



## Week 4 – Facebook and Instagram ads

This summary provides a detailed overview of the Social Media Marketing Bootcamp (Week 4) delivered by **Evan Mangan** on behalf of the **Local Enterprise Office Limerick**, focusing on Facebook and Instagram advertising strategies.

### The Current Landscape of Social Media Marketing

Evan began by welcoming participants to the fourth week of the bootcamp, recapping previous sessions that covered AI tools like ChatGPT and Gemini, as well as Canva. He explained that while the first three weeks focused on free marketing, the reality of modern social media is that **organic reach is in a state of significant decline**.

Evan said that on Facebook, businesses are currently doing well if they reach **5% to 10% of their followers** with an organic post. While Instagram offers slightly better organic reach—typically between **15% and 25%**—the majority of a business's followers still will not see their unpaid content. He pointed out that because Meta (the parent company of Facebook and Instagram) is an advertising company, they prioritize content the AI deems interesting to the user, often stripping out business posts to make room for friends' content or paid ads. Consequently, Evan said that for businesses to reach thousands of people for specific events like Valentine's Day or product launches, **running paid ads has become very important**.

### Ads Manager vs. The "Boost Post" Button

Evan explained the difference between the simplified "Boost Post" button and the professional **Ads Manager tool**. He described the Boost button as "**advertising on stabilizers**," noting that it is a stripped-down version designed for simplicity but lacking the control and sophisticated targeting of the full tool.

Evan said that the Boost button often leads to **wastage and fewer options**. Specifically, he warned participants against using the Boost Post button on an **iPhone**, because Apple charges a **30% fee** on any money generated through the app, which Meta passes directly to the customer. To avoid this "Apple tax" and gain full control, Evan advised that all ads should be run through the **Ads Manager tool on a desktop browser**. He noted that even if a business only wants to advertise on Instagram, it is still better to use the Facebook-based Ads Manager to set up the campaign.

## understanding Campaign Objectives

When starting a campaign in Ads Manager, the first and most critical step is choosing an **objective**. Evan said that the objective determines two things: how Meta reports the results and, more importantly, **how the AI optimizes the ad's delivery**.

Evan explained the primary objectives available:

- **Traffic:** It prioritizes "clickers"—people who have a history of clicking ads to visit websites.
- **Awareness:** This is used to get the word out to the maximum number of people. However, Evan said the quality of these views might be lower, as the AI may show the ad to "lurkers" who rarely engage.
- **Engagement:** This focuses on people likely to like, comment, or watch a video.
- **App Promotion:** Targeted at those most likely to download an app.
- **Sales:** Evan said this is the most advanced objective. It requires the **Meta Pixel** and conversion tracking to be set up so the AI can identify the specific profile of people who actually make purchases.

For the purposes of the course, Evan focused on the **Traffic objective**, as it is the most accessible for businesses starting out who don't have the web conversion pixel setup for a sales campaign.

## Targeting Strategies: Warm vs. Cold Audiences

Evan introduced the concept of **Warm and Cold audiences**. A **Cold Audience** consists of people who have never heard of the business. A **Warm Audience** includes people who have already interacted with the brand, such as social media followers or website visitors. Evan said it is far easier and more cost-effective to **convert a warm audience** because there is already brand recognition.

### Custom Audiences (Warm)

Evan showed participants how to create **Custom Audiences** to target these warm leads. He said businesses should create audiences for:

1. **Facebook Page Followers:** People who currently like or follow the page.
2. **Facebook Engagers:** Anyone who has visited the page or interacted with a post, even if they don't follow it.
3. **Instagram Followers and Engagers:** Similar audiences for the Instagram profile.
4. **Website Visitors:** This requires the **Meta Pixel**, a piece of tracking code installed on the website. Evan said businesses can track visitors from the last **30 to 180 days**.

### Advantage+ Targeting (Cold)

For reaching new people, Evan explained **Advantage+**, which is Meta's AI-driven targeting. Instead of the advertiser manually picking every interest, the AI scans the ad's image and

text to understand the product and then finds the best audience. Evan said that while advertisers can still restrict the AI by **geography and minimum age**, they should generally allow the AI to test and find the right people.

## The Importance of Creative and "Andromeda"

Evan emphasized that in 2026, **the "creative" (the image or video) is the most important part of the ad**. He explained the **Andromeda system**, Meta's retrieval and ranking process. Within a split second of a user opening their feed, the system looks at thousands of eligible ads, retrieves a shortlist, and **ranks them based on quality and relevance**.

Evan said that if an ad is high quality and gets early engagement, it receives a **higher ranking score**, which makes it cheaper to run and more likely to be shown to the "best" users. Conversely, a poor-quality ad will be penalized with a lower score and limited reach.

## Ad Creation: Existing Posts vs. From Scratch

Evan said there are two ways to set up the actual ad:

1. **Use an Existing Post:** Advertisers can select a post or reel they have already shared. Evan recommended only using posts that have already performed well organically, as this proves the content is engaging.
2. **Create from Scratch:** This allows the advertiser to upload a specific image or video and provide **multiple headlines and primary text options**. Evan said this is highly effective because the AI will test different combinations of text and images to see which performs best.

Evan also recommended using **Canva** to create images in three specific formats: **Square** (for feeds), **Portrait** (for stories and reels), and **Landscape** (for the right-hand column on desktop). This ensures the ad looks professional across all of Meta's placements.

## Action Point List for Participants

Based on Evan's training, participants should complete the following actions:

- **Audit Your Organic Reach:** Review your recent Facebook and Instagram posts to see what percentage of your followers are actually seeing your content.
- **Set Up Custom Audiences:**
  - Navigate to the "Audiences" section in Ads Manager.
  - Create audiences for "People who follow your page" and "People who engaged with your page" for both Facebook and Instagram.
- **Install the Meta Pixel:**
  - If you have a website, generate the Pixel code in the Audiences section.
  - Email the instructions to yourself or your web developer to get it placed on your site.
  - Create a "Website Visitors (180 days)" custom audience.
- **Stop "Boosting" on iPhones:** If you must use the Boost button, do so via a desktop browser to avoid the **30% Apple service fee**.
- **Prioritize Warm Audiences:** When running your next campaign, allocate a portion of your budget specifically to your Custom Audiences (followers and site visitors) before spending everything on cold "interest-based" targeting.
- **Experiment with Creative Formats:** Use Canva to resize your best ad images into **Square (1080x1080)**, **Portrait (1080x1920)**, and **Landscape** formats to maximize placement quality.
- **Use Multi-Text Options:** When creating an ad from scratch, provide at least **two or three different headlines and primary text options** to allow Meta's AI to test which resonates most with your audience.
- **Monitor Your Metrics:** After your ad has run for a few days, check your **Ads Manager** for "Cost per Result". Use the "**Breakdown**" tab to see which age groups, genders, and platforms (Facebook vs. Instagram) are delivering the cheapest clicks.

*This was created with the help of one of our AI colleagues 😊*