

American Traffic Solutions Inc. Uses Small Investment in Facebook Ads to Spread the Word About Highway Safety

Company: American Traffic Solutions
Timeframe: May 2012 -December 2012

In the United States there are more than 1,700 fatalities and 840,000 injuries annually due to vehicle crashes on public highways, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Commission. Those are just the kinds of numbers that **American Traffic Solutions**, a manufacturer of technology and programs for road safety camera and electronic toll enforcement systems, would like to bring down through the implementation of its various products.

But first it had to do a better job of getting its messages out to consumers.

So in the spring of 2012 ATS decided to take its cash

and go to where consumers increasingly congregate: social media.

With a budget of \$12,500, ATS put together small ads on **Facebook** focusing on school-bus safety and the dangers of running red lights. In less than a year, the effort boosted ATS' "likes" to 20,000-plus, from 8,000.

WHY FACEBOOK?

With more than 750 million users, three million active fan pages and a billion pieces of content being shared daily on Facebook, ATS knew that the social platform was the best



Without allocating a major expense, American Traffic Solutions was able to run highly targeted ads that reached hundreds of millions of people on Facebook.

media vehicle to spread its message.

By engaging targeted consumers on Facebook, ATS wanted to get the word out about both the brand and the safety message supporting it.

The ATS Twitter account

and **YouTube** page were both considered as the potential centerpiece for the campaign, but ATS in the end decided that Facebook would take the top spot and the other social channels would be used to push consumers to the Facebook page, said Heather Schlichting, internal communications program manager at ATS Inc.

"Using all of these channels helped to increase awareness of the ATS Facebook page and, more important, its message regarding road safety," she added.

A NEW PR VEHICLE

ATS produced a series of advertisements for Facebook that were highly targeted. It spent \$2,000 in the first two months of the campaign running ads in English and Spanish, while "likes" grew to 12,000.

In August and September, ATS spent \$100 a day for Stop on Red Week ads and Crossing Guard ads. In October, November and December, the expenditure dropped to \$50 a day.

4 Steps to Launch Your Social Media Program

Social media is the perfect tool to reach all types of audiences in order to give them a 360-degree view of your brand. Here are four easy steps to take to establish your social media program to build your brand awareness.

- **Choose the Right Type of Social Media Channel:** Each social-media channel has a specific purpose, and you need to determine whether it's a good fit for you depending on your goals. Do your research. For example, LinkedIn speaks to a more professional audience interested in news stories, community charitable endeavors and your company culture. Facebook is similar, yet geared more toward a casual audience that is more engaged by photos, infographs and other visual effects. YouTube is perfect to house your videos, and Twitter can help you promote all your social media channels. There are many other options to explore and those can be added on as your social media program matures.
- **Start the Conversation:** It's easy to get into the routine of just pushing content into your social-media pages. Opening a dialogue with your readers is a little tougher, but should pay off. Try and stimulate users by asking a question or posting content that is going to require them to react. This strategy will help you raise **awareness and boost revenue**.
- **Set the Stage:** Let's say your 5K run is coming up in three months and you are ready to start talking about it. Set up a way for your audiences to immediately access donation and registration options right on your Facebook page. To engage users and encourage them to take action, post updates about the event and stories about real people who will be affected by their donations.
- **Use Social Media As A Retention Tool:** When the event is over, don't drop the conversation. This is your opportunity to build your strongest messages and transition to future initiatives in order to keep your followers involved and talking about your brand. Sponsor fun contests to determine if they are really listening and reward them for their commitment to your goals.



Heather Schlichting

Heather Schlichting is Internal Communications Program Manager at American Traffic Solutions Inc.

Photo courtesy: American Traffic Solutions