MWM

Meta Ads That Actually Make Leads

A straight field guide for coaches and service owners running lead ads on Facebook and Instagram.



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Read it in order the first time. After that, sections 08 and 09 are the pages I would keep open while the campaign runs.

01

Why most ad accounts stall

Words on this page

Lead
A person who raised their hand by filling in a form or sending a message.

Lead system
Everything between the ad and the booked call: form, CRM, follow-up and reminders.

Most ad accounts stall somewhere after the ad.

This is the guide I would hand a founder before they spend another dollar on Meta.

I have spent years inside sales teams and lead systems. I have moved over 48,000 leads and teams of 100+ into systems, and I keep seeing good ads get blamed for problems that started somewhere else. The offer was fuzzy. The form asked the wrong questions. The lead sat overnight before anyone called. Nobody confirmed the appointment, so nobody showed.

So this guide covers the whole path a lead takes. How I would structure the campaign, what to put in the creative, when a lead form fits, how fast to follow up, which numbers to read on Monday, and the rules that keep your ad account healthy.

It is general advice for coaches and service businesses. Your offer and your market will change the details. When I cite Meta, the FTC, GoHighLevel or another practitioner, the source sits in the margin so you can check it yourself.

Some of the advice comes from well-known Meta ads practitioners. Their own numbers are self-reported, so I kept their principles and left most of their figures out.

A note on sources
Official Meta, FTC and GoHighLevel pages were opened on Nov 14, 2026. Platform rules change, so it is worth rechecking anything here before you launch.

A note on results
Nothing in this guide is a promise of results. Your numbers depend on your offer and your follow-up.

> **An ad is the loudest part of a lead system, and in my experience it is rarely the most broken part.**
>
> Megan

02

Get the offer straight first

Words on this page

Offer
What someone gets, who it is for, and what happens after they say yes.

Delivery system
Meta's automated process that decides who sees your ad.

The ad can only sell what the offer already is.

Before you write a single hook, write the offer in plain words.

Meta's delivery system learns from the people who respond to your ad. If the offer is vague, the people who respond tend to be vague too, and the system goes looking for more of them. I recommend writing the offer down before you open Ads Manager, because every later choice depends on it.

Fill these in the way your client would say them out loud:

Who it is for _____

The problem they name _____

What happens on the call _____

What they leave with _____

When price comes up _____

Describe the work and the call

For coaching and education offers, I recommend describing what is taught and what the call covers. Income figures and guaranteed outcomes create real policy risk, which section 11 explains.

When a founder tells me the ads stopped working, my first question is what the offer is this month.

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Why the call matters
The ad's job is to get the right person to the next step. If you can describe that next step clearly, the ad can too.

Payment plans
Mentioning financing or a payment plan in the ad can trigger a Special Ad Category. See section 11.

03

Creative that feels native

Words on this page

Ad set
The level where budget and audience live. Your ads sit inside it.

Learning phase
The early window when Meta is still working out who responds.

Make ads that look like they belong in the feed.

Keep the account simple and put the variety into the creative.

The practitioners I trust agree on a structure: 1 campaign, 1 ad set or very few, broad targeting and several different ads inside it. Meta's own guidance points the same way. An ad set leaves the learning phase after about 50 results in the week after its last significant edit, and fewer ad sets tend to learn faster.

Vary the format inside one ad set

- A short talking-head video, about 10 to 15 seconds, filmed the way you would post organically
- A plain image with a headline of 4 or 5 words
- A founder story that explains why you built the offer
- A demonstration of the work itself
- A client talking about what they learned or built

To test copy, Meta lets you add up to 5 versions of primary text and headline inside one ad. I recommend that over making separate ads for each line, because it keeps the ad set lean.

Captions help, since many people watch with the sound off. Organic posts that already did well make good ads with a simple call to action added. The Meta Ad Library is worth a look too. Ads that have run for a long time are usually the ones worth studying.

A practical start is a handful of ads, refreshed every couple of weeks.

Learning phase
Source: Meta Business Help Center, About the learning phase, 2026

Structure
Source: Ben Heath, YouTube, 2026; Sam Piliero, YouTube, viewed 2026 (practitioners)

Text options
Source: Meta Business Help Center, 2026

Image and video length
Source: Alister Shirazi, YouTube, viewed 2026 (practitioner)

In HighLevel
GoHighLevel Ad Manager allows up to 10 ad sets per campaign and 10 ads per ad set. Source: GoHighLevel Help Center, 2026

My favorite lead ads look like one person talking to one other person.

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04

Hooks

Words on this page

Hook
The first line or first 2 seconds of an ad.

Personal attribute
A trait such as finances or health that an ad should not assume about the viewer.

Name the problem and the person in the first line.

The first line decides whether the right person keeps reading.

A hook works when the right owner reads it and thinks, that is my week. Nick Theriot teaches a set of hook patterns that adapt well to service offers. These are the ones I would start with:

- The result, without the usual painful step
- The problem, then the fix
- The list of things they already tried
- A direct question about their situation
- Before and after, of the work itself
- A new way of doing an old task, and why it is different

Write each one several ways, then let the ad set test them. A few examples, written for this guide:

The lead came in at 9pm. Who called them back?

Booking discovery calls without chasing anyone by text all weekend.

What happens on a 30-minute strategy call, start to finish.

Keep the person out of the accusation

Meta's standards restrict copy that asserts or implies a personal attribute, such as someone's finances. "You" is fine. "Are you broke?" is the kind of line that gets flagged, so I recommend naming the business problem.

A good hook sounds like something your client already said to you on a call.

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Hook patterns
Source: Nick Theriot, YouTube, 2026 (practitioner)

Personal attributes
Source: Meta Advertising Standards, Personal attributes, 2026

Earnings language
Income figures and lifestyle claims in hooks carry real risk. See section 11.

05

Lead forms or landing pages

Words on this page

Instant Form
A lead form that opens inside Facebook or Instagram.

VSL
Video sales letter. A landing page built around a video.

Pick the form that matches how you follow up.

Both work. It depends on how much context the offer needs.

	Instant Form, higher intent	Landing page or VSL
Fits when	Your team can follow up every lead quickly	The offer needs more explaining before someone should raise a hand
Trade-off	More volume, less context for the lead	Fewer leads, usually more informed ones

Meta offers 2 Instant Form types. More volume is quick to submit on mobile. Higher intent adds a review screen and a note that the business may follow up. It shows only in the mobile feed. If every lead will get a call, I recommend starting with higher intent.

Building a higher intent form

- Prefill name, email and phone
- Add 2 or 3 multiple choice questions. Fewer questions usually means more submissions, and more questions usually means better leads
- Link a live privacy policy page, since Meta does not accept a PDF or image link
- Add consent before you publish. A published form is locked, so a change means duplicating it

Safer qualifiers: "What best describes you?" or "When would you want to start?" Meta's standards bar asking about income, net worth or debt without its prior permission.

If nobody on your team will call a lead today, the form type is the wrong thing to be deciding.

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Form types
Source: Meta Business Help Center, Instant form types, 2026

Questions and prefill
Source: Meta Business Help Center, lead ads best practices, 2026

Editing and privacy policy
Source: Meta Business Help Center, 2026

Money questions
Source: Meta Advertising Standards, lead ads, 2026

Follow-up
Jeremy Haynes calls lead forms close to a coin flip unless a real person calls the leads. Source: Jeremy Haynes, YouTube, 2024 (practitioner)

06

Targeting

Words on this page

Advantage+ audience
Meta's automated audience setting, where most inputs act as suggestions.

Hard control
A limit Meta will respect, such as location.

Go broad and let the creative find the person.

Location is the control that matters most. The rest works better as a suggestion.

Meta says its Advantage+ audience "typically gets better results" than the original audience options. With it on, location, minimum age, language and excluded custom audiences are hard limits. Age, gender, interests and lookalikes become suggestions, unless you further limit the audience.

So I recommend this setup:

1. Set location as the hard control: your service area, or the countries you serve.
2. Leave the other audience settings broad.
3. Put the niche into the ad itself. Who appears in the creative, and the problem the first line names, tends to decide who sees it.

Splitting warm and cold audiences into separate ad sets often does less than people expect. Custom audiences usually sit in the suggestion layer, so Meta may show the ad to both groups anyway.

Targeting that ages badly

Interest targeting aimed at people with money is a common old tactic. Interests are suggestions now, and income framing in the copy can run into the personal attribute rules. If your ad falls in a Special Ad Category, several targeting options are restricted. GoHighLevel documents those limits as no lookalikes or saved audiences, ages fixed at 18 to 65+, all genders, and a 15-mile minimum radius.

The fastest targeting fix I know is rewriting the first line of the ad.

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Advantage+ audience
Source: Meta Business Help Center, Advantage+ audience, 2026

Creative as targeting
Source: Sam Piliero, YouTube, viewed 2026; Ben Heath, YouTube, 2026 (practitioners)

Special Ad Category limits
Source: GoHighLevel Help Center and Meta Business Help Center, 2026

07

Budgets and testing

Words on this page

Conversions API
A way to send what happened after the lead, such as a booked call, back to Meta.

Advantage+ campaign budget
Meta moves budget to the ad sets with the best chances. Formerly CBO.

Give the account time to learn before you touch it.

Size the budget toward learning, cap it at what your team can call, then wait.

Meta recommends waiting before you edit and avoiding frequent budget changes while an ad set is learning, since a significant edit can restart it.

1. **Size it toward learning.** Give one ad set a budget that can realistically reach about 50 results in a week.
2. **Cap it at capacity.** Spend past what your team can call fills the CRM with people nobody calls.
3. **Hold your edits.** Ben Heath recommends waiting 7 to 10 days between edits on smaller budgets. I like that pace for owners still in learning.
4. **Run during business hours.** Meta suggests ad scheduling so your team is ready to respond. Check whether your ads tool supports it.

Which goal to pick

I recommend starting with Maximize number of leads and a higher intent form. Since April 2026, Meta's qualified leads goal needs a Conversions API connection for new campaigns, and GoHighLevel's version expects at least 250 leads a month.

Leads campaigns turn on Advantage+ campaign budget by default, and Meta recommends as few spend limits as you can manage.

I left dollar amounts out on purpose. A budget or cost per lead only means something against your own data.

Daily edits feel like control. To the algorithm they look like a new test every morning.

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Learning phase
Source: Meta Business Help Center, About the learning phase, 2026

Edit pace
Source: Ben Heath, YouTube, 2026 (practitioner)

Scheduling
Source: Meta Business Help Center, lead ads best practices, 2026

Performance goals
Source: Meta Business Help Center, performance goals, 2026

Conversion Leads
Source: GoHighLevel Help Center, 2026

Advantage+ leads
In Meta's early testing, Advantage+ leads campaigns reported 14% lower cost per lead and 10% lower cost per qualified lead. These are Meta's test averages, and the campaign type may not be open to every advertiser. Source: Meta Business Help Center, Advantage+ leads campaigns, 2026

08

Follow-up and your CRM

Words on this page

Speed to lead
How long it takes a new lead to hear from a real person.

Round robin
Leads rotate across your team so no one person gets them all.

The lead is warmest in the first few minutes.

This is the page where most of the money is made or lost.

Meta says that "minimizing the time it takes to follow up with your leads can improve your lead quality," and recommends an integrated CRM over downloading leads by hand. Here is the flow I recommend, in general terms:

1. **Trigger on the right form.** Filter the CRM trigger by Page and form, since some tools fire for every form on every connected Page.
2. **Assign a person.** Create the opportunity with the source tagged, then assign someone. Round robin is fine. Keep repeat submitters with the same person.
3. **Notify after assignment.** The alert goes to whoever now owns the lead.
4. **Reach out within minutes.** A text, only with consent, and an email with your booking link. A real person calls too.
5. **Follow up if they have not booked.** A handful of touches over about 2 weeks plus one check-in around day 30. Everything stops once they book.
6. **Confirm the booking.** A short what-to-expect note or video, a calendar invite, a request to confirm, reminders at 24 hours and 1 hour, and a reschedule link.
7. **Recover no-shows.** A short rebooking sequence.

Practitioners who run large calendars recommend keeping open slots within about 2 weeks, because show rates tend to drop when people book further out.

Follow-up speed and CRM
Source: Meta Business Help Center, lead ads best practices, 2026

Real-time trigger
GoHighLevel can start a workflow when a Facebook lead form is submitted, if the fields are mapped. Source: GoHighLevel Help Center, 2026

Booking window and reminders
Source: Blake Wyatt, interview on Nick Fisher's YouTube, Jul 2025; Jake Larsen, YouTube, viewed 2026 (practitioners)

Texting
Texting a lead needs clear consent. Section 11 has a starting pattern.

Speed to lead costs nothing extra, and it is the first thing I check in any account.

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08

If you build it in HighLevel

A few HighLevel settings worth checking

Small settings that cause big headaches when they are missed.

- Build the form's disclaimer and consent in Meta, then select and map that form in HighLevel Ad Manager.
- Map every field, including custom questions and the Meta Lead ID if you plan to use Conversion Leads later.
- Conversion location, meaning Instant Forms, website or both, cannot be changed after you publish.
- Multi-advertiser ads may be checked by default. I recommend turning it off so other brands' ads do not show next to yours.
- A setting can merge lead form contacts by name. I recommend leaving it off, because 2 different people can share a name.
- Test the form with Meta's Lead Ads Testing Tool before you spend.

All settings on this page
Source: GoHighLevel Help Center, Ad Manager and Conversation AI, 2026

Messaging window
Meta's standard messaging window is 24 hours, and up to 7 days after a first message from a click-to-message ad. Source: Meta Business Help Center, 2026

If you add Conversation AI

I recommend starting in Suggestive mode, where it drafts and a person sends, and moving to Auto-Pilot after a trial. Pause automated replies once someone books, and hand off to a person when money comes up or someone asks for a human. AI pricing changes, so check HighLevel's current pricing page first.

Whether HighLevel Ad Manager supports every Meta feature, such as ad scheduling, spend limits or value rules, changes over time. Check inside your ads tool before you plan around one.

Why this page
Many coaches run their CRM in GoHighLevel. If you use a different tool, the same ideas apply under different menu names.

> **Most of this is a structure problem. The business was built around you, and the part that runs without you was never built.**
>
> Megan

09

Metrics to watch

Words on this page

Show rate
Of the calls booked, the share that actually happened.

Frequency
How many times the average person has seen your ad.

Read your numbers from the bottom of the funnel up.

Cost per lead is a volume check. Booked and showed calls tell you whether the ads are working.

I read results in this order every week: customers, then showed calls, then booked calls, then leads, then clicks. Brian Moncada teaches this reading order for YouTube ads, and it works just as well on Meta.

This week	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4
Cost per lead				
Lead to booked %				
Cost per booked call				
Show rate				
Cost per showed call				
Close rate				
Cost per customer				
Median minutes to first touch				
Frequency				

Compare cost per customer against your real offer price. Watch whether 1 or 2 ads take most of the spend, since that is often the first sign of creative fatigue.

The first days of a new campaign often reach people who already know you, so early results can look better than true cold traffic. I recommend judging after a couple of weeks.

I left targets off this page because a target only means something against your own data. Fill in 4 weeks, then set your own.

Reading order
Source: Brian Moncada, YouTube, viewed 2026 (practitioner)

Early results
Source: Blake Wyatt, interview on Nick Fisher's YouTube, Jul 2025 (practitioner)

A cheap lead who never shows up is the most expensive line on the report.

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10

Common mistakes

Words on this page

Creative fatigue
When the same people have seen an ad so often that it stops working.

The patterns I see most often.

Every one of these is fixable, and most cost nothing to fix.

- **Chasing the cheapest lead.** Then wondering why the calendar fills with people who do not show or buy.
- **Optimizing for the wrong goal.** Conversations or engagement when the real goal is a qualified lead or a booked call.
- **Earnings claims in the ad.** Income figures or lifestyle claims put the whole ad account at risk.
- **Editing every day during learning.** Each significant edit can restart the clock.
- **Too many ad sets.** One offer split so many ways that no ad set leaves learning.
- **Publishing the form too early.** Then needing to change a question or the consent text on a form that is now locked.
- **Asking about money on the form.** Questions about income or debt run into Meta's lead ads standards.
- **Slow follow-up.** Calling hours later, or leaving it to whoever happens to check their phone.
- **Booking too far out.** Calls 3 weeks away with no confirmation or reminders.
- **Spending past capacity.** Raising budget beyond what the team can call and close.
- **Stiff copy out of fear.** "You" is allowed when it does not assume a personal attribute.

Cheap leads
Professor Charley T teaches that cheaper leads often convert worse, and recommends optimizing to a deeper step. Source: Professor Charley T, YouTube, viewed 2026 (practitioner)

Platform rules
Sources for each rule are on the earlier pages.

If I had to pick one, it is slow follow-up. It quietly wastes every other dollar you spent.

Megan

11

Compliance notes

Words on this page

Special Ad Category
A label Meta requires for certain topics, which limits targeting.

Consent
Clear permission, given before you text someone.

Know the rules before Meta reviews your ad.

A short list of rules that apply to coaching and service offers.

Earnings and outcomes

Meta prohibits ads offering unrealistic financial reward for minimal effort, promised salaries or guaranteed jobs. The FTC has told money-making-opportunity companies that "potential" earnings claims imply those earnings are typical, and has pointed to civil penalties. I recommend describing the work, with "results vary" beside any outcome.

Special Ad Categories

Meta's Employment category includes professional certification programs and guaranteed interviews or career placement. In the US, the Financial products and services category has been required since Jan 21, 2025, and covers in-house installment payments and buy now, pay later. If your copy mentions certification, job placement or a payment plan, a category may apply, and Meta notes a qualifying ad without one may be rejected.

Texting your leads

A consent checkbox pattern to bring to your attorney:

> By checking this box, I agree to receive calls and text messages from [Business name] about my inquiry at the number provided, including messages sent with automated technology. Consent is not a condition of purchase. Message frequency varies. Msg and data rates may apply. Reply STOP to opt out, HELP for help. See our Privacy Policy [URL] and Terms [URL].

General information only. I recommend having counsel review your exact wording before it goes live.

Compliant copy is the baseline for a lead ad, and it holds up when the account grows.

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Earnings rules
Source: Meta Transparency Center, Prohibited commercial practices, updated Oct 30, 2026

FTC
Source: FTC, Notice of Penalty Offenses concerning money-making opportunities, cover letter, Oct 26, 2021. Penalty amounts may have changed since.

Special Ad Categories
Source: Meta Business Help Center, Special Ad Categories, 2026

Texting consent
The FCC rules on texting consent changed in 2025. Check current rules with counsel.

Ad review
Mostly automated and typically done within 24 hours. The destination is reviewed too. Source: Meta Business Help Center, ad review, 2026



If nothing changes, where is your business next November?

If you want a second set of eyes on your ads and the system behind them, start with the Diagnostic. It is a free 30-minute call with me on video. There is no pitch and no prep.

If you want to go deeper afterward, I can put together a written report: an audit of how the business runs today, a 30-day action plan in order, a short list of AI tools and what each one is for, and a straight answer on whether ongoing 1:1 support makes sense.

Book the Diagnostic

mywealthmedia.com/diagnostic

$1M+ in 8 months, on systems Megan built from the ground up.

CEO, online sales training company

You've already proven you can build a business. Let's build one that can scale.

Megan Lemay, Fractional COO and AI Systems Architect, My Wealth Media LLC, San Diego

Sources

Where the facts in this guide came from.

Official

Meta Business Help Center: About the learning phase; Advantage+ audience; Advantage+ campaign budget; Advantage+ leads campaigns; Instant form types; lead ads best practices; custom disclaimers; performance goals; Special Ad Categories; ad review; messaging window. 2026

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Meta Transparency Center: Prohibited commercial practices, updated Oct 30, 2026

FTC: Notice of Penalty Offenses concerning money-making opportunities, cover letter, Oct 26, 2021

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Practitioners (YouTube, viewed Nov 2026)

Ben Heath, campaign structure videos, 2026

Sam Piliero, creative and targeting videos

Nick Theriot, hook types, 2026

Alister Shirazi, Instant Forms and creative volume

Jeremy Haynes, lead form and funnel ranking, 2024

Professor Charley T, lead quality

Blake Wyatt, interview on Nick Fisher's channel, Jul 2025

Jake Larsen, booking and reminder patterns

Brian Moncada, reading results by funnel stage

How to read these
Official pages were opened on Nov 14, 2026. Practitioner figures are their own self-reports and were not independently verified.