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METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE FORMATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SALES FUNNELS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA (USING YOUTUBE AS AN EXAMPLE)

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the development of a methodological approach to the formation and implementation of sales funnels in social media, using the YouTube platform as an example. The process of creating an effective strategy for promoting goods and services on video hosting is examined, encompassing the analysis of the target audience, development of a content plan, setup of targeted advertising, and optimization of the sales funnel. Special attention is given to constructing a multi-level sales funnel model that accounts for the specific nature of communication on YouTube. The key stages of implementing the developed methodology are described, along with criteria for evaluating its effectiveness. The proposed approach can be utilized by companies across various industries to increase sales and enhance business profitability in the video segment of social media.

Keywords Sales funnel, YouTube, video marketing, social media, digital marketing, online sales, conversion, efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

In the current conditions of fierce competition and resource limitations, effective management of the sales process plays a crucial role in achieving business success. One of the key tools in this regard is the implementation of sales funnels — a structured model for interacting with potential customers that allows for the optimization of marketing efforts and an increase in conversion rates.

According to estimates, spending on digital advertising rose by 20% in 2023, with some sectors experiencing growth of up to 49%. The global increase in advertising expenditure for 2022 was 8.2%. Furthermore, 63% of customers expect

companies to provide customer service through social media channels. Each month, 130 million social media users post about their purchases. Additionally, 69% of marketers utilize social media to enhance brand awareness [2]. Given this context, there is a pressing need to develop a methodological approach to the formation and implementation of sales funnels through the effective utilization of social platform capabilities.

One of the most popular and promising social media platforms for businesses is YouTube — the largest video hosting service in the world. Creating an optimized sales funnel on this platform can significantly increase reach to the target audience, enhance brand recognition, and ultimately lead to

growth in conversion rates and sales volumes.

Thus, the aim of this study is to develop a comprehensive methodological approach for the formation and implementation of effective sales funnels through social media, using YouTube as a case study.

METHODS

The process of creating an effective promotion strategy for goods and services on the YouTube video hosting platform begins with a thorough analysis of the target audience. At this stage, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral characteristics of potential customers are examined, and their primary issues, needs, and preferences are identified. This allows for the determination of the most effective means of engagement with the audience within the platform itself.

The next step involves the development of a well-thought-out content plan. This plan encompasses the creation of thematic content that aligns with the interests of the target audience—whether educational, entertaining, or branding videos. According to Kolokol'tseva K.R., it is also important to optimize all elements of the video materials (titles, descriptions, tags, thumbnails, etc.) to enhance their visibility on YouTube [3].

Concurrent with the content creation process, targeted advertising must be configured. This entails segmenting the audience based on various criteria, designing advertising campaigns that consider the stages of the sales funnel, and continuously testing and optimizing advertising creatives. Properly configured advertising enables the efficient acquisition of new potential customers.

The final stage is to construct and optimize the sales funnel itself by harnessing the capabilities of YouTube. It is crucial to create a multi-layered model of interaction with the audience by

integrating video content, targeted advertising, and other digital tools into a cohesive system. Regular monitoring of key metrics and analysis of bottlenecks allows for the continuous improvement of the sales funnel's effectiveness.

A comprehensive approach to implementing all these stages facilitates the development of a truly effective strategy for promoting goods and services on the YouTube video hosting platform, ensuring maximum reach to the target audience and a high conversion rate into sales.

The construction of a multi-layered sales funnel model that takes into account the specific nature of communication on YouTube is a key component of the proposed methodological approach. This model is designed to structure and optimize the process of engaging with potential customers at various stages, starting from the initial attention capture and culminating in the completion of the targeted action.

At the first level of the funnel lies the audience attraction stage. Here, the creation of high-quality and relevant video content plays a vital role, as it conveys the value of the products or services being offered while generating interest and curiosity among viewers. Additionally, targeted advertising significantly influences this stage, allowing for precise outreach to the target audience.

The next level involves engaging users for further interaction. At this stage, video content must not only inform but also encourage the audience to take active steps—such as commenting, liking, subscribing to the channel, and so forth. Maintaining a constant dialogue with the target audience, responding to comments, and swiftly addressing feedback are also crucial in this phase.

The final level of the funnel focuses on converting the engaged audience into targeted actions — such as visiting the website, filling out forms, or making purchases. Various tools can be employed for this

purpose, including embedding sales links and calls-to-action directly within the video content, configuring YouTube cards and banners, and integrating with other digital channels.

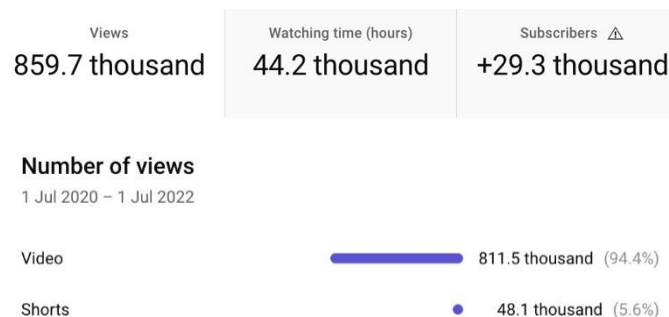
Thus, the proposed multi-layered sales funnel model, tailored to the communication specifics of the YouTube video hosting platform, enables the implementation of a comprehensive and structured approach to promoting goods and services, ensuring effective attraction, engagement, and conversion of the target audience.

To demonstrate the application of the methodology developed in this study, research was conducted from July 1, 2022, to January 31, 2024, which included the application of the proposed methodology to a real case of promoting a YouTube channel.

The study was conducted on the YouTube channel @LittleWomenAtelier [1], which specializes in creative activities, particularly in clothing creation, culinary recipes, interior design, and aesthetic

representation, with a primary focus on promoting clothing in the “Little Women” style. The channel features detailed video tutorials in which the creators showcase the process of home decoration, holiday preparations, and the making of handmade products. This includes material reviews, step-by-step instructions, decoration, and assembly of finished items, as well as videos that inspire creativity, share ideas, and explore the artistic process, all of which contain native advertising for clothing in the “Little Women” style. The channel's main audience consists of handicraft enthusiasts, culinary aficionados, and fans of the "Little Women" aesthetic, with content primarily aimed at promoting the clothing website of the brand “Little Women Atelier.”

First, let us examine the channel's statistical data from July 1, 2020, to July 1, 2022. During this period, work on the channel based on storytelling techniques was not conducted (Figure 1).



Icon impressions and video watch time

Data for the period July 1, 2020 – July 1, 2022 (731 days)

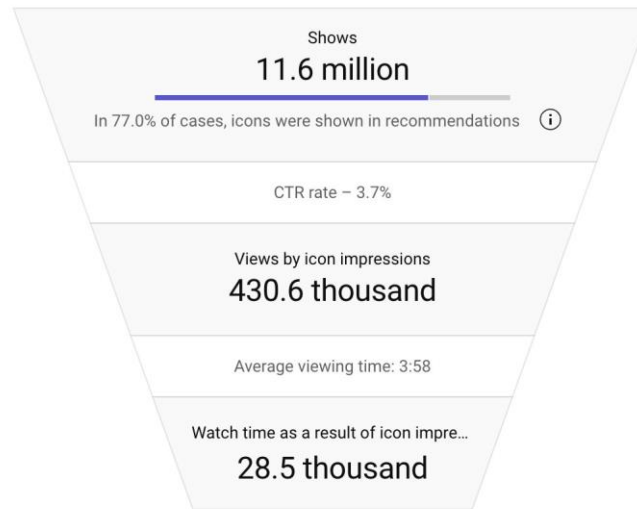


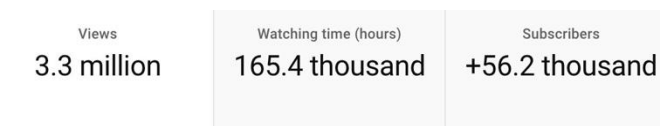
Fig. 1. Statistics of the YouTube channel @LittleWomenAtelier for the period from July 1, 2020, to July 1, 2022

Initial Situation (Before Expert Intervention):

- Views: 859.7 thousand
- Watch Time (hours): 44.2 thousand

- Subscribers: +29.3 thousand

Let us consider and analyze the statistical data corresponding to the period of our active work (from July 1, 2022, to January 31, 2024) (Figure 2).



Number of views

Jul 1, 2022 – Jan 31, 2024



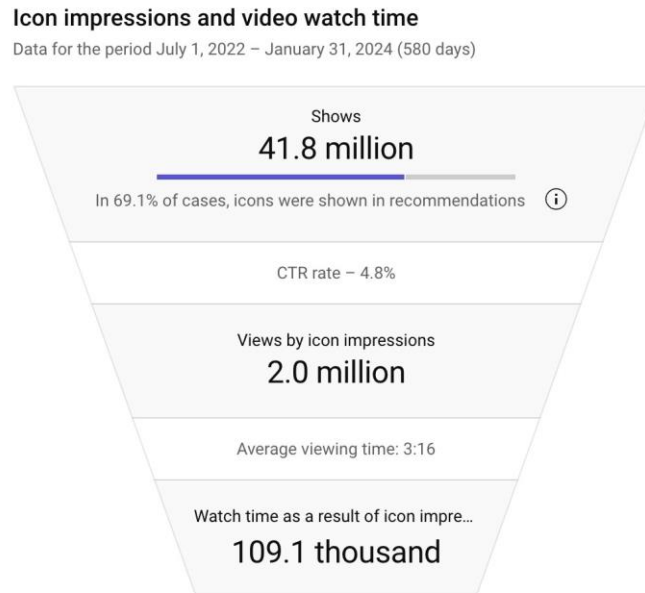


Fig. 2. Statistics of the YouTube channel @LittleWomenAtelier for the period from July 1, 2022, to January 31, 2024

After Expert Intervention:

- Views: 3.3 million
- Watch Time (hours): 165.6 thousand
- Subscribers: +56.2 thousand

RESULTS

The implemented activities based on the methodology I developed significantly improved the channel's statistics, as evidenced by the substantial increase in all key metrics: views grew by over 3.8 times, watch time increased by over 3.7 times, and the number of new subscribers more than doubled. These results indicate that the developed methodology is an effective tool for brand promotion on the YouTube platform. The following sections outline how this methodology was implemented:

1. Audience Analysis:

- Data Collection: Analysis of demographic data, interests, and behaviors of current subscribers and viewers.

- Tools Used: YouTube Analytics, Google Analytics, surveys, and questionnaires.

- Findings: Identification of key characteristics and segments of the audience. For instance, if a predominant group was identified as women aged 18 to 34 who are interested in fashion and lifestyle content.

2. Content Plan Development:

- Content Strategy: Planning video releases based on the interests of the target audience.
- Content Types: Educational videos on style, fashion tips, personal vlogs about lifestyle and fashion, showcasing new clothing.
- Optimization: Titles, descriptions, tags, and thumbnails optimized to maximize visibility and searchability.
- Examples: Creating titles such as "How to Create a Fall Look: Professional Tips," descriptions that include keywords, and eye-catching thumbnails.

3. Targeted Advertising Setup:

- Audience Segmentation: Identification of more precise subgroups within the target audience.
- Campaign Development: Creation of engaging advertisements, such as promotional inserts before popular videos.
- Testing and Optimization: A/B testing of different ad creatives, analyzing their effectiveness, and making necessary adjustments.
- Examples: Ad spots featuring teasers for new videos, integration of CTAs for subscribing to the channel.

4. Storytelling Integration:

- Vlog Creation: Incorporation of personal stories, showcasing the influencer's daily life, style, and clothing.
- Native Sales: Natural presentation of products and brands as part of the influencer's everyday life.
- Emotional Connection: Development of content that resonates with the audience on an emotional level.
- Examples: Videos such as "A Day in the Life of a Fashion Blogger," where the influencer naturally showcases branded clothing.

5. Monitoring and Sales Funnel Optimization:

- Key Metrics Analysis: Tracking views, watch time, subscriptions, and engagement (likes, comments).
- Content and Strategy Optimization: Adjusting the content plan and advertising strategies based on gathered data.
- Tools Used: YouTube Analytics, Google Analytics, social media analytics tools.
- Examples: Identifying "bottlenecks": if audience retention drops at specific points in the video, adjustments to content and format are made.

It is also important to consider the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of this methodology, which are presented below

with examples from the previously described case:

1. Increase in Views:

- Before Implementation: 859.7 thousand
- After Implementation: 3.3 million
- Growth: Increase of 2.44 million views (approximately 3.84 times).

2. Watch Time:

- Before Implementation: 44.2 thousand hours
- After Implementation: 165.6 thousand hours
- Growth: Increase of 121.4 thousand hours (approximately 3.75 times).

3. Subscriber Growth:

- Before Implementation: +29.3 thousand
- After Implementation: +56.2 thousand
- Growth: Increase of 26.9 thousand subscribers (approximately 1.92 times).

4. Audience Engagement:

- Criteria: Number of likes, comments, shares.
- Assessment: Significant increase in interactive actions from the audience.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the methodology I developed, which included a thorough audience analysis, the development and optimization of a content plan, targeted advertising setup, storytelling integration, and continuous monitoring, demonstrated its effectiveness in significantly increasing all key metrics of the YouTube channel. This underscores the power and importance of a strategic approach to social media management and the use of storytelling to create an emotional connection with the audience.

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