LinkedIn Objective-Based Advertising Guide

Maximize Your Campaign Results

Linkedin **MARKETING SOLUTIONS**

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Why objectives?

Determining your objective is the first most important step in creating a successful marketing strategy. An objective is your campaign goal that determines the strategies, tactics, and key performance indicators for you marketing campaign. Setting an objective provides clarity of purpose and direction for your marketing team to follow, and for your executives to track and support. Without an objective, a company or brand may struggle with launching campaigns that lack clarity on what it wants to achieve.

While LinkedIn Marketing Solutions is known as a great source for leads, we also support many top- and mid-funnel objectives. You may be a B2C luxury brand or a financial services firm trying to grow un-aided brand awareness among an influential audience, or a mid-size tech company wanting to increase consideration or intent for your product through storytelling videos. Regardless of your objective, you can't miss out on the opportunity to get your message in front of the right person when they're most engaged across a network of more than 645 million influential members on LinkedIn.

In this guide, you'll learn how to maximize results unique to each objective following best practices, checklists, and recommendations from our expert client solutions managers, product, and content marketing teams.

We hope you enjoy the read.

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How objective-based advertising works in LinkedIn Campaign Manager

Campaign Manager is LinkedIn's self-serve platform for creating and managing your ads. Objective-based advertising is a campaign creation design leading with objectives. In Campaign Manager, an objective is the action your want your customers to take after seeing your ad, whether it's filling out a lead gen form or clicking through to your website.

The goal of objective-based advertising experience is three-fold:

Provide easier campaign creation

By identifying your advertising objective, we streamline your campaign creation. We only show you ad formats and features that support your objectives. For example, we won't advise you to set up conversion tracking if your objective is brand awareness.
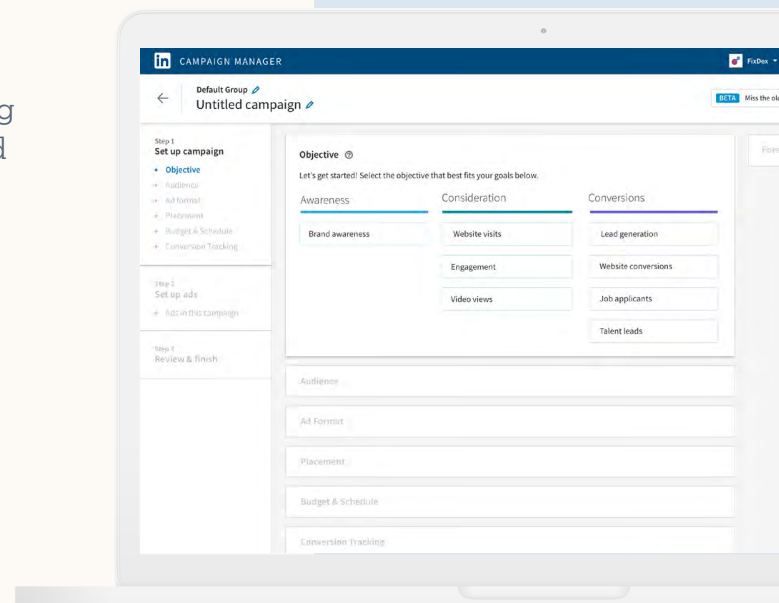
Maximize results

Knowing your objective allows us to optimize your ads toward an "optimization goal" to get more of the results your care about. Plus, we charge and optimize for higher-quality clicks that support your objectives (for website visits and website conversions objectives only).

Easily measure and track results

We've included "key results" in reporting and forecasting to more easily track the outcomes you care about, based on your unique objective.

To get started, log into Campaign Manager. You'll then be prompted to select the objective you'd like to accomplish with your ad campaign.

Summary of objectives

Objective	Marketing goal	Supporting ad formats
Brand awareness	"I want more people to learn about my business."	**Sponsored Content** (single image, carousel, video), **Text Ads, Dynamic Ads** (Spotlight, Follow Company)
Website visits	"I want people to visit a website destination off LinkedIn."	**Sponsored Content** (single image, carousel, video), **Text Ads, Dynamic Ads** (Spotlight), Sponsored InMail
Engagement	"I want more people to engage with my content posts."	**Sponsored Content** (single image, carousel, video), **Dynamic Ads** (Follow Company)
Video views	"I want more people to watch my videos."	**Sponsored Content** (video)
Lead generation	"I want more quality leads on LinkedIn."	**Sponsored Content w/Lead Gen Form** (single image, carousel, video), **Dynamic Ads** (Download Ads), **Sponsored InMail w/Lead Gen Form**
Website conversions	"I want to more purchases, registrations or downloads."	**Sponsored Content** (single image, carousel, video), **Text Ads, Dynamic Ads** (Spotlight), **Sponsored InMail**
Job Applicants	"I want to promote job opportunities at my company."	**Sponsored Content** (single image), **Dynamic Ads** (Spotlight, Job Ad)

💡 **PRO TIP**

Engagement campaigns are the only campaigns with a "Follow Company" button.

Objective-based optimization

When you choose an objective, Campaign Manager does more than just show you formats and features that support your objectives. Choosing an objectives also allows us to optimize your ad to get more of the key results you want based on your objective. We bid more actively to get impressions among audiences more likely to take the preferred action based on your objective (such as filling out a lead gen form or converting on your website).

That's why if you have multiple objectives for a campaign (such as brand awareness and website visits), it's important to choose just one that's most important to you because these two campaigns will optimize differently.

Here's a list of objectives and what their optimizations are:

Objective group	Objective	Optimization
Awareness	Brand awareness	Impressions
Consideration	Website visits	Clicks to landing page
	Engagement	Engagement (any clicks on ad including social actions, clicks to landing page, Follow Company)
	Video views	Video views*
Conversions	Lead generation	Lead gen submissions
	Website conversions	Conversions
	Job applicants	Clicks to landing page

* For the video views objective, bidding by impressions optimizes for impressions (# of times people have seen your ad) whereas bidding by video views optimizes for video views (the number of two or more continuous seconds of playback on a screen at 50% visibility or a click to a call to action, whichever comes first).

PRO TIPS

Objective-based optimization is activated when you choose automated bidding and max cost CPC/CPV bidding.

Social actions will be available on all Sponsored Content Ads but won't be optimized for unless you choose the "engagement" objective.

"The OBA experience has vastly improved the effectiveness of our campaigns, giving us higher levels of control and efficiency across our client campaigns. This has made a huge impact on our project results, as well as improving user experience and accessibility."

Andy Tweedale
Head of Social Media at Passion Digital

Paul West Jauregui
VP of Marketing at Praetorian Group

"LinkedIn streamlined its campaign creation process with the new objective-based advertising experience, enabling Praetorian to more easily reach its ideal client profile with relevant and powerful messaging that drives awareness and conversions."

Brand awareness

Brand awareness campaigns are impression-based campaigns. These campaigns are ideal for top-of-funnel brand building.

Awareness campaigns are important because they help drive lift for lower-funnel campaigns. If you focus too much on conversion campaigns, your well may "dry up" requiring you to replenish your base with awareness campaigns. Make sure you have a good mix of brand awareness and conversions campaigns.

Optimization	Brand awareness campaigns maximize for impressions
Checklist to maximize your awareness campaign	✓ Ensure you're running at least 4 pieces of creative ✓ Check on bids to make sure they're competitive ✓ Compare max available spend in the forecasting tool to your campaign budget. Are you spending enough to reach a member more than once or twice? ✓ Look at Campaign Demographics for top-performing segments and analyze target audience
Our recommendations for improving brand awareness	Try a variety of ad formats to get your message across (single-image, carousel, or video)
Products to use	• Sponsored Content (single image ads, Carousel Ads, Video Ads) • Dynamic Ads (Spotlight Ads, Follow Company Ads) • Text Ads

Website visits

Website visits optimizes for clicks that take customers to your website so they can learn more about your product or services.

Optimization	Website visits campaigns maximize for clicks on links to your landing page
Checklist	• Confirm your CTR (click-through rate) goal. This may be calculated based on past campaigns or related lower-funnel goals. • Make sure you've set a "website visits" campaign to maximize CTR rates to your landing page. • Make sure you have at least 4 pieces of creative running
Our recommendation for improving website visits	• Review your creative. Is it relevant for the audience you're targeting? • Ensure your ad rotation is set to optimize to top-performing 💡 **PRO TIP:** Ad rotation options are located in the gear icon under "Ads in this creative" under step 2 • Use Campaign Demographics to tweak targeting and focus spend on top-performing targeting facets • Turn off under-performing creatives • Use automated bidding for campaigns delivering 85% of daily budget with tested creative and targeting. Otherwise, start with CPC (cost per click) bidding. • Shift dollars from bottom-performing campaigns into top-performing campaigns.
Other resources	• Creative best practices • Analyze your campaign performance • How do download performance reports • LinkedIn's ad rotation
Products to use	• Sponsored InMail (message ads) • Sponsored Content (single image ads, Carousel Ads, Video Ads) • Dynamic Ads (Follow Company Ads, Job Ads) • Text Ads

Engagement

The engagement objective gets customers to interact with your posts by clicking on your ad, liking, sharing, and/or commenting on your posts. Engagement can also help drive customers to follow your company's Page.

PRO TIPS

- Only engagement campaigns using Sponsored Content ad formats will have a "Follow Company" button

- Follow clicks are considered both paid and social clicks. They're counted under the "clicks" column and also under the "total social actions" column in Campaign Manager. They're counted only once under the "Total Engagement" column.

- "Follows" metrics in Campaign Manager track the follows gained from members who clicks on the "follow" button on your Sponsored Content. "Follows" metrics on your LinkedIn Page keep a running total of all follows regardless of source.

Optimization

- Engagement campaigns optimize for any click on your ad (clicks to your landing page, social actions, or clicks to your LinkedIn page and LinkedIn page follows)

Checklist to improve engagement rates

- Set engagement goals (engagement rate, number of likes, shares, comments, follows, etc.)

- Make sure you've chosen the "engagement" objective when building out your campaigns

- Make sure you're running at least 4 pieces of creative

Recommendations to improve engagement rates

- Review the creative
  - Is the content relevant for the audience you're targeting?
  - Do you have a clear CTA?
  - Is the headline text clear and concise?
  - For the Carousel Ad format, switch the order of your cards to A/B test which cards drive higher engagement and optimize your content
  - For Video Ads, include captions for audiences who play videos on mute

- Change ad rotation to optimize toward top-performing creative that drives the most engagement (clicks, likes, comments, shares or follows)

- Every 1-2 weeks, pause the ad with the lowest engagement and replace it with a new ad creative. Over time, this will improve your ad relevance score (based on metrics that indicate LinkedIn members found the ad interesting, such as clicks, comments, and shares) which will help you win more bids.

- Use Campaign Demographics to tweak targeting and focus on top engaging targeting facets. If there are specific demographics getting a high volume of impressions but low volume of clicks, consider excluding them to focus on facets more likely to engage

- Exclude existing followers from seeing your ad to grow new followers

💡 **PRO TIP**

You do not pay for viral actions under this objective.
You only pay for clicks among your targeted audience.

Products to use

- Sponsored Content (single image ads, Carousel Ads, Video Ads)
- Dynamic Ads (Follow Company)

Video views

Video views optimizes for video views and is the only objective that gives you the option to bid based on cost per view. Video views is the number of two or more continuous seconds of playback on a screen at 50% visibility or a click to a CTA whichever comes first.

Optimization	• Video views campaigns optimizes for video views.

Checklist for improving the number of video views	• Have you chosen "Video Views" as your campaign objective?
	
	• Does the video have a low view rate? View rate is the number of views divided by impressions, multiplied by 100.
	  – If the view rate is low, it might indicate the audience is not finding the video relevant or interesting enough.
	
	• Is the content relevant for the customer?
	  – Keep it concise, visually compelling and focus on storytelling to drive your point home
	  – Show what you want your audience to see in the first 10 seconds of the video

Recommendations	• Change your ad rotation to optimize toward top-performing ads • Has your CPV (cost-per-view) gone up over time? If so, this may be due to content fatigue. Rotate in new creative (e.g., new headline, new video, etc.) • Keep video length to less than 20 seconds • Add captions. Think of mobile first. A large number of video views happen while user has their sound off. • Feature a clear CTA (call-to-action)
Resources	• Follow these specs and best practices for videos on LinkedIn • Ad metric definitions
Product to use	• Video Ads

Lead generation

LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms drive 2-3x more conversions vs. standard campaigns.

In Campaign Manager, lead generation campaigns must use LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms pre-filled with LinkedIn members' profile data. This is one of the easiest and most effective ways to get leads on the platform.

Checklist for successful Lead Gen Form campaigns

✓ Make sure you have a CPL (cost per lead) target in mind based on the lifetime value of the lead

✓ Have you selected "lead generation" as your campaign objective?

✓ Is your content relevant to your target audience?

✓ Are you up front about what your audience is getting in exchange for their information?

✓ Review your lead generation form:

- Are you using LinkedIn's one-click solution? (No custom fields or manual input needed from the member)

- Does the form have too many fields? (We recommend no more than 4-5.)

✓ Assess the quality of your leads.

- While CPL's may be high, LinkedIn leads may be higher quality compared to leads you're seeing on other platforms

Recommendations from our experts to improve cost per lead

- Review click-through rates
  - Is the CTR low? If so, review the content and targeting. Make sure you are targeting the right members with the right messaging.
  - If your CTR is high but form completion rate is low, your lead gen form could have too many fields. Avoid fields that require manual input.
- A/B test new forms
- Run conversion tracking on a Sponsored Content campaign that does not have Lead Gen Forms at the same time as your Sponsored Content Lead Gen Form campaign. Compare costs and quality between the two campaigns by viewing "cost per conversion" and "cost per lead" metrics.

Products to use

- Sponsored InMail (single image ads, Carousel Ads, Video Ads)
- Sponsored Content (Message Ads)
- Dynamic Ads (Download Ads)

Website conversion campaigns

Website conversion campaigns optimize for actions on your own website that you define as valuable.

This can be actions such as downloading whitepapers or filling out forms on your website. Website conversion campaigns must use conversion tracking.

Optimization	• Website conversion campaigns optimize for conversions on your website

Checklist to improve cost per conversion

- Make sure you've selected the "Website conversions" objective. Even though conversion tracking is available for other objectives, only "Website conversions" optimizes for conversions itself (and not landing page clicks for website visits, etc.)

- Review Insight Tag implementation. Confirm that all conversions are built correctly and verified.

- Make sure your campaign is set to optimize to a conversion type

Recommendations to improve cost per conversion

- Use demographic reporting to review the actions of specific audiences and optimize your targeting to focus on members who are generating strong conversion results

- If click through rate is higher for an ad, but you have a lower conversion rate, review your landing page (e.g., too many form fields, etc.)

- Look at performance by creative. If conversions are high against one or more creatives, figure out what is driving higher conversions.

Other resources

- How to set up conversion tracking

- Troubleshooting conversions

Products to use

- Sponsored InMail (Message Ads)

- Sponsored Content (single image ads, Carousel Ads, Video Ads)

- Dynamic Ads (Spotlight Ads)

- Text Ads

For the first time in the history of media, you can reach the world's professionals all in one place. More than 645 million people worldwide gather on LinkedIn to stay connected and informed, advance their careers, and work smarter. Together they comprise the largest global community of business professionals. These are the decision-makers, influencers, and the leaders of today and tomorrow — precisely the people you want to target.

For more information, visit marketing.linkedin.com

Get started

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