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# Meta Ads from Zero

A practical guide to Facebook and Instagram ads for a service business

Beginner • Written by Edward Eaton • edwardeatonmarketing.com
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# About this course

Meta Ads reach people who were not searching. This course shows how to earn attention, capture enquiries and measure what works.

### Who it is for

Business owners and new marketers who want to understand and run Meta Ads.

### What you will be able to do

- Understand how Meta Ads work and how they differ from search
- Set up tracking with the Pixel and Conversions API
- Write copy and create creative that earns attention
- Choose between lead forms and landing pages
- Test and improve on a small budget

### How to use it

Read the chapters in order, do the "Try this" exercises where they appear and keep a simple log of what you change and what happens. Examples marked illustrative show method, not promises. Results depend on your business, area and effort.

### Contents


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CHAPTER 1

# How Meta Ads work

## How Meta Ads work for a local business

> **The short answer.** Meta Ads show your ad to people on Facebook and Instagram. You choose an objective such as leads, a location, a budget and creative, and Meta's system decides who sees it through an auction, learning from results. Local businesses do best with a clear offer, strong creative and tracking to real enquiries.

### The basics

1. Choose an objective, such as leads.
2. Choose an area and, loosely, an audience.
3. Set a budget.
4. Add creative: image or video and text.
5. Meta shows the ad through an auction and learns who responds.

### Different from Google

People are not searching, so the ad has to earn attention. That is why creative and offer matter so much. See Google or Meta? and best ads for service based businesses.

### Learning phase

Meta needs time and results to learn. Avoid changing everything at once. See why results change week to week.

### Measure real enquiries

Install the Pixel and the Conversions API so Meta counts real enquiries. See Meta Pixel and Conversions API.

### A worked example (illustrative)

A local gym runs a lead ad to people within five miles with a simple trial offer. Meta shows it to people who tend to respond to fitness content. The gym learns which creative works over two weeks. Illustrative.

### Common mistakes

- Weak offers.
- No tracking.
- Boosting posts.
- Changing everything weekly.

## Meta Ads Manager Explained: What It Is, How It Works and When to Get Help

> **The short answer.** Meta Ads Manager is the free tool where you create, manage and measure ads on Facebook, Instagram and Meta's other placements. You pay only for the ads you run. “A Meta ads manager” can also mean the person who runs the account for you. Most accounts are built in three levels (campaign, ad set and ad), and most beginner losses come from the wrong objective, missing tracking and judging results too soon.

## What Ads Manager is, and what it is not

Ads Manager is the main workspace for advertisers on Meta. It lets you choose a goal, pick who sees the ad, set a budget, upload creative and read the results. The “Boost post” button inside Facebook and Instagram offers a simpler way to promote a post, with far fewer controls. Meta Business Suite is the wider app for running pages, inboxes and posts. For anything beyond promoting a single post, Ads Manager is the tool to use.

## The three levels of every campaign

| Level | What you set here | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Campaign | The objective: what you want people to do | Leads, Sales or Traffic |
| Ad set | Audience, location, budget, schedule and placements | Homeowners within 20 miles, £15 a day |
| Ad | The creative, text and where the click goes | A video of a finished kitchen with a free survey offer |

## Choosing an objective

Meta's current objectives are Awareness, Traffic, Engagement, Leads, App promotion and Sales. The objective tells Meta what to optimise for, so choosing the wrong one is the most expensive beginner mistake. If you want enquiries, pick Leads or Sales, not Traffic, otherwise Meta finds people likely to click, not people likely to enquire.

| Your goal | Typical objective | Count this |
|---|---|---|
| Enquiries for a service | Leads | Form submissions or calls |
| Online sales or ticket purchases | Sales | Purchases and revenue |
| Send people to a page to read | Traffic | Landing page views |
| Be seen by more people nearby | Awareness | Reach and frequency |

## Set this up before you spend

- **The Meta Pixel.** A snippet on your site that lets Meta see visits and actions.
- **Conversions API.** A server-side connection that sends conversions to Meta more reliably than the Pixel alone.
- **Your conversion events.** Define what counts: a form submission, a booking, a purchase. Without it, Meta can only optimise for clicks.
- **A way to mark good leads.** Ads Manager shows leads, not whether they were any good. Tracking which enquiries became customers is how you find out.

## The numbers to look at first

| Metric | What it tells you | Watch out for |
|---|---|---|
| Results and cost per result | How many of your chosen outcome, and at what price | A cheap result that never turns into a customer |
| Link click-through rate | Whether the ad earns clicks | A high rate with few enquiries points to a page problem |
| CPM (cost per 1,000 views) | The price of attention in that audience | Rising CPM can mean audience fatigue or more competition |
| Frequency | How often the same person saw the ad | High frequency with falling results suggests creative fatigue |

### Five beginner mistakes

1. **Boosting posts instead of building campaigns.** Boosts give you far fewer controls over tracking and over what Meta optimises for.
2. **Choosing the wrong objective.** Traffic buys clicks. Leads and Sales buy outcomes.
3. **Changing too much too soon.** Large edits to a running ad set can reset delivery, so change one thing at a time.
4. **Judging after a day.** Results move week to week, so read trends over longer periods. See why Meta results change week to week.
5. **Ignoring policy.** Health and personal-attribute wording gets ads rejected. See the healthcare ad policy guide.

### When to hire a Meta ads manager

Running it yourself can work for a small, simple account if you can spend a few hours a week learning and checking it. Hiring makes sense when ad spend is meaningful, when results are inconsistent, when you do not trust the tracking, or when the time would be better spent running your business. A good manager names who runs the account, explains how leads are tracked, and does not promise numbers before data exists.

## Boosted posts or Ads Manager for a service business?

> **The short answer.** Boosted posts are quick to set up from a post but offer limited objectives, placements and tracking. Meta Ads Manager gives full control over objectives such as leads, audiences, creative, budgets and measurement. For a service business that wants enquiries, Ads Manager is usually the better tool, with boosting kept for simple awareness.

### Side by side

| | Boosted post | Ads Manager |
|---|---|---|
| Setup | Seconds from a post | More steps |
| Objectives | Limited, mostly engagement | Leads, messages, conversions and more |
| Control | Basic | Audiences, placements, schedule |
| Tracking | Basic | Pixel, conversions, lead forms |
| Best for | Simple awareness | Getting enquiries |

### When boosting is fine

To promote an event or a post to local people with a small budget when you are not tracking leads.

### When you want enquiries

Use Ads Manager with a lead objective, a clear offer and tracking. See Meta Ads Manager guide and how Meta ads work.

### A worked example (illustrative)

A plumber boosts a post and gets 200 likes but no calls. He builds a lead ad in Ads Manager with the same photo, a form and a clear offer, and gets 12 enquiries in a week. Illustrative.

### Common mistakes

- Boosting for vanity.
- No tracking.
- No offer.
- No follow up.

## Meta Advantage+ explained: what to switch on and what to watch

> **The short answer.** Advantage+ describes Meta's automated options for audiences, placements, budgets and creative enhancements. For service businesses they can improve delivery with enough data, but you should know exactly which are on, especially creative enhancements that change your wording or images, and keep full control of anything regulated.

### What it covers

- **Audience:** letting Meta find people beyond your suggestions.
- **Placements:** letting Meta choose where ads show.
- **Budget:** spreading budget across ad sets automatically.
- **Creative enhancements:** automatic changes to text, images or music.

### When it helps

With enough conversion data and clear creative, automation often improves delivery and reduces manual work.

### What to watch

- Check which creative enhancements are on, per ad, especially if your wording must be exact.
- Keep exclusions and location settings.
- Watch lead quality, not just volume.

### Regulated services

For clinics and other regulated services, keep full control of wording and claims. See Meta ads for clinics without rejections.

### A worked example (illustrative)

A clinic turns on Advantage+ audience and placements but switches off creative enhancements that rewrite text. Delivery improves and the wording stays exactly as approved. Illustrative.

### Common mistakes

- Not checking which options are on.
- Letting automation change regulated claims.
- Switching everything on blindly.
- Ignoring lead quality.

# Want the full course?

This is a free sample of **Meta Ads from Zero**. The full course has 4 chapters.

Join the waitlist at edwardeatonmarketing.com/courses/meta-ads-from-zero and you will hear first when it launches.