

Desing in new media practices: A review on facebook ads as a social network

Seçil Ermiş *, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Graphic Design, Çankırı Karatekin University, Turkey.

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Abstract

The requirement of reaching the target audience in a short time and simultaneously, which is located at the core of new media environment, is one of the common goals of today's communication tools. The impediments between humans such as geography, language, limited information and limited visuals are now obsolete. Virtual environments, which have become a part of our everyday life with communication technologies, also create a study field in advertising. Delivering advertisements to the target audience at the lowest cost and in the shortest time, addressing to both individuals with the lowest financial sources and individuals with highest financial sources and allowing global multi-communication are factors that have helped virtual environments excel over other communication technologies and lent impetus to digital advertising. Social networking environments, where new advertising practices are observed in the new media, are defined as web-based services that connect world-wide computer networks and allow them to communicate. Facebook is one of such social networking environments. Hundreds of thousands of people are exposed to insistent and imposing advertisements on online environment due to advertisements posted via Facebook. A good design and creativity is required in order to successfully convince the target audience. Graphic design is, therefore, of great importance in the advertising industry. Graphic design in advertising combines elements that help convey the message to the consumer more quickly, easily and effectively. In this study, a literature review was conducted in terms of facebook ads, graphic design discipline, advertising, advertising strategies of agencies and these were investigated using qualitative research methods.

Keywords: Facebook, social media, design and media, advertising

*ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Seçil Ermiş, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Graphic Design, Çankırı Karatekin University, Turkey. E-mail address: secil@karatekin.edu.tr

1. Introduction

As of 2015, there are 2.5 billion internet users in the world, and 1.8 billion of these users have an account on social media networks. Given that, almost 1 out of 3 people in the world have a social network account (Eraslan & Eser, 2015). In order for companies to be successful in the advertising industry, they need to analyze behavior patterns of their target consumer and internal and external factors affecting these behavior patterns (Karabulut, 1981). In an online world uncontrollable by laws, users produce and consume uncountable amounts of content every minute (Schmidt & Cohen, 2014).

In the first quarter of 2014 in Turkey, the ratio of people between the ages of 16-74 who use internet everyday or at least once a week was found to be 44.9%. Among internet users, 30.8% order or purchase goods or services online for personal use. Considering purposes of internet use, in the first quarter of 2014, 78.8% of internet users participated in social networking sites (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr>). Today, it is not enough for companies to just start a website. They need to take their place in various e-commerce sites and social networking sites.

Social networking environments, one of the fields in which advertising practices are seen in the new media, are defined as web-based services that connect worldwide computer networks and allow them to communicate. Facebook is one of these social networking environments. Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard student, in 2004 as a social networking site that allows people to communicate with others and exchange knowledge (<http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>).

With more than 1 billion users as of 2014, Facebook is the most academically researched social media tool with the highest commercial value. It is the world's most popular internet site after Google. It is used very frequently in the USA, Brazil, India, Germany and the UK. Time spent daily on the site is approximately 20 minutes (Eraslan & Eser, 2015). Facebook has turned into a website that cannot be ignored by the advertising industry, because it allows brands and companies to create fan pages on the website, publish advertisements according to user's profile information and it is also a very suitable platform for viral campaigns (Shih, 2009).

The purpose of advertisements, as a result of capitalism, turn things that people don't need into things that they need. To prove themselves in today's fast-growing brand competition, Companies now have the obligation to advertise in the virtual environment as a result of technology. This varies depending on the target audience. The fact that young people spend most of their times at the computer, on social networks such as facebook has made it necessary to advertise on these platforms. According to Uzunoğlu et al., the rapid increase in the share of communication technologies in our lives has changed the advertising platform of establishments. (Uzunoğlu et al., 2009).

When advertising on Facebook, companies have the option to customize their advertisements according to their target audience. For example, it is possible to start an advertising campaign that is only aimed at 18-22 year-olds, if requested. If someone is among the target audience in question, Facebook shows the ad to that person. Facebook finds out about your areas of interest based primarily on your activities on Facebook such as liking a page. It uses information such as your age, gender, location and devices that you use to connect to Facebook. It also collects information about your areas of interest based on internet sites and applications that you use. This is called "interest-based advertising" and many companies utilize this system. (<https://www.facebook.com/about/ads>).

Advertisements published via Facebook reach hundreds of thousands of people online simultaneously. When they are online, people are able to access all the information in the world wherever they are. This applies to Maasai cattle herder from Serengeti whose mother tongue is Maa (Schmidt & Cohen, 2014). This allows advertising campaigns to reach a target audience in a number that would not be possible with traditional methods, which makes it an important advertising platform. For this reason, companies publish numerous and compelling advertisements on Facebook. Catchy, creative design has a very important role in convincing the target audience. However, when advertisements published on Facebook are examined, it is

possible to see designs created unconsciously in terms of design and advertising strategies. In creation of advertising campaigns, the first phase of the international strategy application is to determine the direction to go. It is followed by internal-external analysis for the environment and SWOT analysis. After creating the strategy, the strategy must be realized, i.e. the action plan must be implemented. This is followed by observation, evaluation and control (Goldman and Nieuwenhuizen, 2006).

Advertisements on Facebook placed on the right side of the page go back to a long time but they are still useful. These news feeds are called "right hand side ads". "Desktop new feed ads", positioned on the Facebook page, are hard to overlook due to area they cover, font size and image. This type of advertisement on the news feed page is suitable for all companies. When Facebook is used via mobile applications, advertisements on the news feed page appear as full screen. There are "like buttons" below each advertising campaign on Facebook. With the functionality of this like button, the next advertisement to appear on the main page is seen, and Facebook records this like in its database to show users similar pages (www.facebook.com).

Graphic design in advertising combine elements that help convey the message to the consumer in a fast, easy and efficient manner. The target audience, content and message must be determined for an accurate communication design. The slogan of the advertisement must be catchy and positioned correctly in the design. According to Evans and Thomas (2008); principles, research and application are equally important for a designer as formulas and guidelines for a mathematician or research for a sociologist. When creativity is added, the result will not just be a useful product, but one that is aesthetic and pleasant for senses as well.



Image 1. Duracell Facebook Ad (<http://worstfacebookads.tumblr.com>)

As far as the message in the Facebook ad goes, we see in Image 1 that Chris Daughtry, the founder, vocalist and guitarist of the band Daughtry, is associated with the advertisement of the Duracell brand. The product is placed on the left of the artist's image and we see the slogan "Like Daughtry? Like Duracell" on the left. The company uses a metaphor here and associate long-lasting property of Duracell batteries with artist's performance and energy. The image, i.e. elements such as photo, vector and illustration, used in the design is a design element. According to Poulin (2011), the primary definition of image in graphic design is the visual representation of an object as a photographic material, and its secondary definition is the display of an image in digital environment. All of these determine designer's visual language and dialect. A strong and memorable image can start a design's visual communication, or completely terminate it. There are many ways to combine message and idea with image. For the graphic designer, only limit to offer a rich, memorable visual experience that is open to communication is graphic designer's imagination itself. The golden ratio, one of the design principles, provides a basis for page sizes in the field of graphic arts and the golden ratio principles can be used to obtain balanced designs (Harris & Ambrose, 2013). In the Duracell ad (Image 3), we see that the golden ratio was not used in the composition, product placement and photo.

The definition typography, on of the design elements, is to design with writing. It is used to form words, paragraphs and texts. Typefaces are divided into three categories; serif, sans serif and cursive. This is a classification system. Once you get used to this classification, you begin to

understand why you use certain fonts and their development. This classification is a simple and practical reference (Poulin, 2011)



Image 2. Zipcar Facebook Ad (<http://www.redmangomarketing.com/news-updates/facebook-ad-relevance-score-2015-03-1161>)

When there is a dynamic balance between design elements, we are most likely to convey our message. Otherwise, it will strain the eyes. Thus, the bored audience will pay less attention to image's quality or content (Arntson, 2007). The most important point in visual design is the readability of the writing. Using all upper cases in visual design just to make a writing stand out make it difficult to distinguish, make it difficult for eyes to distinguish, and therefore, adversely affect readability. It is therefore better to minimize the use of upper cases unless absolutely necessary (Perkmen & Öztürk, 2009).

Density in page layout shows how crowded a design is. The area covered by various elements and the amount of space that surrounds them alter their effects dramatically. In the Zipcar Facebook ad, the density of the page layout make it difficult for the audience to percept the design. (Image 2) The page layout is about the placement of text and visual elements in the design. The main purpose of the page layout is to present visual and textual elements to be conveyed in a way that it is possible for audience to percept the design with minimum effort. The page layout may support or diminish the perception of information provided in a design. Similarly, an understated page layout allows design to stand out and creative page layouts add value to a work. In order to create the page layout in an effective way, the designer has to take into account the purpose and target audience of the publication. The page layout, whether for a magazine or website, television graphic or packaging graphic, reflect practical and aesthetic evaluations such as where and how the content of a work will be perceived. The grid which guides us when creating the page layout is a tool that helps make decisions regarding the placement of design elements. The use of grid in design makes it possible to obtain greater accuracy in terms of physical measurements or proportional space. The grind adds harmony to the design, allows the designer to be more time-efficient and focus on creating a successful design (Harris & Ambrose, 2013).

Most designers make use of hierarchy as the most important element of design. In this context, they place the image or the title to the focal point. The lead role in design is usually played by the image, message, illustration or typography. Image and text should be placed in a certain harmony. It is designer's responsibility to establish the balance between these two, along with other design elements. Another responsibility of the designer is to provide design elements for the audience in a certain order and get the audience read the text at the end. No matter how messy it looks, the design must have a structure and the audience must be able to get the message. When the hierarchy in text is intended, the most important part verbally must be brought forward. In both internet and print media, the designer must be able to get the audience read the typography from top to the bottom. Once the attention of the audience is drawn, the rest follows. Color, size, design elements, negative space and typography constitute the visual focus. Relative sizes and ratios are usually used to control the hierarchy in the design. If the main heading is in a different color than the rest of the text or a contrast is achieved on dark ground, this will provide a striking visual. Even a short text will be much more effective when it is associated with empty spaces (Evans & Thomas, 2008).

Creative colors selected with an approach that is internalized with the design improve design's communication and memorability. The message desired to be communicated with color can be brought up to the first place using hierarchy. The color perception of the designer must be selected in accordance with the characteristics and the campaign's concept. The emergence of world wide web and online platforms is a transition from paper to screen. Although there are structure and rule differences in these platforms, many qualities and principles of page layout design is related to these platforms as well. The design must be structured to get a response, entertain, inform and guide the audience. Column are used in order to place text in the context and these are divided with spaces. The most obvious difference between a physical book and an online page is that a book is divided into two as the right and the left page and these are physically divided by a binding margin. An online page is a single unit, a single page. For this reason, the page layout of an online page is handled as panoramic or landscape rather two opposing pages, but there is a paradox in this transition; web pages often reflects the style of a book. It can be said that this is done to avoid alienating from the perception that they are used to. (Harris & Ambrose, 2013)

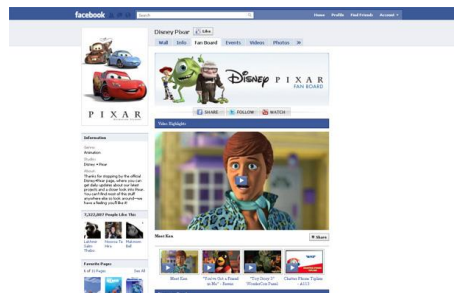


Image 3. Pixar Facebook Page

A design surface is the relationship established between the background and area occupied by the figure. The area occupied by the figure is positive space, and the background is the negative space. Contrast makes it easier to distinguish between these two areas. Human perception helps distinguish the figure and the background in a design. We perceive the figure first, and then the background. Negative areas are spaces in the design where eyes can rest. According to Heller and Vienne (2012), white areas are the most luxurious spots that can be reached in art, as in life. In Image 3, we see that Pixar created a page layout by paying attention to negative and positive areas in their Facebook page.

2. Conclusion

Advertising campaigns are designed to impress the target audience with psychological orientation. The advantage that the companies that advertise on Facebook, one of social media platforms, have is the ability to choose the target audience, create a like page and reach a user network simultaneously and in a short amount of time. For this reason, companies must be careful when presenting their designs to the user and avoid designs that conflict with design principles and unable to communicate the message. In order for a campaign to meet its strategic goal, the companies advertising on Facebook must have an advertising marketing strategy, pay attention to the page layout, have content and message based on the user and the target audience, choose the image to be used correctly, and create designs in which color, stain, space-filling and typography are readable and in a harmony within visual integrity.

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