



Open Universiteit
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Netherlands' Open University scores top marks with Sponsored Content

Innovative targeting, and a commitment to continuous learning, delivers ROI for Dutch online distance learning university, The Open University.

The Open University of The Netherlands (OU) is an independent, government-funded institution that offers the opportunity to study for degrees through innovative, remote learning. Students communicate with one another and their teachers through an electronic learning environment where they can also download materials and take tests. The OU is ideally suited to professionals looking to advance their careers through new qualifications - and it was keen to explore new channels for broadening awareness amongst this audience.

Challenge

- Introduce the OU to new professional audiences
- Drive consideration by showing the positive impact of an OU degree on careers
- Build a community of potential students on LinkedIn

Solution

- Targeted Sponsored Content on LinkedIn
- Content built around stories of professionals enhancing their careers
- Targeting based on matching OU student personas to LinkedIn profile data
- Audience expansion targeting to reach a broader range of like-minded professionals

Why LinkedIn

- The world's largest professional network - and the perfect match for the OU's target audience
- Positions OU content in a credible environment for professionals
- The opportunity to build connections and communities amongst potential students, reflecting the OU approach to learning

Results

- Click-through rates of over 0.8% exceeded all campaign targets
- Phase 1 of the campaign delivered more than 5,500 interactions
- This increased to 20,000 interactions for subsequent phases
- Audience expansion targeting delivered a 50% increase in Sponsored Content performance

"LinkedIn and the Open University of the Netherlands share the same drive: to give professionals the opportunity and tools for greater success. And that's also the basis of our partnership, we always try to do it better, smarter and more successful next time."



Claudia Schutter
Campaign Marketer Online
Open Universiteit

Applying learning

The LinkedIn account team worked closely with OU's social marketers, suggesting approaches to maximise the impact of Sponsored Content. This process of continuous improvement included imagery reflecting the human nature of students' stories, and prominent pullquotes. The results of the campaign's early phases also helped to fine-tune and optimise targeting for improved response rates. The OU offers seven courses across three faculties: Humanities and Law; Management, Science and Technology; Psychology and Educational Sciences. All courses received a similar initial share of the Sponsored Content. However, early results enabled the campaign to focus increasingly on those courses generating the strongest response.

Graduating to the next level of results

The OU's appetite for innovation and optimisation paid off. A strong initial click-through rate of 0.6% improved significantly to over 0.8%, and the number of interactions driven by the campaign similarly grew from a strong starting point of 5,500 to more than 20,000.

Campaign Screenshots



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