

September 2019

# New Scientist Case Study

RocketMill

# How we increased Subscriptions to New Scientist Magazine by +150% YoY while decreasing Paid Social CPA by -62% YoY.

## The brief

When we started working with New Scientist Magazine at the start of 2019 we had two simple KPIs:

- Increase overall subscription numbers YoY
- Improve YoY CPA efficiency

Our first port of call was Google Ads, setting the account up for success. Across our publisher client base, we've discovered that generic magazine keywords are a competitive space to play in, revealing that we needed to drive more potential new subscribers to the site.

We quickly turned our focus to Paid Social, specifically the opportunities with Facebook Ads, and started to build a new customer acquisition platform. Through iterating and improving on previous retargeting activity, and launching an impactful large scale expansion plan, we've hit both our KPIs, delivered significant YoY growth through the channel, and have made a real impact on top line paid media performance.

## The approach

In order to increase overall subscription numbers YoY and improve YoY CPA efficiency, we needed to build upon and continue our retargeting efforts, ensuring we closed the loop on the maximum users who did not subscribe. However, this group was a finite pool of users who we didn't want to oversaturate, and one that does not lead to the sort of growth we wanted to deliver.

We identified that to achieve these objectives and drive meaningful growth, we needed to launch prospecting activity at scale with a focus on cold traffic (no prior engagement with the New Scientist website or social properties). Our audience had to be new users of whom we could directly convert the majority of with the added benefit of increasing our retargeting pool with those we couldn't convert immediately.

# Strategy and Key Tactics

We launched new prospecting campaigns based on the wide range of subjects New Scientist covers on a weekly basis, targeting only new users who are not familiar with the brand.

To scale our audiences, we used a combination of Facebook Audience Planner supplemented with the Facebook API interest recommendations. With a wealth of content, this enabled us to target a huge range of niche interests that we would have otherwise never uncovered, hugely increasing our reach and our performance.

Initially we targeted a wide range of placements, however we quickly found Instagram in-feed and Story ads outperformed other placements. Remaining agile, we doubled down on this, pushing Instagram formats across all our ad sets, helping to drive growth and decrease CPA simultaneously. We also tested the impact polls had on our story ad performance, both on engagement and a subscription level.

## The results

We've driven a huge YoY increase in subscriptions at a reduced CPA, fulfilling our objectives and hitting both our KPIs at once.

Whilst our client was already happy with the significant increase in orders and decrease in CPA, this growth has all been primarily from prospecting campaigns and audiences, new users - who we have been able to convince to take up a subscription - we're no longer just closing the loop on potential subscribers through retargeting.

As an added benefit, through our use of the Facebook API, we've discovered specific interest segments that are highly likely to convert and have been able to use these as a starting point as we explore other channels.

The overall results are:

**+150% YoY Increase in Paid Social Subscriptions**

**-62% YoY Decrease in Paid Social CPA**

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## Putting people first.