



Getting started with LinkedIn paid ads

Advertising on LinkedIn is a great choice for many businesses. Below, we'll explore why you should consider it and provide a walk-through of how to create your first LinkedIn ad campaign.

Why LinkedIn is overlooked

Have you run a campaign on LinkedIn? If not, you are hardly alone. LinkedIn's self-service ad platform often gets overlooked by today's marketers and media planners. This could be due to a number of misconceptions or challenges such as:

- LinkedIn is not a typical social network; but, it isn't a true content platform, either.
- LinkedIn is focused on business connections; so, marketers tend to think of it as B2B only.
- LinkedIn has a much, much smaller audience than Google or Facebook.
- LinkedIn lacks the integration of professional bid management platforms.

Understanding the Value for Marketers

LinkedIn as a highly-targeted communications channel that offers marketers great opportunity. For starters, it has considerable reach — over 500 million members worldwide, with an estimated 150 million in the US.

And, while some might dismiss its "smaller" audience, LinkedIn can actually help you achieve a very precise reach. This is largely due to two factors:

1. LinkedIn provides great targeting options, including the ability to target by job title, employer, role, skills, and interests;
2. LinkedIn profiles contain more detailed and up-to-date "professional" information compared to what people list on their personal profiles on Facebook, Google+ and the like.



Beyond that, LinkedIn now provides additional value through content with its “Influencers” and “Pulse” efforts. Between both of these initiatives and the value of updates and shared stories, LinkedIn has evolved into more of a content platform that is providing a professional and exciting news feed.

In addition, LinkedIn’s self-service advertising platform has a similar feel to those offered by Google and Facebook. For example, it allows you to design different types of ads, create logical groupings, define bids for specific campaigns, and measure performance with metrics such as impressions, clicks and conversions (if tagged/collected).

Now that you know why you should consider LinkedIn for advertising, it’s time to figure out if the platform would be a good fit for your needs. Whenever I look at a campaign, I ask myself a few key questions (see below). If I can answer “yes” to any of them, I know that LinkedIn ads are the right choice for the job:

Do I know the job titles of my target audience?

Since LinkedIn offers targeting by job title, it can help you pinpoint your audience. For example, if you are running the marketing department for a law school that helps legal assistants become attorneys, this targeting option would enable you to focus your efforts on the individuals who have “legal assistant” as their job title.

Do I know where my target audience works?

This targeting method could be used for a number of different purposes. Organizations could tap into it for recruiting by using it to target competitors’ employees. It could also be used for a targeted sales approach as it can get your brand in front of the right people at a company you are trying to sell to. In addition, this targeting option could be a great job search tool — individuals could use it to get their name in front of decisions makers at a firm they want to work for.



Does my target audience have unique skills/interests?

The ability to target by skills and/or interest is great for all kinds of professional businesses. For example, a vendor of analytics software could use it to target individuals who have competitive software or specific analytics languages listed in the skills section of their LinkedIn profile.

Do I know the type of role my target audience holds at a company, or their level of seniority?

This might sound like a stereotype, but targeting by role can be very useful, as it allows you to gauge a person's influence level and salary.

A screenshot of a LinkedIn targeting interface. On the left, there are two dropdown menus: "Function" (highlighted in blue) and "Seniority" (highlighted in grey). On the right, a list of job titles is displayed, each with an unchecked checkbox: CXO, Director, Entry, Manager, Owner, Partner, Senior, and Training. At the bottom right of the list, there is a "Close" button.

How to create a LinkedIn ad campaign

Now that you have some ideas on how to target individuals on LinkedIn, let's do a quick walk-through on how to create an ad campaign.

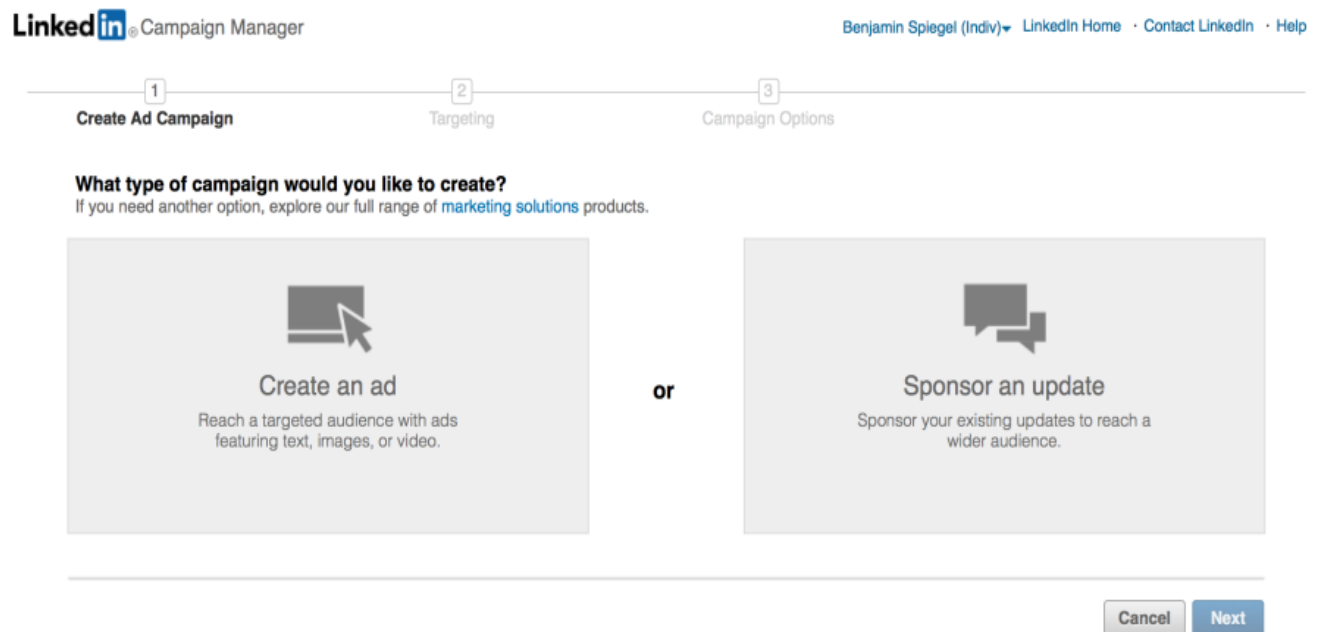
Getting Started:

To create a campaign, you'll first need the following:



- A LinkedIn account
- Basic understanding of your audience
- Ad copy
- Video (optional)

Now go to the LinkedIn Ads <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/ads?#> and click on "Get started." This will present you with two types of campaign options: (1) Create an ad; (2) Sponsor an update.



While we'll be focused on creating an ad in LinkedIn, let me take a moment to tell you about sponsored updates. Sponsored Updates allow companies to pay to promote their content to specific audiences on LinkedIn — in the same spirit as Sponsored Posts on Twitter and Promote Page Posts on Facebook.

Sponsored updates are a great way to get your message directly onto a user's home feed. The offering is comparable to sponsored content on Facebook, and it is a good tool to use to amplify your content. For example,



if you have a great story, interview or other piece of content, you can post it through your company’s LinkedIn account and then make it a sponsored update.

To learn more about sponsored updates go to:

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/native-advertising?#>

Okay, let’s get back on track. Click on “Create an ad.”

Step 1: Creating your Ad

You should now be looking at the following screen:

This is where you create your ad. To do so, you’ll need to fill in a few fields:

- **Campaign Name:** Create a name for your campaign.
- **Ad Language:** Select the language for your ad.



- **Media Type:** Select either a basic advertisement that follows the traditional format, or a video ad that includes a play button on the image.
- **Ad Destination:** This will allow you to link your ad to either a LinkedIn profile page or an external URL. If you are driving traffic to your website, tag your URLs so that you can measure the engagement and quality of traffic in your analytics platform. If you are not familiar with the tagging of URLs, there are numerous URL tagging tools. Goto: <https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1033867?hl=en>
- **Ad Design:** Create your headline and description. Note that LinkedIn is a bit limited in this regard. The headline has a 25-character limit, and the description cannot exceed 75 characters (2 lines). You can also add your imagery here. Note: as you edit your ads, a thumbnail preview appears on the right side. The preview also allows you to toggle the ad size. Make sure you carefully inspect the ad preview to ensure that the image you used is visible and eye-catching.
- **Ad Variations:** LinkedIn allows you to create multiple variations of ads. For each ad, you can choose either an external URL or a page on LinkedIn. Note that the choice of location does not affect the price — it costs just as much to send traffic to external pages as it does to send it to internal pages. Also, keep in mind that LinkedIn advertising is push advertising, not pull. That means that your audience is not actively looking for your product or service, so you have to work harder to make sure your ad stands out and captures the user’s attention. For example: question-style headlines get better engagement than statement headlines.

Step 2: Targeting

Once you’ve completed your ad, it’s time to focus on targeting. This is where you can really start to leverage the power of LinkedIn.

While some of the targeting options on this platform are very similar to Facebook and Twitter (target by age, friends, company, etc.), LinkedIn



allows you to target people by job title, employer, industry, and even skills/ interests.

Below is the audience screen that allows you to precisely target and evaluate your target audience:

Who's the audience for this campaign?

Location	<input type="text" value="Please specify at least one location"/>	Audience 259,000,000 LinkedIn Members
Companies	<input checked="" type="radio"/> All <input type="radio"/> By name <input type="radio"/> By category (industry, company size)	
Job Title	<input checked="" type="radio"/> All <input type="radio"/> By title <input type="radio"/> By category (job function, seniority)	
School	<input checked="" type="radio"/> All <input type="radio"/> By school name	
Skills	<input checked="" type="radio"/> All <input type="radio"/> By skill name	
Group	<input checked="" type="radio"/> All <input type="radio"/> By group name	
Gender	<input checked="" type="radio"/> All <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Male	
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55+	

This screen has a lot of depth and advanced options that will allow you to target your audience *precisely*. Note that as you pick options, the preview screen on the right shows you your possible reach. Be sure you understand audience size, as it is different from possible impressions or metrics used by other networks.

On LinkedIn, audience size is the number of profiles matching the criteria you have. For example:



Audience

28,793 LinkedIn Members

Location: United States

Skills: Tableau, Spotfire or Data Visualization

If you feel that your audience size is getting too small, pay attention to LinkedIn's suggested options. This feature is very similar to Google's keyword recommendations. For example, when I add Tableau and Spotfire as skills, LinkedIn suggests additional product related skills.

All
 By skill name

Tableau x Spotfire x

Consider adding: [Pipeline Pilot](#) [PI Dwrights](#) [IronPython](#) [Aries](#)
[Ingenuity Pathway Analysis](#) [GeneSpring](#) [PEEP](#)
[WellView](#) [Discovery Informatics](#) [ROCS](#)
[Business Connect](#) [PHDWin](#) [Knime](#)
[TIBCO Business Studio](#) [ADB Adapter](#) [XLMiner](#)
[TIBCO General Interface](#) [Scientific Applications](#)
[BusinessWorks](#) [Powertools](#) [Sybyl](#) [PPDM](#)
[Cygnet](#) [Klarity](#) [HTRF](#) [Roambi](#) [Glide](#) [FLIPR](#)
[Compound Management](#) [Discovery Studio](#)
[Schrodinger](#) [Decline Curve Analysis](#) [Cytoscape](#)
[SAP Adapter](#) [Electronic Lab Notebooks](#)
[Cheminformatics](#) [Beilstein](#) [Hit-to-lead](#) [PERC](#)
[Visual Analytics](#) [SAR development](#)
[Event Processing](#) [Virtual Screening](#) [OpenSpirit](#)
[QSAR](#) [Target Discovery & Validation](#)
[RapidMiner](#) [High Content Screening](#) [MPLC](#)


When you add skills to your ad, as well as age restriction, you get the following audience size:



Audience

108,278 LinkedIn Members

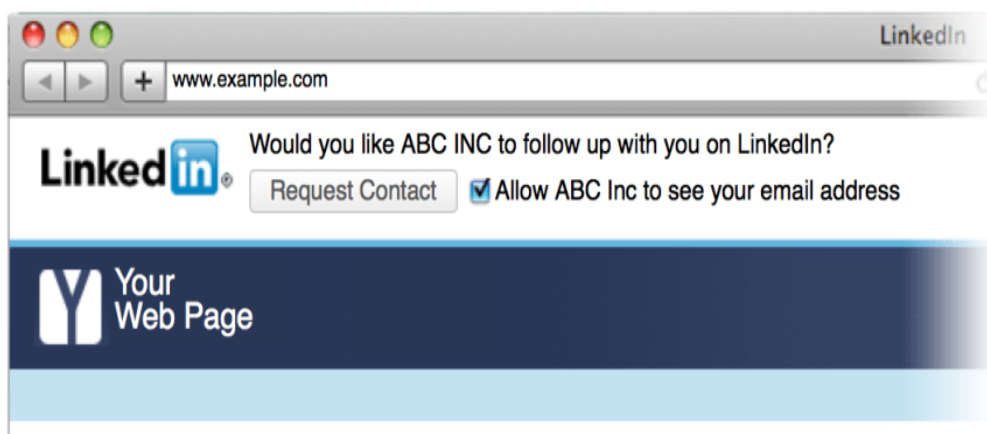
 **Location:** United States

 **Skills:** Tableau, Spotfire, Visual Analytics or Google Analytics

 **Age:** 25-34, 35-54 or 55+

Keep in mind that the more granular you go with your audience design, the better your ROI will be. Also, adding the LinkedIn Audience network can expand your reach (it is similar to Google's Display Network),

Also, LinkedIn provides you with the ability to turn on "Lead Collection." This feature allows users who engaged with your ad to send you their contact info and ask to be contacted. It is very similar to a contact form approach, but due to its tight integration with the platform, it's effortless for the user and has a more secure feel to it.



Step 4: Submitting your Ad



The final step in the process is to submit your ad by simply clicking on “Launch Campaign.” Note: LinkedIn reviews almost all ads manually, so your campaign won’t be online until it goes through a quick review process.