



Local Enterprise Office Galway

Social Media Marketing Bootcamp

Week 5 – TikTok and Facebook/Instagram Ads

29th May 2026

Course Summary

Prepared by The Marketing Crowd

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

Course Overview

This was the fifth and final session of the Social Media Marketing Bootcamp, delivered by Evan via Zoom for LEO Galway. The session covered two substantial topics: TikTok for business marketing, and an introduction to advertising on Facebook and Instagram using Meta Ads Manager. Participants in this cohort were entirely new to TikTok — a poll at the start confirmed that none had used the platform — so Evan approached the TikTok content from first principles, building confidence by drawing consistent parallels with Instagram, which participants had covered the previous week.

The session was structured as a morning block on TikTok (covering orientation, profile setup, the algorithm, and TikTok Shop), a short break, and then an afternoon block on Meta advertising. Evan's teaching philosophy throughout was practical and business-focused: rather than presenting TikTok as a separate challenge, he showed participants they already understood most of it through their Instagram knowledge. He used real examples of Irish businesses, live demonstrations on his phone, and a closing recap that tied all five weeks of the programme together.

Key Topics Covered

TikTok: Platform Orientation

Evan opened by reassuring the group that despite none of them having used TikTok, they were not starting from zero — Instagram Reels is a direct copy of TikTok, and anyone comfortable with Reels already understands the core experience. He walked through the platform live on his phone, explaining the five content feeds: For You (the main AI-driven discovery feed showing videos from accounts users do not follow, personalised to their interests), Following (videos from accounts they have chosen to follow), Friends (videos from Facebook friends or phone contacts also on TikTok), Explore, and STEM. He explained how TikTok's original "you don't need friends here" positioning has since shifted to actively encourage users to connect their phone contacts and Facebook friends to increase platform stickiness and reduce the pull to switch apps.

TikTok: Searching for Business Inspiration

Evan demonstrated how to use TikTok's search function (accessed from the Home feed rather than a dedicated menu icon) to find accounts similar to your own business. He recommended this as a practical first step after the course — searching your business type, browsing what other businesses are posting, and assessing whether TikTok feels like a good fit. He showed examples from boutiques, tourism operators, crafts businesses, and service providers including a financial advisor, solicitor, estate agent, and life coach, reinforcing that the three video formats from previous weeks — clips to music, voiceover, and talking to camera — apply equally on TikTok.

TikTok: Account Setup and Profile Optimisation

Evan walked through setting up a TikTok account from scratch: downloading the app, entering a date of birth, choosing between phone number and email to register, and picking a display name. He made a strategic point about mobile numbers — using your business mobile number to register means TikTok can notify your existing contacts that you are on the platform, which is a significant organic growth advantage. He advised saving the mobile number for your most important business account rather than wasting it on a practice account. On profile setup, he noted a key difference from Instagram: on TikTok, your display name is what everyone sees (keep it clean and professional),

while your bio is the right place to include search keywords, since TikTok's search indexes bio content.

TikTok: Privacy Settings and Account Types

Evan covered the privacy settings relevant to participants at different stages — those who want to experiment privately should switch to a private account to prevent videos going out into feeds or appearing in search. He then explained the choice between personal and business accounts: personal accounts retain access to the full licensed music library (including mainstream artists), while business accounts gain a website link on the profile, better analytics, and the ability to run ads, but only have access to a stock music library. He advised participants to weigh this up based on how important music is to their video style — service businesses talking to camera are unlikely to care about music and should switch; visually product-led businesses may want to stay personal.

TikTok Shop

Evan gave a detailed walkthrough of TikTok Shop using Made by Mitchell Ireland as a real example. He explained the full mechanic: businesses selling physical products can apply to TikTok to open a shop within the platform; once approved, they list products manually or by syncing their website. When they post videos, they can tag products directly in the video, so anyone watching who wants to buy can tap the product and complete a purchase without ever leaving TikTok. TikTok takes a 7% commission on each sale. He drew a clear comparison to Amazon's marketplace model.

He then introduced the affiliate side of TikTok Shop: creators with around 3,000–4,000 genuine followers can apply to become TikTok affiliates, gaining access to a catalogue of products from TikTok Shop sellers. Businesses can set commission rates; creators make videos reviewing or recommending those products and earn commission on any sales generated through their link. He showed a real example of an Irish creator (Melissa D., 41,000 followers) whose teeth-whitening video reached 1.9 million views, illustrating TikTok's disproportionate reach potential versus Instagram.

TikTok: How the Algorithm Works

Evan explained the algorithm from two perspectives. As a viewer, the AI has no initial information beyond your age — its job in the first session is to figure out your interests based on how you interact with videos (watch time, likes, saves, follows, shares). He demonstrated this live, showing how quickly the feed adapts when you engage with certain content. He also showed the "Manage Topics" setting where users can manually steer the algorithm. As a content creator, the process is fundamentally different from Facebook and Instagram — TikTok finds your audience for you rather than requiring you to build a following first. When you upload a video, the AI scans it, identifies the topic, and tests it with around 500 people. If engagement is strong, it shows it to progressively larger audiences. Your first six or seven videos are critical for establishing your niche reputation with the algorithm — posting a mix of unrelated content resets your credibility to zero. Staying within a consistent niche builds authority and increases the likelihood of the AI amplifying your content.

Meta Advertising: Why Ads Matter

Evan positioned advertising as a natural complement to organic social media, not a replacement. Organic reach on Facebook and Instagram has declined — a post typically reaches around 15% of followers, a Reel around 20–25%. There are key business moments (new product launches, events, seasonal promotions, gift vouchers) where paying to reach beyond your existing audience makes commercial sense. He set a rough benchmark: approximately €5 reaches 2,500–3,000 people; €10 reaches 5,000–6,000.

Meta Ads Manager: The Three-Page Process

Evan walked through the Meta Ads Manager tool (accessed via the nine-dot menu on Facebook, then Create > Ad), explaining why it is significantly better than the Boost Post button. The Boost Post button is a simplified tool that offers fewer targeting options and, if used on an iPhone, adds a hidden 30% Apple App Store surcharge. The Ads Manager process runs across three pages: Page 1 — name your campaign. Page 2 — choose your objective (traffic to website or messages in most cases), set your daily budget and duration (minimum recommended €5–€10 per day for at least three to four days to give the AI enough data to optimise), and define your audience. Page 3 — select your Facebook page and Instagram account, choose an existing post or reel to turn into an ad, and add a call-to-action button with a destination URL.

Meta Ads: Targeting

Evan explained the current AI-first targeting approach. The AI reads your ad content and matches it to users who have shown relevant interest signals. You can restrict the AI geographically (country, county, radius around a specific town), set a minimum age (up to 25 maximum restriction), and specify a language. You can also suggest audience interests, age ranges, and gender as guidance — but these are suggestions, not hard restrictions. He flagged one important tick box: "Reach more people likely to respond" expands targeting beyond your specified geography to people who have shown interest in that area from elsewhere — useful for national brands but problematic for local service businesses. He recommended unticking the Audience Network, Messenger, WhatsApp, and Threads placements and running ads only on Facebook and Instagram for the best return on budget.

Tools & Resources

TikTok — The video-first social network with over a billion users. Reached that milestone faster than any previous social network, and is now fully mainstream in Ireland with an estimated 35–40% of the Irish population using it. Used for organic video marketing, TikTok Shop product selling, and affiliate marketing. Download from the App Store or Play Store.

TikTok Shop — TikTok's built-in e-commerce feature allowing businesses selling physical products to list a shop within TikTok. Customers can browse and purchase without leaving the app. TikTok charges 7% commission per sale. Businesses must apply and prove Irish registration. Accessed at tiktok.com/shop or by searching "Sign up TikTok Shop Ireland."

Meta Ads Manager — Facebook's full advertising tool, accessed via the nine-dot menu on Facebook desktop under Create > Ad. The recommended way to run ads on both Facebook and Instagram. Significantly more powerful than the Boost Post button and avoids the Apple 30% surcharge applied to iPhone in-app boosting.

Instagram Edits App — Meta's standalone video editing app, previously covered in Session 4. Evan reiterated its value here: videos edited and exported from Edits can be shared directly to both Instagram Reels and TikTok, and the licensed music carries across both platforms. Recommended as the primary video creation tool for anyone posting across multiple platforms.

ChatGPT (with a Project set up) — Referenced in the closing recap as the key tool for ongoing learning and guidance. Evan recommended using the project set up in Session 1 (with deep business context) to ask follow-up questions on anything from TikTok strategy to troubleshooting specific issues

Action Points for Participants

1. Search TikTok for businesses similar to yours using the search function in the Home feed — search your business type, tap Users, and browse profiles to see the kinds of videos being made. Use this to assess whether TikTok is a realistic fit for your business.
2. Download the TikTok app and create an account this week. If you intend to use it for marketing, register with your business mobile number so TikTok can notify your existing contacts that you are on the platform.
3. Set your TikTok profile to private while you are getting started, so that practice videos do not go out into people's feeds or appear in search results before you are ready.
4. Write a keyword-rich bio for your TikTok profile — include your location, what you sell or do, and the main terms your ideal customers would search for. Keep your display name clean (just your business name).
5. If you sell physical products, investigate TikTok Shop — go to tiktok.com/shop or search "Sign up TikTok Shop Ireland" and review the eligibility criteria. The potential for frictionless in-app purchases and affiliate-driven reach is significant for the right businesses.
6. Spend at least 10 minutes training your TikTok For You feed — when you first open the app, actively like, save, and follow content relevant to your industry and interests so the algorithm quickly learns what to show you and what your account is about.
7. Set up a ChatGPT Project (covered in Session 1) if you haven't already, and use it to get tailored answers to any TikTok questions that arose from today — including TikTok Shop strategy, what videos to make, and how to improve reach.
8. Identify one post or Reel you have already sent out on Instagram or Facebook that you would be willing to put money behind. Go to Facebook, click the nine dots, select Create > Ad, and walk through the three-page Meta Ads Manager process up to (but not including) the Publish button, to get comfortable with the interface.
9. When you run your first Meta ad, set a daily budget of at least €5–€10 and run it for a minimum of three to four days — this gives the AI enough budget to test audiences properly and start optimising toward the right people.
10. Follow Evan's monthly email update for ongoing news on social media platform changes and AI tools — use the link posted in the Zoom chat to subscribe and stay current between courses.

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