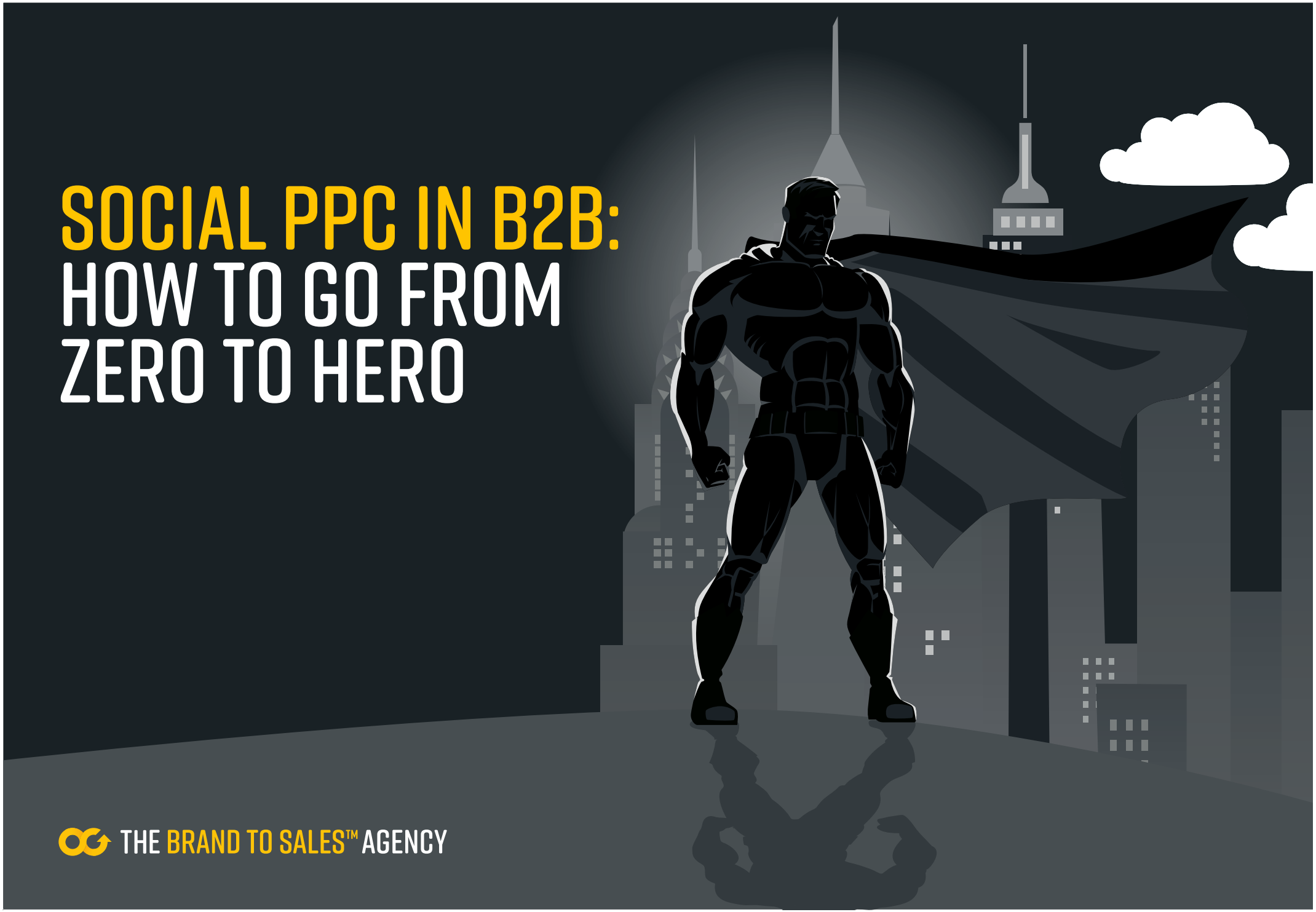
SOCIAL PPC IN B2B: HOW TO GO FROM ZERO TO HERO



THE BRAND TO SALES™ AGENCY



WHAT THIS GUIDE ISN'T

This isn't a complete guide. If it was, it'd be terribly long (yes, even longer!). While for many, Google AdWords is the original PPC platform, we've focused on the pay-per-click (PPC) options offered by the world's biggest social media platforms. Namely, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Each of these three platforms offer lots of options that aren't covered here. They also regularly update their advertising options and are always working on new features. This is our take on the must-know options for today's comms professionals seeking new routes to buyers.



WHAT THIS GUIDE IS

It's a quick-start guide that provides an overview of how some of the main social media PPC advertising models work, why and when you should use them, and a playbook of tactics and tips for each of them to keep your costs low and your conversion rates high.

We'll be covering LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. We hope you learn something new, or at the very least, we confirm something you already thought.

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Section one

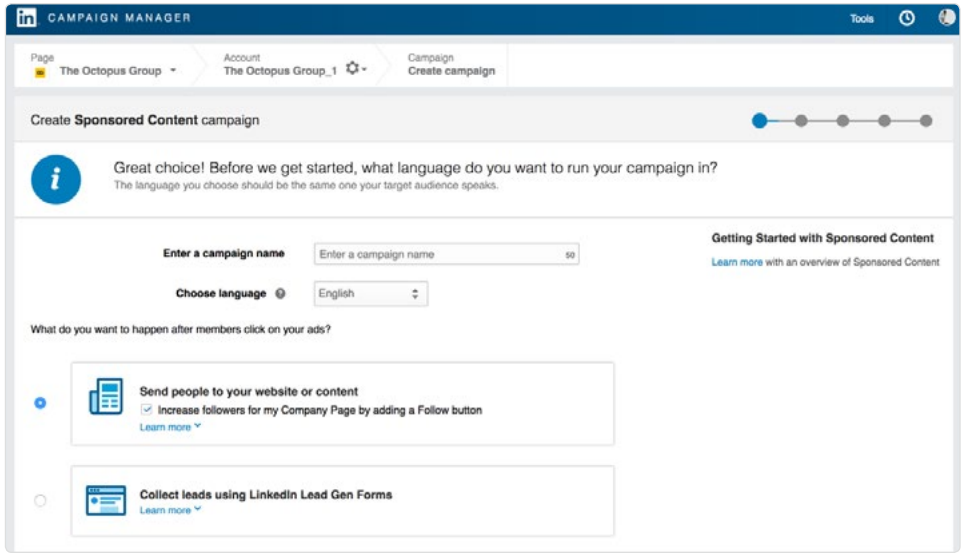
LINKEDIN SPONSORED UPDATES

With over 550 million registered users, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional online social network. If you're looking for more B2B leads, LinkedIn is the place to go. If you're already posting updates on your company's LinkedIn page (or are planning to start doing so), then Sponsored Updates are an excellent way to increase the visibility of your posts and reach a new, specific type of prospect.

Each time you post an update, it appears on the newsfeed of LinkedIn users who already follow your company's page. By sponsoring that update, you're amplifying its exposure as it will also appear on the newsfeed of users who don't follow your page.

You can specify what type of user you want your update to be promoted to by using a combination of targeting options.

You can target by a user's location, job title, company size, industry, skills, and age. As well as by visitor retargeting, company lists and accounts. Those same filtering options can also be used to exclude certain types of users. LinkedIn will give you an estimate of the audience size for your Sponsored Update.



Once you've tweaked your combination of targeting options, you'll be asked to bid on the campaign. You can either pay whenever somebody clicks on the post (cost per click – CPC) or on the basis of how often your update is shown (cost per 1,000 impressions – CPM). You can set a daily budget, as well as a total one, ensuring you don't overspend on the campaign.

With the CPC model, you pay if somebody clicks on any of the following in the post: company name, logo, post title, or the link. You don't pay if they take a social action such as commenting on it, or liking/sharing it.

WHAT MAKES THEM SO GREAT ?

The audience targeting options mean you can create a highly-tailored campaign, so you know you're reaching just the right professional at exactly the right company. For example, if you want to attract new customers and choose to target London-based IT Directors at companies with over 200 employees, you can specify exactly that in the settings.

The ability to exclude certain types of LinkedIn user is an excellent way to keep costs down, as it reduces the chances of you paying for clicks/impressions on those who aren't appropriate targets. Examples include competitors and your existing customers.

The updates show up in a user's newsfeed (marked as 'Sponsored') alongside activity from their contacts and companies they already follow, ensuring they're easier to spot than an ad that appears on the side of the screen.

Now, recently added lead gen cards allow you to keep users on the LinkedIn platform by directing them to pre-populated forms and generating leads on a self-contained unit. This removes a barrier to entry for lead capture, and all leads collected can be directly downloaded from LinkedIn.

WHEN DO THEY WORK BEST?

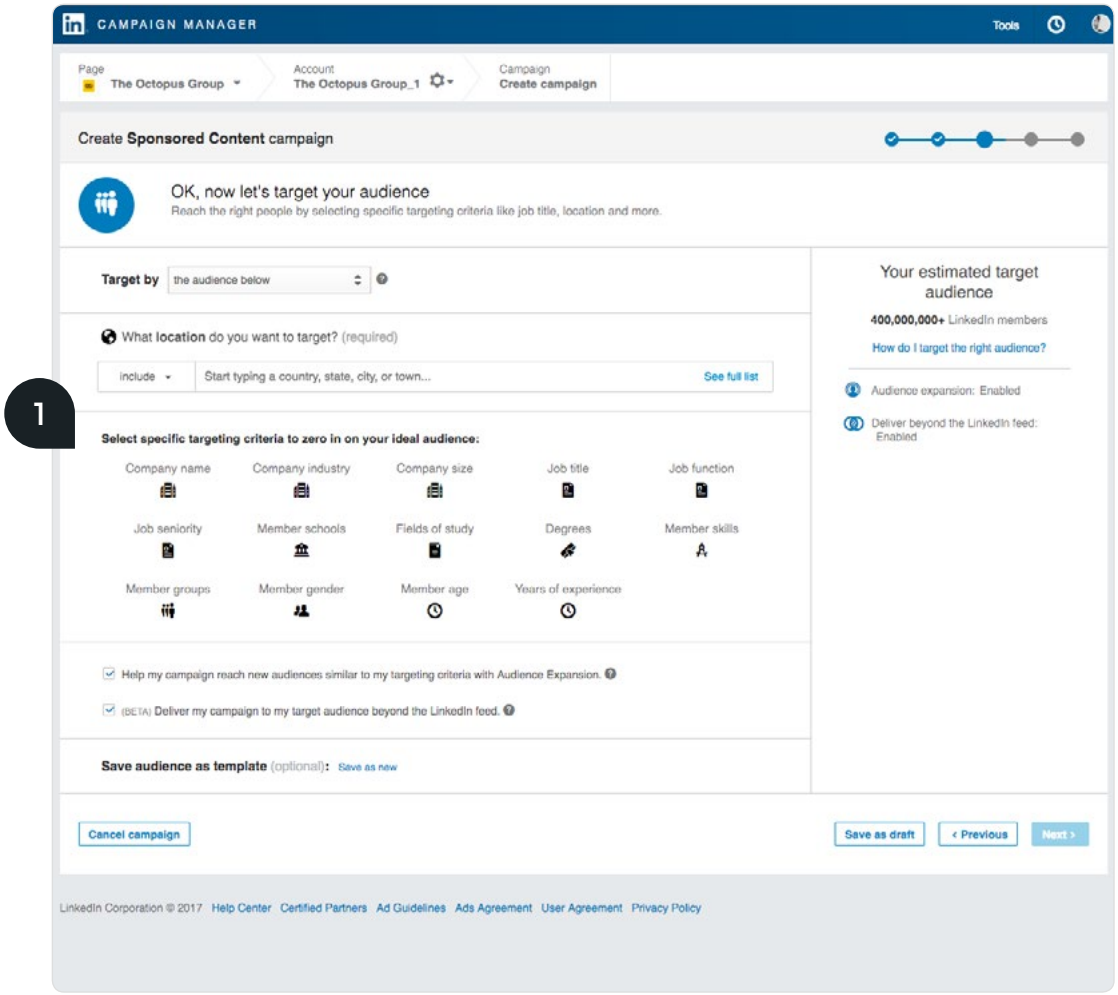
When you know the type of prospect your business needs to reach. The targeting options really let you pinpoint the type of person you want to engage, and, as the data is pulled from a user's LinkedIn profile, you can ensure they're from the right type of organisation.

When you need to bypass the gatekeeper. With executives from every Fortune 500 company, average household incomes of £80,000, and over 50% being at senior management level, LinkedIn users are affluent, experienced, ambitious and influential. They are the decision makers in their businesses.

When you need to reach IT buyers. Research from Clarity Quest Marketing says IT buyers are 50% more likely to engage with vendors on LinkedIn than any other social network, and two in three are happy to connect with sellers on LinkedIn.

The lead gen cards work best when the main objective of the campaign is generating leads as opposed generating to website traffic. These cards also save people from creating gated landing pages.

THE ANATOMY OF A GREAT LINKEDIN SPONSORED UPDATE



1

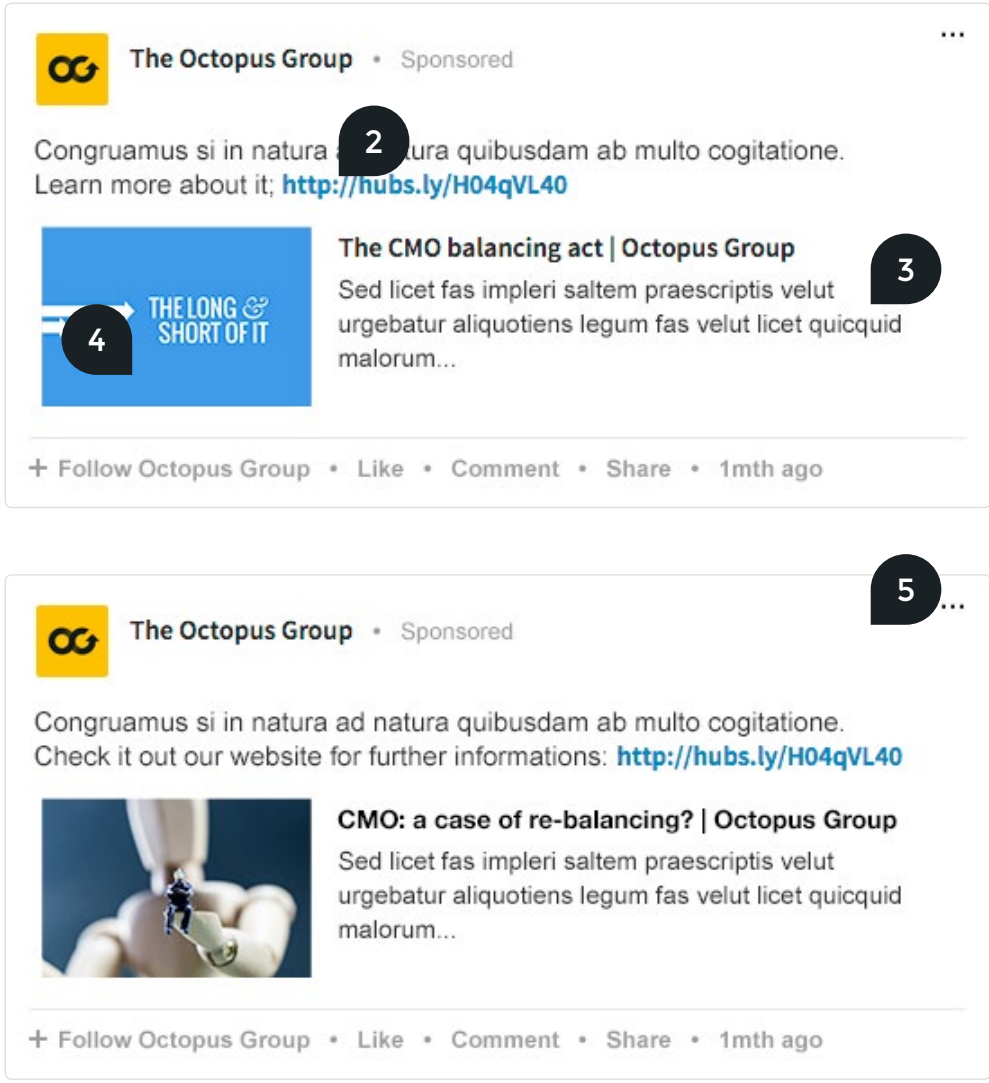
1 Keep the audience settings targeted. Set a combination of targeting options (specific job, location, industry, etc.) and ensure that the post is highly-relevant for this type of audience, as well as the page you're linking through to. The more targeted it is, the higher your click-through rate is likely to be, and the higher the conversion rate once they are on the page you're directing them to.

2 Include one call-to-action (CTA) and one link. You want to ensure that the people clicking are likely to convert and take the next step, once they click the post to reach your landing page. The easiest way to do that is to have one clear call-to-action and keep the number of clickable distractions to a minimum. By having just one link, you're giving prominence to that call-to-action and prioritising clicks that are likely to actually convert. And it doesn't always have to be a URL. In the case of lead gen cards, sometimes it's best to direct people straight to a form fill.

3 **Keep your copy short and within character limits.** Your update will be vying for attention with a host of user connection and company activities that your target user already subscribes to, so you don't have long to make your point. Also, you can't expect somebody to engage with it if the most engaging parts of copy are truncated, so you need to know the character limits. It varies depending on the device's screen size. Generally, it's 300 characters on a desktop, 160 on a tablet, and 35 on a mobile (although best practice for cross platform campaigns is 150 or fewer).

4 **Include an image or video and make it bespoke.** Pick the right one and it'll help your update stand out on a user's newsfeed. LinkedIn lets you attach an image (the max size is 1,200 x 628 pixels) or a video, and it's worth taking advantage of this feature, otherwise your post will automatically pull in an image from the page you're linking to and it may not render exactly as you'd want it to. LinkedIn has also recently introduced Carousel Ads, allowing marketers to tell an interactive story using multiple images.

5 **Test to find the best.** Ultimately, you won't know whether a sponsored update is going to be effective until you put it out there and see how well it performs. Create a few different versions (experiment with the text and images) and see which version performs best.





PRO TIP

To get the most out of sponsored posts, it's worth creating one around a theme that you know is likely to perform well. Look at the open and click-through rates of emails you've sent out in the past, as well as blog posts and LinkedIn posts that have generated the most engagement for you and use them for inspiration.

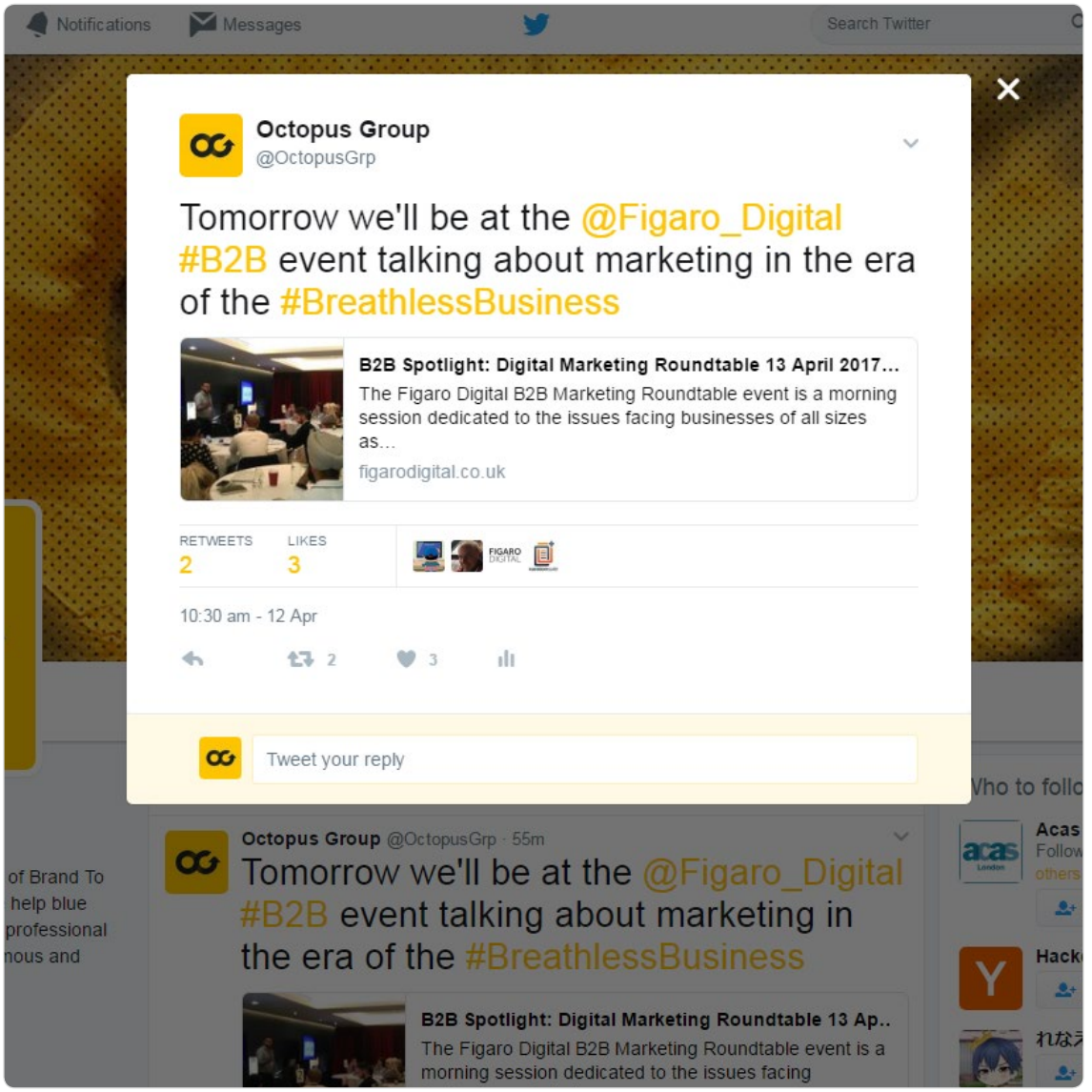
If you don't have much to draw from, then that's OK. Post a range of updates on LinkedIn (either via your profile page or your company's) and see which ones are resonating with the audience you're targeting.

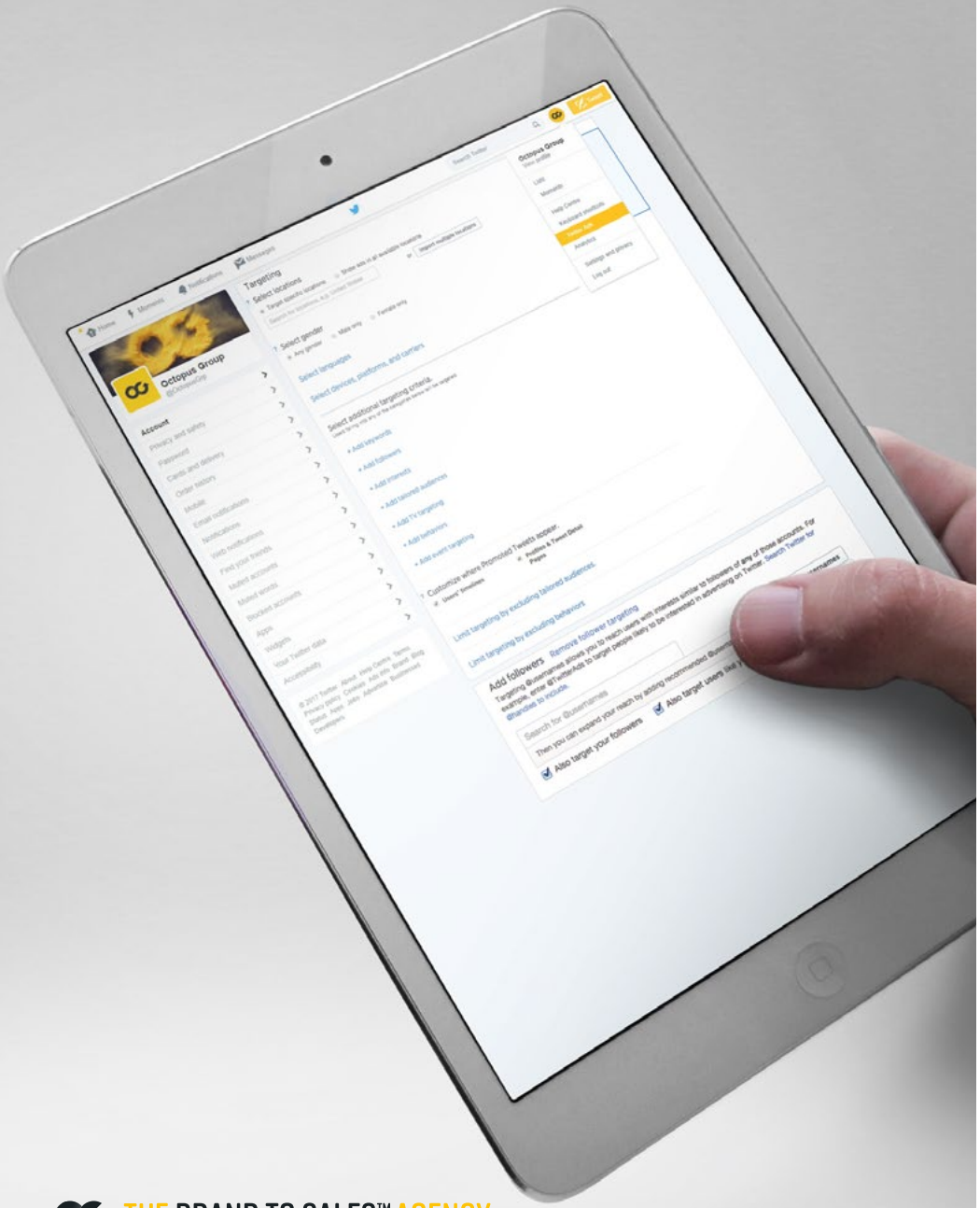
Not only does this give you some insight, it also provides some endorsement (via the comments and likes) for the post if you decide to sponsor it – that social proof can go a long way and increase the chances of users clicking through.

Section two
TWITTER ADS

The 280-character limit encourages users to tweet succinctly, making it appealing not only as a witty social network, but also as a streamlined information service (although less streamlined than when it was 140 characters!). So it's no surprise that it's the network of choice for so many – at the time of writing, stats show that it averages 304 million monthly active users.

When it comes to engaging with users on a one-to-one level and giving your content that 'breaking news' feel, Twitter really comes into its own. A promoted tweet is your best bet if you're looking to grow your audience and generate leads for your business.





PROMOTED ACCOUNT VS PROMOTED TWEET

Both are displayed to the user with the label 'Promoted', and choosing which to go for is a matter of thinking carefully about your campaign goals. Are you trying to grow your follower base, or generate more leads?

A promoted account will appear on the 'Who to follow' area of a user's account, and if you're purely looking to increase your number of followers then this is a good option.

If you're looking to generate leads for your business, a promoted tweet is your best bet. It allows you to tailor your message in different tweets to suit different audiences, increasing the chances of them converting once they arrive on your landing page.

WHAT MAKES THEM SO GREAT

Tailored audiences. You can upload your own list of contacts, such as people whose data you've collected via your website, and target them with your ad campaigns.

Twitter Cards to suit your campaign goal. You can either create your campaign around a particular goal or customise it to suit your own needs. If you're relatively new to Twitter Ads and still testing to see what works best for your business, then an objective-based campaign is best.

Twitter will automatically pick the type of Twitter Card that's best suited to your goal. Twitter Cards allow you to move beyond a tweet's 280-character limit by letting you enrich your tweet with extra content such as a photo, video, summary, or download option (in the case of mobile apps, the option to download).

WHEN THEY WORK BEST

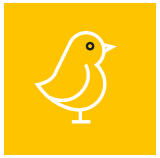
When you want to grow your audience and spread a message quickly. Twitter's pacey feel means you can create a social buzz around your business by engaging with industry influencers and your target audiences.



CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES AND HOW THEY WORK

Twitter's campaign objective options not only give you the best Twitter Card to use, they are also a good starting point for getting you thinking about the different ways you can use Twitter Ads to reach your campaign goals.

HERE'S AN OVERVIEW OF THE TWEET CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE OPTIONS:



Tweet engagement. Reach more people and drive conversation. These tweets include an image and appear in timelines and search results. You're charged based on retweets, replies and favourites.



Website clicks or conversions. Send people to your site to buy or sign-up. They include an image and let you pick from a range of calls-to-action such as 'Order now' or 'Subscribe'. They appear in timelines and search. Charging is based on website link clicks.

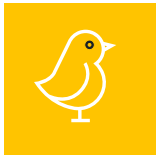


App installs and app re-engagements. Encourage people to download or re-engage with your mobile app. Includes image and a choice of CTA. Payment is based on clicks to install or open your app.

...CONTINUED OVERVIEW OF THE TWEET CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE OPTIONS:



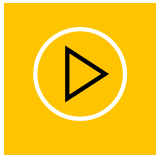
Followers. Grow your community. While these include the option to add an image to your tweet, it's not recommended as it could distract users from clicking the 'Follow' button. They appear in timelines and the 'Who to follow' suggestions area of Twitter.



Leads. Collecting users' email addresses. You can add an image and customise the call-to-action (up to 20 characters long). These appear in timelines and search results, and you only pay when somebody submits their contact information.



Awareness. Maximise your reach and serve your ad to as many people as possible. They have the same format and placement as the engagement-based Tweets, but you pay per thousand impressions instead.



Promoted and in-stream videos.
Get more people to see your GIFs and videos or pair your videos with premium content using an in-stream video feature. In-stream video ads run alongside premium content that has been created by popular publishers.

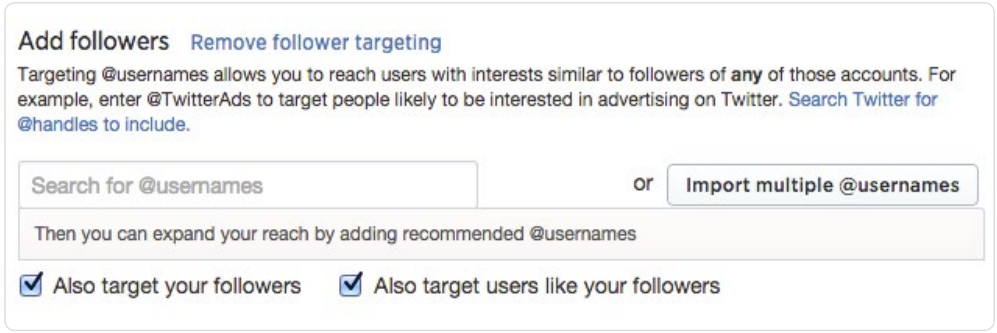
BEST PRACTICE FOR TARGETING YOUR CAMPAIGN

Twitter Ad campaigns can be targeted to people who follow specific usernames or are similar to the followers of those usernames.

Follower targeting can really help you find relevant prospects for your business. For example, you could focus your campaign to target the usernames of your competitors, or your industry's influencers.

Other options include targeting by location, device type and keywords. Keyword targeting helps you reach users by looking at whether a user has used certain words in their search queries,recent tweets, or tweets they've engaged with.

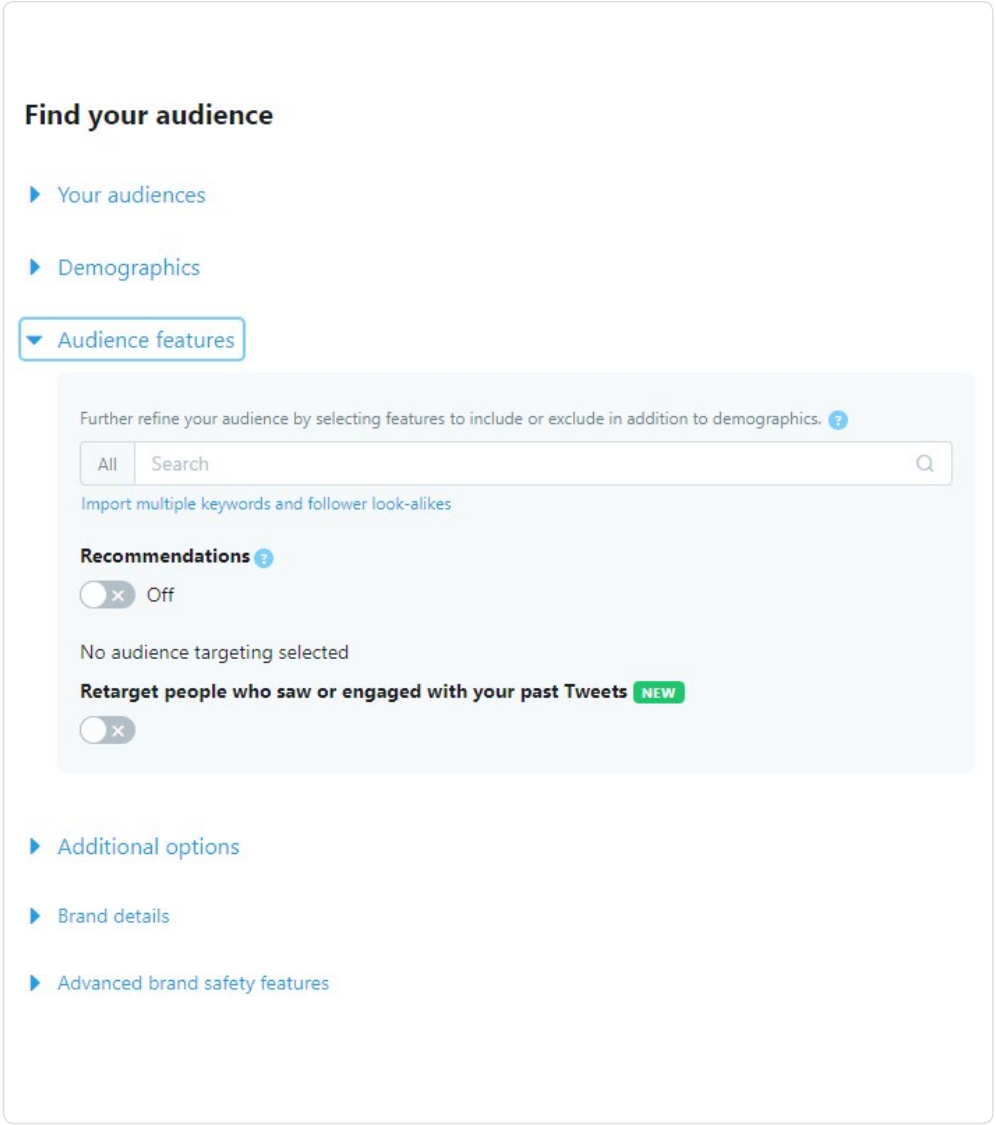
Twitter lets you use these targeting options (along with others) in combination to get your campaign's audience just right, but there are some best practices it recommends:



- **Find out what's working quickly.** Target around 30 usernames per campaign to ensure that you're reaching a large enough audience – the campaign dashboard gives you an estimate of the potential reach of those settings. Adjust your selection until the reach is at least 50,000 followers. This data set is large enough to quickly give you a meaningful idea of what is and isn't working. You can then adjust its size (whether that's increasing or decreasing) in line with your campaign goals.

- **Be specific.** Target the usernames that are most closely tied to your business. While very famous individuals or well-known companies may have millions of followers, those millions are not necessarily aligned around a topic that's relevant to your business. Accounts with a more specific following will be a more effective choice – even if fewer people follow them.

- **Focus on segmentation.** Segment campaigns to help you identify what's working best. Get better results by monitoring your campaign dashboard closely. For example, when targeting usernames, do not add interest targeting into the same campaigns. Instead, run a separate campaign with broad interest targeting. Segment your username campaigns by category – for example, try running one campaign targeted to the usernames of your competitors, and another targeted to the usernames of industry media.





PRO TIP

If your tweet includes a link, try to place it about a quarter of the way through the tweet, rather than the end. Data from 200,000 tweets with links shows that this placement has the highest click-through rate.

Section three

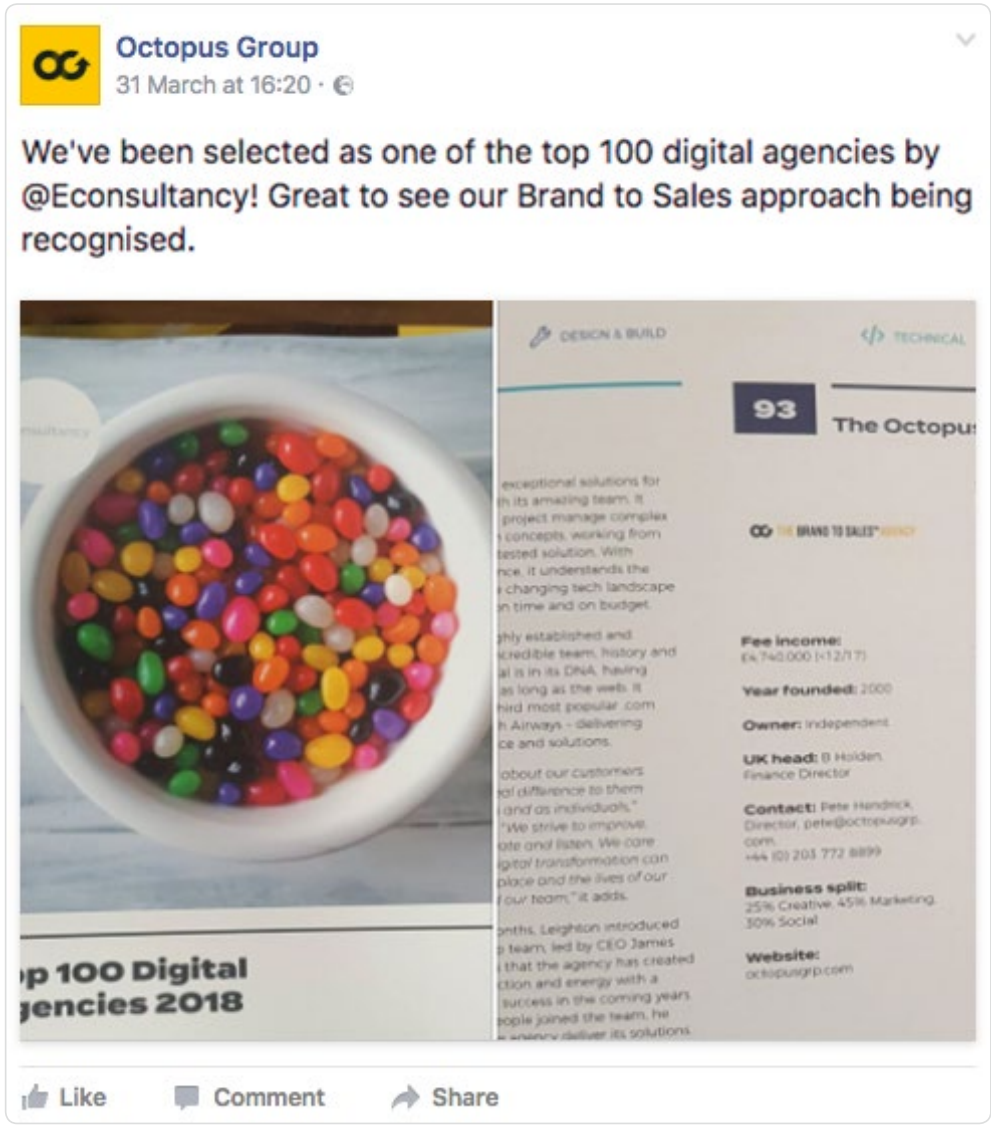
FACEBOOK ADVERTS

At the time of writing, Facebook has around 2.2 billion monthly active users, making it by far the most popular social network. 900 million of them visit the site every day. Facebook's ad model is compelling. Not just because of its huge user base, but also because it has a wealth of information about them such as gender, location, likes, interests, education, device type, online shopping habits, and their connections. The scale and depth of that data makes it one of the most targeted advertising options available.

How are you charged?

After you've created your ad and selected your audience settings, you choose a budget for the total amount you want to spend on your ad, and how long you want it to run for. The ad will stop once the budget is used up or the end-date arrives, whichever comes first (you can change the date and budget settings and pause the ad too).

Your ad then enters an auction against other ads. Facebook automatically bids on your behalf, but you can also set your own bid. You can either pay for every 1,000 impressions of your ad, or pay every time somebody clicks it.



WHAT MAKES THEM SO GREAT

Custom audiences and lookalike audiences. You can upload a contact information list (such as email address or phone number) and your ad will be served to those people if they're on Facebook. You can also target people who are similar ('lookalike') to those on the list.

You can also target your adverts based on user activities both on and off Facebook, such as travel preferences, online purchasing habits and device usage, to name but a few.

WHEN THEY WORK BEST

Simply...when you want to reach your audience. When your company's product is niche, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking you won't be able to reach them at all – but with over 2.2 billion users, there's a strong chance some of them will be on Facebook. Plus Facebook's various targeting options, such as custom audiences and behaviours (described above), give you the tools to help you reach them.

Targeting options with Facebook Adverts

There are many to choose from, and they can be combined in various ways. Options include:



Location



Interests



Gender



Education level



Relationship status

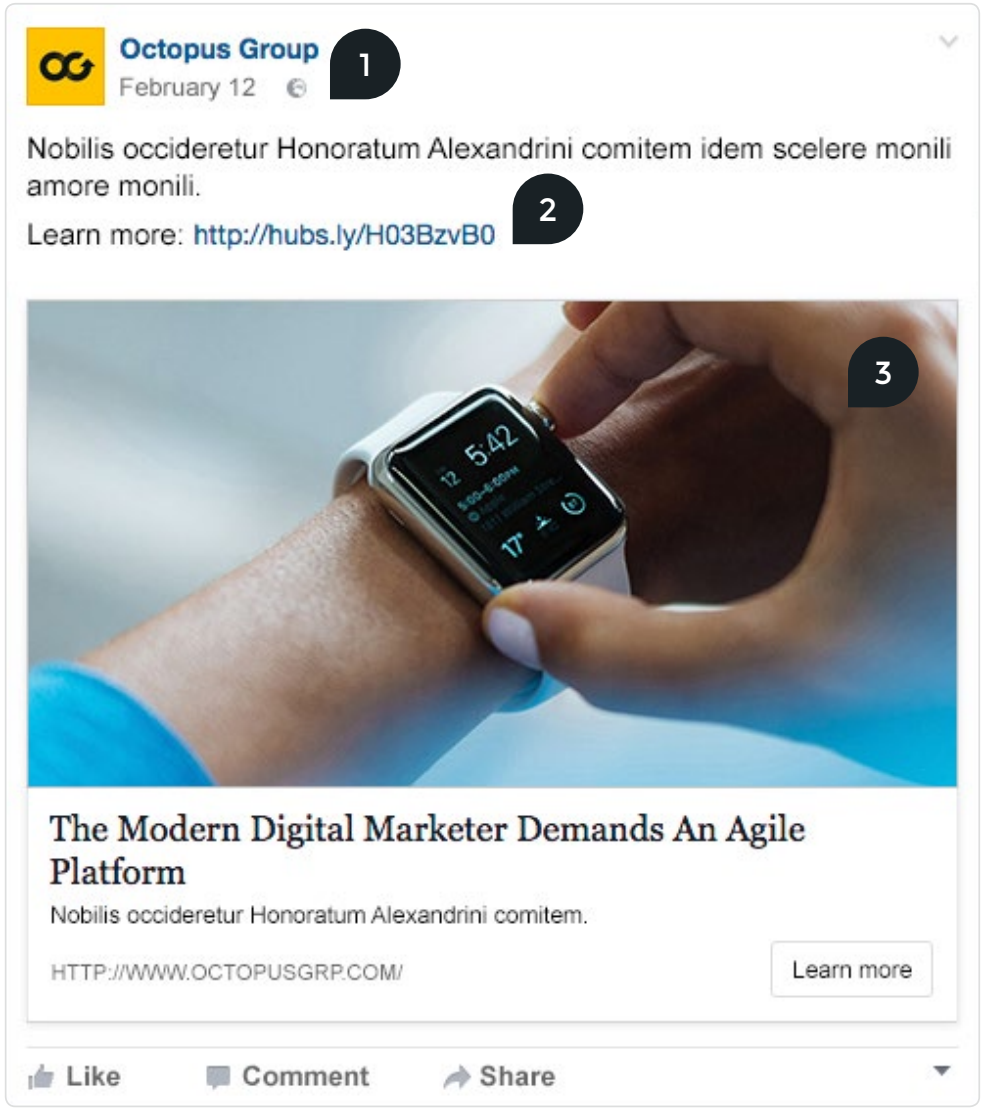
THE ANATOMY OF A GREAT FACEBOOK ADVERT

Here are some best practice tips to get the most out of your adverts:

1 **Avoid ad fatigue.** Facebook suggests changing the creative elements of your ad every one to two weeks – if everybody in your target audience has already seen your ad many times, it can become expensive to achieve your desired results.

2 **Place your CTA near the start.** Facebook recommends including your CTA within your first 90 characters.

3 **High-quality visuals for more engagement.** Research shows that Facebook posts with images receive 37% more interactions than those without, so use this insight for your ads. You can choose for ads to appear in the News Feed (as well as the right column of any page on Facebook), giving you the option for your ads to be displayed naturally to users…especially if you've done a good job of aligning your audience targeting options and advert. Remember, Facebook doesn't allow any image with more than 20% text overlay and you can check image eligibility online.





PRO TIP

Creating a compelling offer that really speaks to your audience can be difficult if your business doesn't have a brand new product or service to promote.

Harness the power of social proof instead. Include a customer testimonial, ideally from an industry influencer, in your Facebook ad to endorse what you're offering and make it relevant to your audience. No testimonials to hand? No problem. You can achieve social proof in other ways. For example, if your company's product or service is used by over 100,000 people, include that. 'Join 100,000+ businesses that rely on us' is all the social proof you need!

Section four

PPC FOR B2B TAKEAWAYS

There are nuances between all the different PPC options available to you, but some practices can be applied to all of them:

- **An unbroken chain of relevance.** To keep your costs low and your conversion rates high, aim to ensure that each component of your PPC campaign is relevant to the next one, from start to finish.

- **Relevant CTAs.** If your campaign involves promoting your data storage service for UK-based SMEs, include that in your audience ad targeting options, bear it in mind in your ad copy and imagery, make sure the call-to-action is relevant to it, and ensure that the page you're directing the user to (such as a social media company page, landing page or a part of your website) is bespoke to that campaign's audience and offer.

- **Segment.** If you have the time, keep every element as segmented as possible from start to finish, so that you can make it highly relevant to that subset of your audience, which will help to decrease costs as well as increase conversions.

- **Test.** Sometimes a seemingly great ad will perform badly while another ad will do surprisingly well. The truth is you simply don't know for sure how any of them will do until you put them out there and see what your audience makes of them.

- **Get creative.** Create a few different ads and test them to see which work best for your company's goals. Once your results data set is large enough, you'll know which ads are the weakest and should be paused so that their remaining budget can be reassigned to your best performing ads.

- **Clear monitoring and reporting.** One of the most appealing elements of PPC is how quickly it can deliver positive results, but without careful attention it can lead to an ineffectual (and costly) campaign.

- **Establish your goals before activating your campaigns.** Are you looking to generate leads? Increase your audience? Or perhaps you want to re-engage your existing fanbase?

  By defining your primary goal before executing your campaign, you know what metrics to use to measure how well your campaign is doing. For example, a goal of engagement might be primarily measured against how many replies you receive. While a lead generation one might focus on click-through and conversion rates, looking at how many people fill in a form once they land on your webpage.

  All of the platforms have reporting dashboards, making it easy to keep track of how well your campaigns are performing against their goals.

  Once you know what to measure and report on, it's important to check your PPC campaigns daily. That way you'll know the best way to allocate your budget and tweak your campaigns so that you get the highest return on your investment.

- **Track your data.** What's working today might not work tomorrow. For example, what's not working in the morning, might actually prove to be very effective after 5pm on weekdays for users on mobile devices. You need to track the data and look for patterns to find the best combination of settings for each of your campaigns.


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