Local Enterprise Office Longford

Christmas Marketing

Course Summary

30th October 2026

Prepared by The Marketing Crowd with the help of one of our AI colleagues ☺

Course Overview

This session showed how to plan and run digital marketing for the run up to Christmas. The main idea was to use ChatGPT, set up properly, as an expert adviser whose advice is tailored to your own business. The session then covered the main decisions and channels one by one: whether to take part in Black Friday and Cyber Monday, how to turn a product or service into a gift, gift vouchers, SEO, Christmas imagery, social media, Facebook and Instagram ads and email marketing. It finished by pulling all of it into a week by week Christmas marketing calendar.

At this time of year the thinking has to change. For most of the year you are selling your products. Coming up to Christmas, it is all about gifts.

Each of these topics would normally fill a three hour course of its own, so the aim here was to cover the fundamentals. The detailed notes go further, and the ChatGPT setup can answer follow up questions specific to your business.

Throughout the session, Evan used a real ladies' boutique, Ivory Lane (ivorylane.ie, with shops in Galway and Limerick), as the example business, with the owner's permission.

Part 1: Setting Up ChatGPT as Your Christmas Marketing Expert

Deep Research

ChatGPT has different levels of answer:

- **Instant mode:** the default in the free version. It answers within a couple of seconds.
- **Thinking mode:** click the Think button and it weighs up the question for maybe 8 to 10 seconds.
- **Deep Research:** a huge step up. It takes 10 to 20 minutes and produces a report of roughly 10 to 25 A4 pages. It is the most thorough answer the AI can give on any topic.

When you ask for Deep Research, ChatGPT looks at a couple of hundred sources. Based on what it finds first, it decides what needs more research and goes back for more, repeating this before it writes the report. It suits topics you really want to understand. You would never use it for something like recommending a restaurant.

How to run it: in ChatGPT, click **plus**, select **Deep Research** and type or paste your prompt. You can add extra requests to the prompt, such as how much each item is worth, how to apply or a ranking. When you submit, ChatGPT turns your request into a research brief and asks whether that is what you want. There is an edit button if you want to change anything, but usually you just confirm and it starts.

Examples given:

- **Grants:** "I have a ladies boutique in Galway and Limerick. Do deep research and tell me all the grants available for my business, how much each is worth, how to apply

and rank them by which I would most easily get." The brief will offer to check sources such as Local Enterprise Offices, county councils and government bodies.

- **Premium services:** a busy driving instructor wanting more revenue could ask for all the premium services driving schools in Ireland offer, what they charge, whether pricing differs by region, how those services are positioned against standard ones and whether the UK and US offer premium services not available in Ireland.

- **New service:** a life coach thinking of offering a new service could ask how life coaches in Ireland, the UK and America have introduced it, priced it and positioned it, plus the pitfalls to avoid.

Free and paid versions:

- Free: 5 standard Deep Research reports a month, and you cannot run two at the same time.

- Paid: 10 high level Deep Research reports a month, then standard ones after that. You can run reports at the same time. The free version is not bad, but the paid one is better.

The three reports to run for Christmas (all prompts are in the notes, so just change the details to suit your business):

1. **Christmas marketing for your industry:** give your business name, web address and main products or services, then ask for deep research on your industry in Ireland, the UK and the US. Ask how businesses like yours maximise sales in the run up to Christmas and which tactics work best, including Black Friday, Cyber Monday, gift vouchers, Christmas gifting and digital channels such as search, social media and email. You do not need to describe your business much. ChatGPT works it out from your website.

2. **Your own business (SWOT analysis):** "Conduct deep research on my business… conduct a SWOT analysis." When you ask for deep research on any business, including a competitor, ChatGPT will:

    - read every page of the website
    - work out the products and services and how they are positioned
    - find and look at the social media
    - read online reviews and any articles mentioning the business
    - identify the competitors and analyse them

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. It is like asking a consultant for their view.

3. **How your industry uses digital marketing:** for example, deep research on small independent ladies' boutiques in Ireland (not large chains), covering how they use digital marketing effectively and which tactics work best.

The grants prompt is in the notes as well.

Competitors: deep research on your main competitors is a good idea in general. If you add those reports to a project, ChatGPT knows all about your competitors when you ask how to stand out from them. It isn't needed for the Christmas project, but it suits a general digital marketing project for your business.

Projects

If you ask a lot of questions about one topic, it is far better to keep them inside a project. Projects are available in the free and paid versions.

How to set one up:

1. Scroll down the left hand side to **Projects**, hover over it and click **plus**.

2. Give it a name, for example "Christmas Marketing for [your business]", and click **Create project**.

3. Click the **three dots** at the top, go to **Project settings** and paste in the custom instruction from your notes: "Act like a digital marketing expert for the business [insert business name]. Always provide creative, practical and easy to implement tactics that fit a small business budget. Tailor every recommendation to increase sales, grow our audience and build engagement." Then click **Save**.

4. Click **Sources** and add files to give ChatGPT more context. Add the three Deep Research reports. You could also add other marketing files, such as Google Analytics data or social media insights.

How it works: whenever you ask a question inside the project, ChatGPT first reads the custom instructions and the attached files. It then adds what it knows from its training and what it can find online. It also reads all the other chats within that project, so its answers stay consistent and build on what you discussed before. Across your general ChatGPT account it only has a shallow memory, which is why grouping chats into projects is much better than having them scattered.

Using it: for everyday questions (how to cook lamb chops, a restaurant suggestion) use the normal ChatGPT box. For anything about your Christmas marketing, go to **Projects**, hover over your project name and click the **pencil** to start a new chat inside it.

Why context matters: the quality of advice depends on how much context ChatGPT has.

- **Weakest:** "Act like a Christmas marketing expert and tell me how to market in the run up to Christmas." The advice will be generic to any business.

- **Better:** describe the business, for example a ladies' boutique with stores in Galway and Limerick and a website.
- **Better again:** use **Personalisation > Custom Instructions** in your ChatGPT settings to give around half an A4 page of background, such as your stores, products, customers and the social networks you use.
- **Best:** a project with full Deep Research reports on your business, your industry, Christmas marketing for your industry and possibly your competitors attached.

Throughout the course, Evan gave prompts (all in the notes) to paste into the project, so each answer is tailored to your business.

Part 2: Black Friday and Cyber Monday

The first decision is whether to take part in Black Friday and Cyber Monday. The dates are in the notes.

Pros:

- It is a good time to clear unsold or old stock at a discount.
- For shops, an offer such as 30% off selected items pulls people in, and once in store they may buy other, more profitable items that are not discounted.
- It can raise awareness of your business.
- It works well as a targeted email campaign. If you can split your list into recent and lapsed customers, a strong offer can reactivate lapsed customers and get them buying again.
- It creates future upselling and cross selling opportunities. A customer who buys a heavily discounted item is now on your customer list and may buy more profitable things later, at Valentine's or Mother's Day.

Cons:

- You can get drawn into taking part just to be seen to, even when it is not profitable. Work out whether it is profitable for you.
- For services (a life coach, a yoga instructor) or handmade luxury products, discounting can devalue what you sell. People may decide they no longer want to pay full price.
- It may not make sense to discount just before Christmas, when you hope people will buy at full price as a gift. Customers may remember seeing it 40% cheaper two weeks earlier.

Prompt (in the project): "Act like a Black Friday marketing expert. Given my products and services and our target customers, should I participate in Black Friday and Cyber Monday?

Explain the pros and cons. Suggest the best offers and promotions for my business. Give me a step by step action plan for the remaining weeks in the run up to Black Friday." You don't need to list your products or customers, because they are already in the Deep Research.

For Ivory Lane, ChatGPT said Black Friday made sense, set out the pros and cons, and noted that the risk was profitability rather than a lack of sales. It suggested the best offers and gave a step by step action plan, all based on what it knew about the business from the Deep Research.

Part 3: Turning Your Product or Service into a Gift

Services

Even if you offer a service, you are in the Christmas gift market. Yoga classes, life coaching, a vet clinic, a driving school, consultancy and photography classes can all be packaged as a gift. Examples shown included a life coach, a photography school and a veterinary clinic offering gift vouchers "for the animal lover in your life". It comes down to packaging and positioning.

Tips:

- **Create a Christmas gift page on your website**, not just a gift voucher page. Position it as a Christmas gift voucher with Christmassy imagery, and send social media posts about giving your service as a Christmas gift.

- **Think about what the person physically gives.** Often it is how a gift looks that people like. Hotels sell a service, yet they all offer a gift box, because people like giving and receiving something that looks good. Keep the electronic version for those who prefer it, but consider a beautifully boxed version. Photograph it and put the photo on your Christmas gift page so people can picture giving it. Links to box suppliers are in the notes.

- Evan showed The Marketing Crowd's own Christmas gift voucher page as an example. It has Christmassy branding, explains what the voucher can be spent on and shows a photo of the gift box.

- **Add a "drop a hint" form.** The people seeing your promotion, such as your social media followers and website visitors, are often the people who would like to *receive* your service as a gift. A form on the page can invite them to email someone a link to the page as a hint. Evan demonstrated filling in his wife's details with the message "hint, hint".

Physical products

If you sell physical products, you are definitely in the gift market, but you need to think about how people search at Christmas. A jeweller would want to be found all year for searches like "jewellers" or "gold necklaces Longford". Coming up to Christmas, they would also want to be found for "Christmas gifts for her", "Christmas gifts for a wife" and "Christmas gifts for a girlfriend".

Examples:

- **Dunnes Stores** has a dedicated page for “Christmas gifts for her”, with that phrase in the meta title and headline.
- **Gifts.ie** ranks with a page whose meta title is “Christmas Gifts for Women 2026”.
- **Boots** has a “Christmas gifts for her” page as well.
- **A garden centre** wants to be found for “garden kneeler and seat” during the year. At Christmas people aren’t searching for that product, but they are searching for “Christmas gardening gift ideas”, “Christmas gifts for gardeners” or “Christmas gifts for dad who’s a gardener”. A gift page with 10 or 20 products, including the kneeler, gets found for those searches.
- **Toys:** people may search for a specific toy, but thousands are searching for “Christmas gifts for seven year old boys”.

Service businesses want these searches too. A yoga instructor would want their gift voucher found for “Christmas gifts for yoga lovers in Longford”.

Prompt: “Act like a Christmas gift marketing expert. Suggest creative ways to package and promote my products or services as Christmas gifts.”

Part 4: Gift Vouchers

Only two participants sold gift vouchers, which was surprising.

Selling vouchers online with Gift Up: asking a web designer to build voucher sales into your site would be expensive (designing, programming and testing could cost around a thousand euro). Gift Up is an easy and affordable alternative (link in the notes):

- You can tailor it with your own image, text and denominations in euro, and run a test to see how it works.
- It is free to set up. You pay a percentage, around 3%, on each voucher sold, so there is no upfront cost and no risk.
- The money goes straight into your Stripe account, and Gift Up takes its small fee.
- When you sign up, you get a small piece of code to put on your website. Customers can then choose a denomination, such as €50, and have the electronic voucher sent to themselves to give as a gift.

Designing vouchers in Canva: Canva and Gift Up can work together. In Canva, go to **Templates** on the left, search “gift voucher”, choose a design and click **Customise this template**. Replace the background image, delete anything you don’t need and change the text. Use the design:

- on your Christmas gift voucher web page

- as the image on your Gift Up page
- printed, if you sell physical vouchers in a shop

Legislation: you can no longer set a short expiry date on gift vouchers. Under consumer rights law, gift vouchers must be valid for five years.

Prompt: "Act like a Christmas marketing expert. How can I maximise sales of gift vouchers for my specific product or service? Suggest 10 practical tactics, including how to package, promote and sell them online and offline. Prioritise the most effective ideas."

For Ivory Lane, ChatGPT suggested:

- Position the voucher as the gift of choosing something beautiful rather than giving money ("Let her choose exactly what she loves").
- Create a dedicated Christmas gift voucher page as the top priority.
- Make the voucher feel like a premium present, with an elegant physical voucher in a branded envelope or gift box, because a digital code isn't exciting to open on Christmas morning.
- Sell the experience, using the shops' advantage over online only retailers with personal styling advice, for example a "mother of the bride" style experience or a "little luxury" gift package.

Part 5: SEO for Christmas Searches

Finding the search terms

To find the search terms people use when looking for gifts in your sector, use the project.

Prompt: "Act like a Christmas gift marketing and SEO expert. Identify 20 gift related Google search terms my ideal customers might use, and recommend how I can optimise my website to appear for these searches." You can change 20 to 30 or 40.

For Ivory Lane, ChatGPT checked the website and Irish search results. It recommended focusing on gift vouchers, fashion accessories, gifts for women over 40 and 50 and gifts at set price points. Suggested terms included:

- ladies boutique gift vouchers Ireland
- fashion gift vouchers Ireland
- Christmas gift vouchers for her
- Christmas gifts for women Ireland
- Christmas gifts for mum
- Christmas gifts for women over 50

- luxury gifts for her

It recommended seven priority pages, including a fashion gift voucher page, a "Christmas gifts for her" page and pages for gifts under €50 and €100 and gifts for mum. A search for "Christmas gifts women Ireland" showed Next, Carraig Donn, Boots and Shaws all doing exactly this, with dedicated pages. ChatGPT wasn't saying to target everything, just the seven things most worth focusing on.

How Google search results work

On a search such as "car insurance":

- The **sponsored results** at the top are ads. "Hide sponsored results" marks where the ads end.
- Below that are **10 organic (free) results**. A click on an ad for car insurance might cost the advertiser €3 or €4, because big companies push up the price. For a search like "yoga classes Longford" a click might cost 50 cent.
- Page 2 holds positions 11 to 20 and page 3 holds positions 21 to 30.

Google says 70% of people don't go beyond page 1 (they redo the search instead) and 95% don't go beyond page 3. You really want to be on page 1, or at worst page 2 or 3. Page 4 might as well be page 44.

How Google decides the order (simplified)

Data collection: Google sends a bot, the Google Spider, to websites, roughly once a week for a small business site. It checks around 200 things:

- **Outside your website:** how long the domain has had a website, where it is hosted and whether good quality sites link back to it.
- **On your website:** how quickly the page loads and what is in key parts of the page, including the meta title, headline, body text, images (and whether they are tagged), links to other pages and the URL.

It then moves through as many pages as it can and sends the information back to Google.

Data processing: when someone searches, Google doesn't go out looking at websites. It runs the stored data through its algorithm, where each factor carries a weighting, some heavy and some light. In a split second it decides the order and puts the 10 best on page 1.

Google's product is its search results, so it only cares about giving people the best results. That means:

1. **The most relevant page.** It ranks pages, not companies or websites.
2. **From a site it trusts (domain authority).** When there are more relevant pages than places (for example, 35 hotels in Killarney), trust decides which are shown.

3. **That loads quickly and gives a good experience,** including being mobile friendly.

Flip this around for your own business. For a search like “yoga classes in Longford”, ask yourself:

- Do I have a page Google would see as highly relevant?
- How does my domain authority compare with competitors?
- How quickly do my pages load, and is my site mobile friendly?

Page speed: check it free with **GTmetrix** (gtmetrix.com). Enter a web address and click **Test now**. Look at the measure called **LCP (Largest Contentful Paint)**, which should be within around 1.2 seconds. If you log in, you can change the test server, for example from Seattle to London, which is nearer.

Domain authority: this is mainly built through backlinks, meaning other high quality sites linking to you, such as the Local Enterprise Office, a local newspaper article or well established blogs. If Google rates those sites, it assumes they wouldn’t link to anything dodgy, so it trusts your site more. The Marketing Crowd’s domain authority is around 20, which is good for a small business.

Relevance comes first. A trusted, fast site without a relevant page won’t appear. Relevance is also the part you fully control.

Checking where you really rank

Google uses **personalised search results**. If you visit a site a lot, Google may put it higher for you. To see where you actually appear, open an **Incognito window** in Chrome (three dots, then New Incognito window), which has no cookies or search history, and search there. Done this way, The Marketing Crowd appeared first for “digital marketing trainer”.

What makes a page relevant

Someone looking for a dog friendly hotel in Killarney wants to land on a page that is only about the hotel’s dog friendly facilities, not a home page covering ten things. Google knows this. The top results (Randles, Muckross Park, Dromhall) all have dedicated pages, with “dog friendly hotel Killarney” or “pet friendly hotel” in the meta title, headline, body text and URL. Google also knows a dog is a pet.

The elements of a relevant page:

- **Meta title (also called SEO title):** the text that appears when you hover over the browser tab. Every page has this field when you edit it, and you decide what goes in it. Google treats it as what the page is about and gives it heavy weight. Put the most important search term at the start, because the beginning carries the most weight. Google also mixes and matches the words, so one meta title can rank for several related searches. You have around 70 characters. Evan’s page reads “Digital Marketing Trainer, Social Media Trainer, Evan Mangan”, with his name at the end because ranking for it isn’t a priority.

- **Headline:** the next thing Google weighs heavily. Write it for people first, then check it includes your main search term.
- **Body text:** write it for people, then check the main term appears naturally once or twice. Don't force it in five or six times.
- **Image alt tags:** describe images using the term, for example "Evan Mangan is a digital marketing trainer in Ireland".
- **URL:** you decide the words, so include the term.

Examples from The Marketing Crowd site:

- **Video marketing:** a separate page ranks second organically for "video marketing training course". The term is in the meta title (along with CapCut video editing), headline, body text, image tags and URL.
- **AI marketing:** about a year ago, the site wasn't ranking for "AI marketing trainer". Google was treating it as different from "digital marketing trainer", so Evan created a dedicated page. It now ranks first.
- **Get well soon gifts:** Gifts.ie ranks first, with "get well gifts" and "get well soon presents" variations in the meta title and headline.

Editing the meta title: log into your website, edit the page and scroll down to the field called **SEO title** (in WordPress) or **meta title** (often in Wix or Shopify). Evan added three asterisks to his meta title, clicked **Update** and showed them appearing in the browser tab on the live page.

Applying it to Christmas

Ask yourself what you want to be found for. If it is "Christmas gifts for her" or "Christmas gifts for gardeners", you need a page for each. Fill in the meta title, write a headline and body text using the term, tag images and include it in the URL. A dedicated page can be a blog post or a main page, because a blog post is a page. It is up to you where you put it.

ChatGPT's specific recommendations for Ivory Lane:

- **URL** containing "christmas-gifts-for-her".
- **Meta title** "Christmas Gifts for Her Ireland" with "Ivory Lane" at the end.
- **Headline** "Christmas Gifts for Her", with opening text along the lines of "Looking for special Christmas gifts for her…".
- **Target terms** for price point pages, such as "Christmas gifts for her under 50 euro" and "under 100 euro", and "Christmas gifts for mum Ireland" for the mum page.
- **Navigation:** add a visible Christmas Gifts link to the main menu.
- **Home page:** feature the gift voucher.

- **Alt tags:** optimise them, for example “Christmas jewellery gift for her” instead of “gold statement earrings”.

Never take these pages down after Christmas. Once created, they sit in Google’s index and gradually work their way up. After Christmas, take them off your menu but leave them on the site (this works on Shopify too). Nobody searches for “Christmas gifts for her” in February, so it doesn’t matter that they are there. Next September or October, add them back to the menu and update the year to 2027. The Google Spider will find and refresh them, and you keep all the trust already built up. Boots and Next do exactly this. The same applies to Christmas collections, such as gifts for mum or gifts for women over 50.

If SEO is of interest, look out for upcoming SEO courses from the Local Enterprise Office.

Part 6: Christmas Images and Design

Free stock images: Pixabay, Pexels, Unsplash and LibreStock all have free Christmas images (links in the notes).

Designing in Canva from scratch:

1. Choose a design type, for example an Instagram post (4x5) or a landscape format.

2. Go to **Photos** on the left and search “Christmas” or “snowman”. On the free plan you can’t use images marked with a crown, but there are plenty of free ones.

3. Right click the image and choose **Set image as background**. Double click to adjust it.

4. Go to **Text**, click **Search fonts and combinations**, search “Christmas” and choose a Christmassy text style. Edit the wording, for example “Gift Vouchers Now Available”.

5. Click the text to change the font, size or colour. Canva suggests colours from the photo, so you could match the text to the snowman’s scarf.

6. To make text stand out, go to **Elements** and put a shape, such as a circle, behind it in a colour from the photo. The eye is drawn to text inside a shape. Click the shape and use **Transparency** (100 is fully visible, 0 is invisible) to make it partly see through.

7. Go to **Share**, then **Download**, and use the image on your website or anywhere else.

Using Canva templates: go to **Templates**, search “Christmas” and use **Category** to filter, for example to Instagram posts. Choose one and click **Customise this template**. Go to **Uploads**, bring in your own product images (hold down Ctrl to select several) and drag them into the design. You can also swap in more Christmas photos.

AI images in ChatGPT: click **plus**, choose **Create image** and upload your own product photo. Evan uploaded a photo of a woman with a handbag and asked for a 4x5 Instagram post for a Christmas campaign that was upmarket but definitely Christmassy, with the woman and handbag as the main image and text about Christmas gift ideas. On the paid

version he used **Work**, which lets ChatGPT take the task and come up with several options. It produced three designs with different headlines: “The perfect Christmas gift for her”, “Christmas gifts she’ll love” and “Wrap up something special. Find her perfect Christmas gift.”

AI images in Gemini (free): click **plus**, choose **Create image**, attach your photo and be specific about what you want, including the exact text (for example “The perfect Christmas gift for her. Visit ivorylane.ie”) and that it should look very Christmassy. Gemini produces one image at a time rather than several options. The result kept the same woman and handbag but placed her in a new, more Christmassy scene, with gold accents.

LEO Longford will be running AI courses in the new year for anyone interested in the latest ChatGPT features.

Part 7: Christmas Videos

Christmas videos weren’t covered in detail, because LEO Longford is running a three hour course on this next week. In short, Christmas videos could be:

- lots of short clips of your products, services or gift vouchers set to Christmassy music
- the same with your own voiceover
- you talking to the camera

These can all be made in the free **Edits** app. Video matters because reels are the main way to reach people on Facebook and Instagram.

Part 8: Social Media

How the algorithms work

Every social network’s algorithm has two jobs:

1. Work out what each user finds interesting and fill their feed with it, so they keep coming back.
2. Keep them there once they arrive.

The more people come back and stay, the more ads they see. The networks see everyone as *their* users, not your followers. If your content is dull, hardly anyone will be shown it, because it drags down their network.

When you post, the algorithm shows it to a small group of your followers and watches what happens:

- **Video:** do people get past the first 3 seconds? Do they reach the 50% and 75% marks?
- **Image post:** do people stop or swipe past? If they stop, how long do they stay (dwell time)?

- **Engagement:** do they comment, share, save or repost?

The more engagement, the more people it shows the content to. Content needs to be visual, interesting and worth people's time.

Facebook versus Instagram

Facebook: even with the most interesting content, you won't reach all your followers, because there isn't room in people's feeds. Roughly:

- 40 to 50% of a feed is content from friends, which is what brings people back
- around 20% is ads
- 15 to 20% is recommended content from pages people don't follow
- only around 10 to 15% is content from pages people do follow

Most people follow around 200 pages, so your business page is competing with all of them for that small window. Brown Thomas, with around 271,000 Facebook followers and excellent content produced by an agency, gets only 4 to 40 likes on most Facebook posts. Expect 90 to 95% of your Facebook followers not to see your post, so don't pin your hopes on Facebook for free.

Instagram: people use Instagram to follow interests, not friends, so you're not competing for a tiny share of the feed and reach is higher. Brown Thomas gets hundreds of likes per post on Instagram. Realistically you could reach 15% to 20%% of your followers, or more with strong engagement.

If you're going to focus on free social media at Christmas, focus on Instagram.

Which formats reach most

- **Reels reach more of your followers than image posts.** Feeds are mostly reels because people engage more with them. Evan's own feed looked closer to half and half because he has favourited the Local Enterprise Office accounts (shown with a little red star), so all their posts come into his feed regardless of format.
- **Carousels reach more people than single image posts,** because swiping through them counts as engagement.
- Brown Thomas posts mainly reels on Instagram, and its image post is a carousel.

So focus on Instagram, then reels, then carousels.

Adding links

At Christmas you want to send people to your website, for example to your gifts for her page.

Facebook: you used to be able to add a link to every post or reel. Facebook is rolling out a limit of two links per month unless you pay for one of its subscriptions. In response to a

question, Evan clarified what this means: if you send out 10 posts or reels in November, only 2 of them can include a link. The two can go to the same page or different pages. Until you get a notification about the limit, you can add links freely. It is being rolled out worldwide, and the subscription is already on sale in Ireland. Save your two links for your important Christmas promotions.

Instagram posts and reels: you have never been able to add a working link (Instagram didn't want it to become a "spam fest"). A pasted URL won't be clickable and will frustrate people. Instead:

1. Go to your profile and tap **Edit profile**.
2. Go to **Links**, where you can add up to five links, and add the page you're promoting.
3. In your post, say something like "To find out more and to book, tap the link in our profile".
4. Remove the link afterwards via **Edit profile > Links > Remove link**.

Instagram Stories: you *can* add a link. Stories appear in a separate feed at the top of Instagram. They reach fewer people, around 5 to 7% of your followers, but they are an extra way to get in front of people. Evan demonstrated, pretending to be a restaurant promoting a new Christmas menu:

1. Tap **plus**, then **Story**, and take a photo (here, a new Christmas dessert).
2. Tap **Aa** to add text, such as "New Christmas Menu".
3. In your phone browser, go to the page you want people to visit, hold your finger on the URL and tap **Copy link**.
4. Back in the story, go to **Stickers > Link** and paste the URL.
5. Under **Customise sticker text**, change it to something like "View Menu" and position it.
6. Tap **Your story** to post.

Followers who tap the sticker go straight to the page.

Prompt: "Act like a social media marketing expert. Develop a Christmas social media strategy for my business, focusing on Facebook and Instagram. Suggest 20 creative ideas for posts, reels and stories that will engage my target customers and help me generate more Christmas sales." Add TikTok if you use it, or LinkedIn if you're a business to business company, and change 20 to 10 if you prefer.

For Ivory Lane, ChatGPT knew the range (clothing, bags and jewellery) from the Deep Research. It recommended making staff and their styling advice central to the campaign, showing how clothes fit and what goes together, with a content mix starting at 40%

Christmas outfits and styling. On the paid version you can then ask ChatGPT to create the Instagram posts, attaching product images such as dresses and shoes.

Part 9: Facebook and Instagram Ads

Even on Instagram, around 75% of your followers won't see a free post. To get your Christmas promotion seen, run ads. As a rough guide:

- €5 gets you into around 2,000 to 3,000 feeds
- €10 gets you into roughly 6,000 feeds

Those people can be your followers or strangers who have an interest in what you sell.

Evan gave his own example. Promotional posts about training courses don't get much engagement, so they might reach 5% of followers on Facebook and around 10% on Instagram. He'd put €10 or €20 behind them.

Why Meta's targeting works: Meta's AI knows what everyone is interested in from what they search for, save and watch, and what they swipe past. After Evan searched Facebook for tree surgeons in Killarney and watched some of their videos, he saw ads from tree surgeons for the following week. In the same way, it knows which women have been looking at shoes, jackets and handbags or watching boutique videos, and who has been interested in yoga.

How to run an ad (full step by step instructions with screenshots are in the notes):

1. On Facebook, click the **nine dots** and choose **Ad**.
2. For the objective, unless you have a sophisticated setup, choose **Traffic** to send people to your website, then click **Continue**.
3. **Page 1 of 3:** give the campaign a name, for example "Gift Vouchers for Ivory Lane", then click **Next**.
4. **Page 2 of 3:** set a daily budget, such as €10 a day. You can leave it ongoing and switch it off later, or set an end date (recommended if you're new to this). Leave the audience on **Advantage+**, the AI targeting, which works out the best audience from your ad. If you want, click into it and restrict the location, for example to County Longford or a few counties. Leave everything else as it is.
5. **Page 3 of 3:** choose **Use existing post** and select any previous Facebook or Instagram post or reel.
6. Preview how the ad looks across placements on Facebook and Instagram, then click **Publish**.

The AI then finds the best audience within your chosen area and spends only your daily budget.

Prompt: “Act like a Meta advertising expert. Recommend the most effective Facebook and Instagram strategy for increasing my sales.”

Part 10: Email Marketing

If you already have an email list of people who have opted in to receive your marketing (under GDPR), Christmas is a great time to use it.

Tool: MailerLite, which Evan uses himself. It is free up to 250 email addresses and then very affordable, around €15 a month.

Prompt: “Act like an email marketing expert. Develop a Christmas email marketing strategy for my business. Suggest 10 email campaigns.”

If you don’t have a list yet, you won’t build one between now and Christmas, but it is worth starting for next year. Try a prompt like: “Next year, 2027, I would like to use email marketing. Act like an email marketing expert. Tell me how I would go about growing my list between now and next year.”

Part 11: Pulling It All Together into a Campaign Calendar

Timing:

- **Now (October):** decide on Black Friday offers, whether to offer gift vouchers and how to package your product or service as a gift. Start on your SEO now.
- **Late November:** Black Friday social media, ads and emails.
- **End of November and December:** Christmas social media posts and Facebook and Instagram ads.

There are a good few weeks between now and Black Friday to get things in line.

Calendar prompt (in the project): “Act like my digital marketing manager. Using everything we have discussed in this project, create a practical week by week Christmas marketing calendar from now until Christmas week. Include Black Friday, gift vouchers, Google, social media, Meta ads and email marketing, and prioritise the activities most likely to increase my sales. Keep the plan realistic for a small business.”

This works even better if you have already worked through the other prompts, because ChatGPT reads all the chats in the project as well as the Deep Research reports. For Ivory Lane, it organised the next 8 weeks around three sales opportunities: Black Friday dresses, Christmas outfits and gifts, and vouchers. It set out a week by week plan and produced it as a PDF.

How much time will this take? It depends on your business and how complicated your product is. Done properly, it takes time in the first year. You need to:

- work out the topics you want to be found for and create the pages

- set up and package your gift vouchers
- decide what you're going to push
- create the creative

But every year after that is much faster. The pages are already in Google's index, the vouchers are set up and campaigns only need refreshing.

Summary of the Approach

- **Set up ChatGPT properly:** run the Deep Research reports and create a project, so all advice is tailored to your business.
- **Decide on Black Friday and Cyber Monday** based on whether it is profitable and right for your products or services.
- **Recognise that you're in the gifting business,** whether you sell a service or a product, and package and position accordingly.
- **Pull people in through search,** with dedicated pages for the gift searches people make at this time of year.
- **Push yourself in front of people** with social media (Instagram, reels and carousels), ads and email.
- **Make it look Christmassy,** using stock images, Canva or AI image tools.

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