PAID SOCIAL 101:

UNDERSTANDING ADS, ENGAGEMENT, AND ROI

bitly THE POWER *of* THE LINK.

PAID SOCIAL 101: UNDERSTANDING ADS, ENGAGEMENT, AND ROI

A paid social strategy is the cornerstone of successful social media marketing today. These days, your organic content often isn't seen by your entire community. In many cases, paid social ads are the only way to actually get ROI from social.

To give you an idea, on average, organic tweets now only reach around 10% of followers. A Facebook page with over a million likes only averages around a 2.27% organic engagement rate. Hard to believe, right? That's where a paid social strategy can help.

Using paid social can solve declining engagement and help quantify the value of social media. It also allows you to strategically target consumers,

track the cost and ROI of each click, and see clear across every touchpoint in the funnel all the way through to conversion.

So how do you implement a paid social strategy? It's equal parts art and science. You have to be creative. You have to be fun and original. And you have to test, track and optimize everything accordingly. When done right, you can mold your paid social strategy into a well-oiled machine that churns out the results you're looking for, every time.

In this guide, we've rounded up all of the tips and tricks you need to get started with your paid social strategy across all the major social channels. Read on to learn:

▶ How to identify which networks
   are right for you

▶ How to set up & optimize
   campaigns for each
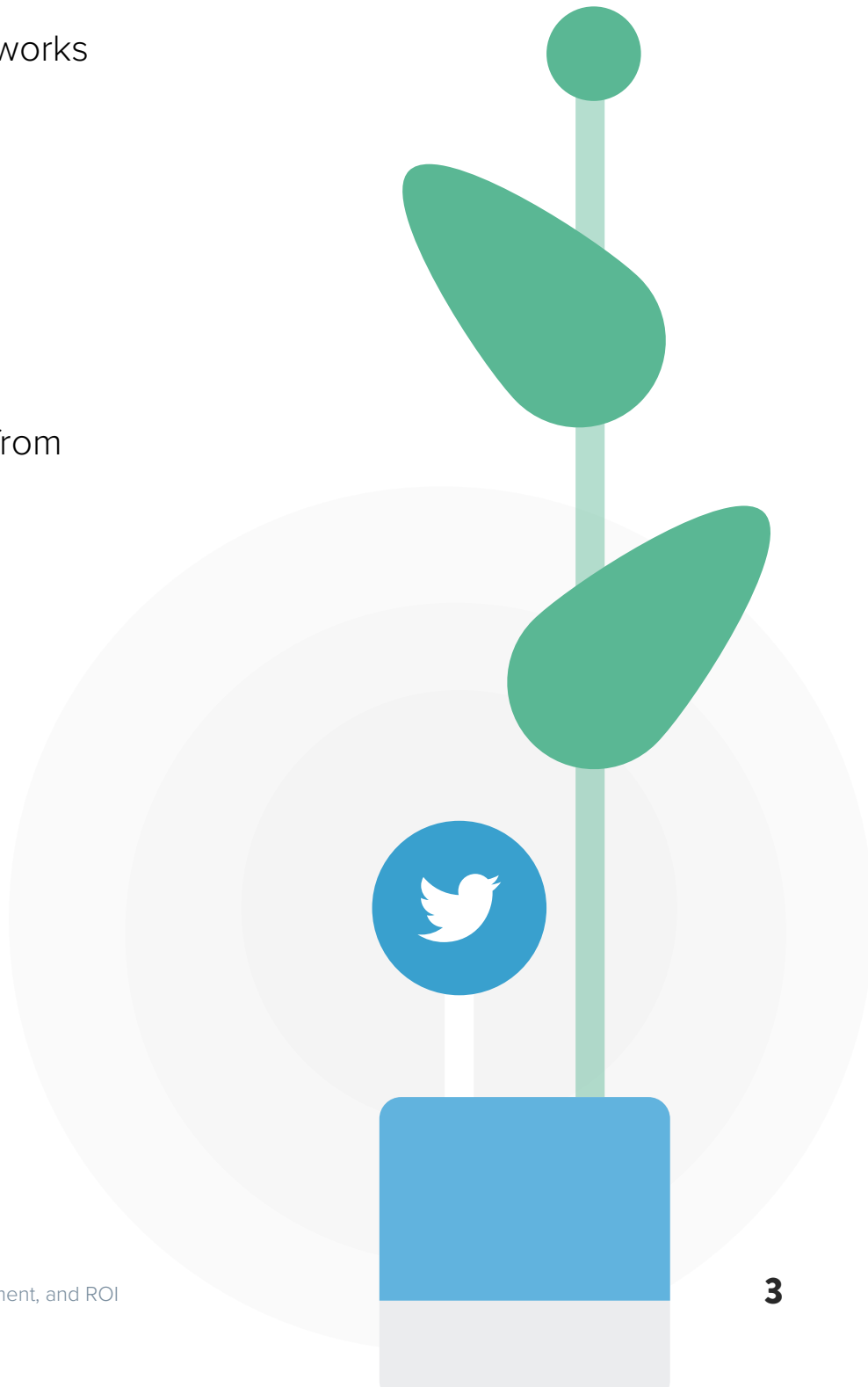   social network

▶ Tried-and-true strategies from
   the experts

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01
HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PAID SOCIAL CHANNEL

It seems like every day social channels are adding new ad formats and paid offerings. There's Facebook Carousel Ads, Snapchat ads between stories, Twitter's emoji ad targeting... With all of these options and an often limited budget, how's a marketer to choose?

As you begin integrating more paid social into your marketing strategy, it's important to give thought about where you spend your advertising dollars.

Start With These Three Questions

Here are three questions to ask when you first set out to find the right paid social channels for your business:
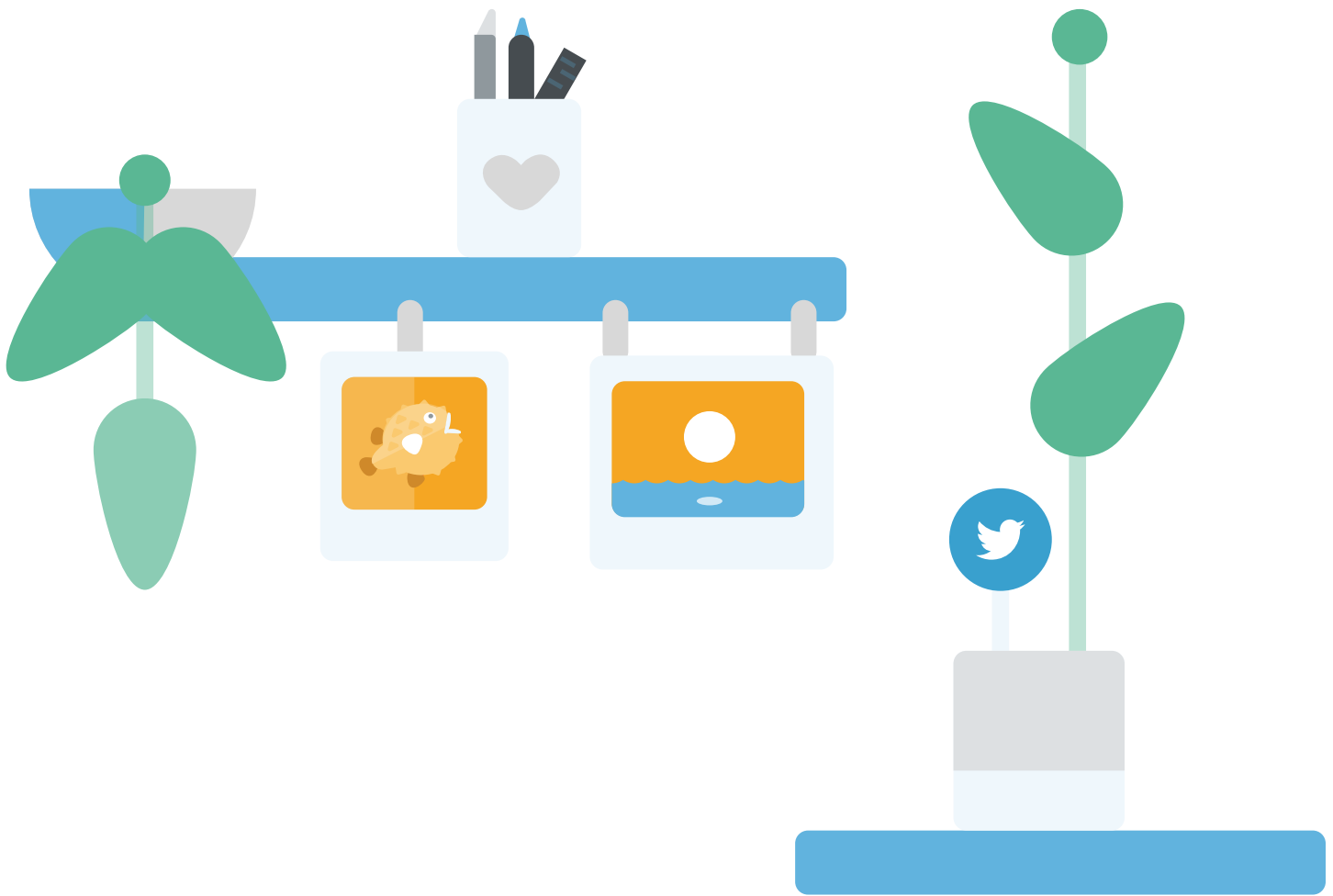
01 | Who's My Perfect Customer?

First things first, who are you trying to reach? Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, profession and location vary greatly from channel to channel. Each social media network has its own unique niche and purpose.

02 | What's My Budget?

Your overall paid social budget will determine how many channels you should advertise on and which ones will give you the most bang for your buck. Most social media platforms charge per engagement, whether it's a click or impression.

"The most important thing to think about when it comes to paid social media exposure is that the more engagement you get out of your initial post, the more money you save. What I mean by this is that if you reach a large audience with your paid post and pique their interest, they're likely to organically share it with their friends." - Brandon Howard, All My Web Needs

To calculate your budget, you'll want to work backwards from your greater marketing budget and factor in other initiatives you will be running for the quarter or year. It's likely your business goals, time of year and expenses will factor into these calculations as well.
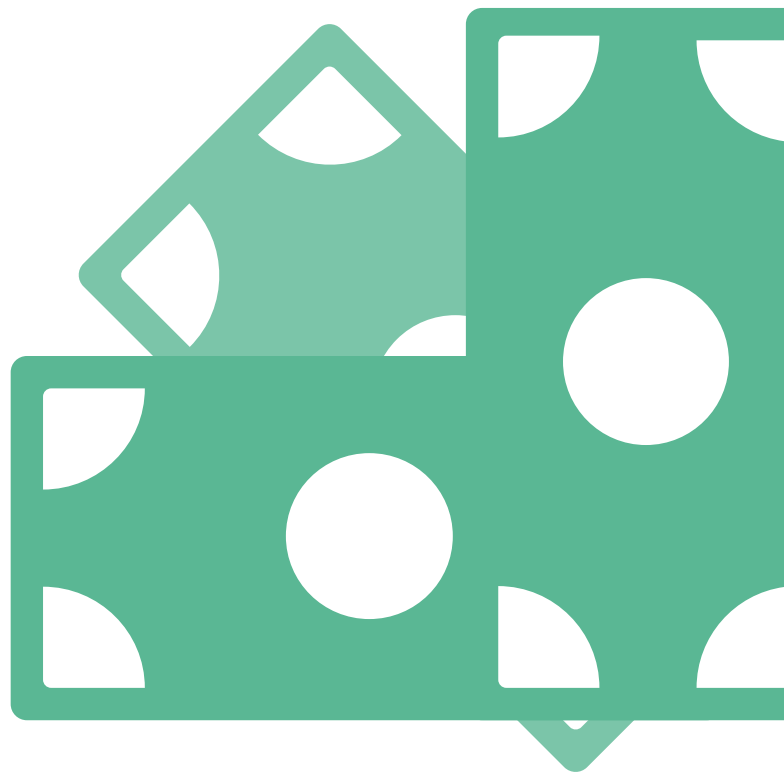
3 | What Type of Content Am I Sharing?

The type of product you sell and the audience you're trying to reach will influence the type of content you produce. Visual content is all the rage these days - content with relevant images get 94% more views than content without. Video now dominates on Facebook - Facebook native video engagement is 97% higher than Youtube and 75% higher than Instagram. Meanwhile, infographics get the highest click-through-rate on LinkedIn, more so than any other channel.

Evaluate What Each Channel Has To Offer

We've done an analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of each major social channel to help you get started.
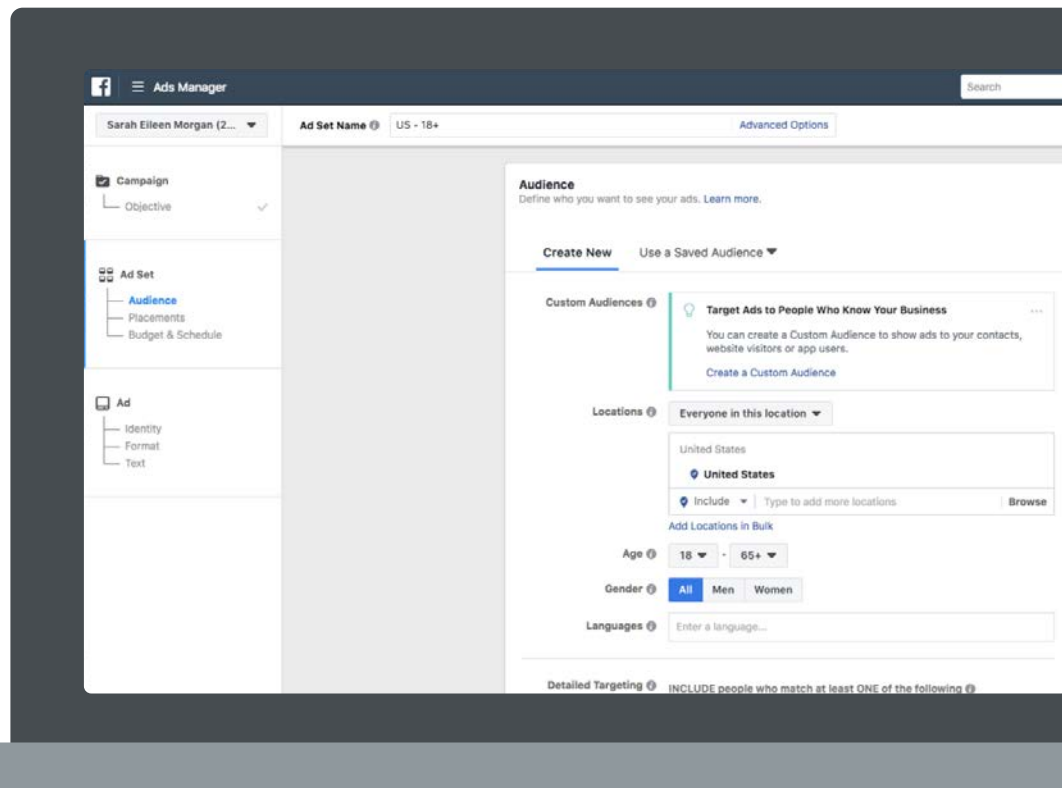
Facebook

Demographics

Worldwide, there are over 2.19 billion monthly active Facebook users. Not only is this a huge audience to tap into, but age and income show that these users also have a lot of purchasing power. 78% of the adult online population is on the platform and 77% of users have an annual income of over $75,000.

Pros

- Facebook's Power Editor allows you to get really granular with Facebook Ads. You can target by location, demographic, interests and life events. For instance, you can filter for users who recently got married or started a new job.

- The editor even lets you target connections, such as friends of those who like your page.
  You can slice and dice however you see fit to make sure your paid content always gets in front of the best possible audience.

- Facebook Ads support a range of media formats so you can get really creative. Try experimenting with images and video in the new ad formats. Facebook Carousel allows you to add 3-5 images and links within a single ad unit to tell a fuller story. The interactive Canvas ad format allows users to engage with images by swiping, tilting and zooming in and out.

- Last but not least, it doesn't cost much to get started on Facebook. The minimum daily spend is $1.00. While you'll likely need to spend more than that to see results, it's still a fairly accessible channel for businesses of all sizes.

Cons

- Paid post ads have a 90 character limit, so you do have to choose your words wisely.

- To encourage higher quality ads, make sure they contain less than 20% text. Studies suggest that if you use more text than that your engagement will likely start dropping off.

- While Facebook also offers CTA buttons to help you drive home your message.

There are seven CTA buttons to choose from:

Book Now

Contact Us

Use App

Play Game

Shop Now

Sign Up

Watch Video
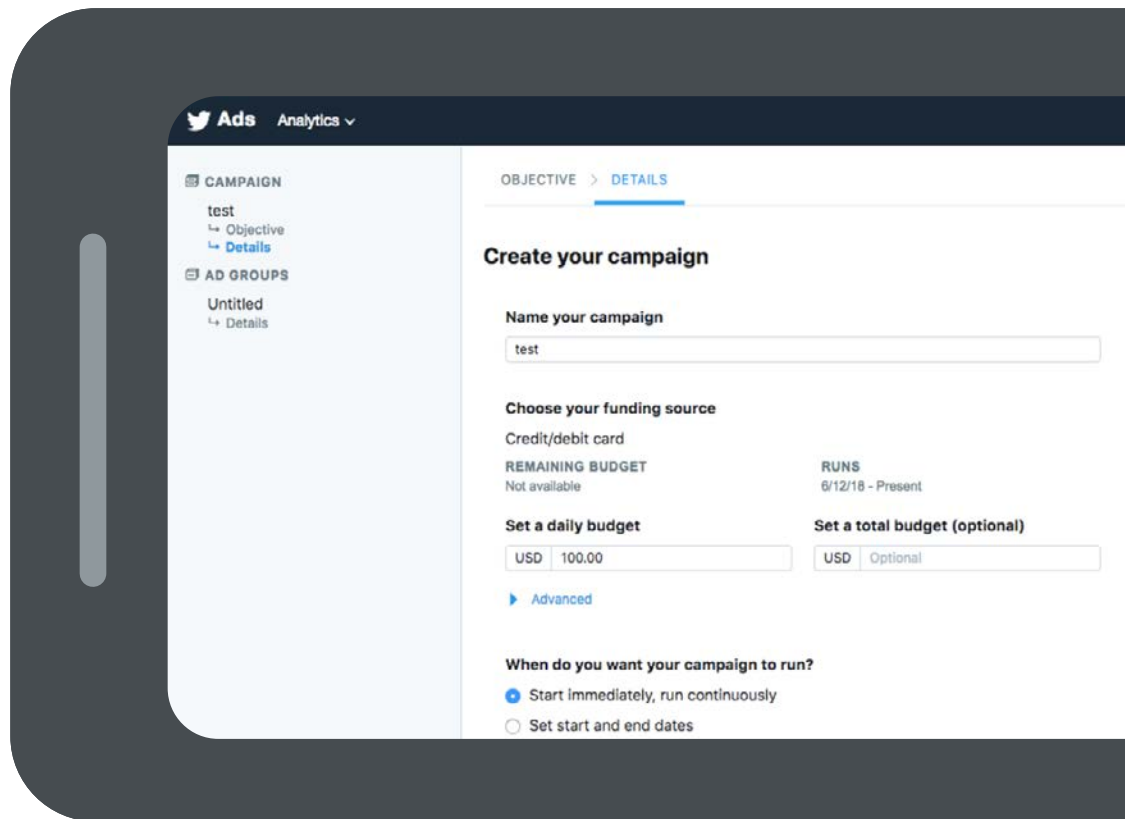
Twitter

Demographics

Twitter is most popular with the under 50 crowd and skews more heavily towards male users. Urban and suburban areas are also more active on Twitter. Only 29% of Twitter users check their account more than once a day. This is an important fact to understand when creating your paid social strategy.

Pros

- You can generate quick leads using Twitter's Twitter Cards or Promoted Tweets. This can be especially useful when you're trying to trendjack. Twitter's Lead Generation Card makes it easy for users to share their email address and sign up for your email newsletter or become a member.

- Twitter users can engage with your paid content just as they would an organic tweet. So if they retweet your paid ad, their followers will see it too. Twitter does not charge for this extra engagement.

Cons

- Twitter's stats dashboard is fairly high level, so you will want to compliment it with other tracking tools to get a fuller picture of how engagement compares. Use Bitlinks in your posts to get more insight into content performance at both an individual tweet level and channel view. Bitly can also provide a transparent view into how each campaign performs across Twitter and beyond so you can compare results cross-channel.

- Twitter's native ads share the look-and-feel of an organic tweet and are shared right in the feed. Since users tweet as they go, it can be really easy for paid content to get lost in the noise. Twitter does offer left-hand side ads, but it's pretty costly.
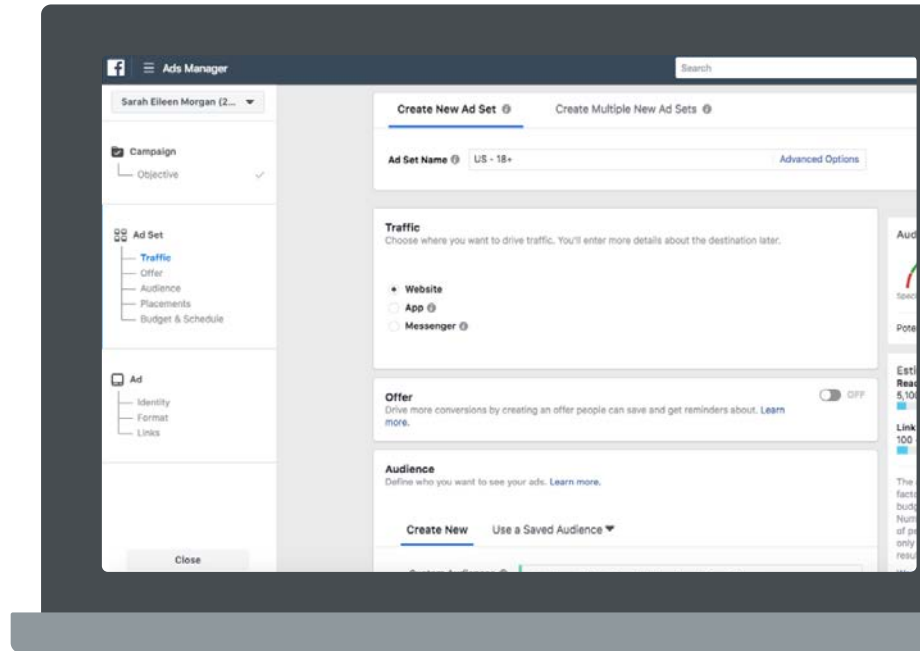
Instagram

Demographics

With now over 700 million monthly active users, Instagram is the second largest social media network behind Facebook. More than half of online adults ages 18 to 29 use Instagram and it's most heavily used in urban areas.
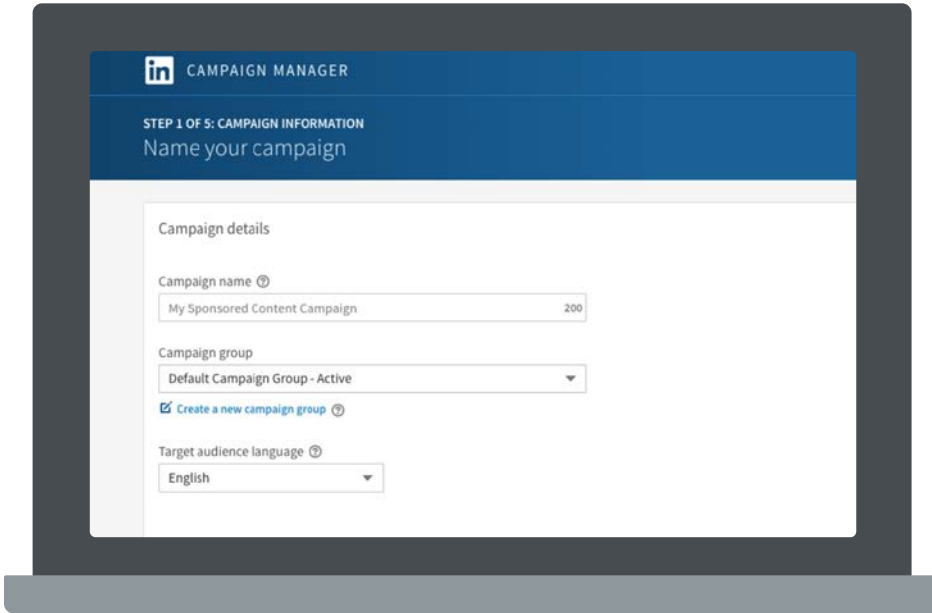
Pros

- Primarily a mobile social network, Instagram is made up of thousands of niche communities and feature accounts, which are galleries dedicated to highlighting a specific topic.

- Historically, ad recall from Sponsored Ads on Instagram is 2.9 times higher than Nielsen's norms for online advertising.

- Instagram Sponsored Ads are native, which means they're incorporated into the content and user experience. Users are more likely to engage with the content if it looks authentic.

Cons

- Instagram Ads are currently managed through Facebook's Power Editor. This means that marketers have to either already be familiar with Facebook's paid platform or learn how to work an additional platform.

- Unless you are posting through Facebook's Power Editor, posting is still limited to the mobile app, which means you have to either manage all your ads via mobile, or use a combination of desktop and mobile to manage your Instagram presence.

Linkedin

<u>Demographics</u>

There are 500 million active users on LinkedIn. The average LinkedIn user is between 30 - 49 years old and holds a college degree.

Pros

- LinkedIn is a goldmine for B2B marketing. At 500 million plus users, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network. It's the channel where you're most likely going to be able to target heavily by professional demographics such as job title, function, industry, company size and seniority.

Cons

- LinkedIn's Campaign Manager has a lot of minimum requirements and can be costly for smaller businesses to get started on. The minimum required audience size is 1,000, the minimum cost to advertise is $2 for both CPC and CPM and the minimum daily budget is $10.

- LinkedIn is also one of the last social media channels to hop on the remarketing bandwagon, with Linkedin Lead Accelerator. Since it's still fairly new, there may not be as many resources and use cases to reference.
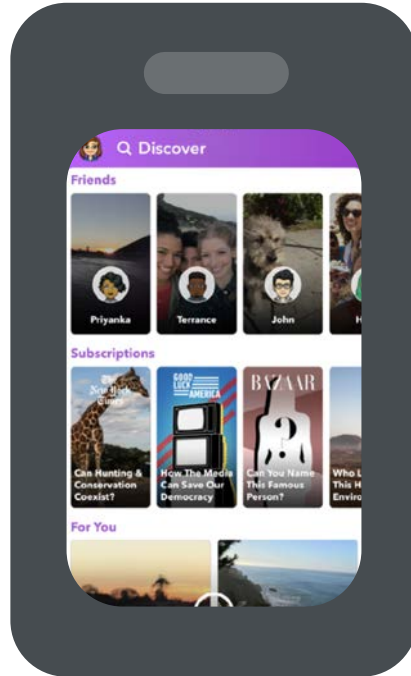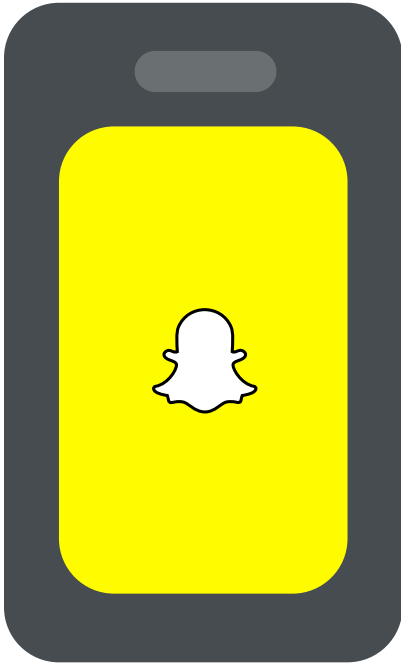
Snapchat

Demographics

This disappearing message app has historically been known as a platform for teens, but in the past few years it's been starting to age up. There are currently 191 million daily users on Snapchat and 65% of those users contribute content, meaning everyone on the platform is very engaged. Using Snapchat's paid ad tool, Discover, you can easily access this audience.

Pros

- Even as Snapchat is aging up, it's a great place to speak to millennials. The Snapchat audience is digitally savvy and hungry for content. Since it's still an emerging platform, it's a great place to experiment with new content or strategies. "It's not as high profile as Facebook or Twitter where people scrutinize every word and you have to represent the brand," says David Berkowitz, CMO of MRY.

- Snapchat has doubled down on ad formats this year, rolling out a series of ads that include conversion driving CTAs. These formats include listicles, app-install ads, live stream and more.

"Reaching users organically through Snapchat is a time consuming process, and it's hard to prove ROI. Fortunately, Snapchat's On-Demand Geofilters allow businesses of all sizes to try Snapchat advertising for as little as five dollars (and the cost of designing a geofilter). Now anyone can use geofilters to target local colleges, the food court at the mall, or even a competitor's store."

Roy Harmon,
Director of Marketing,
Such Ads!

Cons

- Rates for Snap ads currently start at $3,000/month.

- Many marketers still struggle with tracking and measuring ROI from Snapchat and building on engagement post-snap. We've seen brands use Bitly Campaigns to optimize their Snapchat strategy. KIND found a way to see if people click from Snapchat to a promotion just by using Bitlinks. During a spring sale, the brand drove followers to purchase on their landing page by including a Bitlink and promo code. Using Bitly Campaigns, KIND was able to track Snapchat performance and see how it stacked up against other channels like Instagram, Facebook and email.
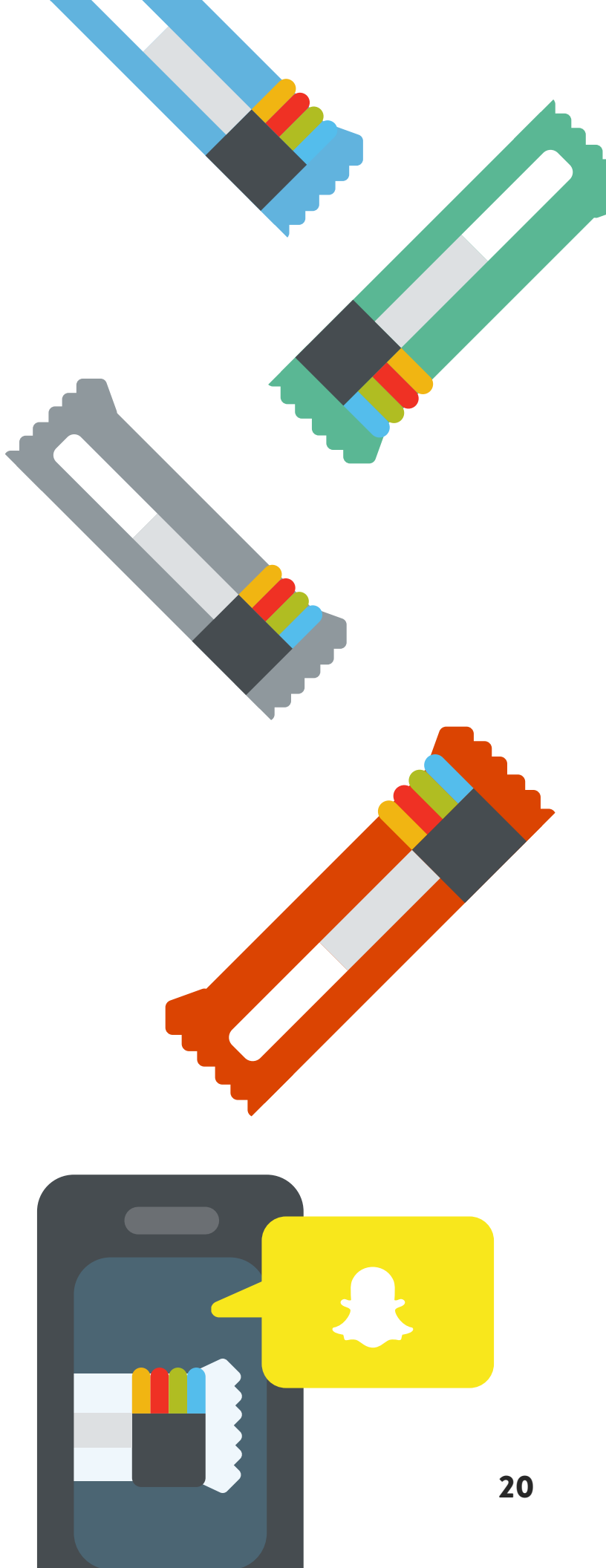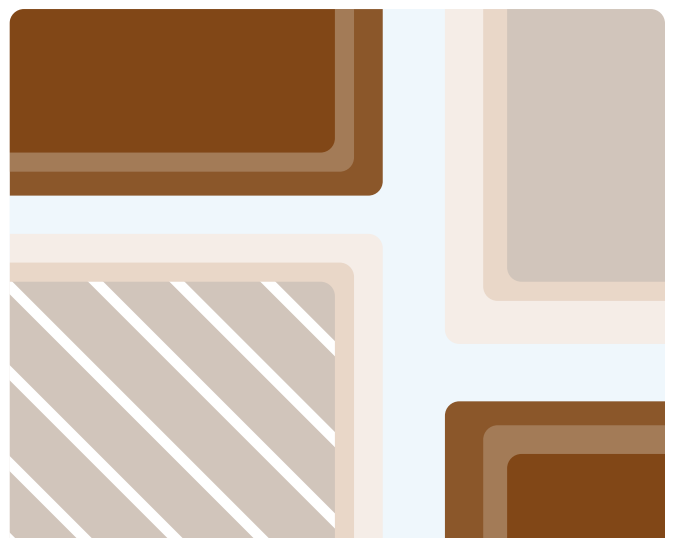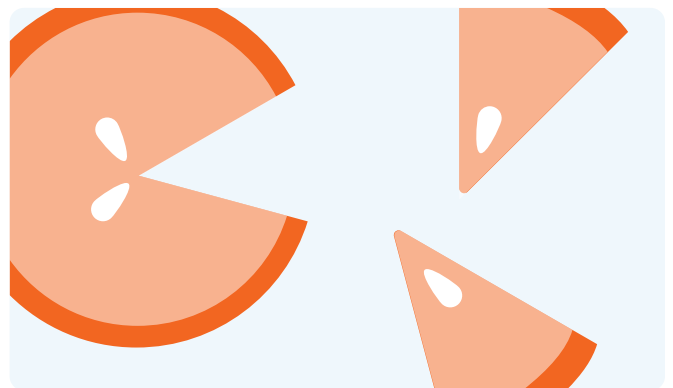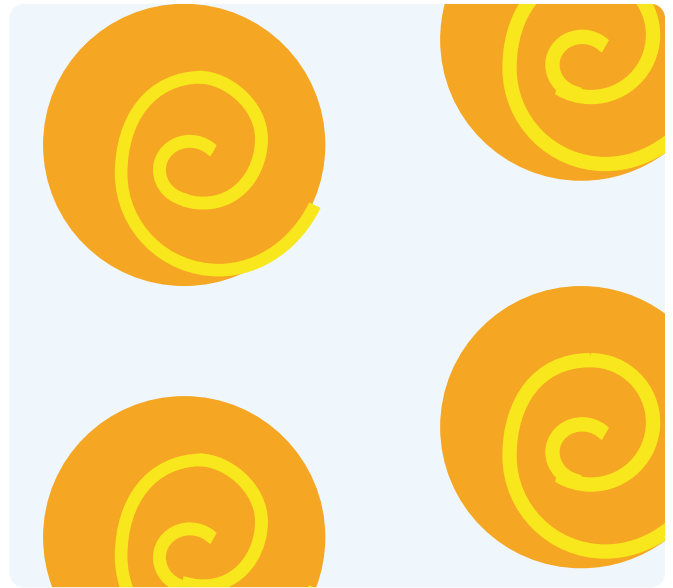
Pinterest

Demographics

Pinterest's user base is primarily female. The number of female users is almost triple that of men. Pinterest users are also mostly under 50.

Pros

- Pinterest's platform is inherently built off showcasing things that people admire or want to buy. Research shows that 93% of Pinterest users use the platform to plan purchases.

- Pins have a greater reach and a longer lifespan than a lot of other content on other popular social channels. Pins are 100 times more spreadable than a tweet and the half-life of a pin is 1,6000x longer than a Facebook post.

Cons

- The best performing frequency for Pinterest is 15-30 pins a day. So if you want to support your paid content by building out your brand on the platform, it'll take a lot of visual curation.

- Pinterests' niche demographic can also be a challenge. The most popular Pinterest topics are fashion, home decor, cooking, and lifestyle. If your business falls outside of these categories, it can be hard to build engagement.

But Above All, Listen To Your Numbers

There's no one size fits all solution to finding the right social channel. Every business is slightly different and the landscape is always changing. Even after you find the right channel, you'll want to continue to test to make the most of your paid social strategy.

We've seen many companies use Bitly to optimize their paid social content. Some A/B test images and copy in a series of ads, others track strategies that work in organic content and carry it over to their paid efforts.

The Social Quant, a tech company with a platform that helps clients build engaged Twitter audiences, uses Bitlinks to A/B test their CTAs on social.

"Bitly allows you the opportunity to effectively test different copy to see what gets more clicks and what's a complete dud," says CEO Mike Kawula.

Kawula and his team regularly tests copy and visuals across different tweets to see which combination drives the most engagement around their blog posts.

"We'll send 3-4 tweets the day a post goes live to see what gets the most clicks," Kawula explains. "We review that data the next day and take the most clicked tweet and put it in a bucket of tweets that gets tweeted consistently."

By keeping the blog post constant but using different Bitlinks, Social Quant is able to see which CTA resonated most with their audience. And A/B testing just on Twitter alone has paid off big.

"This data helps us maximize our Twitter marketing and has helped our startup get over 25,000 visitors a month just from Twitter," Kawula says.

One last note we'll leave you with:

don't get caught up with testing to beat the algorithm or to stay within your budget. Like organic social, authenticity is key when it comes to paid social. Your relationship with your customers will ultimately drive you towards the right social channels.
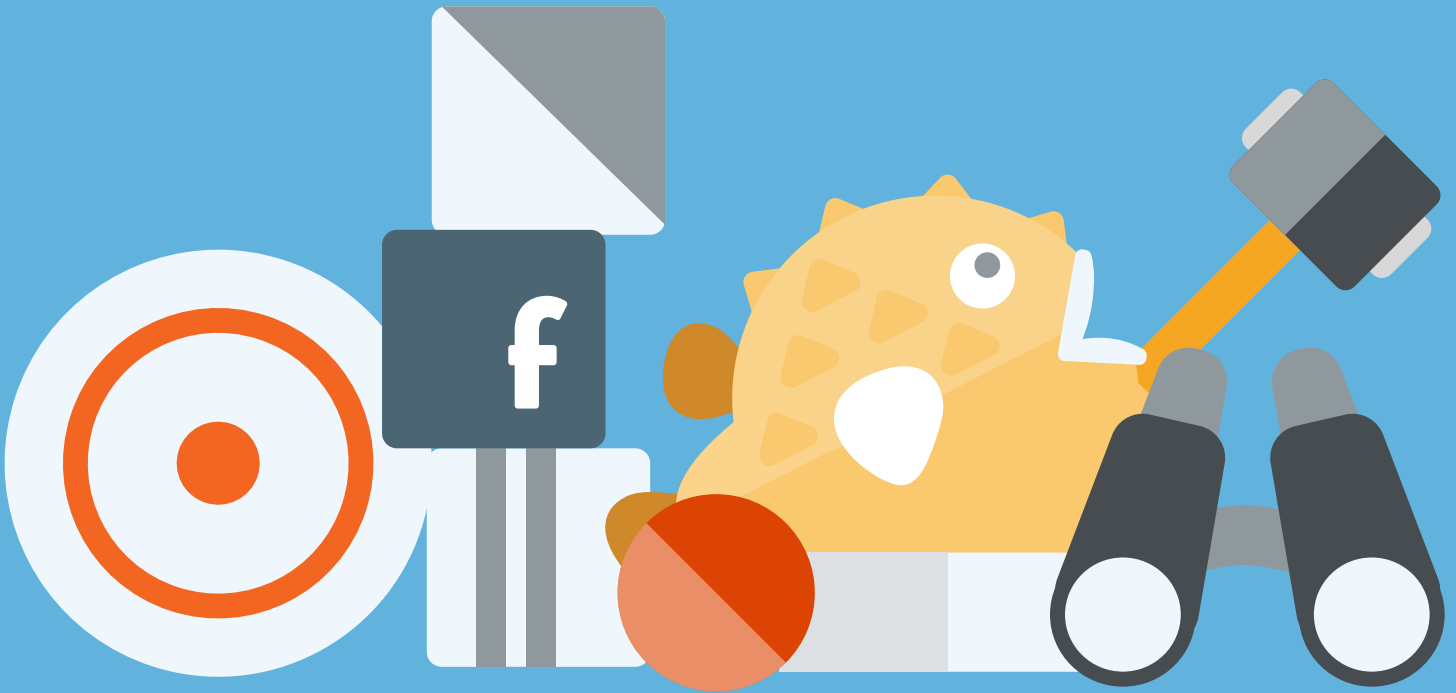
Social Quant, Inc. @TheSocialQuant

Limited Time! Increase your Followers, Engagement & Leads from #Twitter

Free 14-Day Trial: bit.ly/1h3583p

vs

Social Quant, Inc. @TheSocialQuant

Watch your #Twitter followers count, retweets, visibility & profits take off: bit.ly/1h3583p #SocialMedia

02
FACEBOOK ADS

Facebook is the largest social media network in most major markets, both when it comes to organic user engagement and the average paid social strategy. It's the leader in social referral traffic and social commerce, driving 85% of all social commerce orders. The average American spends 40 minutes a day on the platform.

Facebook Ads are getting even more important. Organic reach is dropping, with some posts reaching only 12% of your total fans. Facebook's algorithm favors advertisers with strong content and lowers the visibility of weaker content. To connect, engage, and convert on Facebook, you have to create a paid social strategy with targeted Facebook Ads. Check out how to fit Facebook Ads into your paid social strategy in five steps.
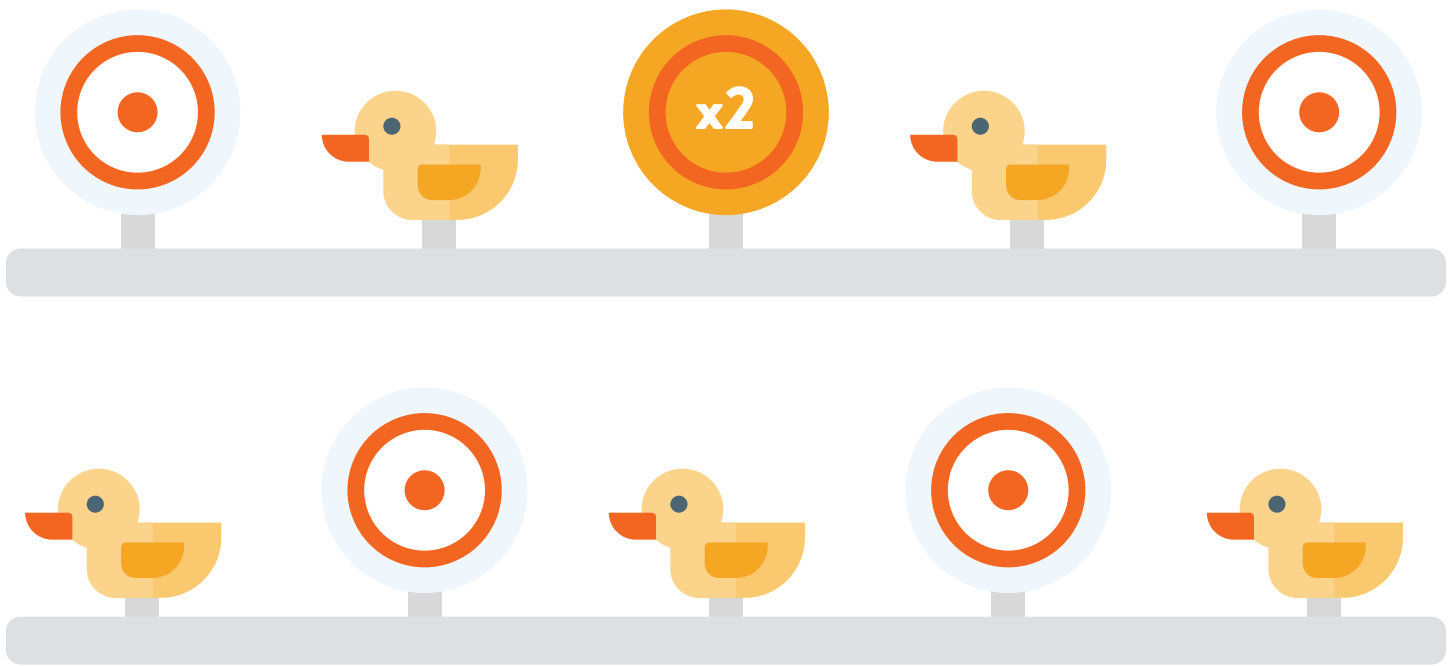
01 | Target, Target, Target

One of the biggest things to keep in mind when it comes to Facebook Ads is targeting. Honing in on who you're communicating with, when you're reaching them, and where, is a smart way to create a budget for paid social and optimize your reach.

"Before you even think about getting started, you need to know who you're going to target."

Facebook Ads run off a bidding system. Facebook hosts a limited number of ads at any given time and advertisers must bid for the relevant audience against others in the lottery system in order to secure a position. The placement will go to the highest bidder.

To bid, you submit the highest amount you're willing to pay per impression or click. Your bid will run until you hit your maximum budget. This could be $.30 per impression or $10 per click. Facebook will always charge you the lowest amount possible to win the bid.

Because you're paying per engagement, you want to make sure you get the most bang for your buck by getting your content

to the most targeted audience possible. Facebook Ads allows you to get really granular, offering a range of segmentation such as age and gender, interests, behaviors and connections.
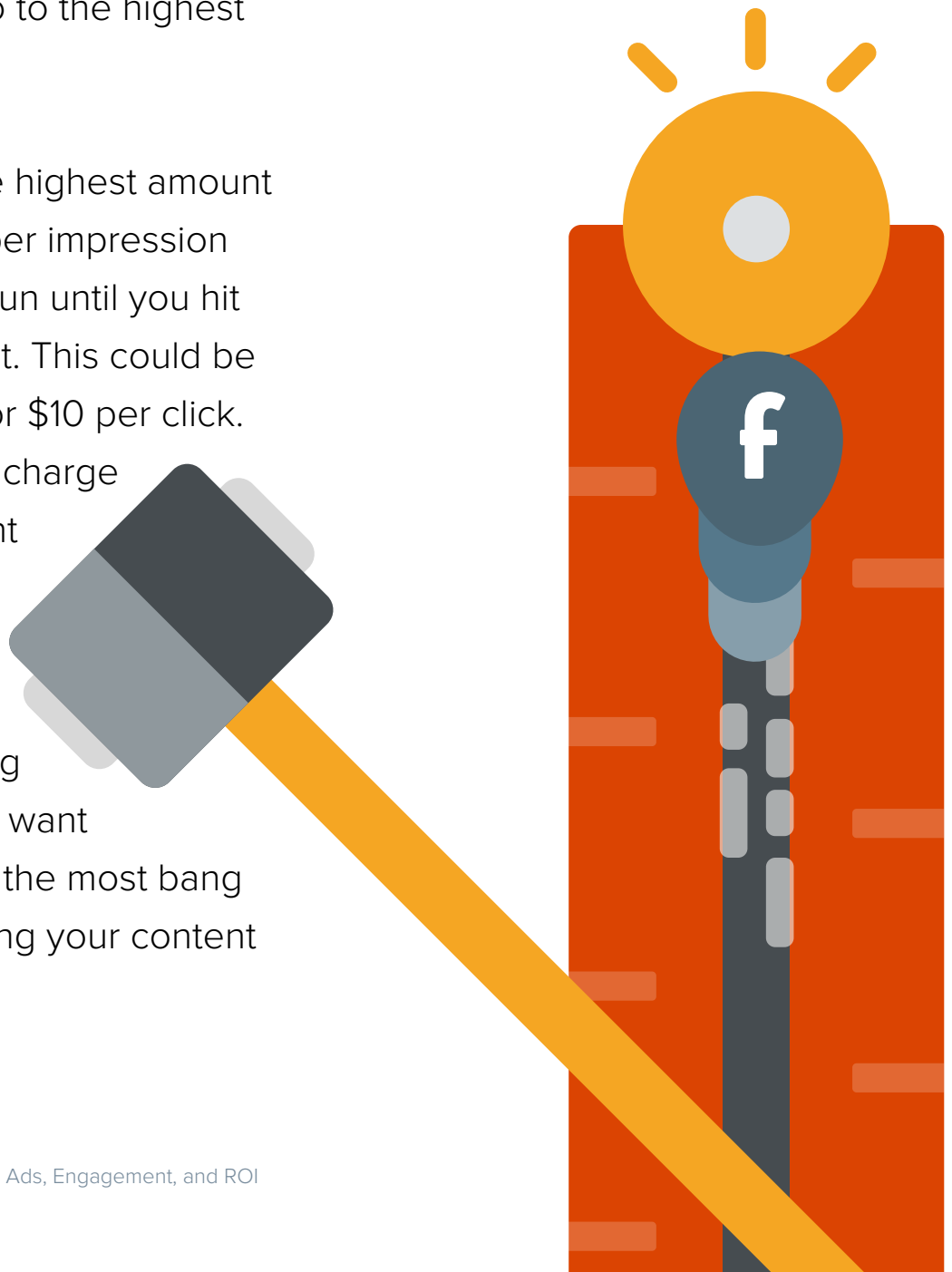
02 | Building Your Paid Social Audience

Facebook Ads are a great way to reach new audience groups and they're also a powerful way of keeping your existing audience engaged.

At Bitly, we do a lot of retargeting, where we serve up Facebook Ads based on a user's previous actions. Let's say we noticed you were reading about Facebook Ads. When it comes time to post, we would likely share an ad for a paid social webinar instead of a mobile webinar ad on your Facebook feed.

For us, Facebook Ads have generated new leads and built brand awareness. We're generally focused on creating educational eBooks and webinars (like this Paid Social 101

Facebook allows you to target people similar to existing audiences - so it's not only people you haven't reached before, but it's people who may know about your brand already or may be visiting your website you can get really granular with as well.

webinar), that speak to customers' and potential customers' pain points.
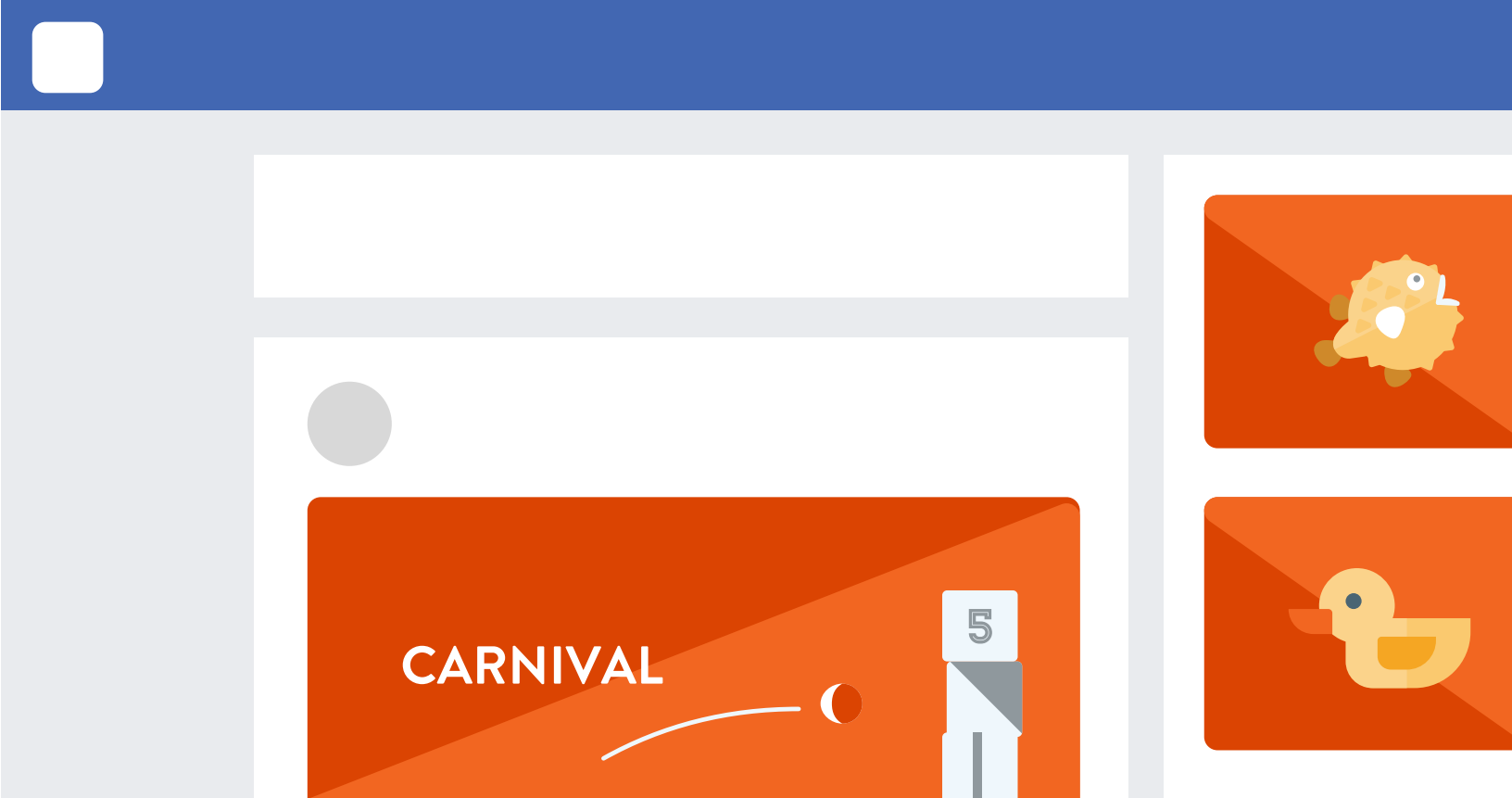
03 | Finding Your Medium

The two most popular Facebook Ads are the news feed and right-hand side ads. The news feed ad looks like an organic post within your feed, while the right-hand side ad is the small box on the side of your main feed.

In addition to this, there are also Boosted Posts, which expand the reach of an organic post in the news feed. You can target either fans or friends of fans with this existing content. This is a great way to promote user generated content (UGC). Afterall, 93% of consumers find user-generated content helpful and 85% trust content generated by others more than they trust the content produced by brands.

04 | Storytelling Through Rich Media

Native videos, videos that are directly uploaded to Facebook, have a greater reach than any other type of post on Facebook. In fact, they perform better than videos on Youtube, Vimeo and Vevo. This means that beyond sharing neat video content from other brands, you have to post original video content.

Over the past few years, Facebook has made a big push towards video and other rich media formats with Facebook Live and Sequenced Ads. Experimenting with these ways of storytelling can keep your audience engaged.
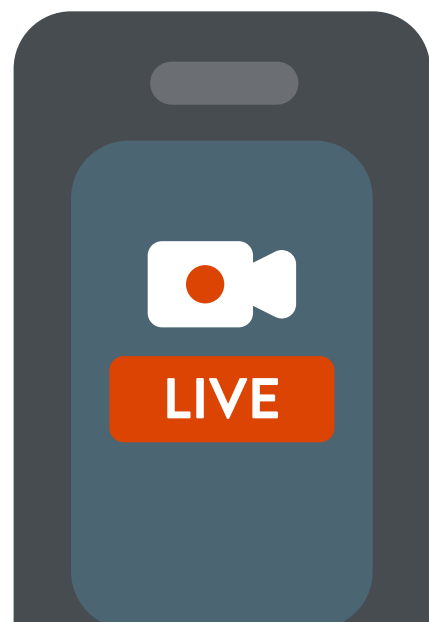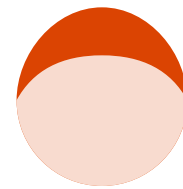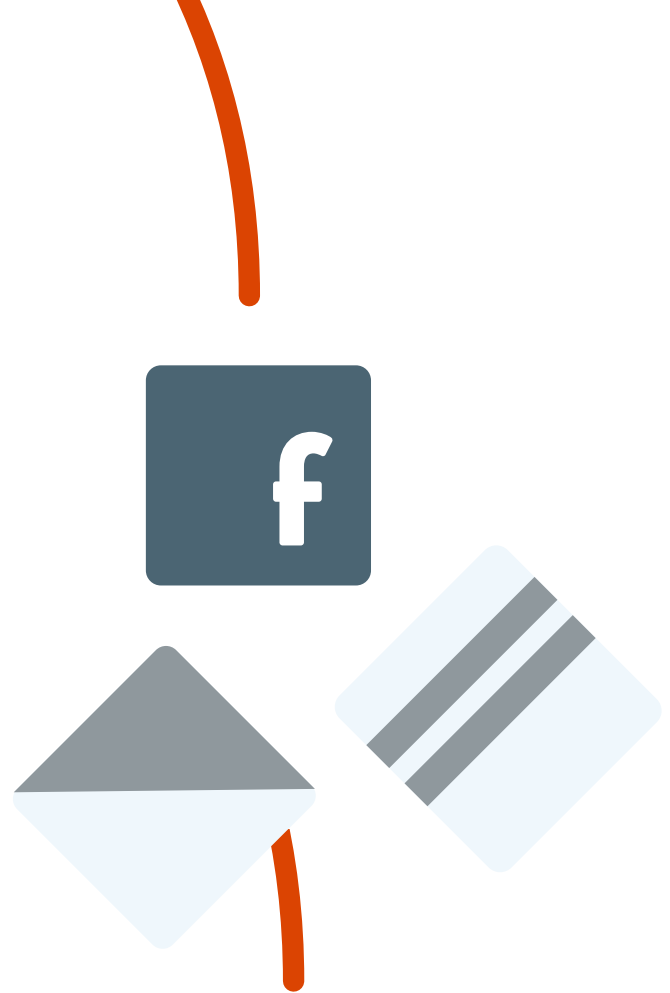
05 | Tracking Conversions

Just as important as the content is measuring and tracking success. Bitly's OneView tool shows you a macro view of your micro efforts in Facebook and across other channels.

At Bitly, we use a mix of Bitly, Salesforce Parameters and UTM parameters to track conversion. You can couple this with a Facebook pixel that tracks a certain action or event such as "check out, "sign up" or purchase to track from a cost-per-lead perspective within the Facebook Power Editor. We also use Google Analytics to track more middle and bottom-of-the-funnel traffic. With all three together, we're able to track clicks, traffic and conversions.

As one of the largest social platforms in the world make sure Facebook is a big part of your Paid Social Strategy. Learn to use this channel well and you will quickly be on your way to creating a successful paid social program.

"Are my ads converting? That's the crux of why we're doing ads in the first place."
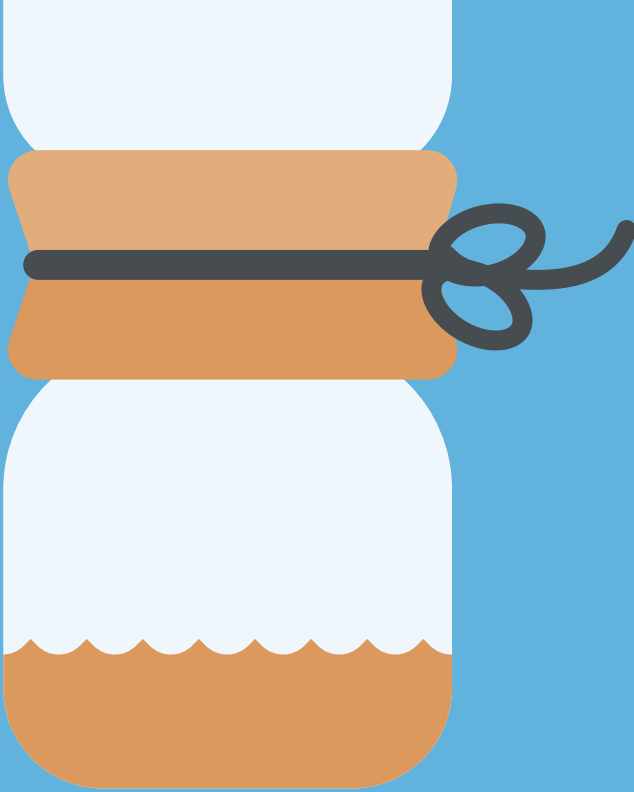
03
TWITTER ADS

On a channel where you only have 140 characters to convey your message, every word counts. You only have so much room to convince your followers to learn more, shop or download. Twitter's brevity can be a challenge for marketers. So, here's how to kick off your Twitter Ads strategy in five easy steps.

Step 1 | Set Up Your Campaign & Twitter Audience Platform

At Bitly, we find a lot of success with retargeting ad campaigns. This is where we serve up content that's personalized to users based on previous actions they've taken. Our goal is to drive them back to our website and ultimately convert.

When we first set up a campaign, we choose "start immediately and run continuously." This ensures that the campaign only ends when the budget is maxed out. This gives us the ability to track and optimize the copy and creative as it goes. You might even want to test time of day and day of week, to make sure your content gets in front of your audience and sticks.

"Always update the ads that you're running on Twitter, especially since people see it and then move on."

In the past, we've tested a few variables, from time of week to copy and images, and have found success with follower targeting where we target users similar to those that are already following us.

Step 2 | Conversion Tracking

Twitter has a tracking pixel that allows you to see the actions users take after click. With the pixel, you can see how users are converting after that first touchpoint - whether they're purchasing, downloading, signing up for your service or more. You're even able to see users who interacted with your Promoted Tweet on mobile, who later came back to visit your website on a computer.

To set up this tracking pixel, all you need to do is add a snippet of Twitter code to a page on your website where the conversions take place.

In our case, we're using the pixel to track users who interact with our ad and then fill out the form to download our ebook.

Step 3 | Select Your Audience

When selecting your audience, consider your budget. Generally, the larger your scope of reach, the greater the cost and the lower your probability of getting someone to click.

Like Facebook, Twitter has a range of filters that can help you narrow down on an audience group that will give you the most bang for your buck. In the Twitter Ads editor, you can target by language, gender, interests, keyword and more.

For us, running a retargeting campaign, we'll select our tailored audience here. We have a few audience groups that we have previously set up through our tracking pixel, including Bitly users, website visitors and those who have previously filled out a lead form.
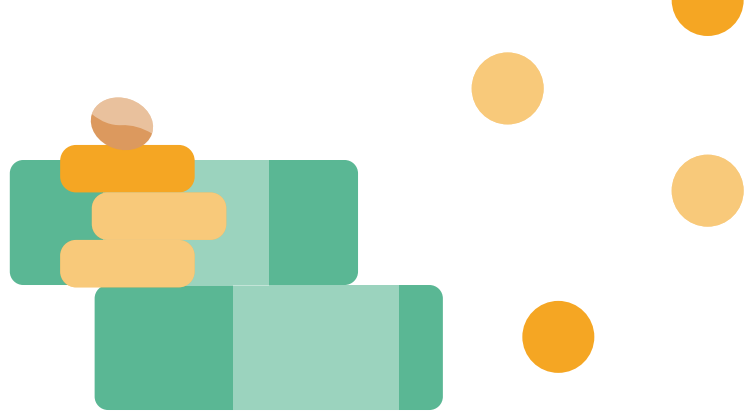
Step 4 | Set Your Budget

When setting your budget, always start on the lower end. Twitter allows you to tweak your campaign as it runs, so test it out at a minimal cost. We chose a bid just a little under Twitter's suggested range. If you find that you're not meeting your daily budget, continue to increase your bid until you find that sweet spot.

This prevents you from running out of budget too early in the campaign. It also ensures that you're able to reach a good range of users over a longer period of time, because some people might not check Twitter every day or at the same time each day.

Step 5 | Choose Your Creative

Last is perhaps the most fun part of creating a Twitter ad: the creative. Here, you can create a new tweet or select an old tweet to promote.

At Bitly, we've found that Website Cards are really great for driving engagement. Cards include a large

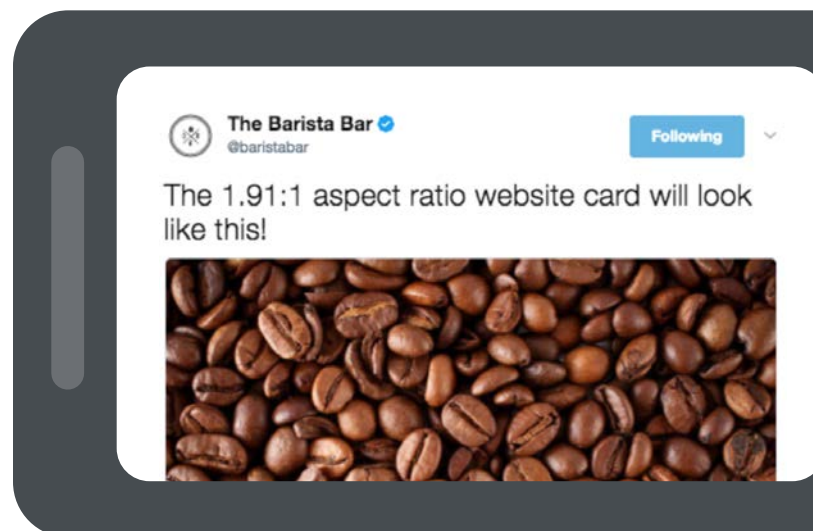featured image and a CTA button where you can directly capture email addresses or drive app installs.

Twitter Promote

There's also another, newer way to use Twitter too. It's called Twitter Promote Mode. The idea is pretty simple. For just $99 a month, Twitter will automatically promote your tweets according to your preferred audience. All you have to do is tweet as usual, and if your tweets meet Twitter's quality requirements, they will be promoted to your selected target. Twitter is claiming you will reach 30,000 additional people and gain 30 followers each month.

Why Twitter Ads Are So Powerful

More marketers are turning to Twitter Ads than ever before. That's probably because Twitter is a conversational platform. Brands are able to insert themselves into real-time events or trends unfolding on the channel. And users are able to engage with Promoted Tweets just as they would organic tweets from their friends.

So, as Twitter continues to evolve their ad offerings, paid storytelling on the platform will only get even more powerful.

The Barista Bar
@baristabar
Following

The 1.91:1 aspect ratio website card will look like this!

04
INSTAGRAM ADS

Many advertisers are now shifting their budgets towards Instagram Sponsored Ads. With 95 million photos and videos generated daily on the platform, brands are eager for a slice of the social commerce pie.

The secret is, Instagram is easy. You don't need professional equipment or an enormous budget to get started with Instagram Sponsored Ads. "Your audience doesn't want perfection, they just want to know that they're understood." says Samantha Jayne, Instagram influencer and author of "Quarter Life Poetry." So jump right in and connect.

We've rounded up five steps to getting the most hearts for your dollar out of your next Instagram Sponsored Ad.

01 | The Anatomy Of An Ad

Instagram Sponsored Ads are so powerful because they're native, which means they blend right into the feed as users scroll without disrupting the experience.

Prachi Mishra, Head of Product Marketing at AdRoll, one of the first companies to work with Instagram and brands on paid ads, dissects the anatomy of a Sponsored Ad below:

Instagram offers a range of call-to-action buttons for their paid posts, including "Learn more," "Download," "Install Now," "Shop Now," "Sign Up," "Buy" and more. Since organic posts don't allow clickable links, it can be valuable paying for this CTA to help maximize conversions.
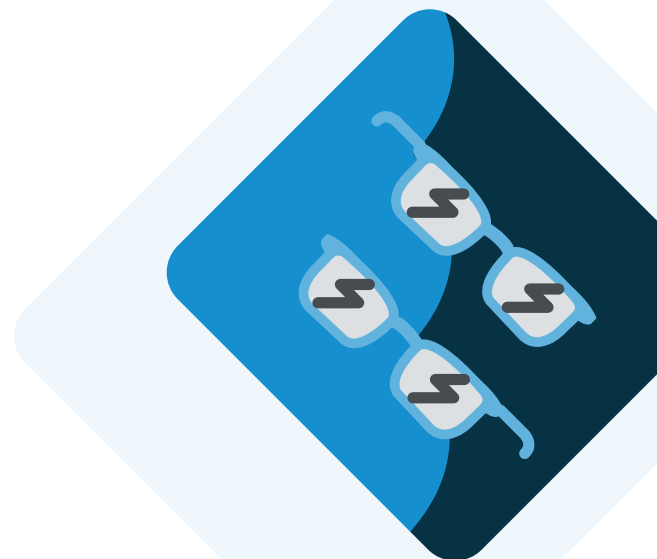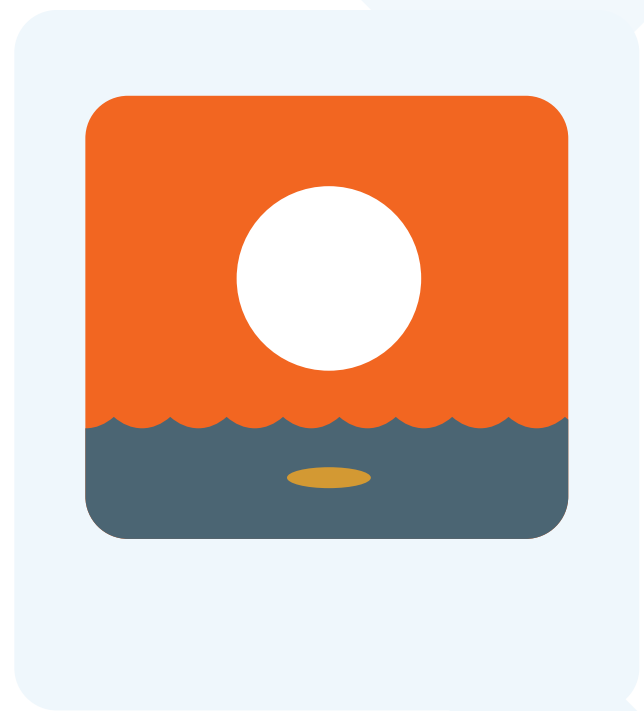
02 | Powered By Facebook

Instagram Sponsored Ads are run through Facebook, and can be set up through Ad Creation, Power Editor or the Facebook Ads API. This gives you access to the full suite of targeting features, so you can filter by audience demographics such as age, gender, and interests. As with most paid social channels though, Instagram is secretive with how much it costs to advertise on the platform.

03 | Business Insights

For smaller businesses or those who aren't ready to invest in Sponsored Ads just yet, Business Insights can be a good introduction to the paid offering.
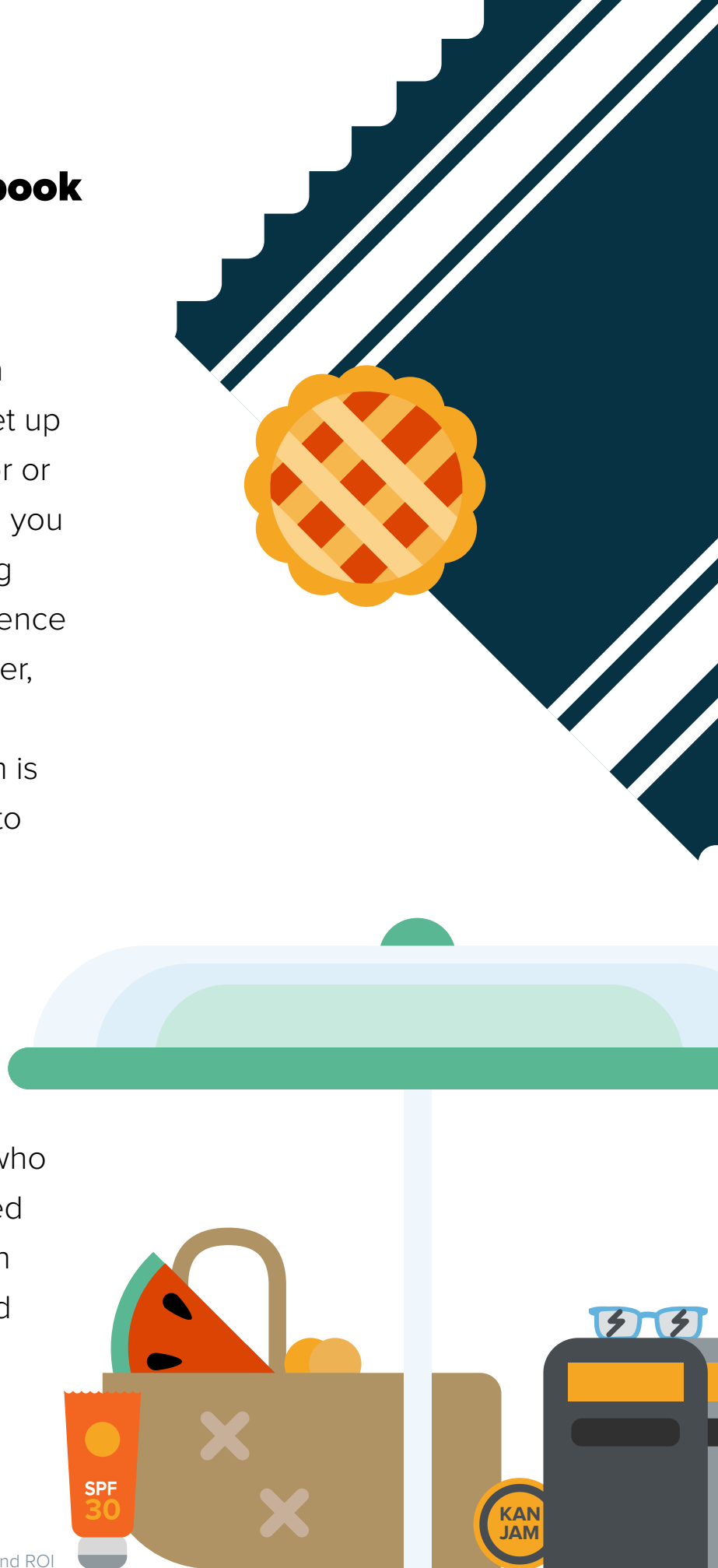
Business Insights is Instagram's solution to making advertising more accessible for small to medium businesses, but it's simple, mobile-first interface can also be great for bigger businesses looking to run quick campaigns on the go.

Business Profiles

This is a free feature for brands who have business profiles on Instagram. Brands can give followers four options to get in contact with them: call, text, email or directions to the nearest location.
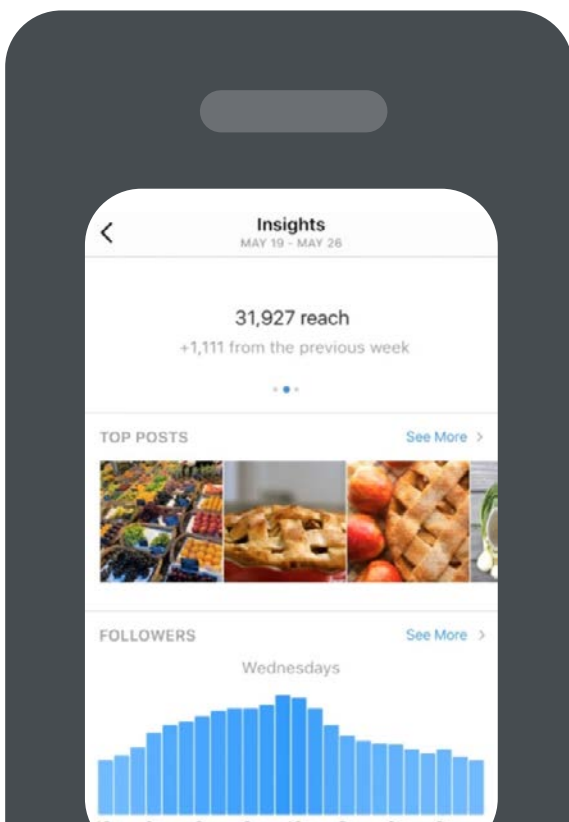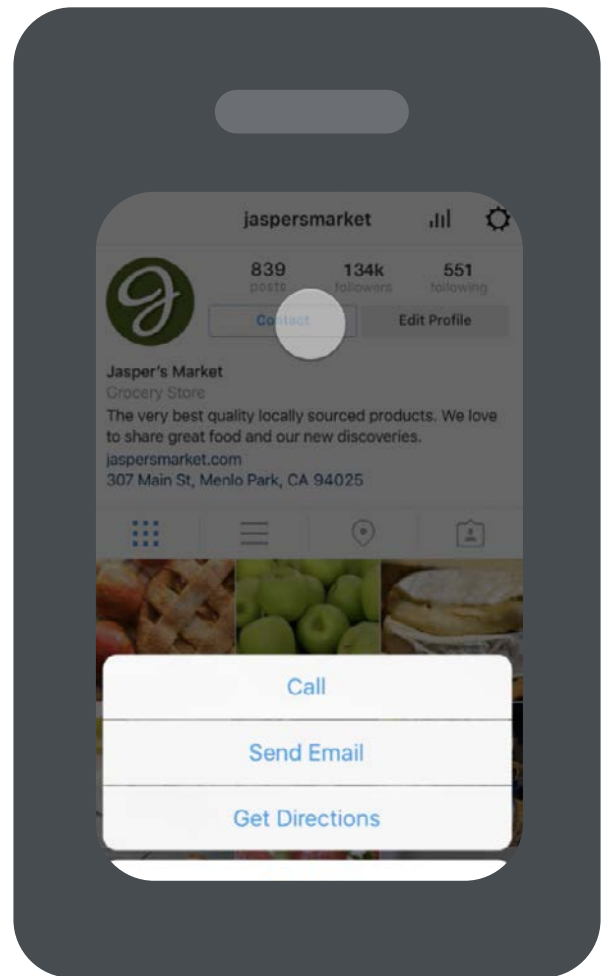
Insights

Insights gives marketers a quick and easy view of who's engaging the most, when they're engaging and which content is resonating the most. It also digs deeper into follower demographics such as gender, age and location.
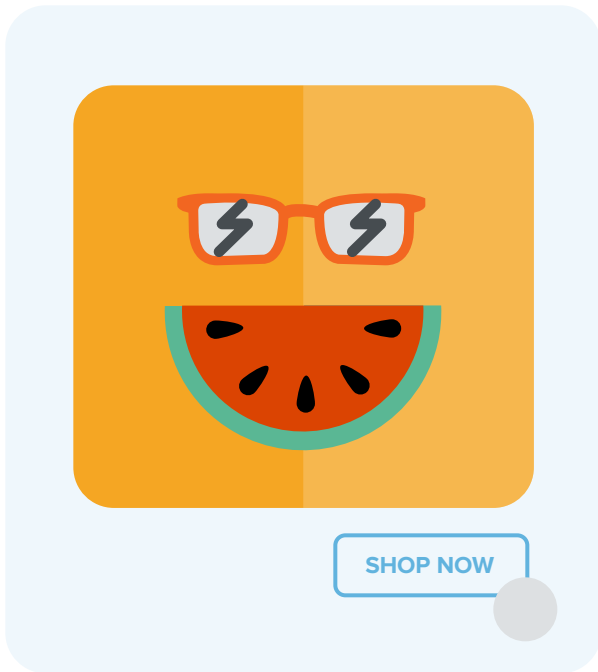
Promote

Now you can turn a trending organic post into an ad right within the Instagram app. Simply pick a post that's been generating a lot of engagement and add a CTA button and target audience, or allow Instagram to suggest an audience.

04 | Pass The Mic

For smaller businesses or those who Find your niche and partner with influencers to create more awesome content for like-minded users.

Brands should consider partnering with influencers who are plugged into these communities to further amplify their reach. User Generated Content (UGC) is proven to build trust and drive more engagement. Up to 90% of shoppers say User-Generated Content holds more influence over their decisions than even search engine results!

05 | The One Constant On A Constantly Evolving Platform

Despite the number and frequency of updates that have left many marketers' heads spinning, the key to standing out in the feed remains constant: quality content.

So get 'gramming! Find your audience, create your aesthetic, build out your community and continue to test until you find a strategy that works best for you.

05
LINKEDIN ADS

There are some things that just go together. Peanut butter and jelly, Han Solo and Chewie, Mulder and Scully, Snapchat and millennials... and LinkedIn Ads and B2B marketing.

If you're a B2B marketer and you're not already using LinkedIn Ads, here's the butter to your bread. LinkedIn members are six times more engaged with content like brand updates and news than with job listings and posts.

The platform also drives 80% of all B2B leads, and 46% of all visits from social channels to corporate sites.

LinkedIn Ads offer hyper-targeting by professional demographics, allowing you to reach more engaged, higher quality decision makers. At 500 million plus users, LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network, is your best sidekick.
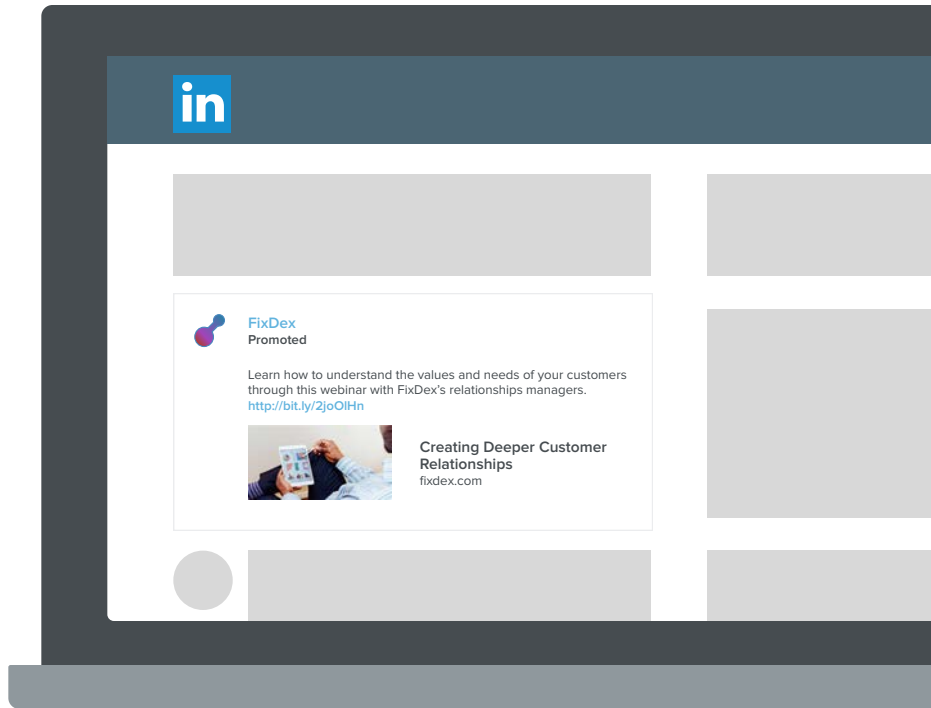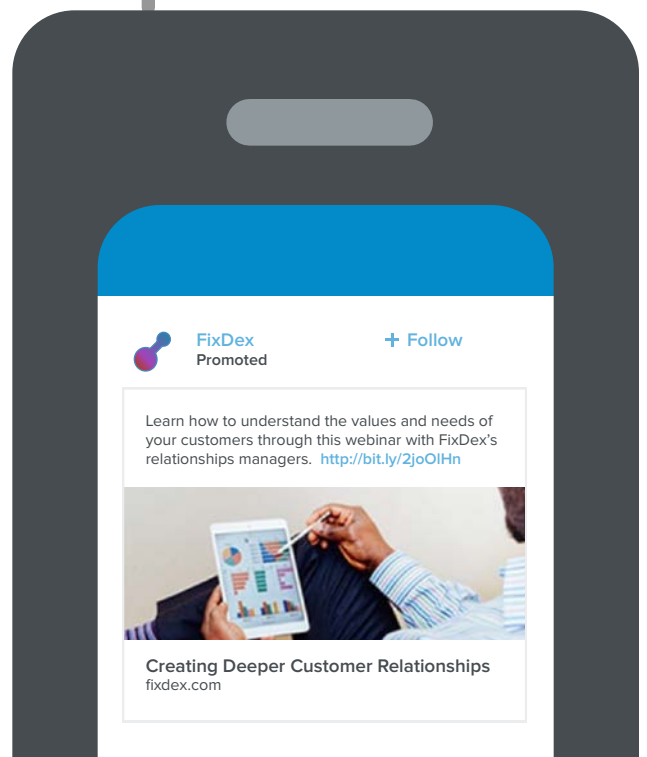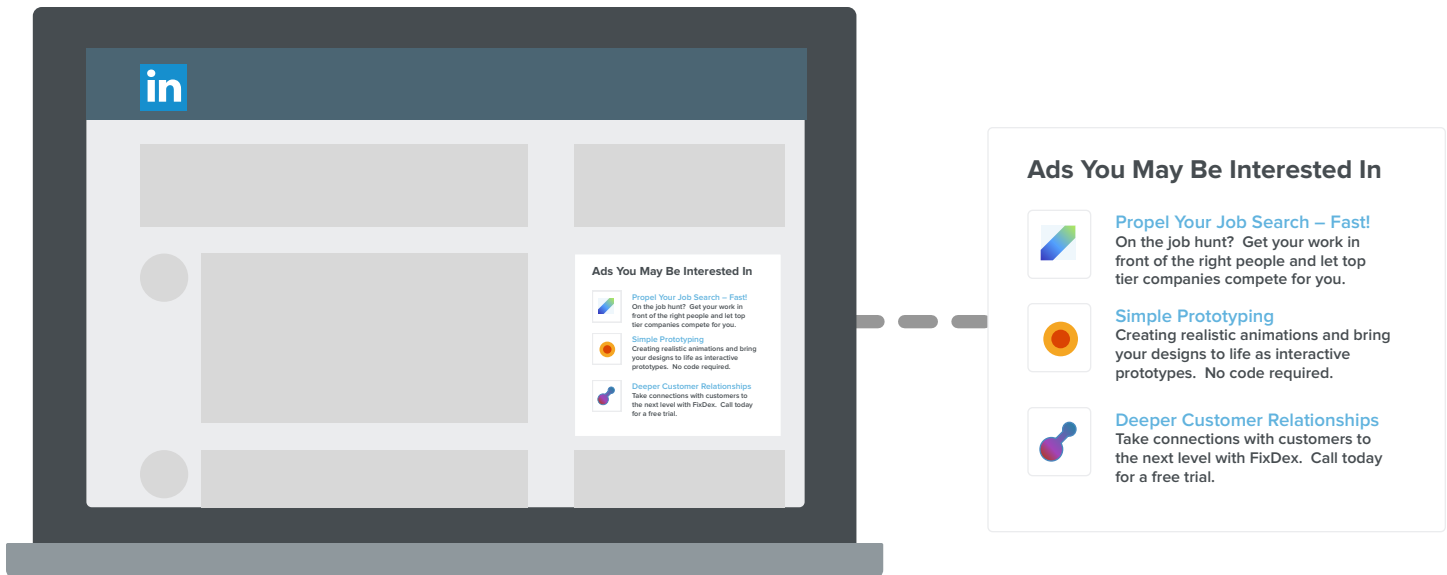
01 | Ad Formats: Sponsored Updates & Text Ads

There are two LinkedIn Ad formats to choose from: Sponsored Updates and Text Ads.

Sponsored Updates

Sponsored Updates are native ads that fit right in with the look and feel of the LinkedIn feed. They are also responsive across all devices: desktop, mobile and tablet.
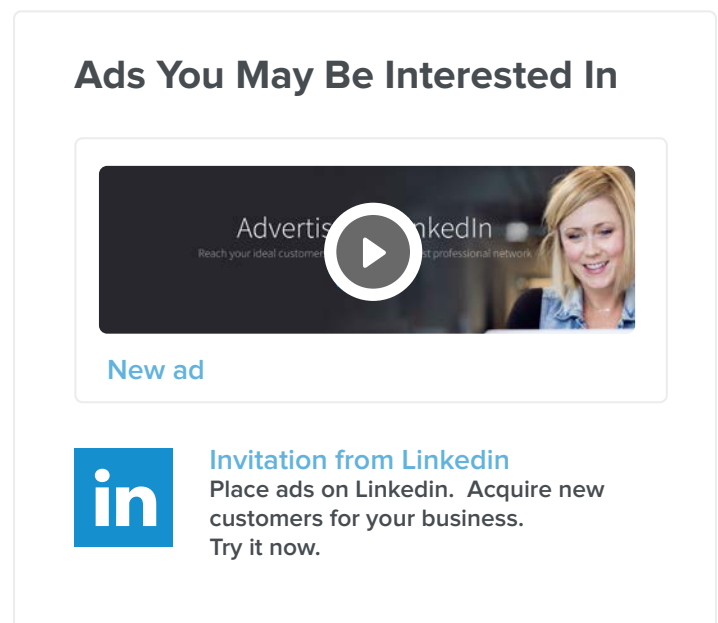
Text Ads

Text Ads are smaller, text-heavy ads with 50 x 50 pixel images that show up in the right hand side of the feed.

LinkedIn also offers a range of rich media options in the sidebar, such as video and Slideshare presentations.

For video ads, a video renders in place of the image and copy. Videos can be up to two minutes long and expand once it's clicked on. You can import an existing video from your own YouTube channel or upload a new video.

SlideShare ads can also be an effective medium to test, since the channel receives 500% more traffic from business owners than Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Linkedin.

Select specific targeting criteria to zero in on your ideal audience:

Company name	Company industry	Company size	Job title	Job function
Job seniority	Member schools	Fields of study	Degrees	Member skills
Member groups	Member gender	Member age	Years of experience	Company followers

Company connections
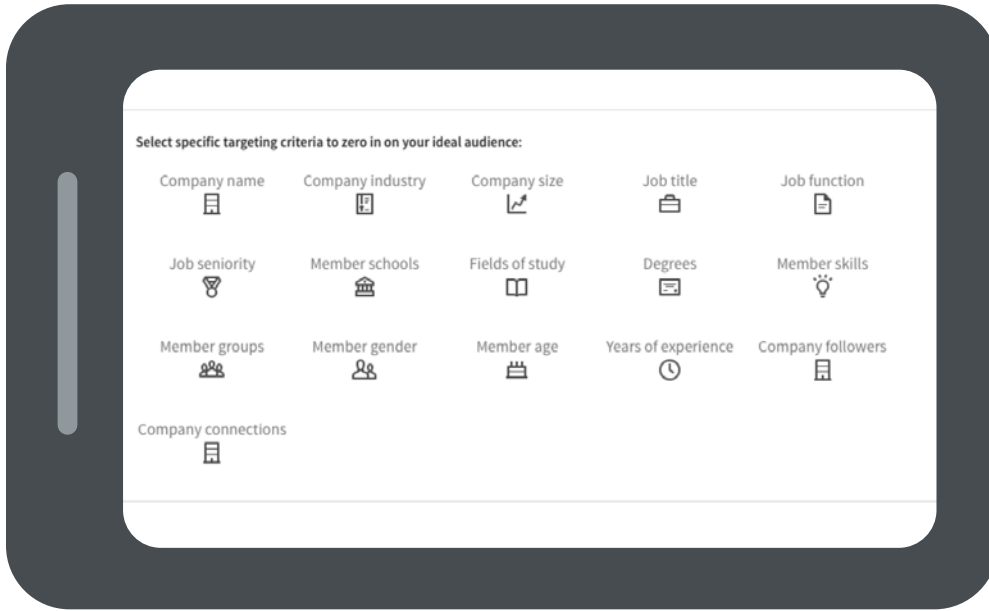
02 | Audience & Targeting

LinkedIn Ads can be highly targeted by B2B demographics such as job title, function, industry, company size and seniority.
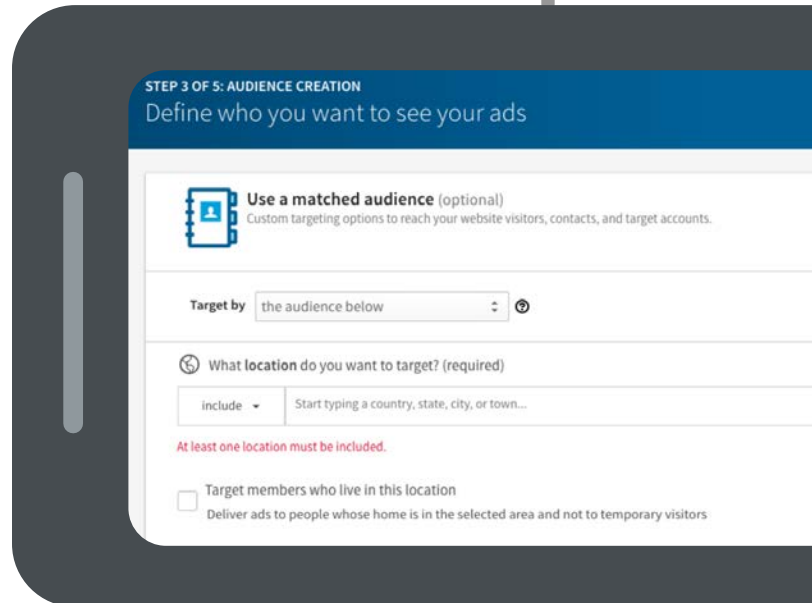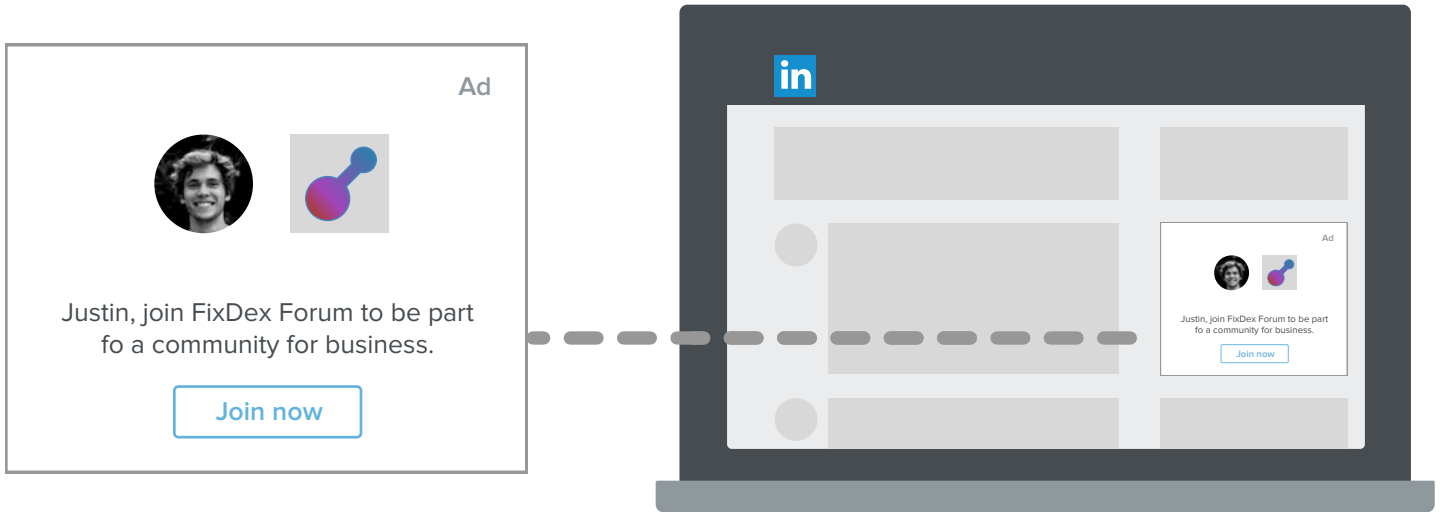
Your targeting might look like this:

Title: VP of Marketing
Location: NYC
Company Size: 10,000+
Industry: Retail

STEP 3 OF 5: AUDIENCE CREATION
Define who you want to see your ads

Use a matched audience (optional)
Custom targeting options to reach your website visitors, contacts, and target accounts.

Target by   the audience below

What **location** do you want to target? (required)

include ▾   Start typing a country, state, city, or town...

At least one location must be included.

Target members who live in this location
Deliver ads to people whose home is in the selected area and not to temporary visitors
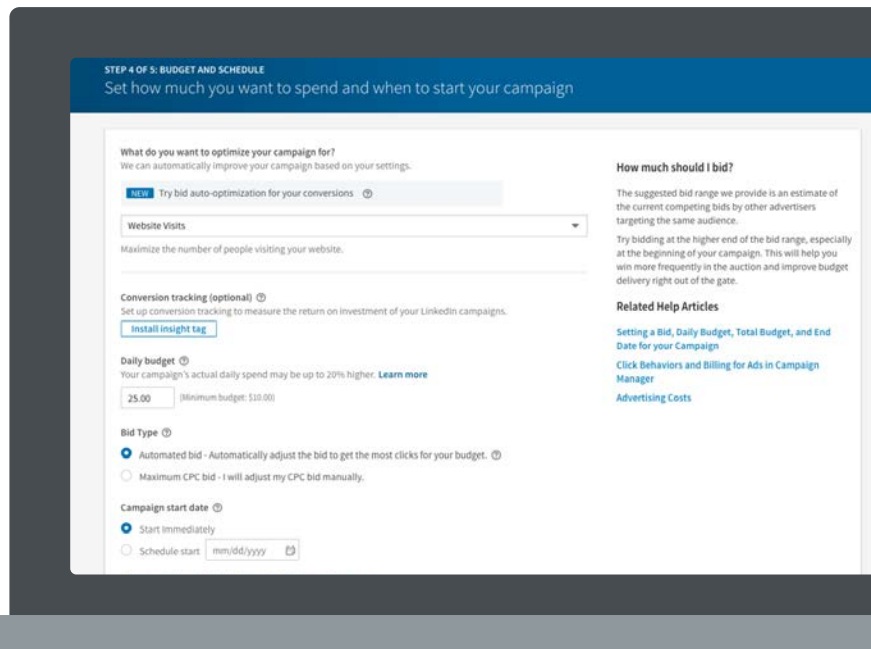
You can also create dynamic ads in the sidebar using these demographics, to create a more compelling CTA. Below, for example, FixDex Forum uses Justin's profile picture and name to grab his attention and convince him to join the community.

03 | Bidding

Like most options for your paid social strategy, LinkedIn Ads run on a bidding structure: you can bid by cost-per-impression (CPM) or cost-per-click (CPC).

LinkedIn's Campaign Manager does have pretty strict minimum requirements, with the minimum audience size being 1,000 and the minimum CPC and CPM cost at $2 a click. This isn't a concern for larger businesses looking to tap into LinkedIn's audience base, but can be a challenge for smaller advertisers. If you do decide to make the jump, you'll want to get the most bang for your buck by testing whether a CPC or CPM model is most effective at driving leads and/or conversion. But of course, testing shouldn't stop here, variables like segmentation, content and time of day also affect the performance of your campaign.

LinkedIn charges different rates for ads depending on the time of day and when users are most engaged. So you'll want to be conscious of how you distribute your ad budget throughout the day, because once you reach your limit your ad will stop running.

04 | Put On Your Lab Coat

But no matter what the numbers say about LinkedIn being a platform of choice for B2B marketers, the only numbers that you should really be looking at are your own.

Continuously test your campaigns to find the copy, creative, time and audience that works best for your budget and resources.

For further optimization, try adding Bitlinks in your campaigns to see how your LinkedIn ads are performing against content across other channels. Or even A/B test by using the same Bitlink in two different pieces of creative to test the performance of one image against another. By simply adding a link, you'll be able to see all of your clicks rolled up in one dashboard.

So put on your lab coat and get to testing! Two new members join LinkedIn each second. Your audience is always evolving, and so should your content, to reach the most qualified business professionals.
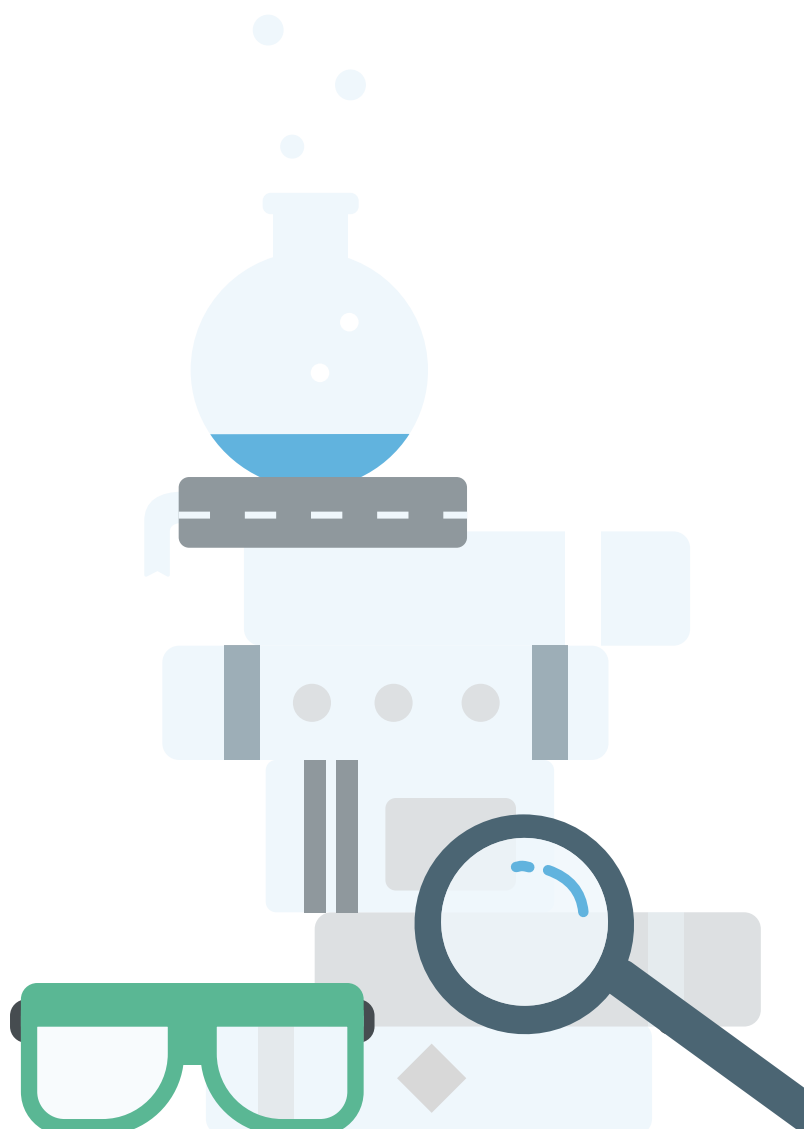
Conclusion

In this day and age paid social is one of the most powerful and important ways to build your brand or business. If you're not using it then you're going to fall behind your competitors who are. The good news is that it's never too late to start. And a smart, well executed paid social strategy should quickly start yielding returns. So if you choose to start using paid social (and you should) here are a few key takeaways to remember.

Find your Medium

All audiences are different. What works for one brand might now work for you. That's why it's important to spend time experimenting until you find your magic formula for how to best reach and interact with your customers. Your audience might respond better to some kinds of content more than others. But that's one of the great things about paid social - it'll help you figure out what that is.
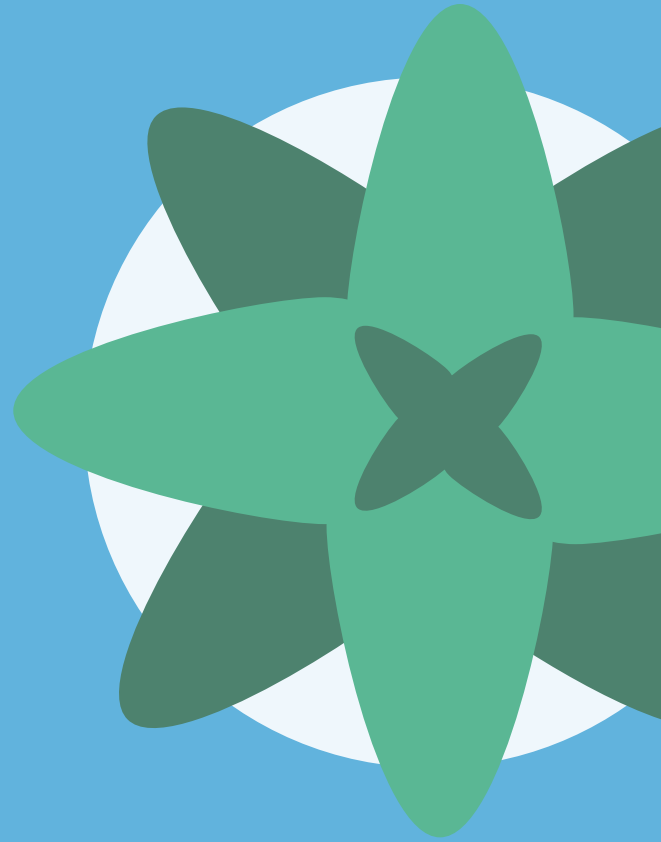
Know your Target

It seems simple enough, but you can't begin to implement a paid social strategy until you know exactly who your audience is and where to find them.

Build your audience

Paid social a great way to reach new audience groups and it's also a powerful way of keeping your existing audience engaged.

Track Success

Just as important as the content is measuring and tracking success. That's where the power of the link comes in. At Bitly, we use a mix of Bitly, Salesforce, and Google Analytics to track conversion, which gives us both a macro and micro level view of how our content is performing. Make sure you are paying attention to your data so you know quickly what's working and what's not – and so you can be agile as social ad platforms continue to evolve.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT HOW *you* CAN USE THE LINK TO OPTIMIZE *your* PAID SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS?

CLICK TO GET STARTED