



Local Enterprise Office Tipperary

Facebook & Instagram Advertising — Part 2

24th April 2026

Course Summary

Prepared by The Marketing Crowd

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

Introduction

This document summarises Part 2 of a two-session Facebook and Instagram advertising course, delivered for participants of the Local Enterprise Office Tipperary programme. Building on the targeting fundamentals covered in Part 1, this session focused on running ads from start to finish — including choosing campaign objectives, setting budgets, understanding AI-driven targeting, selecting platforms and placements, and creating three different types of ads: using an existing post or reel, uploading an image, or uploading a video. The session concluded with a practical walkthrough of how to analyse and interpret campaign results.

Campaign Objectives: Choosing the Right Goal

One of the most important decisions when setting up any Facebook or Instagram ad is selecting the right objective. The objective you choose determines two things: the reporting you receive and how Meta's system optimises your ad behind the scenes.

When you choose **Traffic**, Meta will report on how many people clicked through and what each click cost. A cost per click between 10 and 40 cent is excellent; 40 cent to €1 is typical; anything above €2–3 is expensive. When you choose **Engagement**, the system reports on interactions rather than clicks, and optimises for people most likely to engage — but those people may not necessarily click through to your website. **Awareness** reaches the widest possible audience for your budget, but doesn't optimise for any specific action — useful if you simply want to get the word out about a new service or product.

Leads campaigns include a built-in form that Meta auto-populates with the user's information, reducing friction. However, in an Irish and EU context, GDPR compliance is an additional consideration — leads don't automatically opt in to ongoing marketing, and the leads aren't automatically connected to email platforms like MailerLite or Mailchimp.

Sales campaigns are the most powerful but require both the Meta Pixel installed on your website and at least 40 tracked conversions per month. Without these, the system simply doesn't have enough data to optimise effectively. For most small businesses on these courses, **Traffic** (driving people to your website) will be the most appropriate objective.

One important note: once a campaign is live, you cannot change its objective. If you realise mid-setup that you've chosen the wrong one, you can go back and change it before publishing — but once the ad is running, you'd need to create an entirely new campaign.

The Three Pages of Ad Setup

The ads tool in Meta is structured across three sequential pages:

Page 1 is where you name your campaign (choose something you'll recognise when reviewing results later — nobody else sees this name) and, if relevant, self-declare under

Special Ad Categories. These categories — social issues/politics, housing, employment, and credit/financial services — exist to prevent discrimination in targeting. If your ad falls into one of these categories, you must declare it or your ad will be rejected. For most small businesses, this won't apply.

Page 2 is where you specify the type of traffic you want (website, messages, calls, or profile growth), set your budget and duration, decide on your targeting approach (AI or manual), and choose your platforms and placements.

Page 3 is where you select which Facebook page and Instagram account the ad will come from, then create the actual ad content — either by selecting an existing post or reel, or by creating something from scratch.

Budgets, Targeting: AI vs. Manual Control

Budget Guidance

As a rough guide, €5 per day reaches around 3,000 people, and €10 per day reaches 5,000–6,000. However, this depends on the size of your target audience — a very narrow audience gives Meta fewer options and reduces its efficiency. Splitting your spend across 2–3 days is generally more effective than spending everything on a single day, as it allows the system to learn and optimise over time.

For warm audiences of up to 5,000 people, a total spend of €10–€20 is recommended. For cold audiences where you're using AI targeting, a minimum of €10 per day is advisable to give the system enough data to test effectively.

AI (Advantage Plus) vs. Manual Targeting

For many years, advertisers were fully in control of their targeting — specifying location, age, gender, and detailed interests. Meta has now shifted toward AI-driven targeting (called Advantage Plus) as the default, gradually reducing manual options and encouraging advertisers to let the system decide.

With AI targeting, you set "controls" — a geographic area, a minimum age, and optionally a language restriction — and the AI does all the testing within those constraints. It tests different audience segments, monitors performance, and allocates more of your budget toward the audiences generating the best results.

The practical recommendation: if you have a warm audience (people who follow you on social media or have visited your website), manually target them first — the AI may not reach them with a small budget. Then, if you have additional budget for cold audiences, let the AI take over and exclude your warm custom audiences to avoid overlapping. If you have no existing followers or website visitors, go straight to the AI. If you have a large budget (roughly €100+ per day), the AI is generally the better option and will factor in your custom audiences on its own.

Platforms, Placements, and Ad Review

Choosing Where Your Ad Appears

Meta can serve your ads across multiple platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Threads, WhatsApp, and the Audience Network (ads appearing within third-party websites and apps). The recommendation is to **untick the Audience Network and Threads** — studies show lower-quality clicks from the Audience Network, and Threads advertising is still too new to assess reliably.

Even if you leave both Facebook and Instagram selected, Meta decides internally how to split your budget between them — it could be 80/20, 90/10, or any other ratio. If you want a guaranteed split, you need to run separate campaigns for each platform.

Within platforms, you can also control placements (feed, stories, reels, in-stream). In-stream ads — those that appear in the middle of videos — are generally disliked by users and often clicked to dismiss, so unticking them is a reasonable choice.

How the Ad Review and Auction System Works

Once you publish an ad, Meta's AI reviews it before it goes live. Ads can be rejected for: inappropriate imagery, poor grammar or spelling, or language that violates platform policies. Notably, words related to weight loss, anxiety, depression, or direct personal targeting (e.g. "your 2-year-old") are often rejected, even if the same content is fine to post organically. The solution is to rephrase — using AI tools like ChatGPT or Gemini to rewrite rejected ad copy is a practical approach. A useful research tool is the **Meta Ads Library** (searchable via Google), where you can browse currently running ads by topic or business name to see what language and formats are being approved.

Once approved, your ad enters an auction system. Meta's Andromeda system filters the thousands of eligible ads to a shortlist, and its GEM (Global Execution Model) scores each one based on relevance and predicted performance. Ads with higher scores win more auctions, appear more frequently, and cost less per click. Creating engaging, high-quality ads that people actually interact with directly improves your score over time.

Creating Three Types of Ads

Type 1: Turning an Existing Post or Reel into an Ad

The simplest approach: go to page 3, leave the setup on "Create an ad," scroll down to Ad Setup, and select "Use an existing post." You'll then be able to browse all your previous Facebook and Instagram posts and reels, choose the one you want to promote, add a call-to-action button with your website URL, and click Publish.

The advantages are: convenience (the content is already created), social proof (it carries existing likes, comments, and shares), and the fact that you know the content resonated with your audience. The downside is that you can't test multiple creative variants — and it will appear publicly on your profile as well as as an ad.

Type 2: Creating an Image Ad from Scratch

On page 3, leave the setup on "Create an ad," scroll to Setup Creative, and select Image Ad. Upload your image(s) — ideally both a **4:5 version** (1080 × 1350px) for the feed and a **9:16 portrait version** (1080 × 1920px) for stories. Both versions can be created in Canva using Custom Size, uploading your image, right-clicking to set it as background, and downloading.

You then provide primary text, a headline, a description, and a call-to-action button (e.g. "Shop Now," "Book Now," "Learn More"). Meta's AI will generate alternative text options — you can accept or edit them. The system will also generate AI-reimagined versions of your image (different backgrounds, different crops, different models) for testing. Enhancements like text overlays, 3D motion, and auto-translation are optional but worth considering. Once finished, add your destination URL and publish.

Type 3: Creating a Video Ad from Scratch

The process is very similar to the image ad, but for video you need to prepare three sizes in Canva: **portrait** (1080 × 1920), **square** (1080 × 1080), and **landscape** (1280 × 720). Upload your original video to Canva, use Custom Size to create each version, right-click to set the video as background, and download each.

Note: Meta cannot generate AI variants of videos the way it can for images. Text and headline testing still applies, and enhancements like text overlays and translation are available. After uploading your three video sizes, provide your ad copy, URL, and call to action, and publish.

Analysing Your Campaign Results

After your campaign has run, go to Ads Manager (accessible from the left-hand menu when using Facebook as your business page), click Campaigns, and set the date range to "Maximum" to see all-time results rather than the default 30-day view.

At the top level, you can see each campaign's total spend, number of link clicks, and cost per click. Clicking into a specific campaign reveals a "Breakdown" option that allows you to drill down into:

- **Age** — which age groups clicked most
- **Gender** — the male/female split of clicks and impressions
- **Geography** — which counties or regions produced the most activity
- **Platform** — the Facebook vs. Instagram split of your spend and clicks
- **Placement** — which specific placements (feed, stories, reels) generated the most clicks and at what cost per click

Understanding these breakdowns helps refine future campaigns — if older audiences are responding better than expected, if one platform is far more efficient than the other, or if certain placements are generating low-value clicks, you can adjust accordingly.

Key Takeaways

This session covered everything needed to go from a blank ads manager to a live, targeted ad campaign. The essentials to keep in mind:

- **Choose your objective carefully** — it shapes both your reporting and Meta's built-in optimisation.
- **Warm audiences first** — if you've built up social media followers or website visitors, make sure they see your ad before you spend on cold audiences.
- **Budget realistically** — €5–€10 per day over 3–4 days is a sensible starting point; the AI needs volume to test effectively.
- **Control your placements** — untick the Audience Network and Threads until there's stronger evidence of quality.
- **Start simple** — turning a successful post or reel into an ad is the quickest path to your first campaign.

Action Points

1. **Access the Meta Ads Library** (search "Meta ads library" on Google) and look up your competitors or similar businesses in your sector to see what ad formats and language are currently approved and running.
2. **Set up your Meta Pixel** on your website if you haven't already — this is the foundation for tracking website visitors and eventually running Sales campaigns.
3. **Create your Custom Audiences** in the Ads Manager: followers on Facebook, followers on Instagram, engagers on both platforms, and website visitors (180 days). Name them clearly with identifiers like your county abbreviation.
4. **Identify your best-performing organic post or reel** — one that received strong likes, comments, or shares — and use it as the content for your first ad using the "existing post" method.
5. **Prepare your image sizes in Canva**: create both a 4:5 version (1080 × 1350px) and a 9:16 portrait version (1080 × 1920px) of your chosen ad image before going into the Ads Manager.
6. **If running a video ad**, prepare three versions: portrait (1080 × 1920), square (1080 × 1080), and landscape (1280 × 720) using Canva's Custom Size tool.
7. **Set your campaign name to something recognisable** (e.g. "April Offer — Warm Audience" or "May Sale — Cold AI") so you can easily identify campaigns when reviewing results.
8. **Untick the Audience Network, Threads, and WhatsApp** in your Placements settings until there is clearer evidence of quality clicks from those channels.
9. **After your first campaign runs, use the Breakdown tool** in Campaigns to analyse age, gender, geography, platform, and placement data — and use those insights to refine your next campaign.
10. **If your ad is rejected**, check the rejection reason, then use ChatGPT or Gemini with the prompt "Act like an expert in Facebook and Instagram ads — my ad was rejected because [reason]. What alternative wording would be acceptable?" to rewrite the copy.

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