



PHOENICIA UNIVERSITY

INSTAGRAM ADS

The Modern Way to Reach Your Exact Audience

A hands-on lesson on campaign structure, targeting, and ad creative

2 One Platform, Every Business Goal

“A well-targeted Instagram ad reaches more of the right people than any organic post ever will.”

— A common phrase among social media marketers

- Puts a photo, video, or carousel in front of a precise, chosen audience instead of just your followers.
- Works across Feed, Stories, Reels, and Explore — one campaign, many placements.
- Gives you exact performance data instead of a guess at what worked.

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apps ads run across: Instagram, Facebook, and Audience Network

Built inside Meta Ads Manager, it's now the standard way every modern business advertises on Instagram.

3 The Ads Manager Workspace

One campaign, three levels — only the top level sets your goal.

The Structure

- Campaign → Ad Set → Ad
- Only the campaign objective is required up front; every setting below it has a sensible default.
- Ad sets and ads must sit inside a campaign, but each ad set can target a different audience.
- There's no single "publish" button — build it inside Meta Ads Manager, or promote a post directly from Instagram.

Reading the Levels

- Campaign — the goal you're paying for, e.g. traffic, awareness, or sales.
- Ad Set — the audience, budget, and schedule for that goal.
- Ad — the actual image, video, or carousel people see, plus your caption.
- The Preview panel stays visible while you build, so you see the final ad before you spend anything.

4 Boosting a Post vs. Building a Campaign

The same goal — more reach — but each is built for a different level of control.

Boosting a Post (The Quick Way)

- Takes an existing post and pushes a small budget behind it in a few taps.
- Limited targeting options — mostly interests and a rough location radius.
- One objective per boost, chosen from a short list.
- Best for a quick, simple visibility bump on content you already posted.

Ads Manager (The Modern Way)

- Builds a dedicated ad from scratch, with full control over every setting.
- Detailed targeting — custom audiences, lookalikes, interests, and behaviors.
- Multiple ad sets and creative variations tested against each other.
- Best suited for real campaigns with a budget, a goal, and a way to measure results.

5 A Basic Ad in Action

Concrete example: turning a product photo into a live, running ad.

Building the Campaign

- Open Ads Manager and click Create.
- Choose an objective, e.g. Sales, then name the campaign.
- Set a daily budget and pick your audience — age, location, and interests.
- Upload your image or video, write the caption, and add a call-to-action button.
- Review the preview, then publish — the ad enters review before it goes live.

Setting	Draft	Final
Objective	Traffic	Sales
Daily Budget	\$5	\$20
Audience Size	2M	450K
CTA Button	Learn More	Shop Now
Result: one product photo → a targeted, budgeted, running ad		

6 Ad Review and Editing

Every ad goes through review before it runs — and can still be adjusted after.

Understanding Ad Review

- Meta checks every ad against its ad policies before it's shown to anyone.
- Most ads are approved within a few hours; some take up to 24.
- You can edit budget, audience, or schedule anytime without restarting review.
- Changing the actual image, video, or text sends the ad back through review.

Status	Meaning
In Review	Being checked against ad policies
Active	Approved and currently running
Rejected	Denied — usually fixable with a small edit

If Rejected: → *edit the flagged element and resubmit*

Most rejections are fixed in one edit — check the specific reason Meta provides.



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Choosing a Campaign Objective

The objective you pick at the top of the funnel shapes everything else about the ad.

Awareness — Get Seen

Shows your ad to as many relevant people as possible, at the lowest cost per view.

Traffic — Get Clicks

Optimized to send people to your website, app, or Instagram profile.

Engagement — Get Interaction

Optimized for likes, comments, shares, and saves on the post itself.

Sales — Get Conversions

Optimized to find people most likely to actually buy, using pixel and app data.

8 Combining Two Targeting Filters

Concrete example: finding the exact audience inside a broad customer base.

Stacking Two Audience Filters

- Start with a broad interest, e.g. everyone interested in "skincare."
- Layer a behavior on top, e.g. people who've engaged with online shopping ads, to narrow further.
- Interest: Skincare AND Behavior: Online Shoppers → refined audience
- Both filters apply together, so only people matching every condition are included.

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45+
Skincare	340	480	290	150
Fitness	410	520	300	120
Home Décor	90	260	380	340

9 Placements and Where Ads Appear

Where your ad shows up changes how people experience it.

Feed

square or portrait posts
between organic content

Stories

full-screen vertical
tap-through between friends' stories

Reels

full-screen video
plays inside the Reels feed

Explore

square or portrait
shown while browsing Explore

Why It Matters

- Automatic Placements lets Meta choose where the budget performs best.
- Manual selection is worth it when your creative is built for one specific format, like a 9:16 Reel.

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Case Study: Launching a New Product Line on Instagram

A small skincare brand relied only on organic posts to launch a new product, reaching mostly existing followers and seeing slow, unpredictable sales.

0 → 3.2%

click-through rate achieved once paid ads were added to the launch

Three changes made the difference:

- A short video ad replaced a static photo, showing the product actually being used.
- A lookalike audience was built from existing customers, reaching new but similar people.
- A/B testing ran two captions against each other, and the stronger one received the full budget.

Outcome

The launch reached far beyond existing followers within the first week. Sales grew steadily as the budget shifted toward the better-performing ad, and the brand kept the lookalike audience for future launches.

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Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

A few habits cause most of the wasted budget people run into with Instagram ads.

The Mistake

- Targeting an audience so broad or so narrow that the budget is spent inefficiently.
- Using a single static image when the placement calls for video or vertical formats.
- Launching an ad and never checking performance data until the budget runs out.
- Sending every click to a generic homepage instead of the specific product shown in the ad.

The Fix

- Start with a mid-sized audience — a few hundred thousand to a few million — and adjust from results.
- Create at least one vertical video version for Stories and Reels placements.
- Check results after the first 24–48 hours and adjust budget or creative as needed.
- Link directly to the exact product or offer featured in the ad’s image or video.

12 Building Toward Mastery

Run a Small Test Campaign

Launch a \$5-a-day ad for a week and study the results before committing a larger budget.

Practice Audience Layering

Build a custom audience, then a lookalike from it, and compare how each performs.

Always A/B Test Creative

Run two versions of an ad's image or caption side by side, even when you're confident in one.

Track Beyond Clicks

Connect the Meta Pixel to your website so you can measure actual purchases, not just clicks.

Key Takeaways

- Instagram ads let a business reach a precise, chosen audience — not just existing followers.
- Every ad is built inside a Campaign → Ad Set → Ad structure, with the objective set at the top.
- Review, placements, and targeting can all be adjusted without rebuilding an ad from scratch.
- A/B testing and lookalike audiences turn one good ad into a repeatable, scalable strategy.