Gaining a better understanding of Facebook’s Brand Awareness objective

Facebook’s Brand Awareness objective is an effective option for brand advertisers looking to drive brand outcomes. We have created this guide to help address some of the most common misunderstandings so that advertisers can easily and effectively use the objective and achieve their intended outcomes.
What’s the difference between Ad Recall Lift optimization (ARL) and Estimated Ad Recall Lift (eARL)?

**In short:** There are two components of the Brand Awareness objective: the ad recall lift optimization we use to deliver your ads, and the estimated ad recall lift metric we report in Ads Manager.

Polling studies are expensive and take time to conduct, not every type of campaign can be polled, and not every campaign is large enough to poll. **The Brand Awareness objective provides an affordable, real time alternative for all types of campaigns.**

**Estimated ad recall lift** refers to the metric reported in Ads Manager and is the primary reporting metric of the Brand Awareness objective. It allows you to understand ad recall performance as a result of your campaign. It takes 3 forms:

- Estimated ad recall lift (people)
- Estimated ad recall lift rate
- Cost per estimated ad recall lift (people)

To provide an accurate measure of ad recall lift to brand advertisers, we need to estimate the ad recall lift generated by their campaigns. We train an algorithm to predict the results of an ad recall lift study. We then calibrate that algorithm on campaigns where we actually do polling, and then use it to make estimates of campaigns where we don’t poll. Because this is a lift metric, it estimates the incremental change. In order to do this, it needs to estimate both the recall rate when someone sees the ad (the exposed recall rate) as well as the recall rate when someone doesn’t see the ad (the holdout recall rate).

**Ad recall lift** refers to the method we use to deliver your campaign ads. It’s an optimization that is only available with the Brand Awareness objective.

The optimization learns patterns of who remembers ads and who doesn’t by using real poll responses gathered from brand campaigns. It then uses those signals to find ads that your audience is most likely to remember. These signals work to match your audience with ads that will create a memorable connection once they’re seen. This is called a lift optimization. It focuses on driving incremental results so you can get the most impact for your budget.

Two factors come into play in optimizing delivery:

- **Ad recall lift rate**, which is the percentage of people who were reached by your campaign who are incremental recallers. A higher rate is better, keeping everything else constant
- **Reach**, which shows how many people were reached by your campaign. A higher reach is better, keeping everything else constant.

The optimization balances between the 2 factors to maximize estimated ad recall lift (people) for your budget. This is driven by both Recall Lift rate and reach, if the optimization can increase either reach or rate by more than the other decreases, it will do so as this maximizes eARL (people). The purpose of the optimization is to have as many people remember the campaign’s ads as possible for the budget that it is given.
Signals driving Estimated Ad Recall Lift

**In short:** Our algorithm learns factors that make ads memorable to people and serves ads to them based on this historical data.

For every impression served in your campaign, the estimated ad recall lift algorithm makes 2 estimates:

- The first is the probability that a person being served the impression will recall it up to 2 days later.
- The second is the probability that a person being served the impression would have recalled an ad from your brand already.

**Putting it together:** Our algorithm then subtracts the 2 values to estimate the amount of ad recall lift generated by the impression for that particular person. This is a per-impression estimate of ad recall lift.

Generally, the algorithm learns the factors that make ads memorable to people (in the moment), and for the holdout rate it learns how likely people are to already remember an ad from your brand (historical). The combination of “in the moment” and “historical” data helps our fine tune which ads to deliver to an audience that is most likely to recall seeing your ad.

Because what makes one person remember an ad may be different than another, our algorithm too takes a personalized approach to measuring Ad Recall. This means that the signals that we use for one person’s intent may be different than another’s.

Some examples of things that make ads memorable may include click through rates, video views, likes, shares, comments, purchases or other conversions. These are just a few of the thousands of signals we consider, and are not necessarily the most important.

Raising brand awareness with Ad Recall Lift

Because ad recall lift is the best signal we have at scale that correlates strongly with brand awareness, it makes sense to use it as an optimization descriptor to provide transparency into what it does.

Ad Recall Lift is one of the most tightly connected Brand metrics to driving Brand Awareness. Therefore, by measuring and optimizing Ad Recall Lift likely corresponds with effective brand outcomes including Brand Awareness on Facebook.
Evaluating performance with Brand Awareness Objective

In short: We recommend using cost per estimated ad recall because it provides a better reflection of performance than simply looking at the estimated ad recall lift rate.

A high ad recall lift rate is rarely what you want. You could spend the bulk of your budget on a very small audience and drive your recall lift rate to almost 100%, but get little in return. We don’t optimize our Brand Awareness objective for ad recall lift rate, and you shouldn’t either.

We recommend using cost per estimated ad recall because it provides a better reflection of performance than simply looking at the estimated ad recall lift rate. The lower the cost per estimated ad recall lift (people), the better. If you do happen to use the estimated ad recall lift rate, we recommend only comparing rates with similar targeting, budget and timing to ensure proper A/B testing.

The ad recall lift rate of any particular campaign, though, can be dependent on many factors, including creative, budget, audience size, targeting, length of campaign, and percentage of the audience reached. The time of year can also be important as holiday seasons can affect how your campaign performs.

Remember, two factors come into play in optimizing delivery: Ad Recall Rate and Reach. The optimization balances between the 2 factors to maximize estimated ad recall lift (people) for your budget. One creative may drive higher incremental reach overall, whereas another creative may result in a higher estimated ad recall lift rate, but not reach as many people. This basically effectively decreases the overall impact of incremental ad recallers, causing the optimization to deliver to the creative which has a lower lift rate but a higher reach.

Polled Ad Recall lift vs. Estimated Ad Recall Lift

Not all advertisers, however, have access to brand lift polls. This makes the Brand Awareness objective an accessible and affordable way to optimize and measure brand outcomes on a real time basis.

It’s important to remember that ad recall lift as measured in a lift study is an estimate. Polling is another method of estimating the same thing. They may not always agree. If you can run a large study, the polled number is likely to be more accurate, but in the absence of a large study, eARL is the most accurate measure.

Common ad recall lift rates are about 9%, and most campaigns fall between 4% and 17%.

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