. It's that easy. In addition to not annoying your customer, the burn code saves you money. Why waste valuable impressions on the people who already converted?

Converted customers can still be a part of your retargeting campaign, just don't ask them to take the same action twice. Now, you have an opportunity to retarget current customers with new ads. Instead of showing them what they have already bought, you can upsell, cross-sell, or even offer referral discounts through new ads. Essentially, burn the previous campaign and enroll them in a new one!

3. Segment Your Audiences

Audience segmentation allows for you to tailor ad messages to users in different stages of the purchase funnel. The process is simple: you place different retargeting pixels on different pages of your site, and then tailor creatives based on the depth of engagement of each user.

When a visitor comes to your main page, you can target them with creatives that communicate general brand awareness. If they looked at your product page, you can serve them with more specific ads around your product offerings, Regardless of user's level of interest, audience segmentation ensures you are serving relevant and engaging ads.

Why waste valuable impressions on the people who already converted?

4. Use Demographic, Geographic, & Contextual Targeting

Targeting gives you the opportunity to fine-tune your ad placements, ensuring greater relevancy and increasing ad performance. Advertisements can be targeted based on demographic information, like age or gender, contextual factors like subject matter of the website, or geographic data.

Instead of serving ads to everyone, place the right ads in front of the right people.

When you target your ads with consideration for demographic, geographic, and contextual variables, you don't waste valuable impressions on people who aren't relevant to your campaign. Targeting not only improves the relevancy of your retargeting campaign by placing the right ads in front of the right people, but it also lowers your costs. Instead of serving ads to everyone, you're saving your money and showing ads to the people for whom your ads make the most sense.

5. Setting View-Through Conversion Windows

For brand marketers interested in increasing awareness and establishing market share, display can be a highly effective and measurable channel. A frequent complaint of the direct response crowd is that online display advertising doesn't drive clicks at the same rate as paid search advertising, but clicks aren't telling the whole story. Retargeted ads, even if they aren't clicked, can provide brand lift. In one comScore study, retargeted ads led to a 1046% increase in branded search, a clear sign of heightened brand awareness and recall.

The view-through conversion takes into account that some ads don't trigger immediate buying decisions, but can nonetheless influence people to make purchases later, also known as the billboard effect. In the same way a catchy billboard grabs your attention and boosts brand awareness, an online display ad can encourage a later action. View-through conversions provide advertisers with richer data around ad performance by considering conversions that occur within a certain window after a user sees an ad.There are various practices around the length of a view-through conversion window, some providers will set a 30-day window for example, but we recommend 24 hours. A 24-hour view-through conversion window will provide you with valuable data around the stickiness of your ads, the quality of your ad placements, and your audience's shopping habits, without inflating or overstating your ads' effectiveness.

6. Single-Provider Retargeting

Running retargeting campaigns with multiple providers has a number of serious drawbacks. If you run with multiple providers, each provider will be bidding for the same spots on the same websites, driving up media costs and decreasing the chances each has to serve ads to your users. You may also run into difficulties effectively implementing frequency caps, as each retargeting provider will be operating independently.

If you're new to retargeting and you want to test the waters with different providers, it's more effective to run tests in subsequent months using one provider at a time. You'll have a better sense of which campaign actually performed better without skewing your results.

7. Optimize Your Creatives

The banner ads you use may do more to determine success than any other factor of your retargeting campaign, so it's crucial to devote sufficient resources to making beautiful ads. Marketers often try to cram as much information as possible into the space allotted. This method of designing banners will only distract your audience and won't serve the purpose of the ad: to win their attention and keep it. You want to be memorable, so that even if your audience doesn't click your ad, it stays with them. Often, creating memorable ads is best achieved by keeping copy minimal and design simple. All of your banner ads should be well-branded and recognizable. Use bold colors, concise copy, and clear calls to action with big, clickable buttons. For more suggestions, check out our section on banner ad best practices.

ROTATING YOUR CREATIVES & A/B TESTING

Even if you launch your campaign with incredibly strong creatives, running with the same set of ads for months on end will result in a lower performing campaign. According to a ReTargeter study, clickthrough rates decrease by almost 50% after five months of running the same set of ads. After seeing the same ads again and again, a user's interest is no longer piqued and the ads are more likely to blend into the background. By rotating your ad creative every few months, you can easily avoid experiencing these dips in performance.

Simple A/B tests can provide the data you need to run campaigns with high-performing ads. Instead of relying on what you think will work, you can run tests for measurable and actionable results. A/B testing your creatives will help you determine the optimal combination of ad copy, calls-to-action, and graphics. Here at ReTargeter, we always run A/B tests and recommend that our clients do the same.
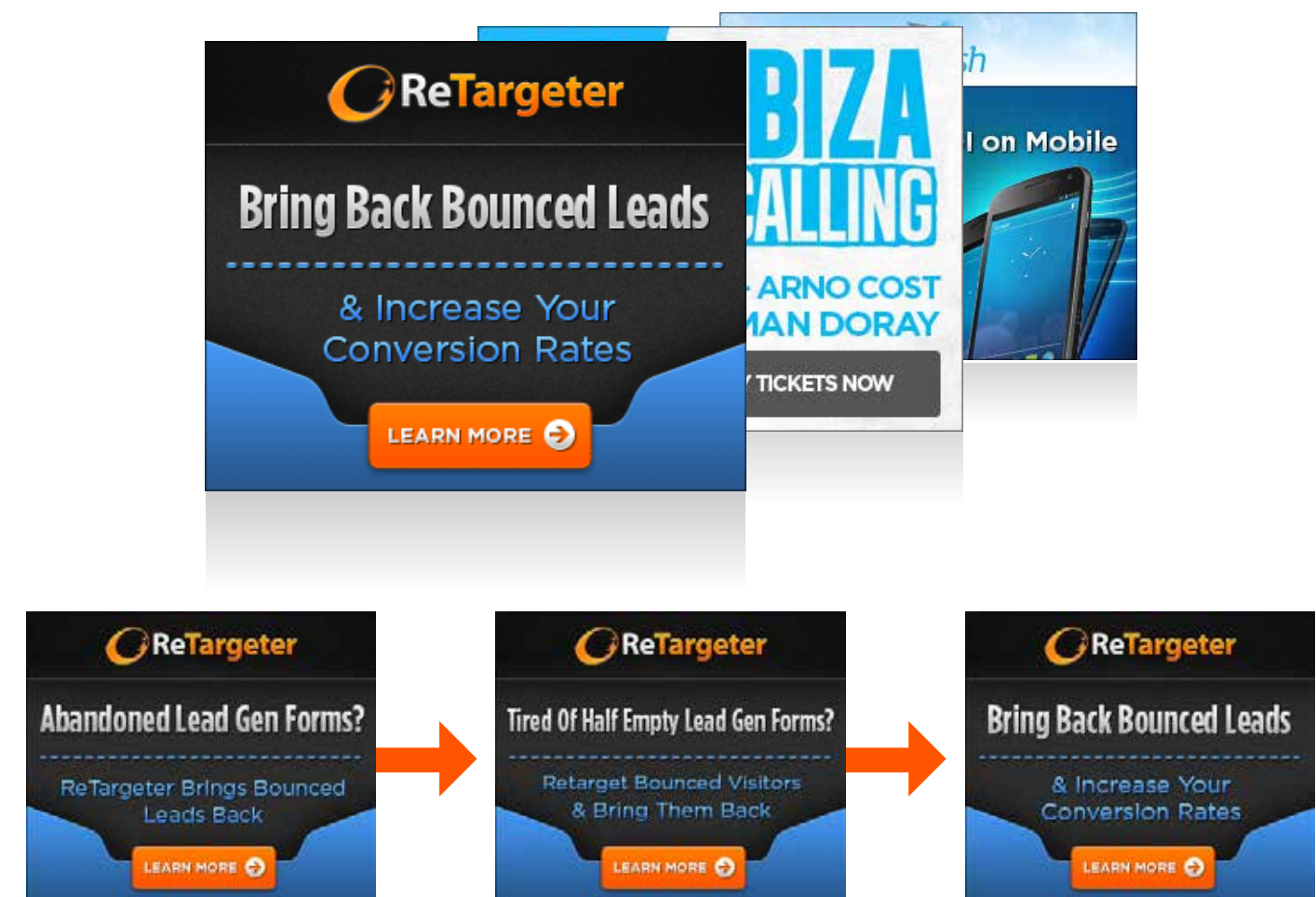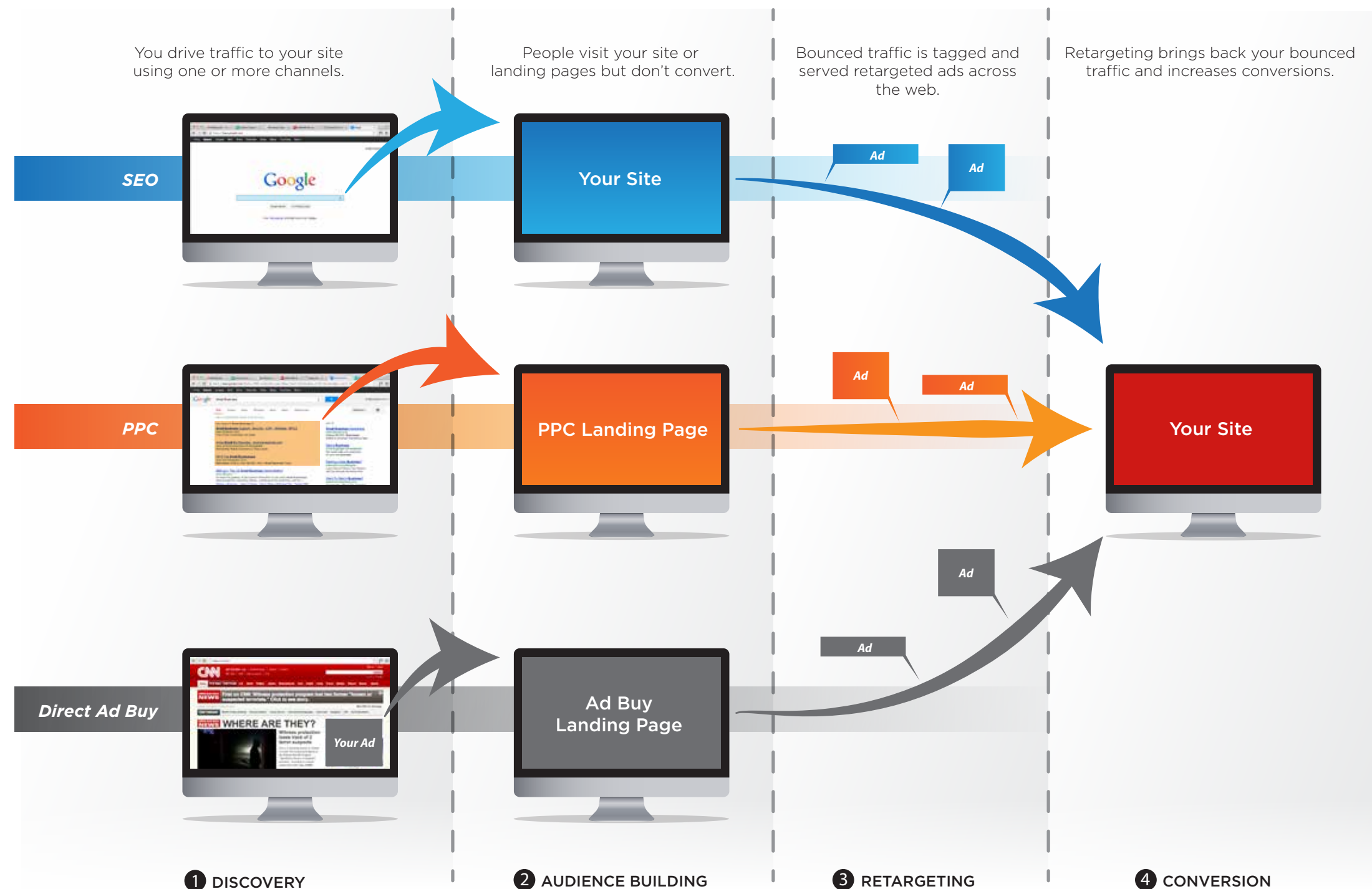
How Retargeting Fits Into
Your Marketing Strategy
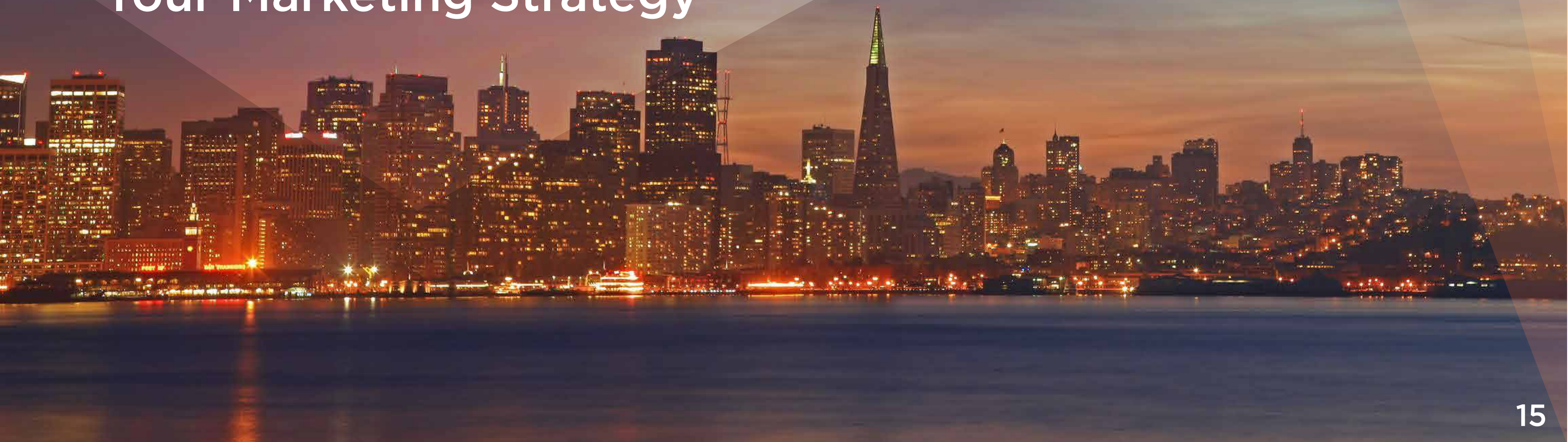
Retargeting serves as a valuable component of an integrated marketing strategy, and will be most successful when used in conjunction with other efforts.

With today's long sales cycles and increasingly complex customer journeys, creating multiple touch points with prospects is essential to maximizing your marketing efforts and your ROI.
When you don't use retargeting, you miss out on a huge opportunity to engage with traffic that will convert.

Retargeting provides the additional touch points that serve as valuable follow-up to a user's initial interest. Amplify your marketing efforts by retargeting across all of your existing channels to re-engage users and turn customers into lifelong brand advocates.

You drive traffic to your site using one or more channels.

People visit your site or landing pages but don't convert.

Bounced traffic is tagged and served retargeted ads across the web.

Retargeting brings back your bounced traffic and increases conversions.

SEO

Your Site

Ad

Ad

PPC

PPC Landing Page

Ad

Ad

Your Site

Direct Ad Buy

Your Ad

Ad Buy Landing Page

Ad

Ad

1 DISCOVERY

2 AUDIENCE BUILDING

3 RETARGETING

4 CONVERSION

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Retargeting and Your Website

Your website serves as the pillar of your online presence. It is where you communicate your value, where you direct traffic, where you optimize for SEO, and it provides the look and feel of your brand. All marketing roads lead to your website. When you finally get the traffic you've been working for, what happens after they leave?
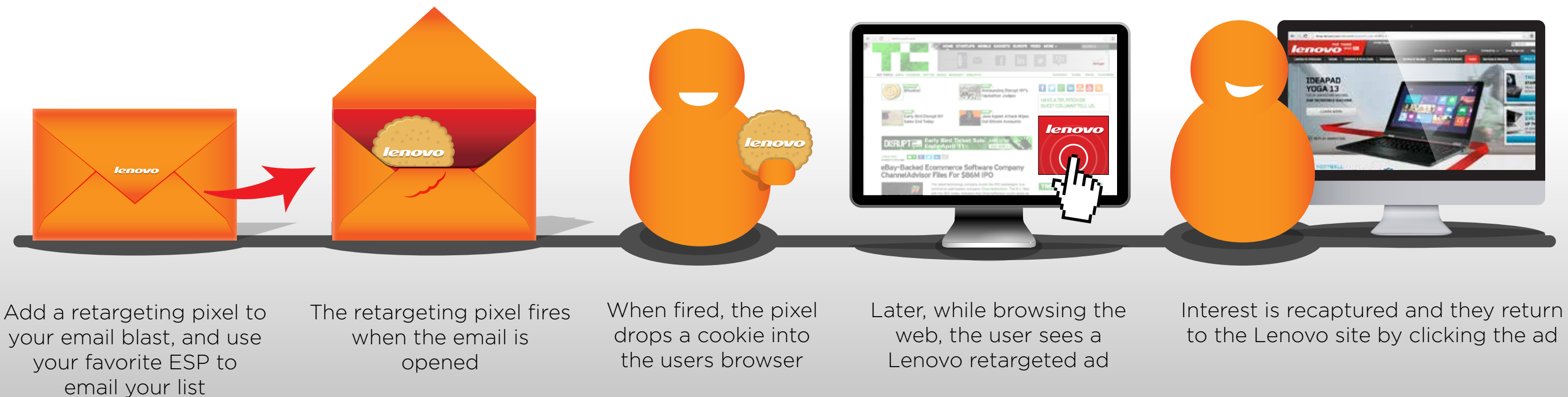
With site retargeting, you don't have to let that hard earned traffic slip through your fingers. Site retargeting will serve ads to people who visit your website after they leave. It is an effective method for ensuring you don't lose that traffic forever. Site retargeting reminds site visitors to come back to do more research or complete the purchase.

Retargeting and Your Email

Email is one of your most important marketing channels. 77% of Internet users surveyed prefer email messages over any other form of communication. Email retargeting supplements your email marketing with display advertising. It is a simple and effective way to drastically improve the reach of your email campaigns.

Email retargeting gives you the opportunity to upsell existing customers, reduce shopping cart abandonment, promote limited time offers, and even drive offline actions. When you do not use email retargeting, you're leaving it up to your mailing list to take the next steps on their own. Internet users may prefer email messages, but this Teradata study shows that email combined with display outperforms email on its own, and the combination can contribute to a significant increase in website and landing page traffic.

Add a retargeting pixel to your email blast, and use your favorite ESP to email your list

The retargeting pixel fires when the email is opened

When fired, the pixel drops a cookie into the users browser

Later, while browsing the web, the user sees a Lenovo retargeted ad

Interest is recaptured and they return to the Lenovo site by clicking the ad

Retargeting and Direct Mail

For the businesses that utilize direct mail, retargeting can help you get the most out of your mailing list. Using CRM Retargeting, an innovative form of retargeting that allows advertisers to serve display ads to people with nothing but an email or mailing address, you can re-engage with those one-time customers who still receive your catalog or other direct-mail promotions but never made that second purchase.

CRM Retargeting provides a unique opportunity to market to users who may have never interacted with your brand's online presence in the past. You can bridge your offline-online database and extrapolate valuable data that will allow you to target your audience with highly relevant messaging. For example, you can take the data you have from phone or in-store purchase habits to show your offline customers relevant ads when they're browsing the web.

Retargeting and Social

You know your customers are active on Facebook, and so is your brand. You've setup a Facebook page, you promote posts you want followers to see, and you may even run some ads to promote your page. But are you using the channel to its full extent? The Facebook Exchange, FBX, is Facebook's real-time bidding platform. FBX is the only place in Facebook's ad ecosystem where advertisers can serve retargeted ads. This means you can serve ads to the people who came to your site and left, even when they're hanging out on Facebook.

Since its launch, Facebook retargeting campaigns have seen impressive results. FBX provides you with the opportunity to target the right audience like never before. You can engage users based on previous browsing behaviors. You can focus on users who are already familiar with your brand. You can serve ads to people who are in varying stages of the funnel, and encourage the next action accordingly. With a billion people devoting 15% of their online time to the social network, Facebook retargeting allows you to reach your users on virtually unlimited inventory.

Retargeting and Events

Retargeting can drive awareness and increase ticket sales for your events. You can serve display ads promoting an upcoming event to people who have visited your website, opened your email, or even attended one of your events in the past. A display campaign will supplement your existing event marketing efforts and can re-engage past customers or site visitors by encouraging a registration or ticket purchase.

Retargeting for events isn't limited to pre-event promotions, however. You can also use retargeting to offer related promotions, deals, and discounts, and ultimately, keep engagement high even after an event has passed. Conferences will often use this technique to encourage event attendees to register early for the upcoming year or to boost awareness for a smaller, lesser-known event.

Retargeting and Existing Clients

You're doing everything right and people are converting, but this doesn't mean your job as a marketer is done. Retargeting isn't restricted to new business. In fact, it can be quite effective in retaining existing clients, as well as in cross-sell and upsell campaigns. Retargeting allows for you to segment your campaigns and serve creatives that are geared toward a highly targeted segment of your customer base.

Once your retargeting campaign has turned a visitor into a buyer, you can move that customer into a new segment for a campaign with upsell-focused messaging. For example, based on a customer's purchase history, there may be a complementary product that would be useful, or an additional package that makes sense. Perhaps a customer purchased the "Basic" package, and a month in you'd like to entice them with "Premium." CTRs and conversion rates have been found to be anywhere from 3-5% higher with retargeting campaigns for upsells, as compared to standard site retargeting. If you're not retargeting your existing clients, you're missing out on those valuable conversions.

Measuring The Success Of Retargeting

The success of any given display campaign is dependent upon your goals. A good outcome for one marketer may not be a good outcome for you. Before launching a campaign, consider what you want to accomplish and set your metrics accordingly. One of the primary advantages digital advertising has over traditional media is the ability to directly attribute sales to ad impressions.

Clicks are one of the most common measurements of success. It's tempting to look to clicks as a performance indicator because they represent a very tangible action, but all the reliable evidence suggests that clicks are not an accurate measure of performance for display.

Advertisements are seldom meant to influence immediate purchasing decisions. Late-night infomercials notwithstanding (limited time offer, call now!), most advertisements are geared toward influencing consumer behavior at some point in the future, not in the present. But how do we know whether seeing an advertisement led somebody to make a purchase later?

A significant percentage of Internet users don't click ads. Ever. Regardless of the demographic makeup of clickers vs. non-clickers (there has been some discussion about whether clickers are or aren't valuable targets), there is a significant number of people who just don't do it, but that doesn't mean they aren't influenced by ads. One comScore study found that being served an ad does correlate strongly with conversions, indicating that seeing an ad can lead someone to convert who otherwise wouldn't. Failing to recognize that unclicked ads have an impact will understate your campaign performance and lead you to underinvest in channels that are actually driving revenue.

View-Through Conversions

Measuring view-through conversions is one way to quantify the impact of these kinds of ads. The view-through conversion takes into account that some ads don't trigger immediate buying decisions, but can nonetheless influence people to make purchases later. By providing information on conversions that occur after a user sees an ad, view-through conversions offer a glimpse into the full impact of an ad beyond just click data.

THE VIEW-THROUGH CONVERSION WINDOW

With a 24-hour conversion window, advertisers can focus on the unique insights provided by view-through conversions, instead of worrying whether the statistics have been artificially inflated. Specifically, view-through conversions can help gauge the following:

1. The stickiness of your ads. An ad that gets you to click on it right away is eye-catching; an ad influences you to make a purchase hours later is memorable. You can determine the "stickiness" of your ads by conducting A/B tests and keeping track of which ads have the highest view-through conversion rate.

2. The quality of your ad placements. Imagine if you have two identical ads running on two separate websites, and each produces the exact same click-through conversion rate but different view-through conversion rates. Whichever site has the higher view-through conversion rate would also likely have a higher concentration of your target audience, allowing you to fine-tune your placements for maximum impact.

3. Your audience's shopping habits. Different products have different purchase cycle—shoppers are likely to spend more time choosing a home theater system than they would a dishwashing detergent.

4. View-through conversions can illuminate these varying habits by showing you how many people buy at the spur of the moment (click through conversions), versus people who wait before they buy (view-through conversions). In tandem with data on dayparting, you can get a fairly clear picture of how your target market buys your products and when they're likely to do it.

Like all metrics, view-through conversions have the potential to be misinterpreted and misused. Yet by carefully considering the actual meaning behind the numbers, and taking care to set a reasonable conversion window, you can leverage view-through conversions to gain a deeper understanding of your ads, your placements, and your customers.

Examples of Successful Retargeting

Mag👀sh

Magoosh Online Test prep offers online courses for GMAT, GRE and SAT courses including video explanations, subject lessons, and practice tests.
Organic search is Magoosh's primary source of web traffic, but it is rare for a student to convert after just one visit, as most are still researching.

"Retargeting serves as a brand booster as students are researching test prep and helps us establish our reputation."
Margarette Jung | Marketing Manager

A retargeting campaign for Magoosh's GRE course yielded 1,123 conversions over six months (61 click-through and 1,062 view-through). To determine the value of view-throughs, Magoosh ran a test and found that people who had been retargeted converted at a significantly higher rate than the control group. As a result of the test, Magoosh attributes view-throughs at 50% of the value of click-throughs.

With view-throughs valued at 50% and a conversion equal to $99, the campaign generated $58,608 in attributable revenue. At a total cost of $11,000 the campaign resulted in an ROI of 486%.
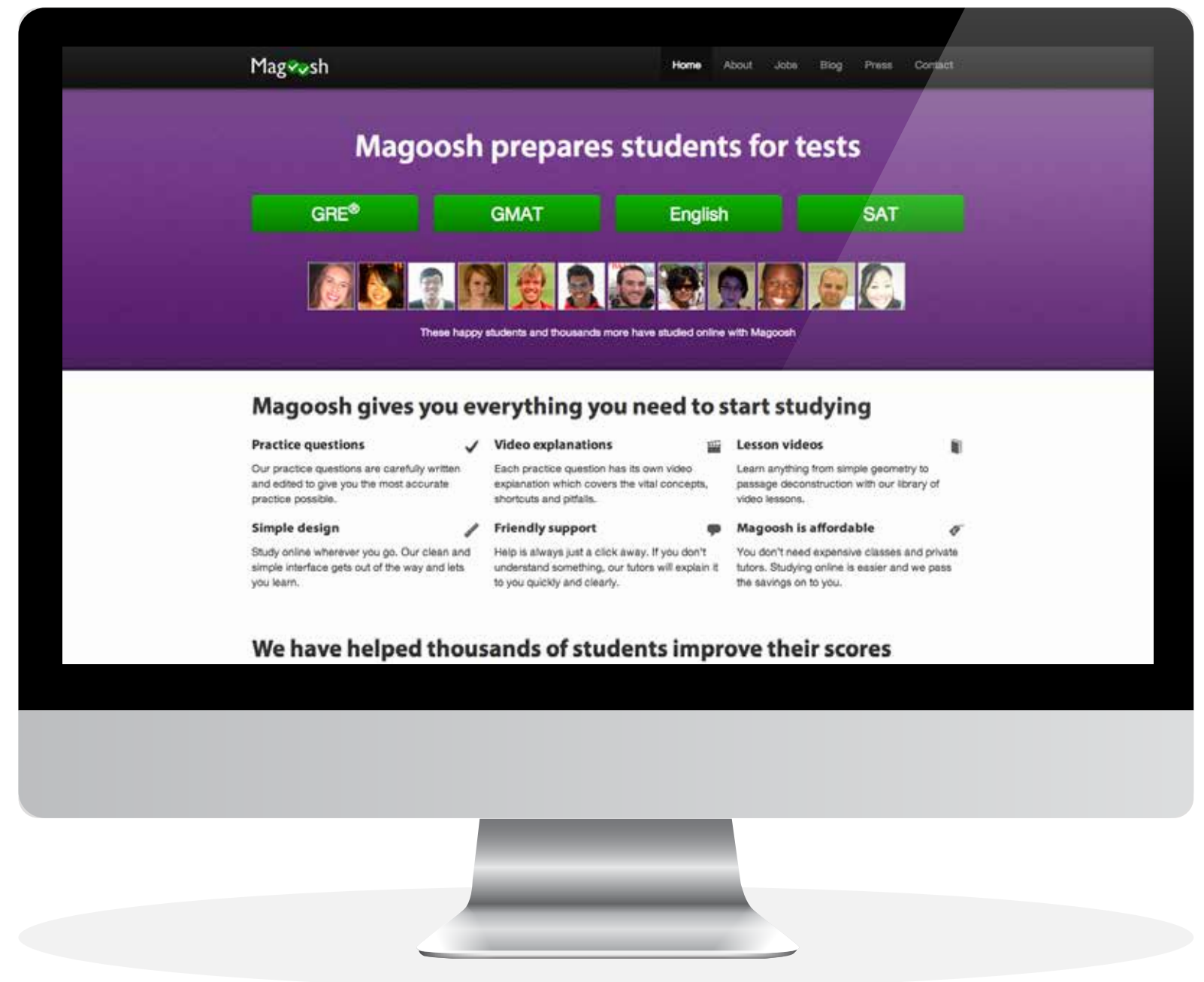
Skimlinks uses ReTargeter to improve brand recall and stay in front of prospective clients during their sales cycle.

In the first month, ReTargeter was able to drive 448 conversions. At Skimlinks, churn rates are quite low; as Aaron puts it, "happy clients are lifelong clients," so having new clients join their program is of paramount importance. Customer lifetime values can be extraordinarily high, and with ReTargeter, the cost per conversion averages a few dollars, leading to an incredibly high returns, which has been the most striking benefit that Skimlinks has seen from retargeting.
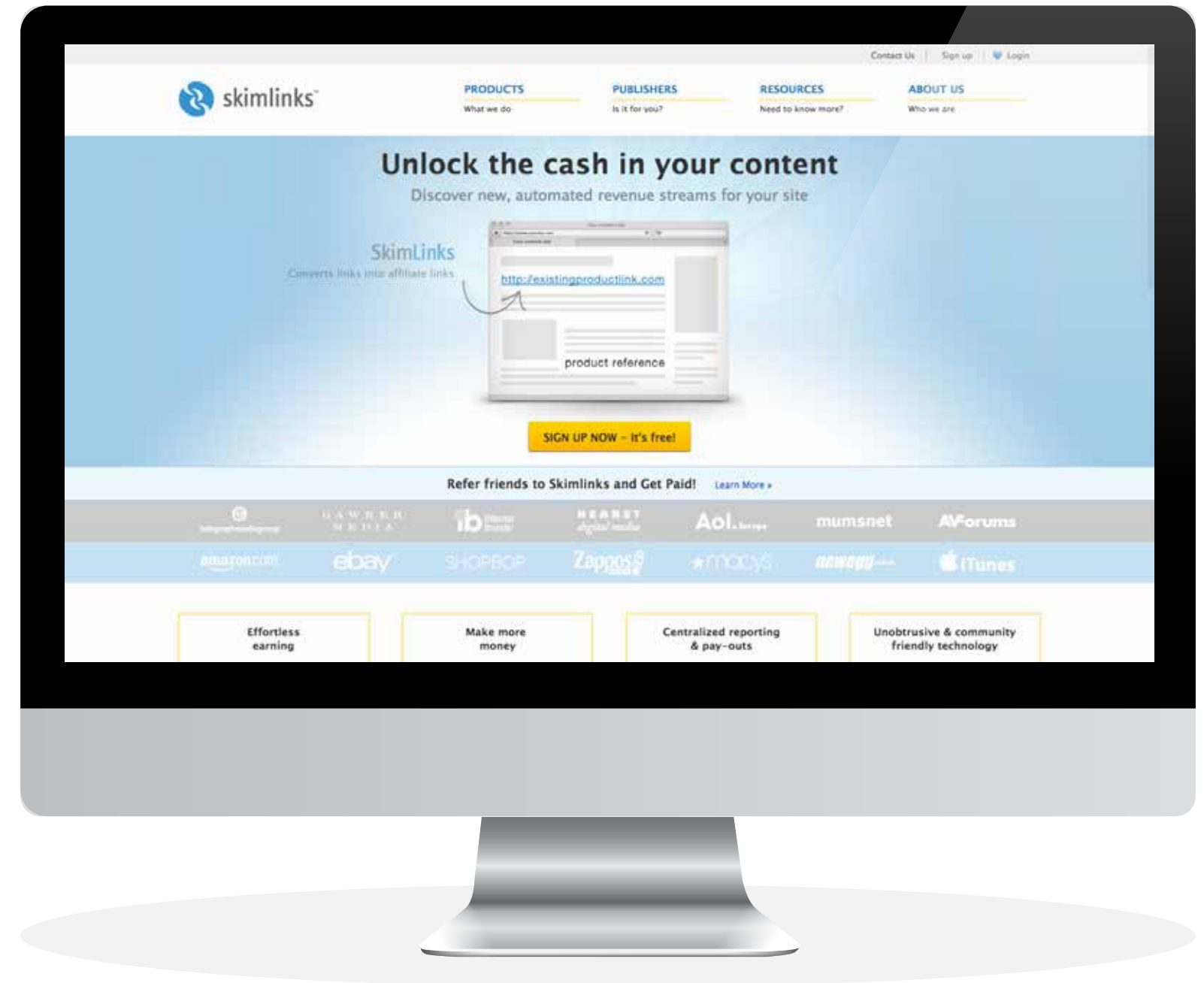
CLEAN®

The Clean Program is a detoxification diet that promotes a healthful diet and lifestyle through a 21 day program. They use ReTargeter to stay in front of their traffic and give them additional chances to purchase their product.

The Clean Program spent $1,000/month on retargeting their current traffic. With a price point of their product at $350, their ReTargeting campaign helped drive 40 conversions, totalling up to $14,000 of revenue from ReTargeting in June.

June 2010 Breakdown

Spend = $1,000

Return = $14,000

ROI = 1,400%

"We have a niche audience for our products, so it makes sense to only target the people visiting our site because they've already shown they're interested in us. Retargeting has been amazing at bringing back bounced traffic and adding additional sales."

Ben Tseitlin | The Clean Program


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7 Deadly Sins of Retargeting

Avoid these seven retargeting sins, and you'll
be sure to have a successful campaign.

1. Showing too many impressions

2. Not showing enough impressions

3. Neglecting your creatives

4. Retargeting current customers

5. Using multiple providers at the same time

6. Failing to measure success

7. Failing to segment

28
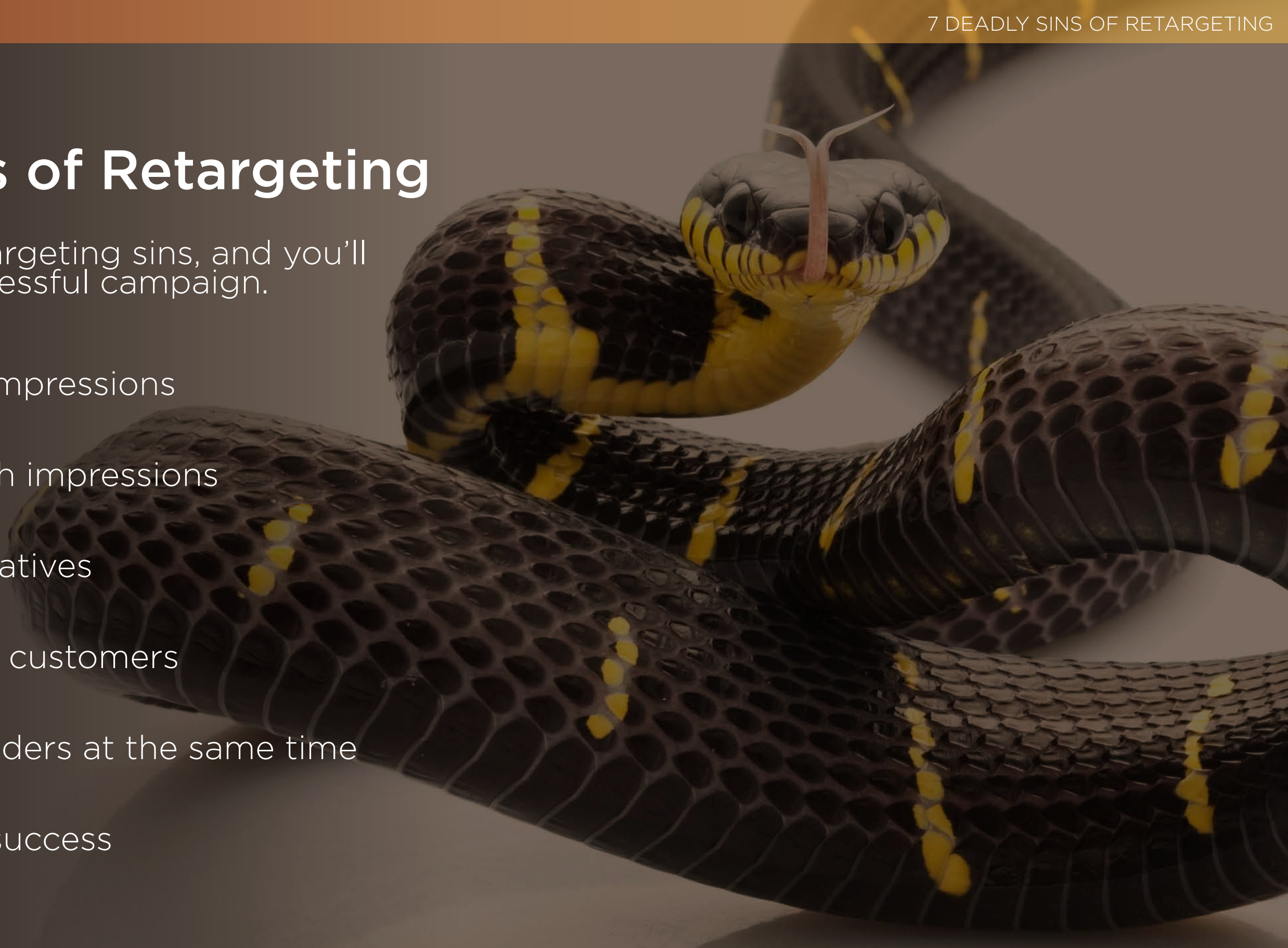
1. Showing too many impressions

One of the biggest concerns most brands have before starting a retargeting campaign is the fear of annoying, creeping out, or otherwise overwhelming their consumers. The concern here is certainly a valid one, as consumer annoyance due to excessive retargeting ads is well-documented. Luckily, it's also easy to avoid. Set a frequency cap to limit the number of impression each of your users is served.
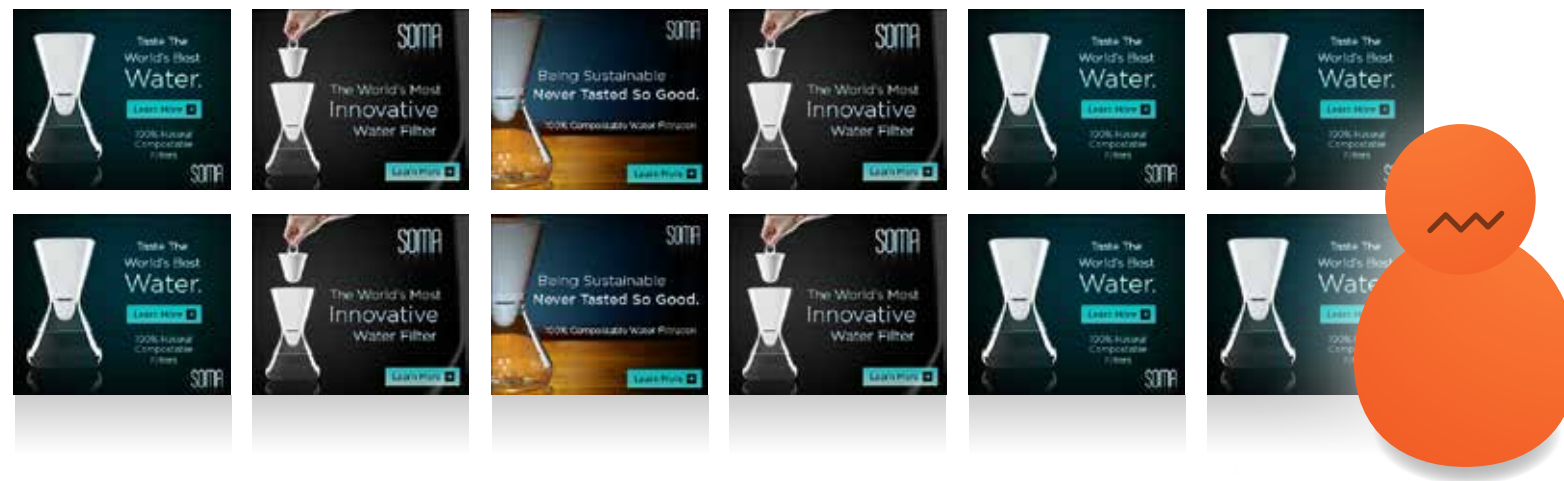


2. Now showing enough impressions

While showing too many impressions can turn users against you, not showing enough can render your retargeting campaign just as ineffective. The power of retargeting lies in its ability to keep your brand top of mind among users through continuous exposure. If you only serve a few ads throughout the month, it won't be sufficient to solidify brand awareness and cement brand recall. In our experience, the optimal number is approximately 17-20 impressions per user per month, breaking down to roughly one impression every other day. At this level, your users won't be inundated with ads, but will see your brand with enough frequency to solidify brand recall.

3. Neglecting your creatives

The banner ads you use may do more to determine success than any other factor of your retargeting campaign, so it's crucial to devote sufficient resources to making beautiful ads. All of your banner ads should be well-branded and recognizable. Use bold colors, concise copy, and clear calls to action with big, clickable buttons. For more suggestions, check out our section on banner ad best practices. Even if you launch your campaign with incredibly strong creatives, running with the same set of ads for months on end will result in a lower performing campaign.

Clickthrough rates decrease by almost 50% after five months of running the same set of ads.

According to proprietary ReTargeter data, clickthrough rates decrease by almost 50% after five months of running the same set of ads. After seeing the same ads again and again, a user's interest is no longer piqued and the ads are more likely to blend into the background. By rotating your ad creative every few months, you can easily avoid experiencing these dips in performance.
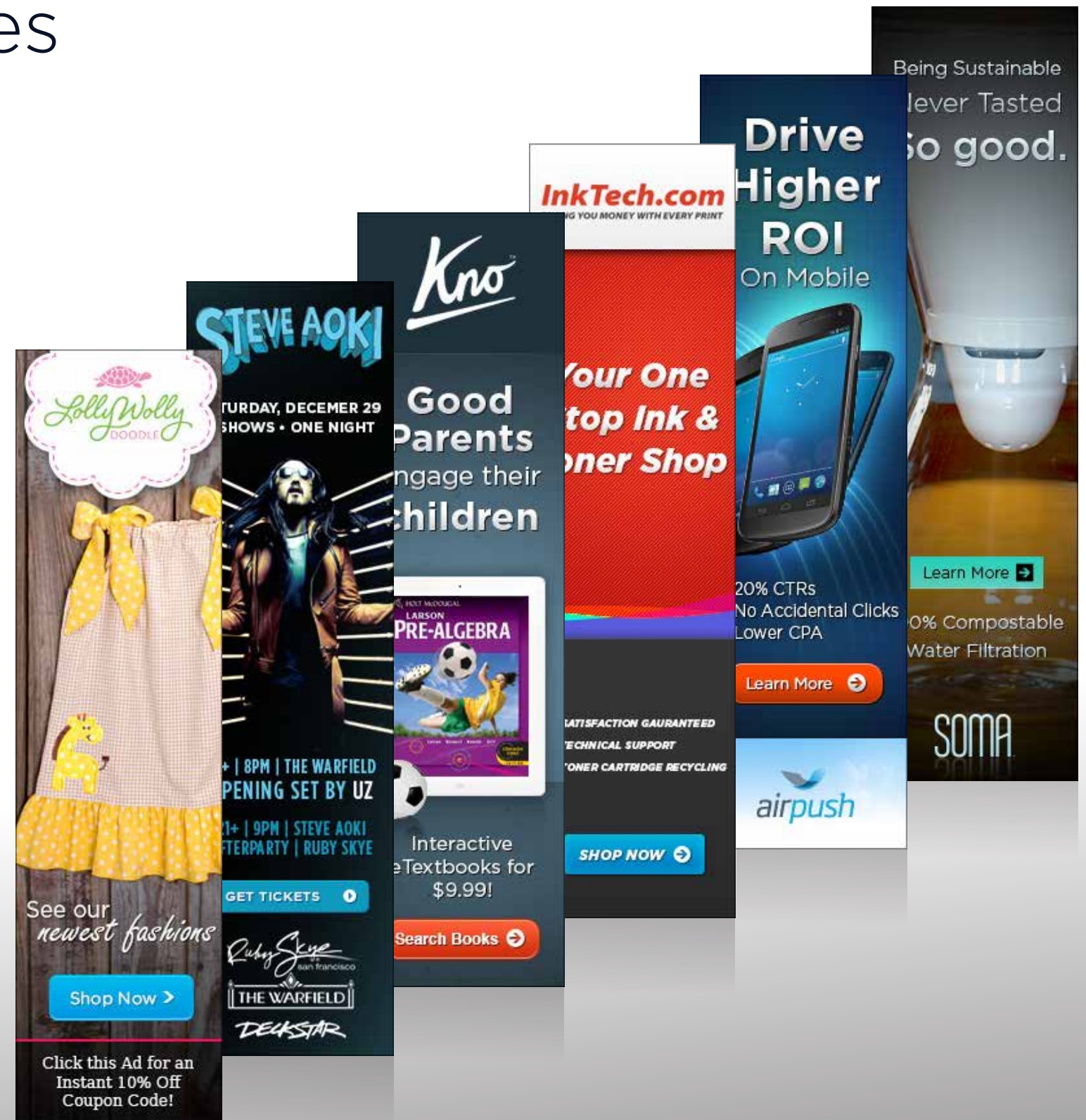
4. Retargeting current customers

If there's anything that annoys people more than seeing 50 display ads per day from one company, it's seeing the same ads after they've made a purchase or completed the desired action. It's incredibly easy to remove users from a retargeting campaign once they've converted. Placing one simple line of code on your post-conversion, or thank-you page will remove your new customers from the pool of unconverted users, and they'll no longer see your retargeted ads. For some brands, it may be a good idea to serve ads after conversion.

However, it never makes sense to serve the same ad creative. Using the same banners is a surefire way to annoy your customers, and often, it doesn't make sense. If you're serving ads for highlighting a product that has just been purchased, that ad spend is wasted. If you do wish to continue serving ads to customers, use a different set of creatives with a new call to action. For example, you might offer a future discount for a referral, or upsell free users of a freemium product.

# 5. Using multiple providers at the same time

Many brands who are new to retargeting want to test the waters with different providers. While it may seem effective to run multiple campaigns simultaneously, running retargeting campaigns with multiple providers has a number of serious drawbacks. Retargeting works using real-time bidding. When your cookied users visit sites with available ad inventory, the retargeting provider will bid on that ad space in real-time, and the retargeted ad will appear as the page loads.

If you run with multiple providers, each provider will be bidding for the same spots on the same websites, driving up media costs and decreasing the chances each has to serve ads to your users. You may also run into difficulties effectively implementing frequency caps, as each retargeting provider will be operating independently. If you're merely running a test, your results will be skewed and inaccurate. It is a good idea to do research, but it's more effective to run tests in subsequent months using one provider at a time. You'll have a better sense of which campaign actually performed better.

Provider 1

Provider 2

?

Provider 5

Provider 3
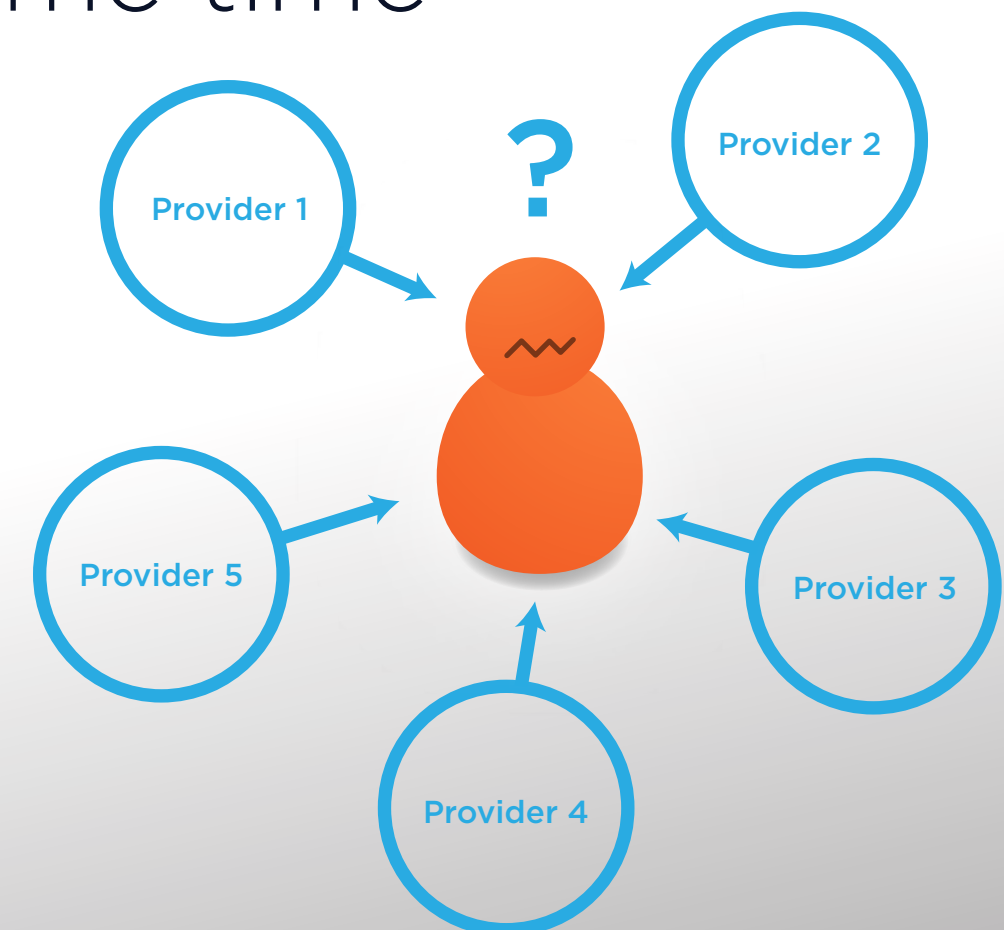
Provider 4

6. Failing to measure success

While your retargeter should provide you with data on clickthrough rates and conversions, it's important for you to track success on your end as well. If you aren't using Google Analytics, set up a free account and begin tracking site visits and visitor loyalty. The majority of Internet users do not click on banner ads, so relying on clickthrough rates as a measure of success is limiting. One good way to gage success is to use Google Analytics to determine how many visitors are returning to your site directly or through Google. If you see an improvement in visitor loyalty corresponding to the launch of your retargeting campaign, you'll know the campaign is working.

Define Realistic Goals → Impliment Campaign → Decifer Metrics → Adjust Campaign →
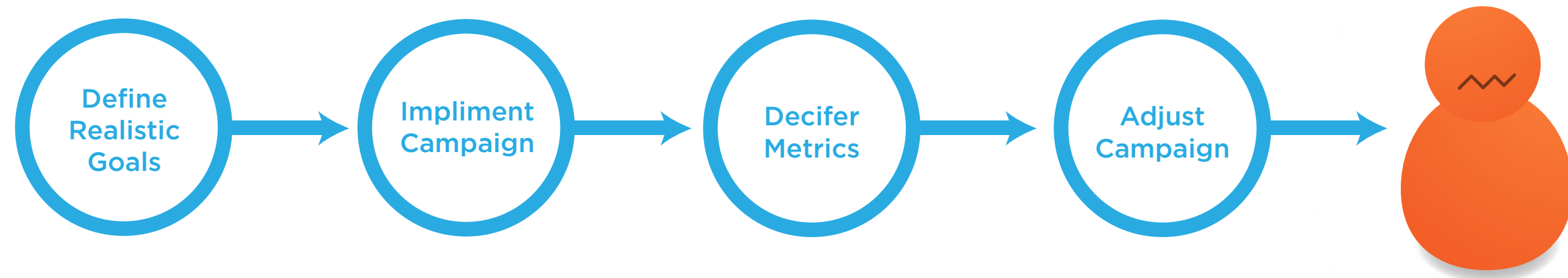
7. Failing to segment

Though less severe than the other deadly sins, failing to segment your retargeting campaign is still a sub-optimal practice. Ideally, each page on your website and each landing page should have its own segment with its own set of creatives associated with it. Users who have spent time looking at your product or services page are at a different stage than users who have simply been to your homepage. Your creative should reflect these users' different stages in the purchase funnel.

Choosing a Retargeting Provider

SELF SERVE VS. FULL-SERVICE

Running a successful retargeting campaign requires knowledge, know-how, and time. With a self-serve retargeting provider, you will manage your campaign in its entirety. This means, you create the banner ads, choose spend, and optimize across networks. If you are able to invest heavy time and resources, then managing your own successful retargeting campaign is possible.

A full-service provider will manage your account for you. You can put your campaign in the experienced hands of an account manager and receive the optimal return on your spend. Full-service providers do require a higher minimum, but are typically worth the investment.

Learn more about self-serve and full-service retargeting to select the option that is best suited to your needs.

Conclusion

The first step to any successful retargeting campaign is to understand how retargeting can work for your company. When used correctly, retargeting serves a valuable component of any marketing mix. If you were apprehensive, now you know that retargeting works for businesses of all sizes and brands of all kinds. If it isn't already, make sure retargeting is part of your digital marketing budget.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

• 8 Best Practices for Running a Retargeting Campaign
• How Retargeting Can Turn Prospects Into Leads
• The Top 5 Retargeting Myths
• 5 Banner Ad Best Practices to Ignore
• Advanced Retail Retargeting

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Display Advertising and Retargeting Glossary

Retargeting/Remarketing: Serving ads to users who have have previously engaged with your brand online, for example by visiting your website (site retargeting), searching for a specific keyword (search retargeting), or opening an email (email retargeting).

Display advertising: A form of online advertising, specifically banner ads.

Cookies: A cookie is a small text file that stores different information. Retargeting relies on cookies to store information about a user's browsing session, specifically whether a user has visited an advertiser's website.

Frequency capping: Restricting the number of times a specific user is shown an ad or set of ads for a specific company. This is a key best practice in retargeting campaigns. Without a frequency cap, users might see ads almost constantly, which could alienate or annoy users and lead to poor performance.

Ad impressions: An ad impression is counted any time an ad is served.

Top of the fold: The top of the fold refers to the portion of a website that is visible to a user without scrolling down. Top of the fold ad inventory is more desirable, as it's more likely to be seen by a larger percentage of users.

Banner blindness: A phenomenon whereby users begin to stop seeing paying attention to online display ads due to oversaturation. Banner blindness is a particular problem when users are exposed to the same ad over and over again.

Click-through rate (CTR): The rate at which ads are clicked. The number of clicks divided by the number of impressions.

Conversion: A conversion is defined by the advertiser. A conversion can be defined as a sale, a completed lead form, or any other action desired by the advertiser.

Conversion Rate: The rate at which users convert.

Click-through conversions: Conversions resulting from visitors clicking directly on an ad and then completing the desired action.

View-Through Conversions: Conversions from visitors who have seen an ad and did not click on it, but later converted.

CPM (cost per mille): An advertising pricing model where cost is determined per thousand ad impressions served.

Cost per click (CPC): A pricing model where advertisers pay when an ad is clicked.

Cost per action/acquisition (CPA): A pricing model where the advertiser pays for each specified action (conversion) linked to the ad campaign. CPL (or cost per lead) is a common form of CPA deals where the advertiser pays per lead generated.

Cost per engagement: A pricing model where the advertiser pays only when a user engages with the ad unit. One example of cost per engagement advertising is Twitter ads: advertisers pay when users click, retweet or reply to a promoted tweet.

eCPM: Effective cost per thousand impressions tells publishers what they could have received if they had sold the inventory on CPM versus CPC or CPA basis.

ROI or ROAS: Return on investment. This is calculated by dividing total campaign spend by revenue generated by the campaign. ROAS is the same concept, but refers specifically to return on ad spend.

Customer lifetime value (CLV): Net present value of cash flow attributed to relationship with a customer. Difficult to calculate with precision (particularly for retention-based companies like ReTargeter), but useful for determining what is an appropriate spend per customer acquisition.

Publisher: A publisher is a producer of content e.g. ESPN, the Huffington Post. Publishers offer ad inventory, though often not through direct sales.

Ad network: A company (or sub-division of a company) that aggregates many different publishers' available media space and makes it available for purchase by advertisers. The ad network is the liaison between publishers and advertisers. Examples of major ad networks are DoubleClick (owned by Google) and Right Media (owned by Yahoo!).

Real-time bidding (RTB): A method of buying online ad space programmatically and one impression at a time. Retargeting depends on RTB--each retargeting impression is bid on as cookied users appear on sites with available inventory.

Ad exchange: A technology platform that facilitates real-time buying and selling of ad impressions across a network or multiple networks. DoubleClick and Right Media are two of the largest exchanges.

Demand side platform (DSP): A system where digital advertisers can buy ads on multiple ad exchanges through one interface. Examples of full-service DSPs include AppNexus, Media Math, and DataXu.

Sell side platform/yield optimizers: SSPs provide media selling and management services for publishers. SSPs function largely like ad networks, except they do not deal directly with advertisers. Typically, SSP media is sold through DSPs.

Run of network: A run of network ad buy is a purchase of a certain amount of impressions on any available inventory across an entire ad network. Run of network advertising typically does not perform as well as targeted advertising.

Behavioral advertising: A form of targeted advertising where ads are served based upon users' previous actions. Retargeting is a form of behavioral advertising.

Contextual advertising: A form of targeted advertising where the ads appear based upon the website content surrounding the placement opportunity.

Audience targeting: A form of targeted advertising that focuses on the people being targeted rather than simply the types of sites where the ads appear.

Lookalike modeling: A form of targeting where a company's ideal user is defined based on data surrounding previous purchases or interactions. Companies can then search for users with profiles similar to the ideal user, and target marketing and/or sales efforts to this audience.

First-party data: Any data gathered and owned by a company. First party data might include names, addresses, email addresses, or behavioral data gathered by the company.

Third-party data: Data that can be purchased by advertisers from a data provider and used for targeted advertising. Data providers like BlueKai or Lotame sell data on demographics, like gender or income, so advertisers can target their outreach to their desired audience.

Data segment/audience segment: A group of online who possess a certain characteristic. Segments can be based on a variety of data types including intent data. e.g. Intent: people in the market to buy a car; Demographic: 30-45 years old ; Interest: Interested in AL MLB teams.

Personally identifiable information (PII): Any data that could be used to identify a specific individual, such as a name or an address.

Data Management Platform (DMP): A platform that helps advertisers manage first-party data, and can deduplicate, and integrate that data with any technology platform you desire. DMPs are designed to help both marketers and publishers make their data actionable.

Bounce rate: A website's bounce rate is the percentage of site visitors who arrive at a site and then leave rather than viewing other pages within the site or completing the desired action. Traffic that leaves is referred to as bounced traffic.

Search engine marketing (SEM): A form of marketing with the goal of driving new site traffic by increasing website visibility in search engine results via a paid placement and/or contextual advertising. Google's AdWords is the most popular SEM tool; it's a pay-per click (PPC) self-serve advertising platform that serves text ads alongside search results based on your keywords.

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SEO: Search engine optimization. The process of optimizing a website to have a high organic search ranking. This ongoing process may include changing content and HTML, frequently updating page content, and working to increase backlinks.

Backlinks: A backlink is an inbound link to a website, and it plays a significant role in a site's organic search rankings.

Landing page optimization: The practices of iterating and improving landing pages to maximize conversions (usually a completed lead generation form). A landing page is the page designated by the advertisers where users are taken when they click on an ad.

A/B testing: A/B testing is a way of testing different copy or image placement on ads or landing pages. A baseline control sample is compared to a test sample where one minor aspect has changed e.g. copy, a link placement, or some other layout aspect. As the results approach statistical significance, the higher-performing version can replace the other version(s).

Purchase funnel: A model illustrating the hypothetical journey of a consumer beginning with initial product/brand awareness and culminating in a purchase. Sometimes referred to as a conversion funnel.

Lead nurturing: The process of building relationships with and staying in front of qualified prospects who are not yet ready for sales, keeping them engaged until they are ready to move to the next step. Aspects of lead nurturing could include email drip campaigns and/or retargeting.

Relationship marketing: Marketing that places an emphasis on long-term customer retention and satisfaction.

Content marketing: A form of marketing involving content creation/sharing based on the idea that high-quality, valuable and relevant content will inspire customer relationships and drive customer action.

Affiliate marketing: A form of performance marketing where a group of affiliates drive traffic or sales for companies and are paid a commission for each visitor, lead or sale driven by the affiliates' marketing efforts.

Switching barriers: Any barrier that might prevent a customer from changing providers. Cancellation fees are one example of switching barriers.

Perceptual mapping: A graphical technique used to display customers' perceptions of a company, often including perceptions of competitors.

Paid media: Publicity gained through advertising or any other paid placement.

Owned media: Owned media are channels owned and controlled entirely by the brand, like a brand's website, blog, or Twitter account.

Earned media: Positive, unpaid publicity earned mentions through means other than paid advertising. For example, being the topic of an article.