

# **READ ME IF YOU WANT TO ADVERTISE BETTER ON LINKEDIN**

**#1**

**in a series of 3**

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**Linked in**

# Read me if you want to advertise better on LinkedIn

This book isn't here to tell you how to come up with a superb creative idea or a smart marketing strategy, how to build a brand or write a compelling call to action. If that's what you're after, go find yourself a copy of *Ogilvy on Advertising* or *Positioning* by Al Ries and Jack Trout, or maybe *Permission Marketing* by Seth Godin. They're great books. Every marketer should read them. But they won't tell you what this book can tell you. If you want to know how to turn that smart marketing strategy and those superb creative ideas into the best possible advertising on LinkedIn, then stay right where you are.

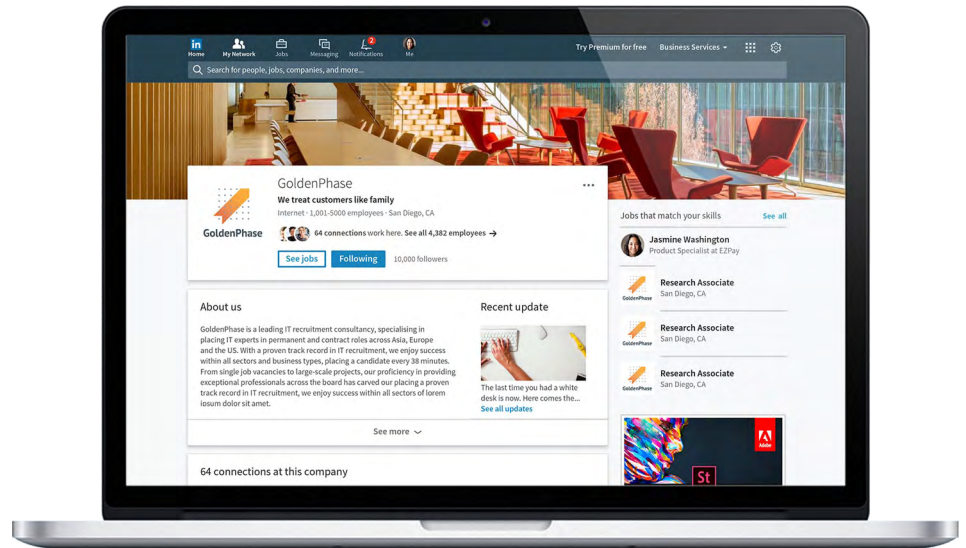
Nobody knows more than we do about how to use LinkedIn to deliver the results you need – and that's why everything you need to know to advertise better on LinkedIn is in this book. No spin, no complex new marketing philosophies or trendy new strategies: just the definitive instruction guide for using our advertising opportunities as effectively as you possibly can.

## Your LinkedIn advertising line-up

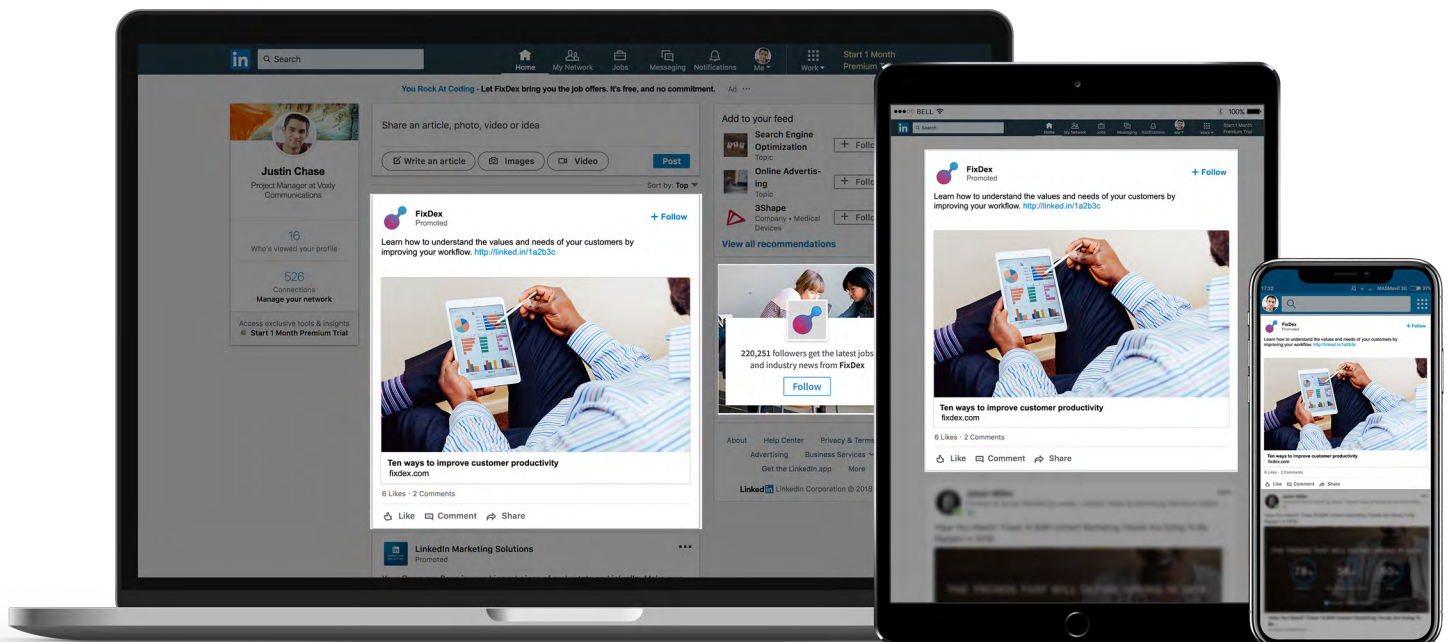
Better advertising on LinkedIn, as anywhere, starts with clear objectives. If you know exactly what you want to do, you're a heck of a lot closer to doing it successfully. On LinkedIn, your objectives will guide the advertising formats that you choose: from building awareness to nurturing prospects and driving leads. There are six of these formats to choose from and combine in different ways to match your business needs. They're the tools in your LinkedIn advertising toolbox:



**The Company Page** is the shop window for your business on LinkedIn. You can also use related Showcase Pages to showcase different brands. It's free to create your Company Page and make it available for your different audiences to find. A Company Page provides a great foundation for other advertising activity on LinkedIn, with an immediate opportunity for audiences to engage with your business and receive organic updates from you.



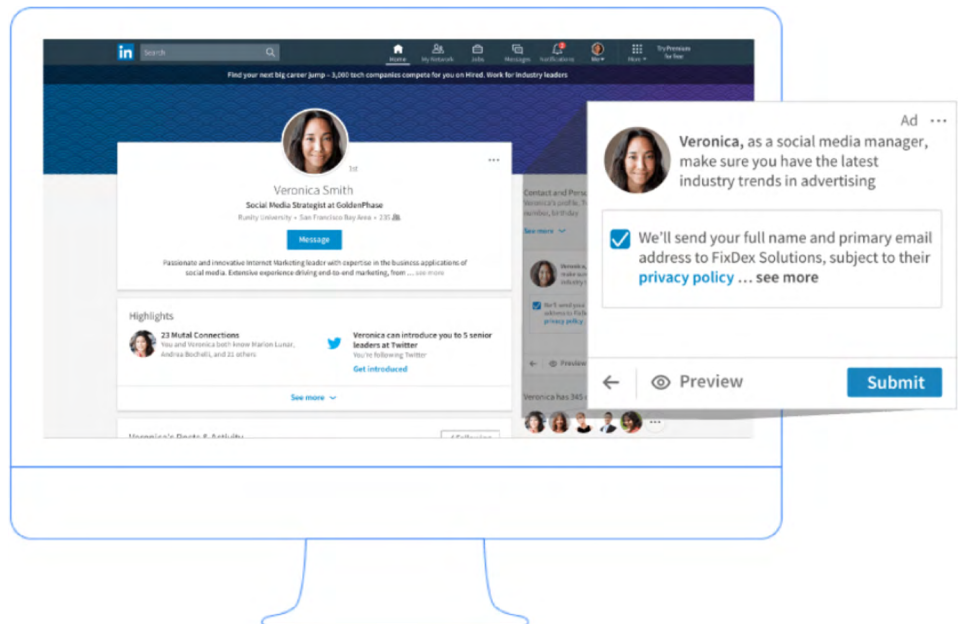
**Sponsored Content** delivers your brand's content in the LinkedIn feed, which is exactly where LinkedIn members look to engage with relevant, useful content from brands. Your content will appear as an update in the feed of your target audience, on smartphone, tablet and desktop. Conventional Sponsored Content involves sponsoring an update from your Company Page. You can sponsor an update that you posted to your company page, or you can publish directly to the feed of your target audiences. This is a great way to tailor content to different audiences, test and optimize.



**Sponsored InMail** delivers private messages to your target audience at scale through LinkedIn's multi-platform messaging environment. It's a fusion of email and instant messaging that professionals trust and respond to, with open rates averaging 52%.

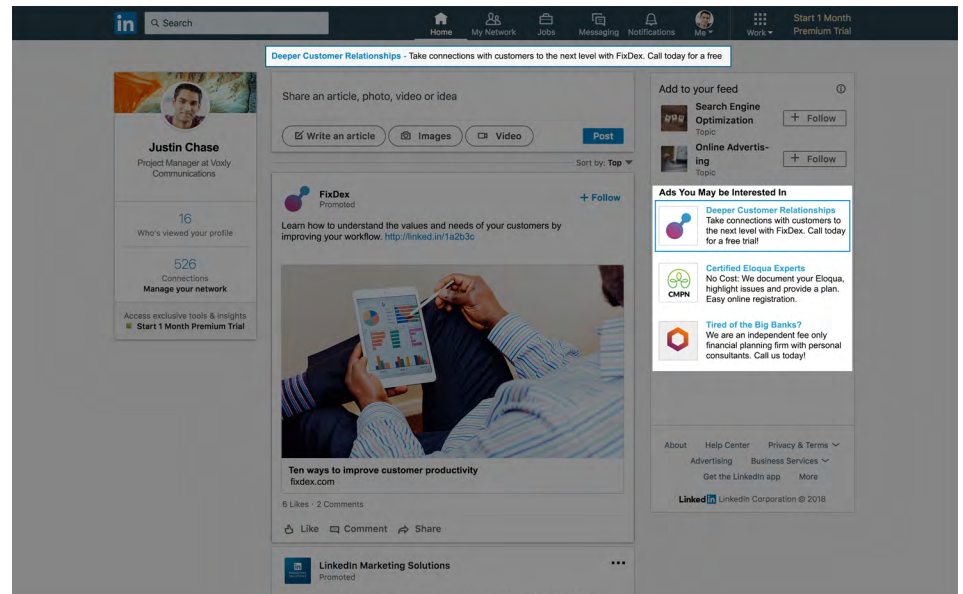


**Dynamic Ads** leverage LinkedIn profile data to capture attention and deliver immediate engagement through an ad that's automatically tailored to each member of your target audience. They appear on LinkedIn's desktop platform, in the right rail, fitting 300x250 pixel dimensions.





**Text Ads** appear in the right-hand column of the LinkedIn desktop interface, and feature a small visual and short message of up to 100 characters. They're nimble and cost effective, a bit like search ads only targeted by LinkedIn profile data so that you know exactly whom you're paying to advertise to.



**Programmatic Display Ads** also appear in the right-hand column of LinkedIn on desktop, and come in classic 300x250 pixel dimensions that will fit your existing online display ads. This makes it simple to add LinkedIn to your existing programmatic schedule. The fact that LinkedIn only displays one ad per page and it's always delivered above the fold with viewability over 80% gives you a very good reason for doing so.

You can combine these different advertising formats to deliver against a full range of marketing objectives. By choosing the right format, it's easy to extend your existing marketing activity to LinkedIn, reach a more targeted professional audience and increase ROI.



# **Pulling the right tools from the box: Choose your LinkedIn touchpoints and tactics**

Your choice of LinkedIn Advertising formats depends on the role you want LinkedIn ads to play. It will depend on your available budget as well. If you're looking to generate awareness and engagement at scale, then you'll want to leverage different LinkedIn touchpoints to when you're investing in generating high-quality leads from a highly targeted audience.

## **For driving brand awareness and engagement across devices**

Sponsored Content is your go-to option here. It reaches members right in their LinkedIn feed, alongside content from their connections and the influencers and brands that they're following. You'll reach a receptive, pre-engaged audience that are very open to engaging with relevant brand content and advertising.

According to Business Insider Intelligence's Digital Trust Report, LinkedIn is 3x more trusted to deliver worthwhile content than any other social platform. That makes the LinkedIn feed a great environment for people to discover your business.



## For generating demand

Demand generation isn't a one-shot deal. You need advertising options for building initial awareness, but also for establishing credibility and consideration, persuading people to engage with your thought-leadership content, and prompting them towards an on-going relationship with your business. This is where you can drive great results by starting to incorporate different LinkedIn touchpoints into your campaign.

You can use Sponsored Content to build familiarity and on-going engagement with your audience. Sponsored InMail adds another dimension with a private message that can stress the value of engaging with your thought-leadership content. Research from Edelman and LinkedIn shows that 37% of business decision-makers have added a company to an RFP opportunity after consuming thought-leadership from that business.

## For driving targeted leads at scale with a limited budget

This is where LinkedIn Text Ads come into their own. They are simple, cost-efficient and highly effective, designed to target a specific audience with a relevant call to action. You can create Text Ads and start driving leads within just a few minutes.

Dynamic Ads, with their tailored calls to action and heightened impact, turn up the volume on your lead generation. Use them for reaching a more targeted audience and increasing the rate at which you generate leads. Pulling details from each member's LinkedIn profile quickly establishes why Dynamic Ads are relevant to your audience, and you can use that same data to populate forms automatically, capturing leads in just a few clicks.

Adding LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms to Sponsored Content creates another powerful tactic for driving leads at scale. These are shorter, smarter data capture forms that are optimized for mobile, pull in relevant details from the audience member's LinkedIn profile, and require them just to click to consent before engaging with your gated content. As a result, they are proven to increase lead quality while significantly reducing your cost per lead (CPL).



## For driving high-quality leads amongst a targeted audience

For some prospects, it pays to take a more personalized approach offering more time, space and impact to explain your proposition. LinkedIn's premium lead generation ad formats not only increase the rate at which you generate leads – they also deliver a stronger flow-through to conversion and revenue, maximizing your Return on Investment (ROI).

If you're following an Account Based Marketing (ABM) approach, and concentrating budget on reaching B2B decision-makers at particular businesses then Dynamic Ads and Sponsored InMail are both highly effective lead generation tools that deliver measurable benefits further down the funnel.

A private Sponsored InMail message, delivered only when prospects are active on LinkedIn, captures the attention of even time-poor audiences. Sponsored InMail can also be combined with LinkedIn Lead Gen forms to ensure you're capturing leads smoothly when those time-poor audiences engage with you on mobile devices. You'll get most value from Sponsored InMail when you deliver concise messages that are clearly focused on how your business can help.

## For executing Account Based Marketing (ABM) strategies

Through LinkedIn Matched Audiences, you'll be able to upload a list of target accounts and then use additional parameters to reach the likely influencers within those businesses. You can then deliver Sponsored Content to drive awareness and engagement, with Sponsored InMail and Dynamic Ads providing personalized calls to action.

## For reaching a more targeted professional audience with existing campaign assets

If you're running advertising on other platforms then the chances are you already have most of what you need to drive results on LinkedIn. Remixing these campaigns to create advertising on LinkedIn unlocks more value from the investments you've already made and increases ROI by exposing your advertising to a premium audience in a focused, uncluttered, professional environment. If you're running an email campaign, you can easily adapt the content to create Sponsored InMail; a top-performing tweet provides a great basis for Sponsored Content; and

paid search campaigns can be easily adapted to create Text ad content, using your keywords as the basis for skills-based targeting.

You may already be using programmatic buying to target your display ads at relevant audiences using behavioral markers and signals of intent. If so, adding LinkedIn to your schedule will quickly increase the quality of your audience. You get relevant professionals in a brand-safe, viewable environment that they trust. The demand you're generating is therefore more likely to translate into the leads your business cares about.





# How to target, track, optimize – and generate more leads

Besides a range of different advertising formats, LinkedIn offers powerful tools and techniques that will ensure your activity delivers the awareness, engagement and quality leads that you need.

## Target as many relevant people as you can

It starts with targeting. As an advertiser, one of the things that you almost certainly know about LinkedIn is that it offers the most robust and reliable data available for targeting a professional audience. That's because people are very motivated to keep their professional profile complete and up to date. The fact that LinkedIn members engage with content in their feed so frequently (15x more often than they look at jobs) adds extra behavioral richness to the data set.

LinkedIn data is powerful but with great power comes great responsibility to use it right. One of the most important steps you can take towards better advertising on LinkedIn involves using targeting data in the right way.

Every LinkedIn advertising format comes with dozens of targeting parameters. You can use LinkedIn profile data to define your audience by the skills they have, the sector they work in, the size of their company, the type of role they have, where they are based... the list goes on. You can also use customized LinkedIn targeting segments to reach people based on the way that they engage with our platform.

With all of these options available, the temptation is to use as many targeting parameters as you can think of. This is a mistake. Remember that the ultimate

objective of targeting is to reach as many relevant people as you can, not to think of different ways to exclude them. Restrict yourself to two or three of the most relevant targeting parameters per campaign. You can run several different campaigns, each approaching your potential audience from different targeting angles, and then switch budget to the targeting approach that delivers the best results.



## Here are a few extra ideas for getting more from LinkedIn targeting:

- Start with a LinkedIn profile search on the audience group that you are looking to reach, and see what profile characteristics that audience has in common. Do they have the same combination of skills? Do they have job titles in common? Similar levels of seniority? Profile searches are a great source of inspiration for finding relevant targeting approaches.
- Keep an eye on your potential audience size, to make sure you have the scale to achieve your objectives. In an ideal world, you want an audience of 60,000 or more for Text Ads and 300,000 or more for Sponsored Content. However, you may need to adapt this depending on the region and sector you are targeting. If you're interested in a specific sector within a specific country, your audience may well be smaller – but don't panic if this is the case. Aim to keep your audience size above 50,000 – and be prepared to increase the amount that you bid to reach them to reflect the fact that you're competing for a more specific group (see the next Chapter for more information on this).
- Choose your targeting parameters carefully to make sure you're not giving yourself extra work and restricting the size of your audience unnecessarily. If you target by job title, for example, you'll have to choose all relevant titles from a list of 28,000. However, if you target by job function, you'll find these have been grouped into a far more manageable list of 26. Think carefully before using age as a targeting parameter because this isn't a required field for LinkedIn members and is often calculated using their year of graduation. You'll get far more accurate results that are more closely aligned with your objectives if you target by seniority or years of experience.
- Look-alike modeling is a sophisticated targeting technique that analyses the characteristics of people that you know are in your target audience – and uses common patterns to find other people who are likely to be relevant. It usually involves a lot of in-depth data analysis. On LinkedIn though, you can apply look-alike targeting to your campaign simply by ticking the 'audience expansion' box and letting LinkedIn algorithms do the legwork of building a bigger, relevant audience.
- Use LinkedIn Matched Audiences to leverage your existing data for targeting on LinkedIn. You can upload a list of email addresses of your existing contacts to either include or exclude them from your LinkedIn campaigns, use website retargeting to follow-up with prospects who've viewed specific pages of your site, and use account targeting to reach influencers and decision-makers at specific businesses.



## Set those algorithms to work

LinkedIn members want the most relevant and engaging content appearing in their feed – and it's in LinkedIn's interest to give it to them. The content platform uses algorithms to prioritize content that drives the greatest engagement. When you run Sponsored Content on LinkedIn, these same algorithms can help to drive engagement rates higher – provided you give them enough versions of your content to choose between.

The trick is to create several different content executions within the same Sponsored Content campaign. LinkedIn algorithms can then switch more budget towards the top-performing versions, driving higher engagement and ensuring your best content appears in the feed more often. Testing shows that the best approach is to run six executions simultaneously. You can achieve this by adding three new content variations on a weekly or monthly basis – and then switching off the three lowest-performing versions.

Optimizing your content in this way will also help your advertising budget to go further when using Sponsored Content. This is because the LinkedIn algorithm uses a Content Relevancy Score (CRS) to help determine which content appears in the feed. Every time a LinkedIn member scrolls through their feed, we run an auction for the opportunity to display Sponsored Content to them. The winner of the auction is decided by a combination of bid amount and CRS.

There's a CRS for every business that markets on LinkedIn, and it's generated using the levels of engagement that previous content has achieved. Optimizing your content will increase your CRS – and increasing your CRS means you are more likely to win auctions and reach more of your target audience, even if your bids are lower than some other advertisers.

You can read more about optimizing your approach to bidding in our next chapter.

## Make life easy for your lead generation

Balancing demand generation and lead generation can be a real dilemma for marketers. Capturing a lead usually means persuading a prospect to complete a data capture form before they can access your content. However, the hassle of completing the form means that fewer people end up engaging with your content. Generating leads means compromising on driving interest and engagement. As more engagement takes place on mobile (57% of all engagement on LinkedIn takes place on mobile devices), the trade-off gets even steeper. Trying to type data into a form on a touchscreen is nobody's idea of a good time.

This is why LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms are such an important aspect of advertising on LinkedIn. They can be used with Sponsored Content and

Sponsored InMail, and there's a similar function available for Dynamic Ads. Lead Gen Forms are shorter, smarter data capture forms that are mobile-optimized and automatically populated with LinkedIn profile data, so that your prospects don't have to type in any of their details or fiddle around with any drop-down menus. They confirm their details with a click or two and get on with engaging with your content while you capture more relevant leads quickly.

Unsurprisingly, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms have a big impact on the quantity of leads that campaigns generate, dramatically reducing cost per lead (CPL). They tend to increase lead quality as well, since more of your highest-value (and often time-poor) prospects make it through the lead generation process.



## Track conversions and optimize around the metrics that matter

As an advertiser, you'll want to know the size of the audience you're reaching, the rate at which they engage with you and the amount that these impressions and clicks are costing. LinkedIn generates all of the metrics that you'd expect in these areas. You can track reach, click-through rate (CTR), engagement rate, cost per click (CPC) and the cost of impressions (CPM) through our Campaign Manager interface, in real time. That's just the start, though. With LinkedIn Conversion Tracking, you can also get a detailed view of what this reach and engagement leads to – and what it ultimately means for your bottom line.

It's fairly straightforward to add Conversion Tracking to any campaign that you run on LinkedIn. You specify the conversion action that matters to you – it could be somebody filling in a 'contact us' form, requesting a demo or a test drive, viewing a relevant product page or

even completing a purchase. To track it, you simply add the LinkedIn Insight Tag to your website, specify the conversion actions that you are interested in and then track the conversion performance of your ads through campaign manager, in the same way that you do the other LinkedIn metrics. The LinkedIn Insight Tag will also give you visibility on the demographics of people visiting your site using LinkedIn profile data – so you get an even more granular view of the type of engagement you're driving.

Conversion Tracking puts all of your other campaign metrics into context by showing how they ultimately deliver on your advertising objectives. Not all clicks and leads are equal – and to see the value that your CPC or CPM

truly represents, you need to see the value they create for your business. Conversion Tracking brings you a step closer to doing so.

When you combine Conversion Tracking with a commitment to A/B testing, running different campaign variants and monitoring how they perform, you're able to optimize your approach in a way that keeps increasing its value. That's an important aspect of better advertising on LinkedIn.



# Making it happen: Self-serve, supported and programmatic campaigns

Broadly speaking, there are three different ways to manage your LinkedIn advertising campaigns. The approach that's right for you depends on the LinkedIn ad formats you're using – and on the way of dealing with a media platform that floats your boat. Some people want the control to get on with things themselves, others would like to talk through the options and explore the best way of doing things. If you're buying ads programmatically, either direct or through an agency, then you probably want to add LinkedIn to that program. LinkedIn gives you all of these options.

## Self-serve campaigns through Campaign Manager

If you're running Sponsored Content, Sponsored InMail or Text Ads, you can use the all-in-one advertising portal, Campaign Manager, to set up and launch your campaign, keep control of your budget, track performance and optimize to deliver the results that you need. If you don't want to talk to anyone at LinkedIn, then you don't need to.

Here are some top tips for using Campaign Manager to maximize the impact of your self-serve campaigns:

### Set your bid above the top bid range

Every time a LinkedIn member scrolls through their feed we hold an auction for the opportunity to advertise to them. We run similar auctions to deliver Sponsored InMail to members. To protect the member experience and ensure strong engagement, LinkedIn carefully controls the amount of in-feed promotions and Text Ads that each member is exposed to, and caps the frequency with which they receive Sponsored InMail. This means that it's important to be competitive when bidding to serve your content to your target audience. You can't achieve your objectives if your content isn't winning auctions – and appearing to the right people.

Choose the terms of your bid based on your campaign objectives. Whether you're bidding on cost per click (CPC) to drive actions or cost per thousand impressions (CPM) to build awareness, Campaign Manager will show you a range of amounts that other advertisers are bidding for your audience. To ensure a strong start for your campaign, set your bid amount \$1 above the top end of this range. This is particularly important if your target audience is small – and especially if it's below the 50,000 level.

If you're following a precisely targeted Account based Marketing (ABM) strategy, for example, be prepared

to bid even more for the very specific impressions that you are after. The fact that you're reaching relevant decision-makers at businesses you've identified at strong prospects will make those higher bids worthwhile. The impressions and clicks are worth more to you than they are to others.

Remember that LinkedIn operates a second-price auction, so the amount you actually pay could be lower than the amount that you bid. Bear in mind too, that you can always adjust your bid if you find yourself paying a higher average price than you would like.





## Set a total budget and a daily budget

Campaign Manager gives you the option of setting a daily budget to control the pace of your campaign, and a total budget to control your total spend. It's important to realize that you don't have to choose one or the other. In fact, the best approach is often to set both types of budgets.

Setting a daily budget without a total budget risks over delivering your campaign and spending more than you plan to. On the other hand, setting a total budget without a daily budget

means that you could spend your available budget too quickly – and without the opportunity to optimize your campaign. This is a particular problem for more focused demand and lead generation campaigns. Set both budgets to stay in control of how much you will spend and the rate at which you'll spend it.

When setting daily budgets, vary your approach for different phases of your campaign. Set your daily budget high early on, so that you generate more data

for optimizing your campaign and boost your Content Relevancy Score (CRS). This will help you to win more bids going forward and enable you to do more with less later on.

In some circumstances, when running awareness campaigns, it might make sense to dispense with your daily budget altogether and aim for maximum reach from the very start. This could burn through your budget quickly – but if it's achieving the immediate impact you need, that isn't necessarily a problem.

## Don't force your campaigns to compete for the same audience

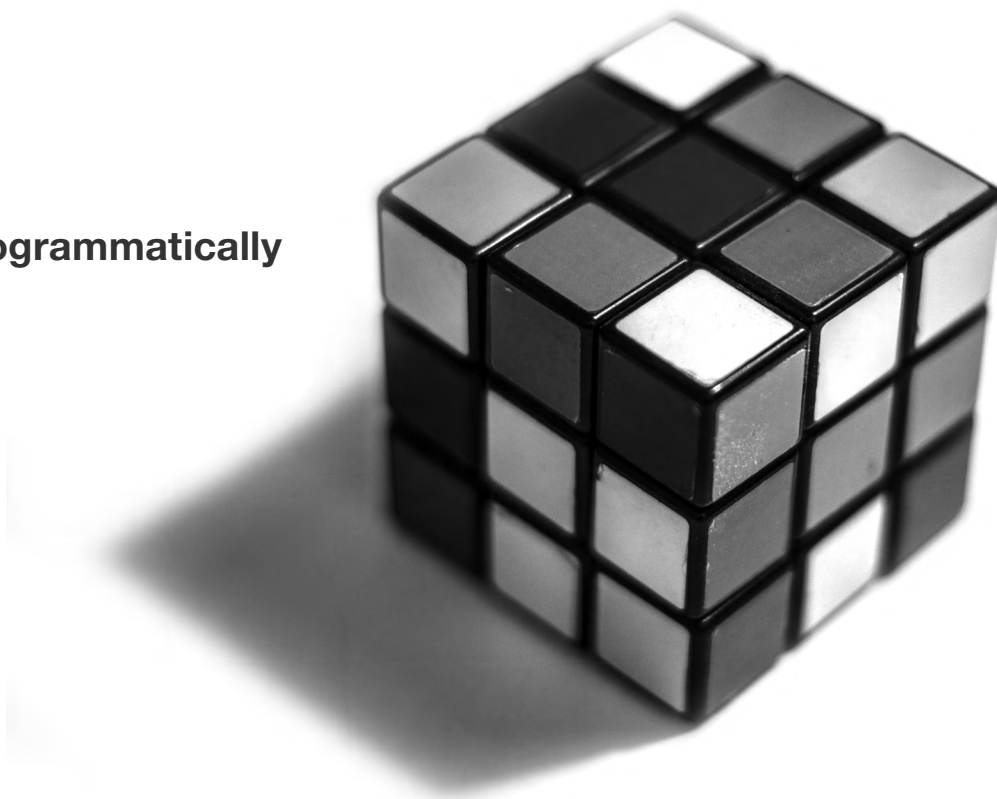
When running two or more campaigns simultaneously, it's important to make sure they aren't competing for the same audience. Too much overlap and your campaigns will drive up one another's CPC or CPM by bidding for the same audience.

## Working with LinkedIn for support on campaigns

If you're using Dynamic Ads, which currently require a more bespoke approach, or if you want to work with a dedicated LinkedIn Marketing Solutions team to help increase effectiveness, you can get in touch with our account team to help set up your campaign. Our experts can help with everything from targeting to creative to optimization.

## Booking Display Ads programmatically

LinkedIn Display ads are available as a programmatic buy. You can book them through your preferred demand-side platform (DSP) or agency trading desk (ATD), with flexible purchasing and targeting options and the option of open or private auctions. Alternatively, you can book with LinkedIn directly, using our private auction.



# If you know how to advertise, then you now have everything you need to advertise better on LinkedIn

There are lots of elements involved in creating great advertising – and we don't claim to be experts in all of them. This book hasn't tried to tell you how to position your brand, or come up with great creative ideas. We're not in the business of telling you how to art direct your ads, which director to choose for your videos, or how to craft the perfect headline. There are advertising and marketing experts who know more than us about these things. We'd be lying if we said otherwise. And we're not liars.

When we tell you that nobody knows more about advertising on LinkedIn,

we're telling the truth. When we tell you that you now have all the technical knowledge you need to create great advertising on LinkedIn, that's the truth too. Don't let anybody tell you that there are any more tricks to this. If you know what you're doing as a marketer and advertiser then you are now as ready as you'll ever be to use those skills on LinkedIn.

Get out there and create better advertising on LinkedIn. And love doing it.



