

B2B SAAS PLAYBOOK

LinkedIn Ads for B2B SaaS

Lessons from running LinkedIn Ads campaigns
across 50+ B2B SaaS accounts.

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getuplead

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Before You Start: Is LinkedIn Right for You?

LinkedIn Ads can be highly effective for B2B SaaS companies, but only with the right strategy, targeting, and budget. Being upfront about the prerequisites saves wasted budget.

Ask yourself these **5 questions** before you commit serious spend:

1 Do you have a clear ICP?

You need paying customers already, and a clear enough picture of their firmographics and demographics to define who you're going after.

2 What kind of product do you sell?

Low-touch, low-ACV products aimed at individual end-users (solopreneurs, freelancers) rarely find positive ROAS on LinkedIn because the platform is too expensive relative to deal size.

3 What is your LTV?

CPCs range from \$5 to \$35 depending on seniority, company type, and industry. That cost has to be justified by long-term customer value, since nobody is actively searching for your product on LinkedIn.

4 Is your audience actually active on LinkedIn?

Targeting criteria can look perfect on paper while your buyers simply aren't logging in, scrolling, or engaging.

5 What is your sales cycle?

Longer, more complex sales cycles need more time to warm up an audience and build authority before anyone considers buying.

Why Most LinkedIn Campaigns Don't Convert

Companies launch lead gen campaigns, generate MQLs that land in the CRM, then wonder why none of those contacts respond to follow-up. 40 MQLs in a month looks great on a dashboard, but it's often a mirage.



Demand Capture
30-40%

Convert buyers who already know and trust your brand.



Demand Generation
60-70%

Build awareness and trust before buyers enter the market.

5%

Only 5% of your target audience is actively in-market at any given time. The other 95% is who demand generation is for.

LinkedIn is primarily a demand-generation channel. While demand capture is possible, its real strength is building awareness long before buyers are ready to purchase. People are there to network, learn, or job hunt, not to shop for software. You can capture demand on LinkedIn, but you usually need to create it first and stay top of mind so you're there when buyers are ready to purchase.

Demand Generation

60–70% of Budget

The goal: get in front of your ICP before they're ready to buy, show them you understand their problem, and stay visible so you're the first name they think of. What works best:



Video Views Campaigns

Use 30–60 second clips to quickly and cost-effectively build a retargeting audience.



Thought Leader Ads

From a founder or CEO's personal profile. Share real opinions, real stories, and avoid corporate speak.



Document Ads

A practical guide or checklist builds more trust than gating content behind a form.

EXPERT TIP

For budgets under \$5K/month, focus almost exclusively on Thought Leader Ads and Video Views. They give the most reach per dollar and build the retargeting pool you'll need for demand capture.

A training management software founder recorded a podcast episode. We turned it into **30-second Thought Leader Ads**. No production budget. No agency creative. Those clips generated far more leads than the client's existing "Book a Demo" campaigns.



Kamel Ben Yacoub, Getuplead

Demand Capture

30-40% of Budget

This is where most companies spend all their budget, and it's the main problem. Demand capture only works well once the demand generation layer has done its job. If someone has never heard of you, a **"Book a Demo"** ad won't convince them. If they've already seen your content, that same ad becomes far more effective because trust has already been built.



Text & Spotlight Ads

Nobody clicks them. That's why they work: low-cost visibility throughout the buyer journey.



Single Image Ads

Product ads, testimonials, cost-of-inaction ads, before-and-after, objection handling. One message, one CTA.



Conversation Ads

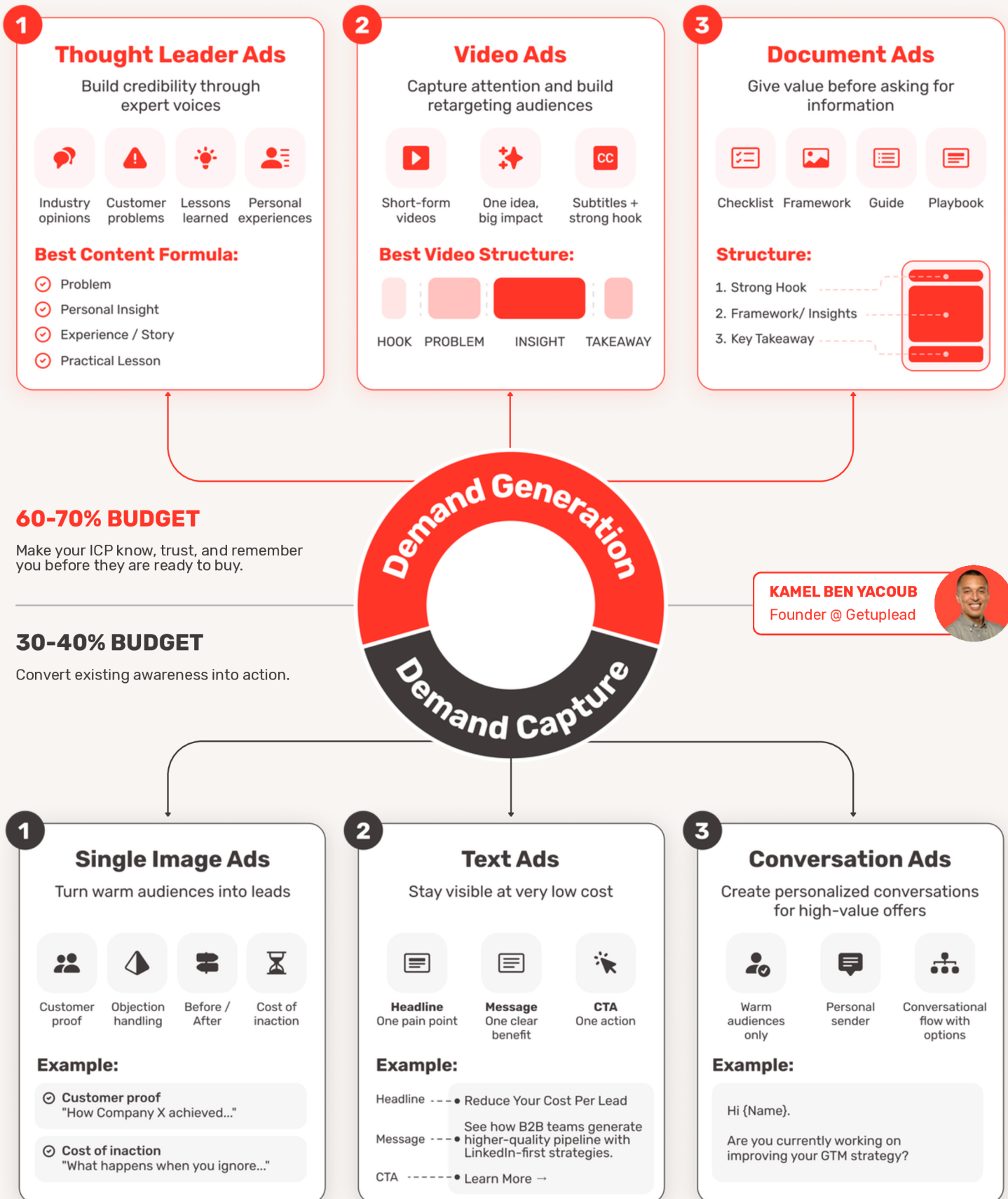
Use only for retargeting audiences, never cold traffic. Always A/B test your sender profile and avoid "Sales" as the sender function.

COMMON MISTAKE

Running the same **"Book a Demo"** ad with the same cold-traffic creative for every warm audience segment is a common mistake. A warm audience has already seen your value proposition. They need proof, reassurance, or a compelling reason to act now.

The LinkedIn Ads Framework for 2026:

Demand Generation VS Demand Capture



Targeting: Finding Your Exact Buyer

Meta targets on interests and behaviors. Reddit targets communities and keywords. LinkedIn targets firmographics and demographics with laser-precision targeting you won't find anywhere else. If you're not using that accuracy, you're not using LinkedIn Ads to their full potential.

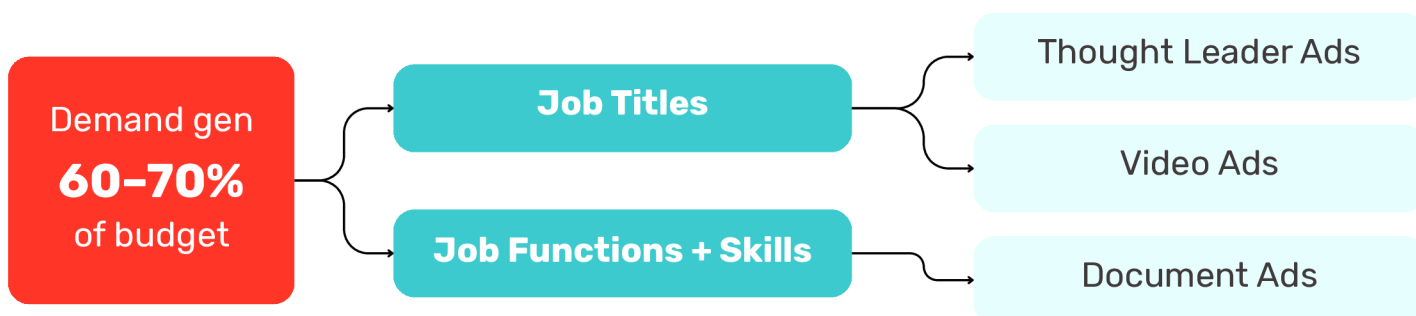
✗ What Not to Do

Skip interests and groups. They're not grounded in concrete profile data and work only for very broad audiences. They're too generic to rely on.

Job Titles vs. Job Functions + Skills

When we onboard a new B2B SaaS client with no historical data, our default is to start with Job Titles if the audience size is large enough, because it's the most precise option available. But we almost always test both in parallel, one campaign targeting by Job Title, and a second targeting by Job Function combined with seniority and skills.

The reason we test both is that Job Titles can be limiting. Not every person with the role you're targeting uses the exact title you've chosen, and LinkedIn's job title database has gaps. Job Function combined with seniority is a bit broader but allows you to reach more of your ICP than you could do with Job titles.



REAL EXAMPLE

"UX Researcher" isn't an available LinkedIn job title. We built the audience using **Job Function** (Product, Marketing, or Research) combined with **UX-related skills**. Almost all of the converting profiles turned out to be actual UX Researchers.

Include people who have **ANY** of the following attributes:



Company Size

51-200 employees, 201-500 employees, 501-1000 employees, 1001-5000 employees

AND also have **ANY** of the following attributes:



Job Functions

Research, Marketing, Product Management

AND also have **ANY** of the following attributes:

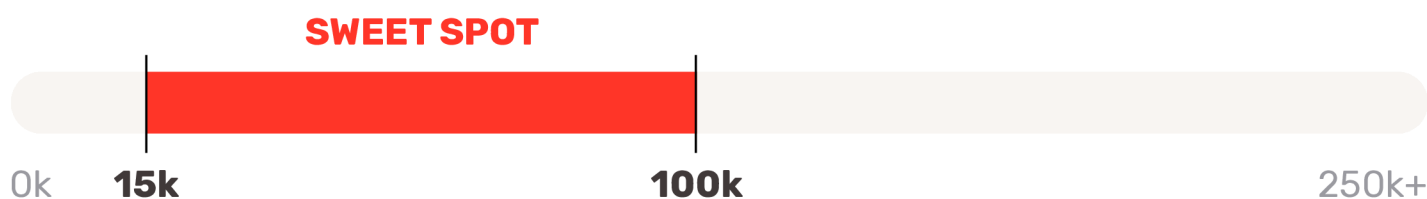


Member Skills

UX Research, User Experience (UX), User Interface Design, Usability Testing, User Interviews, User Experience Design (UED)

Audience Size: Bigger Is Not Better

The common assumption is that more volume means more chances to capture leads. It's the opposite. If your audience is 250K people, do you really have 250K ideal customers? The sweet spot is **15K to 100K**.



Audience Size	What Happens	Recommendation
Under 15K	Budget is hard to spend, audience saturates quickly	Too small. Segment differently or broaden the audience slightly.
15K – 100K	Algorithm reaches your most relevant ICP	Ideal range for most B2B SaaS campaigns
Above 100K	Cheaper impressions but shown to least engaged segments	Segment by country, company size, seniority, or industry

The Seniority Trap

Most companies target only the C-level, assuming that's where decisions get made. But C-level executives rarely make software decisions alone. They approve decisions built from below. Ignore engineering managers, IT directors, and end users, and you miss most of the buying process.

We ran a campaign for an AI process automation company targeting COOs in manufacturing. The best-performing, most-engaged segment for booking a demo wasn't COOs. It was factory and plant managers. We never would have predicted that without the data.

Getuplead Case Study

The Hidden Buyers You're Probably Ignoring

Research from Edelman-LinkedIn and Bain identifies two buyer types in B2B purchasing committees:

- **Target Buyers** are product experts who evaluate vendors and become your primary champions.
- **Hidden Buyers** are process experts in finance, procurement, legal, and compliance. Their role is to protect the company from bad decisions, not engage with product content.

KEY STAT

40% of B2B deals fail because of misalignment between Target Buyers and Hidden Buyers. Run campaigns that target the entire buying committee, not just the decision maker.

Three Exclusions That Matter

Audience Expansion **Off**

It shows ads to people outside your targeting criteria, destroying the precision you've built.

Audience Network **Off**

Places ads on third-party sites with low-quality traffic and no control over placement.

"Open to Work" members **Excluded**

From lead gen and acquisition campaigns. They're job hunting, not buying software for their current company.

The most important audience research happens after launch.

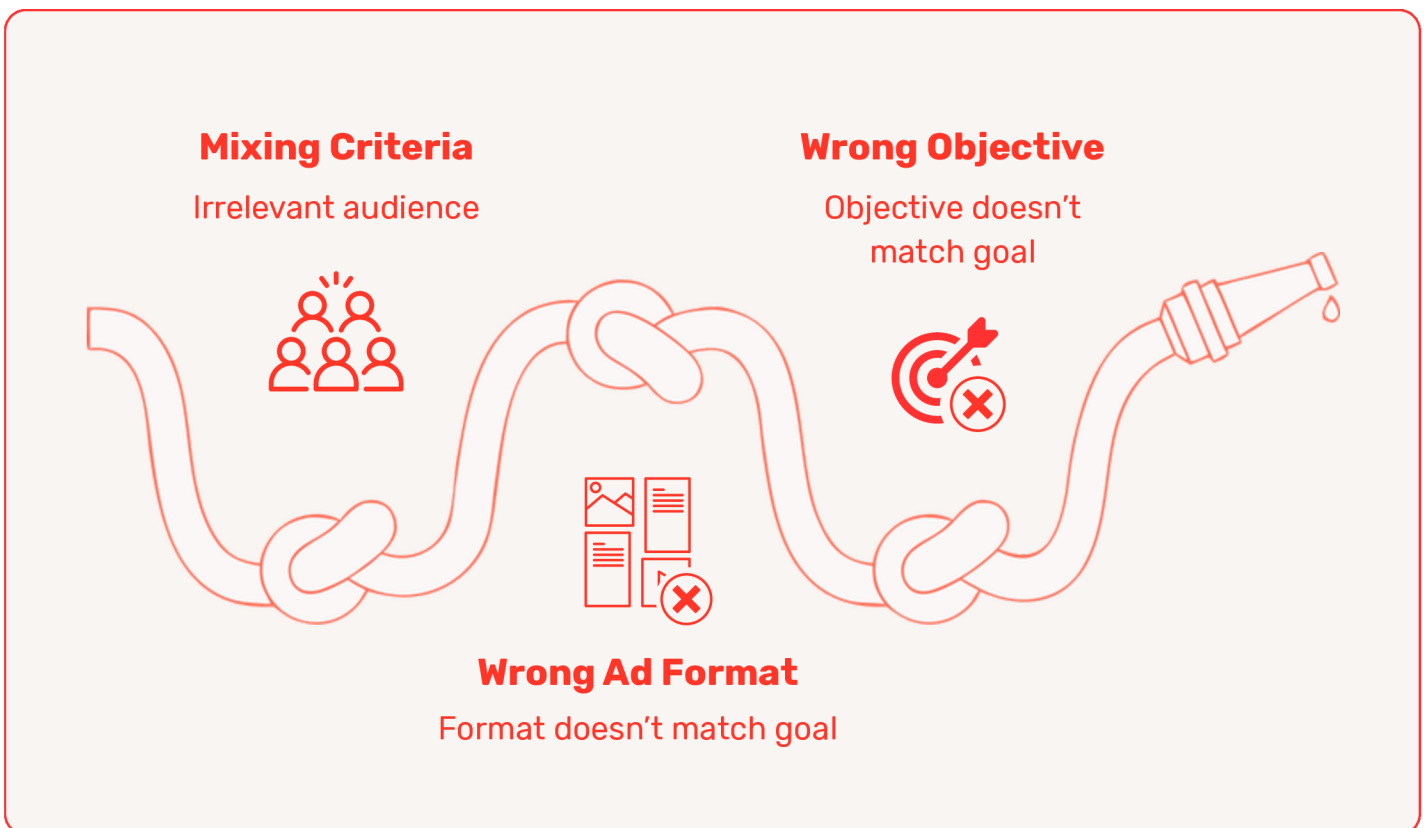
Run campaigns for 2–3 weeks, then use the Demographics Report to see who's actually engaging.

Name	Impressions	Clicks	Average CTR
Marketing Manager	588 (17.02%)	49 (20.08%)	8.33%
Head of Marketing	327 (9.46%)	16 (6.56%)	4.89%
Product Marketing Manager	247 (7.15%)	10 (4.1%)	4.05%
Chief Marketing Officer	214 (6.19%)	12 (4.92%)	5.61%
Social Media Manager	199 (5.76%)	6 (2.46%)	3.02%
Marketing Director	150 (4.34%)	12 (4.92%)	8%

Campaign Structure & Bidding

Three Common Structural Mistakes

- **Mixing criteria with "OR" logic.** Selecting multiple Job Functions with OR targets anyone matching any one function, causing the audience to balloon past 300K and lose relevance.
- **Using the wrong ad format.** Video Ads are rarely the best choice for lead generation. Document Ads work best for ungated educational content, not commercial brochures.
- **Using the wrong campaign objective.** For B2B SaaS, Website Conversions rarely outperforms Website Visits because LinkedIn's conversion tracking often lacks sufficient volume and accuracy. Use Lead Gen Forms for direct conversions and Website Visits for landing-page traffic.



How We **Structure Campaigns**

- **Segment by Audience Criteria First.**

Create one campaign for each audience type and offer (e.g., Job Titles in one campaign and Job Function + Seniority + Skills in another).

Run a maximum of 3–4 ad variations per campaign. That's enough to test different angles without starving each ad of impressions.

- **Refresh Your Ads Instead of Pausing Your Campaigns**

A well-performing campaign (audience above 30K, daily budget under €35) can run for months if you refresh ads and messaging as performance declines. Pausing and restarting resets algorithm momentum and audience recognition. Run always-on campaigns.

- **Bidding: Manual CPC First, Always**

Maximum Delivery spends your budget fast but gives you no cost control. Start with Manual CPC at the low end of LinkedIn's suggested range, then increase every 24–48 hours until spending the full daily budget.

Bidding Strategy	Recommendation	Why
Maximum Delivery	 Never	Spends budget fast, no cost control
Manual CPC	Always start here	Full bid control, lower CPC, better results
Cost Cap	 Never	14-day learning period resets on every change
Leads objective + Manual CPC	 Yes	Optimizes toward actual conversions

Ad Formats That Work for B2B SaaS



Single Image Ads

The most solid, obvious choice. Use for product ads, brand awareness, customer quotes, cost-of-inaction, and testimonials. Success depends on message and creative, not the medium.



Thought Leader Ads

They look like content, not ads. Founder TLAs work best for cold audiences. Customer TLAs work best for warm audiences as social proof.



Video Ads

Best for demand generation and retargeting, not direct lead gen. Keep clips **30–60 seconds**, hook viewers immediately, and always add subtitles.



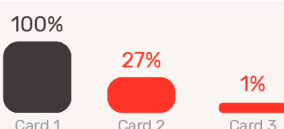
Document Ads

Best for guides, checklists, and educational content consumed in-feed. Avoid using them for sales decks or product overviews.



Carousel Ads **AVOID**

Only 23–30% reach card 2, and just 1% reach card 3. Document ads also allow retargeting.



Swipe-through rate drops off almost immediately. Most budget goes to the first card.



Text & Spotlight Ads

Nearly free impressions because nobody clicks them. Use exclusively for retargeting with bottom-of-funnel offers to stay top of mind.



Conversation & Message Ads

Best for high-ticket offers and retargeting. Avoid "Sales" senders. Test Customer Success and executive profiles.



GIFs in Single Image Campaigns

A GIF that feels like a frozen-text video grabs attention because it's rarely used this way, delivering video-like impact at a lower CPM.

Creatives & Copy:

How to Stop the Scroll

The One Message Rule

The biggest creative mistake on LinkedIn is saying too much in one ad. Focus on one benefit, one insight, or one message. If people have to think about what you're saying, they'll keep scrolling.

We helped a client split one ad with two competing messages into two separate creatives. The result was clearer messaging and stronger performance.



4 Copy Templates We Use

- 1 {What the buyer persona will learn/discover}. {Outcomes of the content}
- 2 {Pain point question to your buyer persona}. {solution/benefits}
- 3 Hey {persona} + {question they want answered}. {how your content answers it}
- 4 { Impactful Stat or number} {how your content answers it}

1

{What the buyer persona will learn/discover}. {Outcomes of the content}

TriNet
Promoted

Discover 6 Strategies to Help Control Runaway Health Insurance Benefits Costs.

Download now to learn:

- * How implementing wellness programs may reduce overall health insurance costs and improve employee well-being.
- * How your company may be eligible to leverage the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit.
- * Insightful statistics: 63% of PEO clients said their health benefit costs were lower with their PEO.*

*NAPEO, your results may vary.

63%
OF PEO CLIENTS REPORTED LOWER HEALTH BENEFITS COSTS.*
EXPLORE STRATEGIES.

[Download eGuide](#)

trinet

Download our eGuide

*NAPEO survey of 35 PEO new clients. "The ROI of Using a PEO" 2019. Individual business results may vary.

2

{Pain point question to your buyer persona}. {solution/benefits}

HSI HandsHQ
Promoted

Nobody enjoys updating their Excel Training Matrix. It's time to ditch that complex skills spreadsheet once and for all.

Still tracking training across multiple spreadsheets?

Ditch that complex skills spreadsheet once and for all.

Manage your teams' training without a complex spreadsheet

[Learn more](#)

3

Hey {persona} + {question they want answered}. {how your content answers it}

Zinc
Promoted

Hey #RecruitmentLeader! 🙌 Love hiring, but hate Background checking? ↴

Try Zinc, and get super fast global background checks at the click of a button.

Zinc

- ✓ Employment history verification in minutes
- ✓ Global right to work checks
- ✓ Integrated directly from your ATS

Zinc does it in minutes, not days.

[LEARN MORE](#)

See how Zinc can help your team to recruit faster

[Learn more](#)

4

{ Impactful Stat or number}

{how your content answers it}

Digital.ai
Promoted

Is your app safe? Our latest report reveals that 65% of apps experienced an attack in 2024. Don't be part of the statistics. Download the 2024 Application Security Threat Report to secure your application today.

In 2024, **65%** of apps experienced an attack.

Are you protected?

[Read the Report](#) **digital.ai**

2024 Application Security Threat Report

Colors That Work

LinkedIn's feed is blue and grey. Stand out with oranges, greens, and reds **using high-contrast colours** that don't blend into the background. Corporate brand colours often disappear into the feed unnoticed.

Copy Length: Match Format to Audience Temperature

COLD AUDIENCE

Sponsored Ads: Keep copy short. People scroll fast, so get to the point quickly.

WARM AUDIENCE

Thought Leader Ads: Long-form works. Use narrative, story-driven content because it fits personal posts.

Weekly Comment Management Checklist

- ☐ **Turn on comment notifications for all active ads.** Enable notifications so you never miss new comments.
- ☐ **Reply to constructive comments.** Conversations increase engagement, signal relevance to LinkedIn, and can help boost your ad's reach.
- ☐ **Handle negative comments quickly.** Hide obvious trolls or respond with humour. Unanswered criticism is often the first thing new viewers see and can hurt performance.
- ☐ **Spend five minutes each week checking** and responding to comments as part of your campaign management routine.

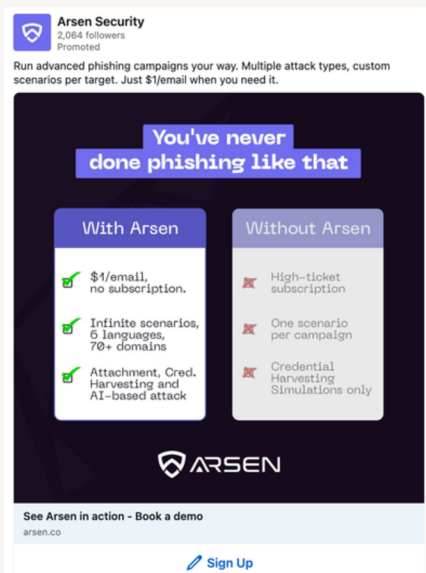
The Retargeting Playbook

Most companies reuse their "book a demo" ads for retargeting. It doesn't work. Warm audiences need content that moves them closer to a decision.

The Angle that Work for Warm Audiences

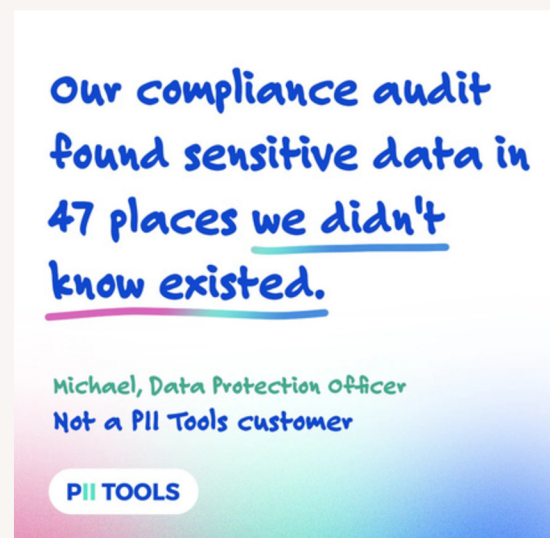
1 Before and after

summarizes outcomes in one scannable ad, effective even for audiences still evaluating.



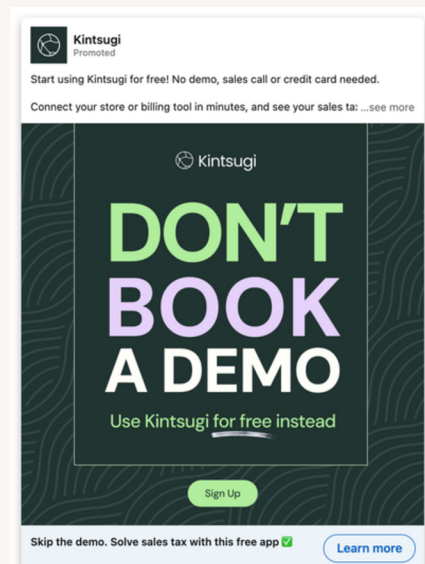
2 Cost of inaction

speaks directly to a fear the buyer already has.



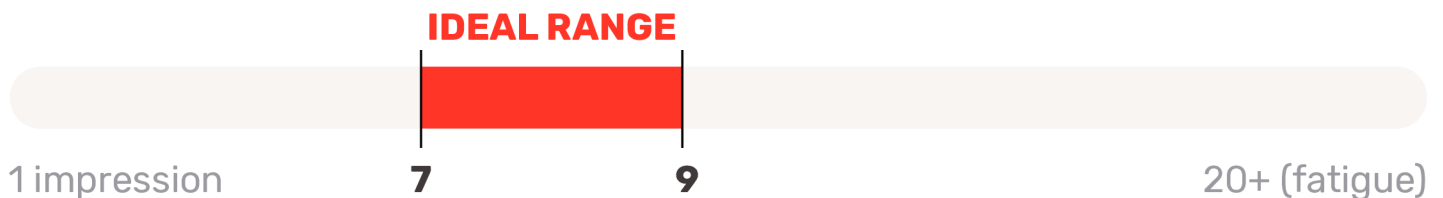
3 Unexpected offers

e.g. a headline reading "Don't book a demo" with the real offer underneath. Surprise stops the scroll.



Frequency & Banner Fatigue

Refresh ads every 60 days. Creative fatigue lowers CTR and increases CPM. Even a simple background change can reset attention and extend performance.

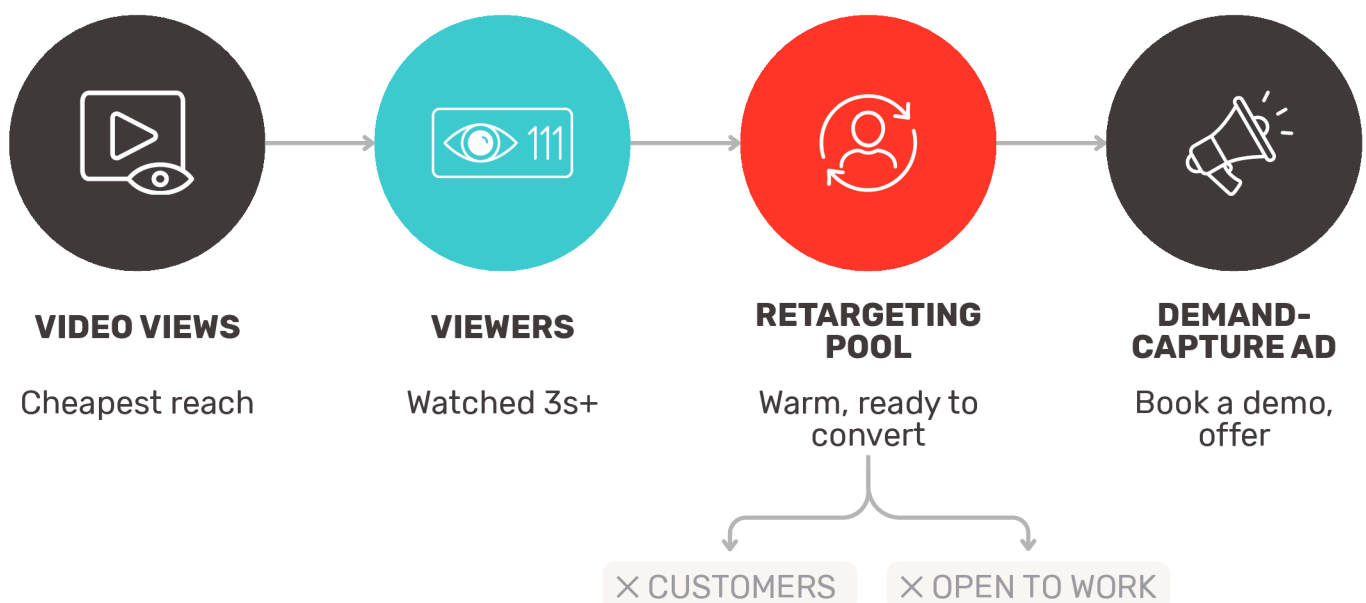


60 days

Maximum lifespan before creative fatigue sets in. Refresh messaging or visuals before performance drops.

Building Retargeting Audiences

Video Views campaigns quickly and cheaply build retargeting pools. Start with Video Views, then retarget viewers with demand-capture ads. Exclude customers and "Open to Work" members.



Measurement: What Actually Matters

The Attribution Problem Nobody Talks About

Most companies see direct traffic or branded search topping their CRM's "original source" report, conclude LinkedIn isn't working, and cut the budget. That's the wrong conclusion from the wrong data.

WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING

Someone sees your LinkedIn ad, doesn't click, then searches your brand weeks later. LinkedIn gets no credit, despite driving the awareness.

Measure both original source and influenced conversions. Track account touches from LinkedIn clicks and impressions before action. In HubSpot, include any LinkedIn Ads touchpoint for a clearer view of influence.

CRM Sync & Self-Reported Attribution

CRM sync + attribution tools provide the most reliable measurement. LinkedIn data is a starting point, not the full picture. Add **"How did you hear about us?"** to uncover missed channels.

Don't Be Obsessed with CTR

CTR is mostly meaningless for B2B SaaS. A low CTR on a well-targeted campaign is fine. Someone not clicking doesn't mean the ad failed; it may simply mean they weren't ready yet. Track instead:

- Reach and frequency within your ICP
- Pipeline influenced by LinkedIn touchpoints
- Win rates in deals where your brand was visible throughout the journey

Where to Start Today

Most companies expect LinkedIn Ads to work like Google Ads: instant leads, cold conversions, and ROI in 60 days. That's not how B2B buyers or this channel work.

The companies that get consistent results understand that only 5% of their audience is ready to buy at any given time. They build demand before capturing it, stay visible long enough to be recognized, and measure what actually matters instead of optimizing for metrics that look good on a slide but mean nothing for pipeline.

Quick Recap Checklist

- ✓ Confirm you have a clear ICP, strong LTV, and an audience actually active on LinkedIn.
- ✓ Split budget 60–70% demand gen, 30–40% demand capture.
- ✓ Target by Job Title and Job Function + Skills in parallel; keep audiences between 15K–100K.
- ✓ Exclude Audience Expansion, Audience Network, and Open to Work members.
- ✓ Start bidding with Manual CPC, never Maximum Delivery or Cost Cap.
- ✓ Match ad format to funnel stage: TLAs and video for demand gen, single image and text ads for retargeting.
- ✓ Refresh creative every 60 days and measure influenced conversions, not just CTR.

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I'm the Founder and CEO of Getuplead, a B2B demand generation agency specialising in LinkedIn Ads and paid acquisition for SaaS companies. Over the past decade, I've helped B2B brands build scalable pipeline by combining strategic targeting, high-performing creative, and data-driven optimisation.

I share practical, experience-based insights that help marketing and revenue teams avoid common LinkedIn Ads mistakes and improve campaign performance. My approach focuses on what drives measurable business outcomes, not marketing trends or theory.

getuplead

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Getuplead reviews your LinkedIn Ads and shows what works and what doesn't.

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