

# ILGA-Europe *Guide to Meta Ads*



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# Introduction



This resource was written and designed by **Jean O'Brien of Digital Charity Lab.**

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See more about my work at: [jeanobrien.com](http://jeanobrien.com)

Get free and affordable resources for digital skills at: [digitalcharitylab.org](http://digitalcharitylab.org)

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Paid digital now

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# Paid vs organic digital

- It's now very difficult to get a good return through organic social alone
- Most of all, organic social is inconsistent - some posts will do well, some will do badly, and they're hard to predict. You need channels that you can rely on to perform consistently.
- Most non-profits need to use some paid channels in order to bring in a return


## Choosing the right channels

- It's best not to split small ad budgets across too many channels
- Pick the channels where you know can get a good return, and manage the ads yourself

# Digital ads now


The digital ad landscape is enormous. This page outlines some of the more popular options for digital ads. My recommendation is that most organisations with low budgets should focus on Meta Ads and Google Grant Ads.

## Social ads



Channel	About
<b>Meta</b> (Insta, Facebook, WhatsApp)	Best ad algorithm
Linkedin	Good for high value prospects like corporate sponsors Expensive
Twitter	Broken, full of trolls
TikTok	Good for young audience But difficult to get users to stop scrolling and follow links

## Google

Including	About
Search Display Performance Max Apps YouTube	Charities getting good ROI on paid Google, <a href="#">according to benchmarks</a>  Requires significant budgets, expertise, time   Explore the <b>Google Grant</b> free ad programme for charities

## Other options

Including	About
Non-Google search	Microsoft Bing - good for older users
Programmatic ads	Systems that automate the buying and placing of your ads - for big budgets only
Other areas to explore if budgets are large	Influencer marketing, sponsored content, podcast ads

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# Google Grant Ads: quick overview

*Digital Charity Lab course on  
Google Grant Ads - with special  
discount:*  
[https://www.digitalcharitylab.org  
/resources/our-online-courses/](https://www.digitalcharitylab.org/resources/our-online-courses/)

## What is the Google Grant?

- A grant for non-profits provided by Google, that includes free access to some Google Workspace tools, and up to \$10k per month in free search ads
- It's easy to acquire - nearly all charities qualify, and the application form isn't difficult to complete

## How should we use it?

- Google Grant Ads are great for 'always on' promotion of your brand - you can ensure that anyone searching for what you offer, will be easily able to find you
- Search audiences are usually a high quality audience: they have high intent and are very likely to convert

## How do we get started?

- Apply for the Grant through [Google for NonProfits](#), if you don't already have it
- Allocate approximately 2-4 days time to 1) learn about how to use the platform and 2) set up some 'always-on' campaigns for your brand
- An online training course is available from Digital Charity Lab
- Once you have Google Grant Ads, you can gather data and make a case for running paid Google Ads too if necessary

Zero-budget  
alternatives to ads



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## No budget for ads?

If you don't currently have a budget for ads, look at other activities that can be stopped to free up some money. If you're boosting posts, for example, stop that and put the budget into proper ads instead.

Aim for a budget of around €1,000 to run a lead ad campaign (see more in the section on lead ads). Once you can measure the performance of this campaign, you can make the case for more budget.

If there is genuinely no budget and no chance of getting one, then review whether you can continue with certain channels at all. If you're putting a lot of time into organic posting on Instagram which brings in no return, that's a waste of resources and you can look at abandoning that channel entirely.

### Zero-budget alternatives

- **Facebook Groups** currently get better reach and engagement than Pages. Groups require a lot of care and feeding - you need people to be posting in them very regularly in order to ensure they get enough engagement, and you need members as well as the organisation to be posting. It can be very difficult to build a group from scratch; where they work best is when people have a strong existing reason to want to be in touch.
- **Email** - some free platforms available for small lists. Once your list starts to grow, it will require a budget, but email is still much cheaper than social media ads.
- **WhatsApp groups** - test out broadcast channels and groups for organising activists or volunteers
- **Google Grant Ads** - free ad spend from Google, will just require a time investment to set up and monitor

# Meta Ads strategy

*The most effective  
digital ad platform,  
and how to use it*

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## Quick glossary of terms

<b>Term</b>	<b>What it means</b>
<i>Objective</i>	Every time you set up a Meta campaign, you need to choose an objective. This tells Meta what kind of results you want from the campaign.
<i>Optimisation</i>	Improving the ad campaign once it's gathered some data on performance. Meta can do this for you automatically, or you can do it manually by removing creative variations, adding more budget, etc.
<i>Conversion</i>	A conversion is when someone takes the action you want them to take from your ad. This could be buying a product, signing up for a newsletter, making a donation, or any other specific action you want people to do.
<i>Leads</i>	A lead is when someone provides you with their contact details (such as email address, mobile number) so you can follow up with them. One of the best uses of Meta Ads is capturing leads so you can move people to email or SMS.

# The marketing funnel

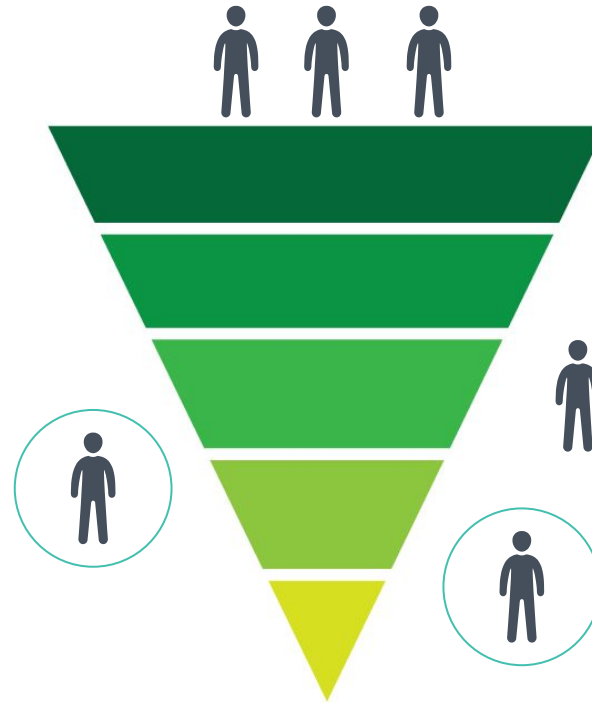
The marketing funnel shows the steps that people need to move through before they're ready to support you. They need to be aware, and interested, and responsive to a call to action. The reason it's a funnel shape, is because you lose people at every stage - only a small percentage of those who are aware of you, will go on to actively support you.



<b>Awareness</b>	<i>Know you exist</i>	}	<i>Starting a relationship with you</i>
<b>Engagement</b>	<i>Are interested in your offerings</i>		<i>Easier to get</i>
<b>Action</b>	<i>Visit websites</i>	}	<i>Becoming customers / supporters</i>
<b>Conversion</b>	<i>Sign up for emails, book events, donate, join</i>		<i>Harder to get</i>
<b>Ongoing support</b>	<i>Convert in multiple ways, stay loyal, recommend you to others</i>		<i>Much higher value</i>
			<i>The most valuable of all</i>

## Meta Ads can target people at all stages of the funnel

Meta has so much data, it knows which people are half way down the funnel, and is able to target them - and this is why Meta Ads are so powerful.



- The reason Meta can do this is because of all the data that it holds on its users.
- There's decades worth of data from user behaviour on the Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp apps
- And also data from the approx 30% of websites across the internet that have the Meta Pixel
- The Meta Pixel is a code snippet that tracks user activity on websites, and feeds the information back to Meta
- Meta knows if people are reading about LGBT issues on news media sites, visiting LBGT campaign sites, buying Pride merchandise, etc.

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# The basics of Meta Ads



- You set up your ad campaign - defining your objective, audience, creative
- Meta finds the first 50 results
- Results will be whatever you set as the campaign objective:
  - Conversions (purchases, donations)
  - Leads
  - Engagements
  - Video views
- It uses those to build a statistical model - i.e., it finds more people like the first 50
- Meta is very powerful and effective at doing this - the Meta Ad algorithm has been described as 'the best media-buying agency in the world'
- Once a campaign has 50 'results', it will be optimised, and find the best value cost per result
- Have you ever seen 'learning limited' on a campaign? When Meta can't find the first 50, learning is limited
- Without the first 50 results, the ad campaign won't perform as well
- It's much harder to get the first 50 results on a high-value ask like a donation, than on a low-value ask like a lead signup
- These basics apply to all types of Meta campaigns (leads, sales, donations, etc) and you need these strategic understanding in order to use the ad platform properly.

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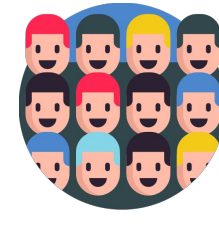
# Meta Ads strategy that works



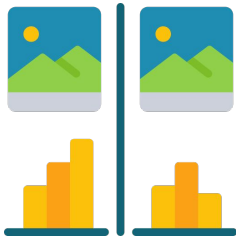
**1. Choose the correct objective**



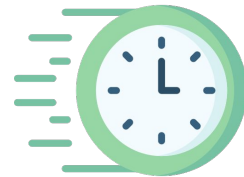
**2. Set an adequate budget**



**3. Use broad targeting**



**4. Run creative split tests**



**5. Allow adequate time**



**6. Ad campaigns > boosted posts**


# 1. Choosing the right objective

Create new campaign ×

Buying type  
Auction ▾

Choose a campaign objective

- Awareness
- Traffic
- Engagement
- Leads
- App promotion
- Sales



Your campaign objective is the business goal you hope to achieve by running your ads. Hover over each one for more information.

[About campaign objectives](#) Cancel Continue

The very first thing you do when creating a Meta Ad campaign is choose your objective - what you want the ads to achieve. There are a lot of different objectives available. Some are strategic, many are not.

Meta is very literal! It's a different way of thinking than we use on other channels and requires a bit of adjustment in our thinking and planning.

For example, on other channels, we often put our call to action in a video and then try to get it seen by lots of people. If you ask Meta to get the video lots of views, it will do just that - find people who like watching videos. If you want people to actually take the action, you'll need to use a conversions objective. The power of Meta Ads is that it will identify and find the people who will take action rather than just watch.

The objectives are really important, and easy to get wrong. If you don't tell Meta the right strategy, it won't find the right people.

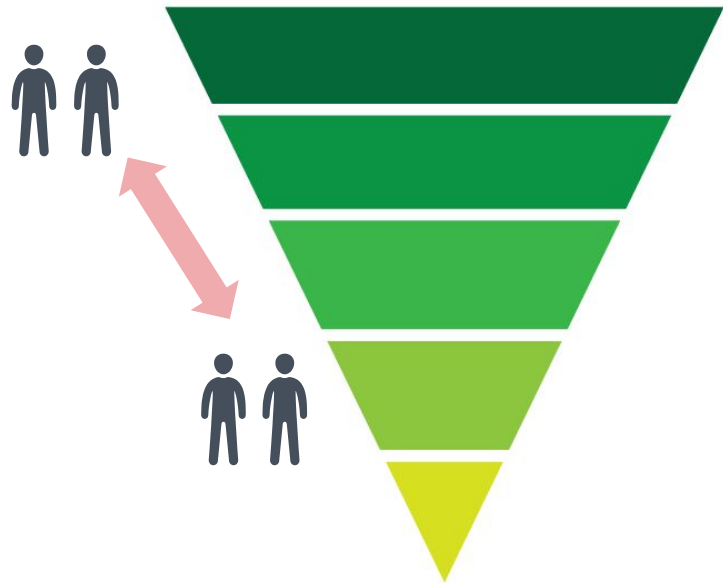


# 1. Options for ad objectives

A quick breakdown of the main ad objectives available to you in Meta, some of their relevant options, and whether or not you should use them in your campaigns.

<b>Objective group</b>	<b>Options in this group</b>	<b>Should you use them?</b>
<i>Awareness</i>	<i>Reach Brand awareness Video views</i>	No - all these objectives are very vague and are about showing your ads to lots of people, not driving a real response
<i>Traffic</i>	<i>Link clicks Landing page views Calls</i>	No - Meta is notorious for sending poor quality visitors in traffic campaigns. Only use call ads if you have a dedicated helpline or similar.
<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Video views Post engagement</i>	Only recommended if you have a plan to follow up with the people who watch the video to the end, or engage with the post, with a second round of ads with a higher value ask. See the next page for more.
<i>Leads</i>	<i>Instant forms</i>	Yes - great for moving people from Meta to email. See later in this guide for how to run a lead campaign.
<i>App promotion</i>	<i>App installs and events</i>	Only relevant if you have your own mobile app to promote
<i>Sales</i>	<i>Conversions Catalogue sales</i>	Yes, if you have a big budget to spend. Meta is really good at optimising ads to find the people who will actually buy or donate. The challenging part is that you will need a significant budget to optimise the campaign.

# Recommended ad objectives



- Only use 'top of funnel' objectives (like engagement, video views) in multi-step campaigns
  - E.g. - run a video views campaign, then target people who watched video to the end with a conversion ask
- But when you're short of time and budget, focus on more immediately measurable campaigns
- **Lead campaigns are measurable and affordable to run**
- If you have a bigger budget, you can look at running conversion ads to bring in donations and other income
- Unless you're using engagement, video view ads as part of a funnel, or they're delivering revenue - stop using them

## 2. Setting an adequate budget

Ad budget and objective are inextricably linked. You need 50 results for the campaign to optimise. The higher value the result is, the more it will cost to run the campaign.

### How to calculate an ad budget

1. Estimate your cost per result. Use previous campaigns, data from other channels, or benchmarks to do this.
2. Divide into two phases - testing, and ongoing campaign
3. Testing phase - you'll need 50 results to optimise the campaign, and you'll also want to test your creative, so budget for 50-100 results here
4. Ongoing phase - set a target for the results you want to achieve beyond the first 50, and calculate the cost of that.
5. Add the two together. Remember that Meta charges VAT on its ads so that will also need to be calculated and included.

### Sample ad budget calculation

Campaign	Estimated cost per result	Testing phase	Ongoing campaign	Total budget
Lead objective Target: 1,000 petition signatures	You should be able to get leads for around €1.50 - €2, depending on what they're being asked to sign up. Let's estimate €2 for this example.	100 x €2 = €200  Aiming to get 100 leads here, and test the creative to find the best variants	900 x €1.50 = €1,350  Using the best creative to get a lower cost per result, we'll aim for 900 leads here to reach the target of 1k signups	€1,550 plus VAT

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### 3. Broad targeting

I recommend using broad targeting for your Meta Ad campaigns. Broader than you think. Much, much broader.

It's a bit different to the way many of us are used to targeting on Meta: using highly specific targeting, such as 'women aged 25-35 who like causes x, y and z, and live in x location'.

Broad targeting feels counter-intuitive, but it really works, because:

- Meta will find the right people
- a large audience doesn't get exhausted as quickly, and you have more scope to run longer term campaigns

When you use a broad audience of (for example) 1 million people, it doesn't mean that Meta will show your ads to a million people. It means that it will find the people most likely to respond within that group.

**How it works:** Meta finds the first 50 conversions, and builds a statistical model based on them. It will use that model to find (e.g.) 50,000 people who are similar to the first 50. And then it will start showing that group your ads.

If you try to do the targeting to find those 50,000 people yourself, you're extremely unlikely to be able to do it. You just don't have the level of data and insight that Meta has.

By having a broad audience, you give Meta scope to run statistically accurate tests. And then you can run long term campaigns without exhausting the audience.

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## 4. Creative split testing

You need more creative variations than you think. Way more. Why? Because it's really difficult to predict what will work.

We use assumptions in our sector because we have to. Most platforms don't allow much testing. You can't do 50 versions of your ads on offline channels: direct mail, billboards, press ads, etc. But with Meta you can, and it will surprise you how many times our assumptions are wrong.

Some of the assumptions that I had - such as, people will respond most strongly to a picture of a human making direct eye contact - have been proved wrong in multiple tests on Meta.

To do a genuinely useful test, don't just pick one campaign identity, don't test two minimally different campaign graphics. It means testing significantly different images, headlines, and copy. Always include a 'wild card' - something very different from your usual images.

See later in this guide for an example of a creative split test I've done, and the results that it brought in.

**Test at least 5 images, 5 headlines and 5 primary texts** in each campaign. (See the next page for a guide to the creative elements of a Meta Ad.) You can use the dynamic creative ad format to combine all these variations, and Meta will rotate them to test the best combinations. You can test 125 different ad combinations with one dynamic creative ad.

Do this for every campaign. Different types of people respond to different types of images and different language. **Test every time.**

## 4. Creative split testing: anatomy of a Meta Ad

The different elements that make up a Meta Ad - primary text, image and headline. When you use the dynamic creative ad format, it will test all of your variants in different combinations, and also adjust them for different placements (Instagram feed, Facebook feed, Instagram stories, etc)

*The examples here show the same ad in different placements - the Facebook version includes the headline, the Instagram version does not.*

**Primary text**

Dogs Trust Ireland  
Sponsored · 🌐

When I first saw Daisy, I won't lie, I shed a tear' - Karen, Puppy Rearer, Dogs Trust Ireland. When a local authority pound found Daisy ...see more

**Image**

Neglected and abandoned mums and pups urgently need your help.

**Headline**

dogstrust.ie  
**Help Us Save The Next Dog** Sign up  
Will you please donate today ...

207 20 comments 29 shares

Like Comment Share

**Image**

Instagram

dogstrust\_ire Sponsored

**Primary text**

SAVE THE NEXT FAMILY LIKE DAISY'S

Sign up

dogstrust\_ire Left alone, starving, in a filthy outbuilding. Your loving care helped Daisy and her puppies... more

## 4. Creative split testing: top tips for Meta Ad creative


### Headline

- Your ad headline is an opportunity to add a strong call to action - such as:
  - Take action now
  - Stand up for change
  - Add your voice now
- Headlines need to be very short (3-6 words) as headlines get cropped in some ad placements
- Some ad placements will remove the headlines completely, so make sure you're not dependent on the headline for the ad to make sense


### Primary text

- Test different lengths - from a single short sentence, to a multi-paragraph case study story
- Received wisdom is that primary text should be short, but I've seen many longer stories work very well as ads. Always test.
- Test a primary text version where you use emojis to create a bulleted list - this can work very well across lots of different types of campaigns. Sample:

Add your support to the call for a permanent ceasefire now!

 Government must use diplomacy to call for a ceasefire

 Civilians and hospitals must be protected

 A humanitarian corridor must stay safe and constantly open to allow aid

Do you agree? Sign and share the petition now!

### Images

While you should always test lots of image variations with your own audience each time, there's a few things I've learned that are fairly reliable:

- Use square images - they're great for mobile
- Don't add logos or branding to your images - it makes them look too ad-like. You don't need them: your brand will appear above the ad in your Facebook / Instagram profile pic
- Phone photos work really well - something about an informal, unpolished image can stand out on the news feed.

People are very used to over-produced advertisements, and I've found across multiple campaigns that authentic images can get better results. Phone photos should still be clear and bright, and not cluttered.

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## 4. Creative split testing: making testing work for you

If you take just one thing from this guide, it should be the importance of doing creative split testing. It doesn't just make campaigns more successful, it also makes your work much easier.

You don't need to spend hours crafting the 'perfect' ad, or pay an agency big budgets to do it - they probably won't get it right anyway. You just need to create some different variations and test. The dynamic creative format makes it easy, and Meta will allocate budget to the best performing ads.

And you'll learn about what resonates with your audience. In campaigns where we've tested creative, we've taken the best-performing images and used them in other platforms too - landing pages, emails, posters.












### **Allow time for creative split testing in every campaign**

- When you're running a lead campaign, give at least 1-2 weeks at the start of the campaign to testing the creative.
- Once you work out what the best performing images and text are, you can create a new ad set with just those images and text, and run them for the remainder of the campaign.



## 4. Creative split testing: results of a split test

'Breakdown' in Meta Ads manager showing the performance of different images in a split test. The campaign objective was leads - people were asked to sign a Gaza ceasefire petition, and they were called afterwards and asked for a donation. Once Meta figures out the best performers, it automatically allocates more budget to them. The difference between the best and worst performers makes a massive difference to the overall performance of the campaign.

Ad	Results	Reach	Cost per result
 Ceasefire Petition - Refresh 01	853 On-Facebook leads	60,978	€1.76 Per on-Facebook leads
 Image "10.png_105_105 (aed286fe6f9498a5...)	93	13,350	€1.91
 Image "1.png_105 (b7261c5ea3991bb92285...)	234	29,809	€1.75
 Image "7.png_105 (8743ae1f30d34beef9ac9...)	25	3,095	€1.75
 Image "8.png_105 (4af0c7b2a800b0f57792a...)	69	10,327	€2.04
 Image "5.png_105 (1475a08d4ae53fa8e9ea...)	14	2,973	€2.18
 Image "9.png_105_105 (6f0af350e74731659...)	37	5,414	€1.98
 Image "4.png_105 (bdc665095d7bc4f37ca8...)	27	4,850	€2.20
 Image "2.png_105 (2e22774b9e37a459ac3c...)	88	16,299	€1.58
 Image "3.png_105_105 (36b3073035c01f5c...)	194	27,492	€1.53
 Image "11.png_105 (96a5cfda06ca19baf16a...)	72	9,366	€1.81
<b>Results from 1 ad</b>	<b>853</b> On-Facebook leads	<b>60,978</b> Accounts Centre acco...	<b>€1.76</b> Per on-Facebook leads

Best performer for quantity

Best performer for cost

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## 5. Allow adequate time

There are many things about Meta that are fast - content can go viral very quickly, and you can set up an ad in a matter of minutes. But your ad campaigns shouldn't be rushed.

### **Why?**

Meta doesn't like being put under pressure. It ultimately wants relevance for its users, and you are charged for ads based on how relevant and interesting your ads are to your audience. If you give Meta more time, it will be able to find a more relevant audience.

Remember the advice about the building blocks of a Meta Ad: Meta finds the first 50 conversions and then builds a statistical model based on this. This is called the Learning Phase, and you need to give it time to work.

- Short term campaigns will cost more per impression, and thus more per result.
- Spread your budget over time. I recommend a minimum 6 week timespan for Meta Ad campaigns - 2 weeks of testing, 4 weeks of running the best creative variations.

## 6. Proper ad campaigns, not boosted posts

### Goal

What results would you like from this ad?

- Automatic**  
Let Facebook select the most relevant goal based on your settings.
- Get more engagement**  
Show your ad to people who are likely to react, comment and share.  
Good for: Engagement
- Get more website visitors**  
Show your ad to people who are likely to click on a URL in it.  
Good for: Traffic

Selecting this goal will start a new ad with the same image and text as your post as this goal can't be used with your post.

- Get more messages**  
Show your ad to people who are likely to send you a message on Facebook, WhatsApp or Instagram.  
Good for: Sales

Cancel Save

Many advertisers on Meta start out by boosting posts, as Meta makes it very easy to do this. But boosting posts is mostly a waste of money.

### Why?

The objectives for boosted posts are much more limited than those for ads - you can only optimise for traffic or engagements. You also can't target custom audiences. Proper ads are much more powerful and give you much more control.

### When boosted posts can work

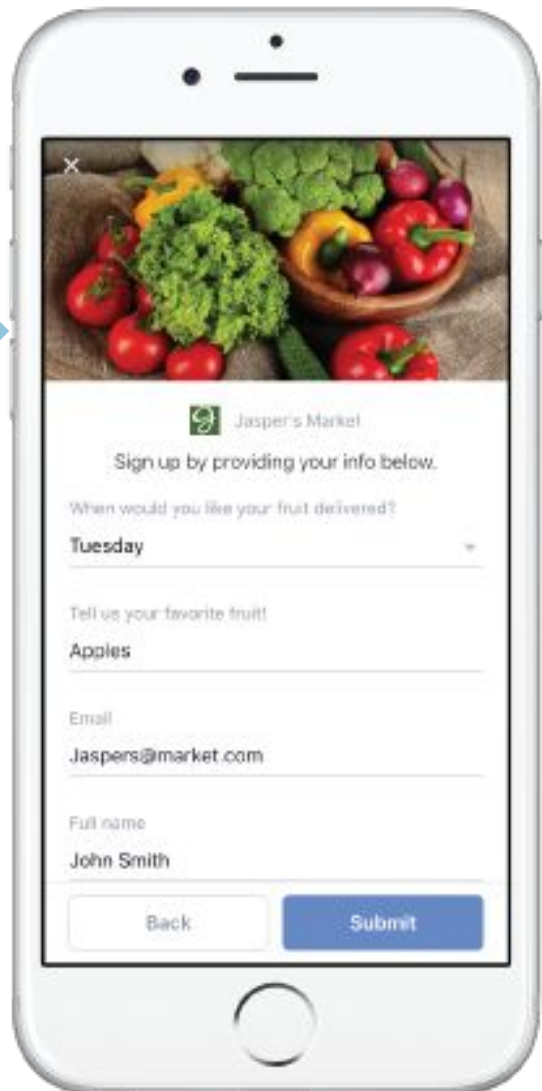
The exception is when you already have a highly engaged audience. If you're getting excellent reach and engagement through your organic posts (this is rare, unfortunately), then you should test some boosted posts - because you already have a warm audience who are likely to respond to them. Just make sure you're [using tracked links](#) so you can measure exact return on these posts.



# Meta Lead Ads

*How to run a lead ad  
campaign on Meta*

# All about lead ads

Meta lead form



  Jasper's Market

Sign up by providing your info below.

When would you like your fruit delivered?

Tuesday

Tell us your favorite fruit!

Apples

Email

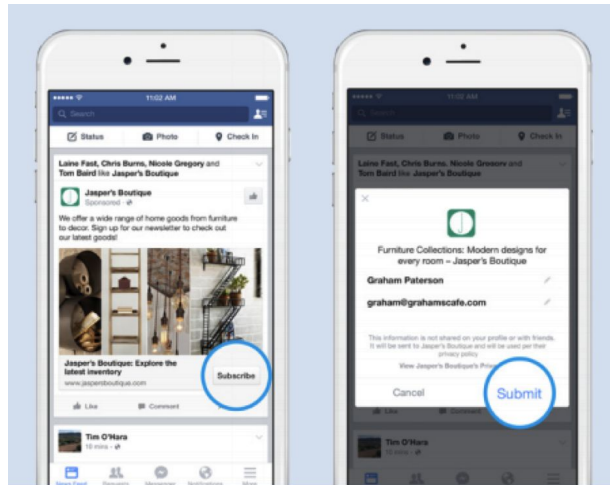
Jaspers@market.com

Full name

John Smith

- Lead ads are a very effective ad format on Meta, that allow you to capture contact details directly on Facebook and Instagram
- Meta's lead forms are very user-friendly and quick for people to fill in
- With a lead campaign, you can capture people's contact information and move them to a platform where it's easier and cheaper to contact them - such as email or SMS
- Email is excellent for cultivation and conversions
- Once you have contact details for a supporter, you have multiple opportunities to talk to them. You can develop a long term relationship, and get long term value from the campaign.
- Lead campaigns will work with small budgets - you can run an effective lead campaign for around €1,000

# Technical requirements



Meta Ad with lead form



- Create an ad campaign on Meta with a lead objective
- Create an 'instant lead form' on Meta and attach it to the ads
- People will be able to submit their email address directly on the Meta lead form



Email address passed through integration service



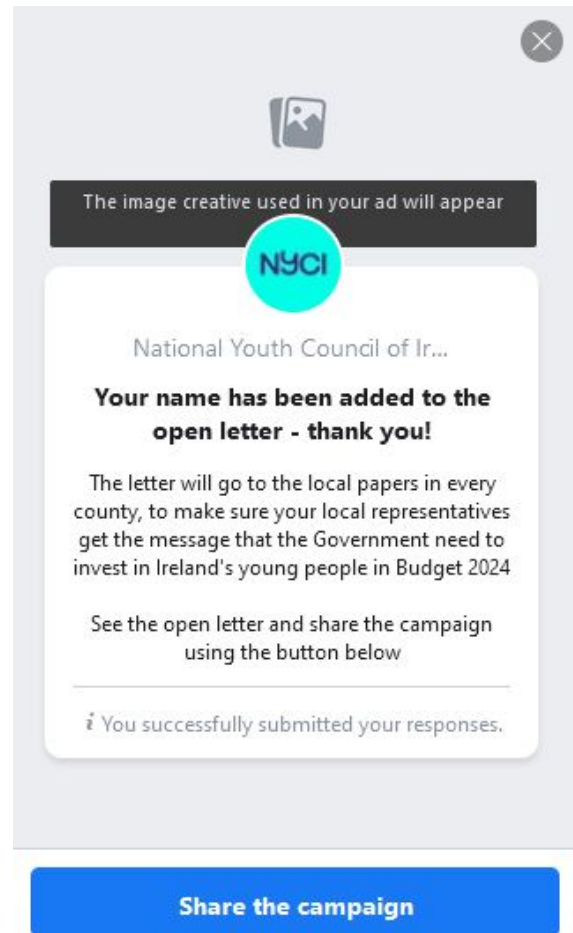
- Sign up at Zapier.com (from about €20 per month)
- Create a 'zap' that connects your Meta form to your email marketing platform



Subscriber added to list and emails triggered

- Set up an email journey on your email marketing platform
- Set it to trigger when a new contact fills out the lead form

# Best practice for lead forms



Sample confirmation screen from a lead form

You'll build your lead form inside Meta. They can have three or four stages, and you need to give care and attention to each.

<b>Step 1 - Intro</b>	<b>Step 2 - Contact information</b>
Short intro explaining what people are signing up for Set the form to use the image from the ad - this way, the lead form will match the exact image they saw in the ad	Capture name and email. This info is auto-filled based on their Facebook / Instagram profile. Top tip: it defaults to 'Full Name'; change this to First Name and Last Name so you can personalise emails with First Name.
<b>Step 3 - Opt in</b>	<b>Step 4 - Confirmation screen</b>
You can add GDPR text here and confirm that people are happy to subscribe.	Place a thank you message here. There's a call to action button where you can ask them to click on to something else. Give them a secondary action to take here, such as a sharing or donation ask. It's a great opportunity to get them more involved while they're very interested.

## Your lead magnet

Every lead campaign needs a 'lead magnet' - an incentive for people to sign up. There are many different types of lead magnets, see the table below for some inspiration.

<b>Lead magnet</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Something</b>
<i>Online actions</i>	<i>Petitions, open letters</i>	You can use a lead form to capture signatures for a petition or other online advocacy actions. It's a great way to attract a new audience who care about a specific issue.
<i>Discount code</i>	<i>Online coupon for an event or product</i>	Offer an exclusive discount code on something you're selling, such as event tickets or a product in an online shop
<i>Toolkits</i>	<i>An information pack or a toolkit</i>	Offer some information that will help people to understand or take action on an issue. You can provide this as a PDF so that people can download it immediately and no postage or printing is required.
<i>Quiz</i>	<i>Quiz, survey</i>	Ask for feedback or get people to test their knowledge on a particular issue. Meta's lead forms allow you to add custom questions, just make sure to keep it quick and easy to fill out
<i>Value exchange</i>	<i>Offer free merch (sticker, tote bag) to get phone numbers for telemarketing</i>	For bigger organisations - offer a free gift such as a branded tote bag or a sticker. Capture phone numbers on the lead form and use telemarketing to convert people to regular donors.

- [More ideas for lead magnets](#) from HubSpot
- [Value exchange campaigns on Meta](#)



# Lead ad campaigns: ingredients & benefits

[Advice on how to structure a welcome email series from Active Campaign](#)

## Ingredients required for a lead campaign

<i>Ad budget</i>	You'll need to spend a decent amount to make a lead campaign deliver - min budget of €500. I would usually spend about €250 on testing, and the rest on an ongoing campaign.
<i>Lead magnet</i>	A concept that will make people want to sign up - such as a discount code, access to an exclusive piece of content, a download, a special offer. Google 'lead magnets' for ideas.
<i>Ad creative</i>	Make sure to split test ad text and images - write 5 different ad copy versions and find up to 10 images. Split testing will help you get the best cost per lead, and it can often surprise you which photo works best. Use the 'dynamic creative' ad type to test different creative variants in one single ad.
<i>Lead form</i>	Create your lead form in Meta Business Suite - this form is where people will sign up by entering their data. Once it's created you can attach it to your ads.
<i>Integration to your email</i>	You'll need to connect your email platform to Meta, so data is passed over when people sign up. <a href="#">Zapier</a> is a popular service for doing this, and has preset integrations and tutorials that you can use. It charges on a sliding scale depending on how much data you have.
<i>Automated email series</i>	Set up an automated email journey on your email marketing platform so new subscribers from the leads get a message from you as soon as they sign up.

I appreciate this sounds like a lot! But there are **many benefits:**

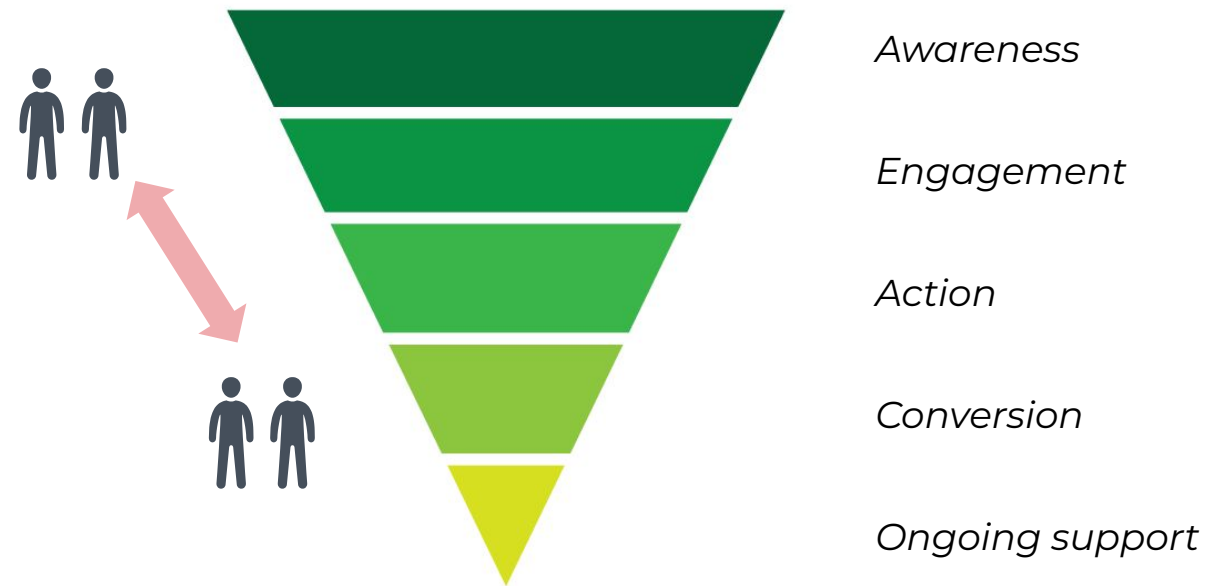
- If you get a good cost per lead, the campaign can be run for a long time on a low daily budget, constantly bringing in new people to your mailing list
- The email journey can be used for other channels - e.g., for people who sign up through your website
- Zapier is a really handy tool and can be used for other automations and timesavers once you're signed up

# Audience-building Meta Ad campaigns

*Use Meta Ads to move  
people from interest to  
active support*

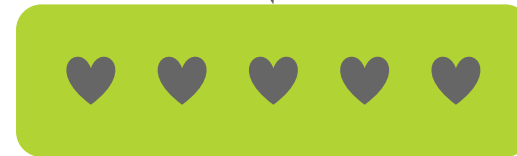
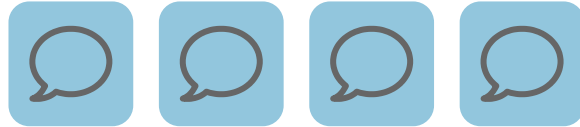
# Use Meta Ads to move people from interest to action

- Remember the funnel? We can use Meta Ads to move people down the funnel, with multi-step campaigns
- Start by engaging them with impact stories that showcase your work
- Save the engaged audience using Meta's Audiences tool
- When the audience grows, you can target them with asks
- This is a very effective way to use Meta for growth - it will bring in an entirely new audience



# The process

*Post & promote impact stories*



*To build and save an engaged audience*



*Target that audience with asks through ads*

## Step 1: stories

- Write impact stories using a 3-act structure
- Promote these stories as ads, with an engagement objective

## Step 2: custom audience

Use Meta's Audience Tool to save everyone who engages with the stories on Facebook and Instagram

## Step 3: target the custom audience

- Once the audience is a decent size, target them with asks
- Asks can be in ads or in posts

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# Creating your impact stories

*Always remember to communicate like a human, not like an organisation*

- Social media gives us an opportunity to showcase our work and reach people who are interested in supporting it. Just remember to communicate like a human, not like an organisation.
- Why? Remember why people go on social media. They're not there to be marketed to! (It happens, but it's not why they're there!)
- They go there to connect
- To keep in touch with friends, family, community
- To be inspired and entertained
- We're in a great position - we actually have the inspiring stories
- Tell stories using the classic story structure:
  - Problem
  - Solution
  - Outcome
- Use one strong photograph per post, no branding
- Thank the audience in every story
- No asks or links, just stories
- Give Meta over to impact stories - don't post any other types of updates. Other updates will get poor engagement and this will affect the performance of your overall Meta strategy.
- Aim for approx 1 story per week
- You'll need a small ad budget to promote each story - e.g. €40

# Structuring your impact stories

<b>Problem:</b>	3 year old Tess struggles with her language, couldn't express herself
<b>Solution:</b>	Thanks to your support, Barnardos was able to help her
<b>Outcome:</b>	She is finding her voice

*Structure your stories with a problem, solution, outcome. The power of this structure is that people instinctively understand it, and it demonstrates the impact of your work. And while the structure is the same each time, the details will always be different, leading to rich and engaging stories that all highlight the importance of your work.*

*To learn more about this storytelling method, see this free webinar where I go through the method in detail:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UG02h2Yad2c>

Simple, striking photo, no logos or branding



Barnardos Ireland

Published by Jean O'Brien [?] · 24 May · 🌐

Tess is only 3 and really struggles with her language. When she first came to Barnardos, she found it really hard to express herself and make decisions, but by giving Tess simple choices like, "orange plate or blue plate, milk or water", it helped her find her voice and gave her a better sense of control. Your support is making this possible. Thank you.



14,814  
People reached

1,440  
Engagements

Boost Post



956

20 comments 60 shares

# Using impact stories to ask for support

Once you've built an engaged audience on Meta, you can also start putting asks into your stories.



 **The Separated Child Foundation** ...  
20 December 2020 · 🌐

When Alem, a separated refugee child, travelled on his dangerous journey he was with a group of other children. They took turns sleeping and keeping watch. This had a profound effect on their sleep: when Alem arrived in the UK, he suffered terribly from sleeplessness and nightmares. We gave him one of our special Sleep Packs for separated children. The packs include a night light, a cosy nightshirt, ear plugs and a stress ball. A good night's sleep sounds so simple, but it makes such an important difference in their journey of healing.

Can you please give the gift of a Sleep Pack to a Separated Child this festive season? For just £10, you can help to make a child feel safe ❤️ <https://bit.ly/34i1nSL> See less


Boost post

👍👍👍 1.5K


78 💬 83 ➦

❤️ Love    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

Most relevant ▼

 **Sandra Trainer**  
Amen to that. God bless. ❤️

3 y Like Reply

 **Carole Barker**  
Its not the children's fault they were born into theirs lifes

3 y Like Reply

Story with donation ask

# Activating your engaged audience

Size  
109,300  
Type  
Custom Audience

[IHF Page Engagements 365 Days](#)

- The Audiences tool in Meta allows you to create custom audiences based on interactions
- You can build an audience of everyone who engaged with Facebook and Instagram content
- Audiences are dynamic and grow as engagement grows
- These audiences be used in ad targeting
- You can also use them to create lookalike audiences - Meta will find more people with similar interests
- Once you've built your engaged audience, you can target them with different types of asks, and see what they respond best to. You can test out:
  - Donations
  - Campaign actions
  - Surveys
  - Volunteering
- And you have the option of using:
  - Story posts with calls to action in links, promoted as ads
  - Ad campaigns



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# Conversion ad campaigns

*Conversions ads require a fairly advanced use of the Meta Ads platform, and large budgets - if you're with a small organisation, lead ads are a better place to start*

Conversion ad campaigns are designed to get people to take a specific action, like making a donation, or purchasing a ticket for an event.

## Resources required

As with all Meta Ad campaigns, you need resources to run a conversions campaign properly. You'll need a really sizeable budget, because if you don't spend enough to get the first 50 results, your campaign won't optimise and you won't get the best cost per conversion. Creative split testing is particularly important in conversion ads, as you can get very different costs per conversion from different ad creative.

## Conversions API

If you're running a conversions campaign such as one promoting donations, you'll need to set up proper tracking through the Conversions API. This connects Meta Ads to your organisation's website or CRM, so that the conversions can be properly tracked. This is quite advanced use of Meta Ads and should only be done if you have strong technical expertise in your organisation, or the budget to bring in outside help. [More about the Conversions API](#) from Meta Ads expert Jon Loomer.

# Political and social ads on Meta

*Dealing with Meta's  
rules and restrictions  
around political and  
social ads*

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# Political and social ads on Meta

*There is a dedicated help centre for NGOs using Meta at: <https://www.facebook.com/government-nonprofits/help>*

*Get guidance on how to set up Meta accounts properly and avoid being suspended or banned: <https://www.digitalcharitylab.org/product/digital-account-management-toolkit/>*

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## Getting set up to run political ads

Meta has strict rules about running political and social ads. In order to run ads on social topics, you'll need to do the following:

- ❑ Get someone authorised to run political ads, by uploading their ID and confirming their identity. See here for instructions: <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/208949576550051?id=288762101909005>. A person can only get authorised to run ads in the country they're located in; if you want to run ads in multiple countries, you'll need to get multiple people authorised.
- ❑ Set up a disclaimer on your Meta Ads manager - this will appear alongside the ads confirming that your organisation has paid for them
- ❑ Ensure your Meta Business Suite is set up correctly - multiple admins, all using their real profiles (no fake second profiles), all assets such as pages and ad accounts attached. Breaching terms can get your organisation banned.

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## Troubleshooting

### Our ads got disapproved

You can appeal the ads through Ads Manager. If that doesn't work, submit a support request at <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/>

If your ads keep getting disapproved, try using different wording.

### Our staff member needs to be anonymous and can't upload IDs for authorisation

If you have any staff members or volunteers who need to protect their identity, they should not be added to your Meta assets - it's not a safe platform for them to be on. Find someone who can upload an ID, or use different platforms that better protect anonymity.

# Building skills in Meta Ads

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# Learning more about Meta Ads

It's really, really worth investing in learning how to run Meta Ads properly. It's a highly effective channel and can get an excellent return for your organisation, with all kinds of goals like fundraising, campaigning and sharing information. By running the ads in-house, you'll save a lot of agency costs.

It is a complex platform though, and teams need support in running campaigns.

## Good sources for learning

- Digital Charity Lab has some introductory resources on [Meta Ads strategy for charities](#)
- [Meta Ads expert Jon Loomer](#) provides a lot of information about strategy and technical tricks on his website for free, as well as provided paid training and support

You'll probably hear recommendations for Meta's free 'Blueprint training'. This is ok for the technical side, but I do not recommend it for learning effective ad strategy.

# Thank you!

Questions / suggestions / feedback are all welcome: [hello@digitalcharitylab.org](mailto:hello@digitalcharitylab.org)

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