



Local Enterprise Office Clare

How to Advertise on Facebook and Instagram Part 2

Course Summary

17th June 2026

Course Overview

This was the second of a two-part Facebook and Instagram Ads course delivered by Evan for Local Enterprise Office Clare. Part 1 had covered the rationale for paid advertising over organic reach, the difference between the Boost Post button and the Ads Manager tool, an orientation to the Ads Manager interface, and how to build and target warm audiences (social media followers and engagers) using custom audiences.

Part 2 picked up where that left off, moving from theory into practical, end-to-end campaign execution. Evan walked participants through the full process of running an ad campaign — from setting a campaign objective, configuring audience targeting (both warm and AI-driven cold targeting), setting budgets and schedules, choosing ad placements, selecting or uploading creative, and finally reviewing campaign performance data using breakdown analytics.

The session was structured as a live demonstration with participants invited to ask questions throughout. Evan covered two distinct ad creation workflows — using an existing post or reel, and creating an ad from scratch using uploaded images or video — and dedicated the final portion of the session to how to read and interpret results inside Ads Manager.

Key Topics Covered

Campaign Objectives Explained

Evan gave a detailed breakdown of all available campaign objectives in Meta's Ads Manager. The four most relevant for small businesses are Traffic, Engagement, Awareness, and Leads.

Traffic is the objective Evan recommends for the vast majority of small business owners. Within Traffic, you can then specify what kind of traffic you want — website clicks, messages, or calls. The objective chosen determines both the default reporting metrics you receive (cost per click, cost per message, cost per call) and the built-in AI optimisation. Meta will prioritise showing your ad to people within your target group who are most likely to take your chosen action — so if you choose website traffic, it targets people with a history of clicking through to external sites.

Engagement is for building likes, comments, shares and video views — useful if raising profile is the primary aim rather than driving off-platform action. **Awareness** prioritises broad reach and is best for local brand-building campaigns, such as a new business launch. **Leads** is a more advanced objective that uses Meta's pre-filled form feature (pulling the user's details from their profile). Evan flagged the GDPR implications — people must manually opt-in to marketing, and leads don't automatically sync to any email platform.

Sales as an objective requires the Meta Pixel to be installed on your website, a custom conversion set up for a thank-you or order confirmation page, and a minimum of around 40 trackable monthly purchases. This level of setup is more appropriate for larger ecommerce businesses with a web developer on hand.

Advantage Plus AI Targeting vs. Manual (Original) Audience Options

One of the central teaching points of the session was how to choose between Meta's AI-driven audience targeting (Advantage Plus) and manually controlled original audience targeting — and when to use each.

By default, the Ads Manager now opens in Advantage Plus mode. The AI reads your ad creative, analyses your stated objective, and draws on its full knowledge of user behaviour across Meta's platforms to identify and test the best possible audience. It learns iteratively — identifying which types of users are engaging, clicking, or converting, and redistributing budget accordingly.

The alternative — labelled "Further Limit Your Audience" in current Meta language (previously "Switch to Original Audience Options") — gives the advertiser full manual control. This is where you can specify location, age, gender, demographics, interests, and behaviours, and where you can select custom audiences such as your social media followers.

Evan's core strategic advice: **if you have a small budget, don't rely on the AI to find your warm audience.** With limited spend, the AI will be testing broadly and there's no guarantee it will reach your existing followers. Instead, create two separate campaigns — the first manually targeting your warm audience (social media followers, engagers), and the second using Advantage Plus for cold audience acquisition, with your warm audience excluded.

If you're on a larger budget (€100+), the AI will eventually reach your warm audience through testing, so a single Advantage Plus campaign may suffice.

AI Controls — What You Can Restrict

When using Advantage Plus, Evan explained that certain "controls" can still be applied without undermining the AI's ability to test. These are hard limits the AI will not exceed:

- **Location:** country, multiple counties, or a specific radius around a town (e.g. 15 miles from Ennis)
- **Minimum age:** up to a maximum of 25 as the lowest age floor
- **Language:** restrict to specific language speakers (though Evan advised against this unless there's a strong business reason, as Meta auto-translates ads)
- **Exclude custom audiences:** you can exclude your warm audience entirely when running a cold campaign

Within Advantage Plus, you can also provide a "suggested audience" — age, gender, interests — which the AI will test alongside other options, but is not bound by.

Budget Strategy and the Learning Period

For a warm audience campaign (typically 2,000–5,000 people), Evan recommended spending around €5 per day spread over a minimum of three days. For a cold AI-driven

campaign, a minimum of €10 per day for five or more days is advisable, as the AI needs time and spend to complete its learning period — identifying which audience segments, creative variants, and placements are generating results.

Evan also explained the "roughly €5 gets you in front of ~3,000 people" rule-of-thumb, and why it doesn't apply to narrow warm audiences. When the target audience is small, Meta has fewer options and therefore costs per impression are higher and reach is lower for the same spend.

Spreading a campaign over multiple days also provides an early warning mechanism — if cost per click is running at €2–3 after day one, that's a signal to pause and review the creative before burning through the remaining budget.

Ad Placements — Taking Control

Under the Placements section of Page 2, Evan showed how to override Meta's default Advantage Plus placement setting (which allows the AI to decide whether to show the ad on Facebook, Instagram, Audience Network, Messenger, and Threads). His recommendation:

- **Deselect Audience Network:** third-party websites and apps that carry Meta ads generate frustration clicks and poor-quality traffic; the clicks inflate numbers without delivering real intent
- **Deselect Threads:** Meta's Twitter/X rival now carries ads, but performance data is still limited, and there's a real risk the AI allocates a disproportionate share of budget there
- **Keep Messenger:** Messenger in-feed placements are discreet and generally acceptable
- **Keep Facebook and Instagram:** the two platforms where ad performance is most predictable and measurable

Evan also recommended deselecting in-stream ads (ads that interrupt video playback), as users typically click to dismiss rather than engage.

Page 3 — Ad Creative: Existing Post/Reel vs. Create from Scratch

Evan walked through two approaches to ad creative on Page 3.

Option 1: Use an Existing Post or Reel. This is the simplest approach and the one Evan recommends for most participants. You select a post or reel already published to your Facebook or Instagram account and turn it into the ad. Advantages include: you can gauge organic engagement before spending money; the ad carries existing likes, comments, and shares (social proof); and there is no text character restriction at the ads tool stage.

Option 2: Upload an Image or Video from Scratch. This approach is more flexible and enables the AI to run creative testing — generating and testing multiple variants of your image, headline, primary text, and call-to-action button to determine which combination

drives the best results. You can upload up to 10 images, and the AI will run competitive testing between them.

For image uploads, Evan advised uploading two formats: **4×5 (1080×1350px)** for feed placements, and **9×16 (1080×1920px)** for story and reel placements. The same approach applies to video. Canva can be used for free to create images or crop video at both dimensions — upload your image or video to Canva, choose the custom canvas size, right-click to "Set image/video as background," and adjust the crop.

On the written elements of the ad, the primary text (the main body copy), headline, and description serve different functions across Facebook and Instagram. On Instagram, for example, the headline doesn't appear; descriptions are not shown. Evan included a reference slide in the course notes to show where each text element appears across platforms and devices.

The **call-to-action button** should match the purchase intent level of the audience. "Learn More" is lower-commitment and suits training courses or consultations. "Shop Now" suits direct product ads where the intent is clear and the product is immediately desirable.

Under the Enhancements section, Evan recommended switching off auto-added music (which can sound out of place), retaining visual touch-ups and auto-translation, and using AI text alternatives with selectivity.

Reading Campaign Results in Ads Manager

Evan closed the session with a practical walk-through of the Ads Manager Campaigns view. Key points:

- Always change the date range to "Maximum" when you log in, as the default is last 30 days — any older campaigns will show no data
- Draft campaigns (where you never clicked Publish) will clutter the list — delete them
- **Reach** = unique people who saw the ad; **Impressions** = total number of times the ad was shown (the same person may see it multiple times)
- An important metric from a traffic campaign is **cost per click** — under €0.40 is excellent, €0.40–€1 is typical, above €2 is expensive
- Use the **Breakdown** tool to analyse performance by age, gender, region, delivery platform, and placement — this reveals who is actually engaging with your ad and where your budget is being spent, often revealing surprises

Tools & Resources

Meta Ads Manager — The only tool Evan recommends for running Facebook and Instagram ads. Access via the nine-dot menu on Facebook, then select "Ad." The Boost Post button on individual posts is not recommended.

Advantage Plus Audience — Meta's AI-driven targeting system, available within Ads Manager. The AI reads your creative, analyses your objective, and continuously tests audience segments to optimise delivery. Works best with larger budgets and longer campaign durations.

Custom Audiences — Pre-built audience segments created in the Audience section of Ads Manager (covered in Part 1). Include followers of your Facebook page, Instagram profile, and people who have engaged with your content. These are the foundation of warm audience campaigns and only need to be created once.

Meta Pixel — A snippet of code placed on your website that allows Meta to track user actions (e.g. landing on a thank-you/order confirmation page). Required for running Sales objective campaigns. Only relevant for businesses with sufficient transaction volumes (approx. 40+ per month).

Canva (canva.com) — Free-to-use design tool used in the session to create correctly sized ad images and video crops. Evan demonstrated using Custom Size to create 1080×1350px (4×5) and 1080×1920px (9×16) versions of both images and videos. The "Set image as background" and "Set video as background" right-click options allow precise cropping.

Ads Manager Breakdown Tool — Built into Ads Manager. Allows post-campaign analysis by age, gender, geographic region, delivery platform (Facebook vs. Instagram), and placement (feed, stories, reels, in-stream). Essential for learning from past campaigns and refining targeting for future ones.

Action Points for Participants

1. **Create your custom audiences now if you haven't already.** Go into the Ads Manager, navigate to the Audiences section, and build custom audiences for your Facebook page followers, Instagram profile followers, Facebook page engagers, and Instagram profile engagers. You only need to do this once.
2. **Plan your next campaign as two separate campaigns** — one for your warm audience (manual targeting using your custom audiences) and one for your cold audience (Advantage Plus with your warm audience excluded). Assign budget accordingly based on the size of each audience.
3. **Choose Traffic as your campaign objective** for the vast majority of ads. Decide upfront whether you want to drive people to your website, generate messages, or receive calls — and set that as your traffic type.
4. **Always name your campaigns clearly** so you can identify them later in Ads Manager. Include the date or promotion name so they're easy to distinguish when reviewing results.
5. **Check the Special Ad Categories box** if your ad relates to politics, social issues, housing, employment, or financial products. Failing to self-declare will result in your ad being rejected or your account being suspended.
6. **Deselect Audience Network, Threads, and in-stream ads** from your placements. Keep Facebook and Instagram (and optionally Messenger) and let Meta decide the split between those two platforms.
7. **Spread your budget over a minimum of three days** for warm campaigns and five days for cold/AI campaigns. Monitor cost-per-click after day one — if it's above €2, consider pausing and reviewing your creative before spending more.
8. **Create your ad images in two sizes using Canva.** Use Custom Size to create a 1080×1350px (4×5) version for feeds and a 1080×1920px (9×16) version for stories and reels. Upload both when creating an ad from scratch. Apply the same process if using video.
9. **Check your campaign analytics using the Breakdown tool** after any campaign runs. Review performance by age, gender, delivery platform, and placement. Use what you learn to refine your targeting and creative decisions for the next campaign.
10. **When logging into Ads Manager to check your results, always change the date range to Maximum.** The default view shows only the last 30 days — older campaigns will show blank data, which is misleading. Deleting draft campaigns will also keep your Ads Manager clean and easy to navigate.

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