

# 5 Need-to-Knows for Successful Social Media Marketing

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By Lisa Wehr October 01, 2009

Social media has taken off so quickly this year that, hopefully, by now you've set up social profiles on the appropriate networks to reach clients and prospects, and your brand profiles are showing up in natural search results.

But what about paid search? Many of the most popular social networks, such as YouTube and Facebook, offer paid ads. But do people look at these ads when they're on the sites?

That's what my firm set to find out with a recent social media eye-tracking study. It revealed five things you need to know to be successful with social media.

**1. Facebook homepages.** When users log in to Facebook, the first place they're directed is to a personal homepage. This includes real-time news feeds from friends and groups, friend requests, highlights, and a sponsored ad located in the column on the right.

Only advertisers willing to spend \$20,000 with Facebook can advertise there. But if you have that budget, it may be worth it. We found Facebook users look at these ads and engage with them longer than with the third or fourth items in their news feeds.

**2. Facebook search results.** We asked participants to search for a brand within Facebook, yielding both natural search results and paid ads. We found that individuals look at the first two natural results, then immediately go to the paid ads. Overall, users spent more time fixating on the sponsored ads than on the third or fourth search results.

**3. YouTube search results.** As with Facebook, individuals in our eye-tracking study initially glanced at the first two natural search results, then spent time viewing the paid advertisements before looking at the third and fourth natural results.

**4. YouTube videos.** When users click on YouTube videos, they have to wait for actual videos to load. We observed individuals continuing to interact with paid results while they waited.

**5. Twitter search satisfaction.** While Twitter doesn't currently offer paid advertising, it could someday. And it does offer its own search, in real time. So we decided to see what participants thought of this search — 50 percent were satisfied with the results.

## Takeaways

Take at least two things from this study: People interact with paid search results on social networks. And synergy is essential — it increases brand familiarity, which is vital for generating sales online and offline.

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