Spread Your Lookalike Audience Wings

Targeted audiences on Facebook are a reliable and proven method for generating ad interest. Likewise, lookalike audiences are a brilliant method for creating said targeted audiences, enabling you to reach new customers who share similar features and attributes with existing customers.
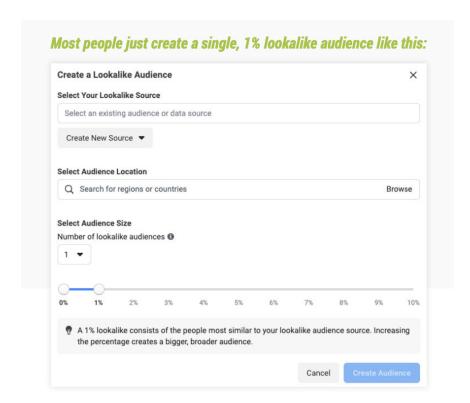
Lookalike audiences are one of the most powerful targeting options on Facebook. If you're not familiar with them, they use an existing audience to create a new audience of people that "look like" the original audience. This tool combines data tracking and AI to automatically create a targeted audience based on existing and successful ones.
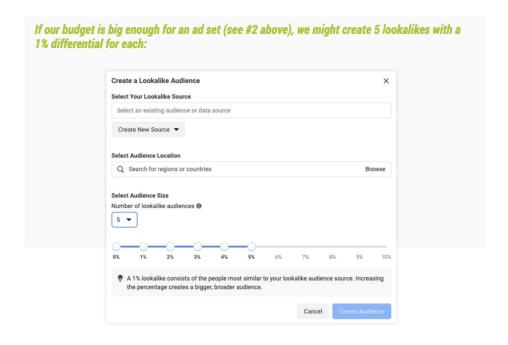
How Do I Utilize Lookalike Audiences?

This tool, while powerful, is also simple. For example, if people purchase products on your website, you can track those purchases using the Facebook pixel. The pixel relays the relevant information back to Facebook, which can then attribute this information to individual consumers, aggregate this user data, analyze commonalities, and find other individuals who share similar characteristics to those who have visited your site or purchased your product.
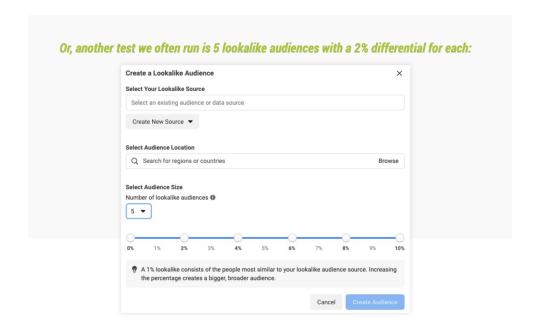
Facebook is a powerful user data aggregator and can be a critical ally for your business. If you have Facebook on your side, you can see real benefits in your ad engagement. For example, when building a lookalike audience, you're essentially telling Facebook: "Show my ads to people that have similar characteristics to those that have already purchased on my website." And it is perfectly equipped to do exactly that.

When you create a lookalike audience, you have the option to create audiences of different sizes up to a 10% lookalike. A 0 - 1% lookalike will be the most similar to your original audience, while a larger percentage will focus more on the greatest common denominators. For reference, 100% would be everyone on Facebook in the region you've selected, and the smaller your spread percentage, the more "lookalike" your new audience will be.

Create a Lookalike Audience   ✕

Select Your Lookalike Source

Select an existing audience or data source

Create New Source ▼

Select Audience Location

🔍 Search for regions or countries   Browse

Select Audience Size
Number of lookalike audiences ⓘ

1 ▼

| 0% | 1% | 2% | 3% | 4% | 5% | 6% | 7% | 8% | 9% | 10% |

💡 A 1% lookalike consists of the people most similar to your lookalike audience source. Increasing the percentage creates a bigger, broader audience.

Cancel   Create Audience

You might say that this sounds like a tradeoff, and you'd probably be right. Whichever benefit you favor results in the diminishment of the other factor. However, we've experimented extensively with creating audiences up to 10% and in different ranges, and we've found a variety of different outcomes. In addition, Facebook's audience manager tool gives you a lot of freedom to build different audiences to suit your needs, which is important because this feature might take some experimentation.

Create a Lookalike Audience   ✕

Select Your Lookalike Source

Select an existing audience or data source

Create New Source ▼

Select Audience Location

🔍 Search for regions or countries   Browse

Select Audience Size
Number of lookalike audiences ⓘ

5 ▼

| 0% | 1% | 2% | 3% | 4% | 5% | 6% | 7% | 8% | 9% | 10% |

💡 A 1% lookalike consists of the people most similar to your lookalike audience source. Increasing the percentage creates a bigger, broader audience.

Cancel   Create Audience

Or, another test we often run is 5 lookalike audiences with a 2% differential for each:

Lookalike audiences, while being a powerful tool, can also be unpredictable. There are dozens of ways to experiment with lookalike audiences, such as geographic area and the size or "how targeted" a particular audience is, and there is no one right way to make one.

Obviously, there will be advantages and disadvantages to different-sized lookalike audiences, and not all of them are always readily apparent. You can create multiple lookalike audiences at once to reach more, fewer, or different people. For your first lookalike audience, it might be a good idea to keep the spread fairly low - between 0 and 1%.

Adjusting Your Budgeting Accordingly

If our budget is lower for an ad set, we might just do two audiences with a 1% spread or experiment with a 2% spread. This will be less costly and leave us with audiences most similar to our proven customers - but smaller percentages also mean our ads will ultimately reach fewer people.

If our budget is higher, we might do one audience of 8%, or maybe go all the way up to 10%. Such a move will be more expensive, but we will reach many more potential future customers. The tradeoff here is that the average viewer of your ad will be less likely to be interested than if you had run a more targeted campaign. Of course, your options are not between one large or one small audience - it can be a strong strategy to create multiple audiences.

Worth noting too is that this process, using the pixel, tracking user data to Facebook, and building a lookalike audience from this data – may not be the best option for your business. While it can't hurt to put ads out regardless, it's certainly best practice to try and target people who are more likely to be interested, just to keep your advertising profitable.

For example, targeting consumers undergoing major life events can be extremely effective. This is one avenue in which advertising over social media is undoubtedly more effective than other forms of advertisement. Facebook even has a metric for "life events," such as weddings, pregnancy, moving, et cetera. Therefore, if you're a catering or moving company, for example, you might find this to be especially beneficial – your future customers may not be actively seeking out the services you provide, but would be interested regardless.

Increase Your Engagement Today

The main message is, don't just create a single 1% lookalike audience and give up there. Instead, try wider spreads and higher percentages to see how those audiences affect your performance.

We'll frequently see a random 2-3% lookalike audience outperform a 1% audience for no reason whatsoever. It just happens sometimes. Facebook and targeted audiences are great tools, but nothing can beat out the good old human factor in the end. By following the advice outlined above, you can easily increase the reach and engagement of your marketing campaigns.