

# The Embryo Guide to Paid Social

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# What is Paid Social?

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Paid Social is, at its most basic, using the “ads” features on social media platforms to improve brand awareness, drive traffic and increase conversions for a business. Essentially, companies pay Facebook and other social media giants to display their ads to customers, and charge a small fee every time someone converts through these ads. The majority of people see Paid Social ads every day, on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, to name just a few key platforms.

For a long time, social media marketing was based on building up your organic presence through regular and engaging posting, however, the rise and profitability of paid social (both for these platforms and the companies that advertise with them) mean that a modern social media marketing strategy has to include paid social.

Today, paid social uses in-depth machine learning and extensive data analytics to help paid media managers target the right audiences, display ads at the right time, show the most engaging copy and control ad spend, to maximise the return that users of their paid social tools get.

# Benefits of Paid Social

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- Access to billions of potential customers who are interested in your sector/business
- Reach your target audience, down to the most precise factors and markers
- Get your posts and content seen by real, engaged users, rather than just hoping for a viral organic campaign
- Run different types of ad campaigns to encompass the entire sales funnel, including:
  - Post Engagement and page likes
  - Website Traffic
  - Purchases
  - Contact form completions and sign-ups
  - Video ads
  - Image carousels
  - Promoted blog posts
- Flexible budgeting and targeting options make paid social accessible for organisations of all sizes
- Get useful insights into your audience using intelligent platform analytics
- Campaigns learn and grow in real-time, which then allows you to use campaign data to target users more accurately and effectively



# Organic vs Paid

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1 Organic social is completely free for individuals and businesses, while Paid social is just that: paid for.

2 Organic social helps to engage your existing users and drive them to become brand-loyal, while paid social helps you expand your audience and bring in new users, while also driving purchases and traffic to your site.

3 Organic social posts are often only seen by around 2% of your followers. Of course, there are things you can do to improve this, but there is a huge amount of organic content that goes unseen. Using paid social guarantees that your content will appear in the timelines of existing customers or potential new ones!

4 Unique organic posts stick around forever, and can help to create a "social website" for potential customers to look at and learn about your brand from. Unique paid social ads only run for short periods, and will only be shown to users a limited number of times.

5 Your organic social posts are delivered to your subscribers, when you post them, while paid social ads use data, machine learning and AI to deliver your ads to specific audiences, in the most engaging format possible.

Of course, it's important to remember that In today's social media landscape, companies shouldn't rely on just one form of social media marketing – a combined strategy and blended approach is key to success.

# Social Media Advertising Platforms

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## Facebook

When it comes to paid social, Facebook ads are considered superior. Facebook gathers so much data about their users which makes it easy for you to build audiences and retarget specific users and groups.

## Instagram

Since being purchased by Facebook, Instagram has upped its advertising features, and a great bonus is being able to link both accounts. Using Instagram story ads can also be a great way for brands to reach their audience, whilst other features on Instagram make it easier for consumers to shop directly from the app.

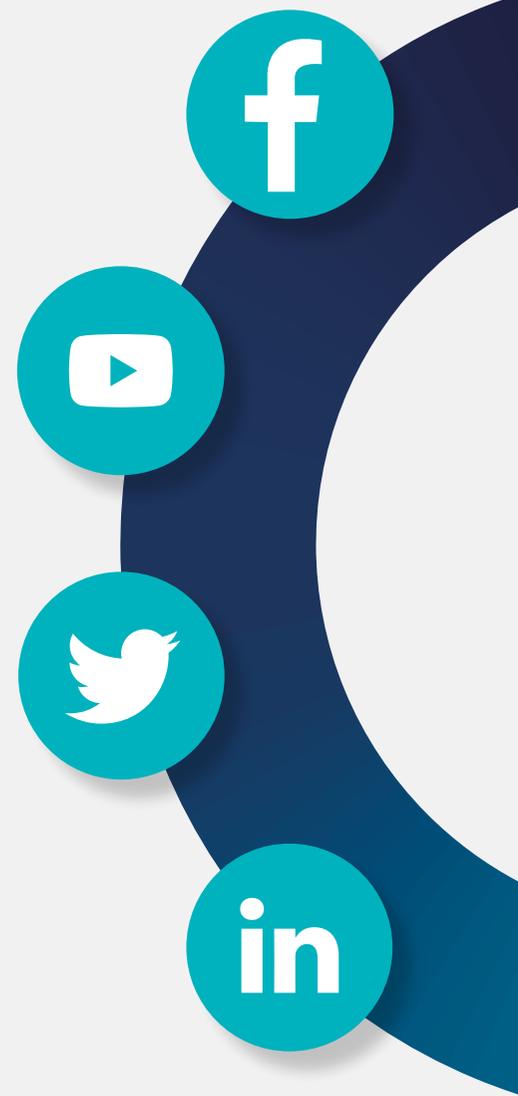
## Twitter

Many businesses see great success with Twitter advertising, with video ads being a popular content choice. The subtleness of their ads can mean that target audiences see your content without necessarily instantly knowing it's an ad they are seeing.

## LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network, so it's a great platform for B2B ads. Using their data you can target key decision-makers within different industries and businesses.

\*Now there are many more platforms including Snapchat and TikTok which are growing in popularity, however for this guide, we've decided to focus on the top four.



# Required Content

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There are lots of different ad formats that you can use and the different ones you choose will depend on the different content you'll need.

- An engaging and stand out headline – this is key to ensure your target audience pays attention to your ad when it's pushed onto their feed.
- Optimised images – different ad types require different image sizes, make sure you check the size of your images and how they're displayed before running your ads.
- Videos – it's quite simple, but a video ad is going to need an engaging video. Remember as well that a lot of users watch videos without sound, so make sure any key information is visual.
- A CTA (call to action) – once your audience has seen your ad, what is it that you want them to do?



# How to Manage Your Budget

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When it comes to managing paid social ads, the budget is one of the areas that organisations have the most difficulty with, and for good reason! Budgeting for your paid social ads is a balancing act between investment and return, between spend and results, and there are no set rules to follow, which makes it even more difficult.

The right paid social budget for a campaign will vary massively depending on a whole host of factors:

- The platform you use – Facebook and Instagram ads tend to be slightly cheaper than ads on LinkedIn, for example.
- The type of ads you're running (brand awareness, website traffic, conversions etc.).
- How many campaigns you're running – too few and you won't get the reach you're looking for, too many and your budget will be spread too thinly, causing all the campaigns to perform more poorly.
- The size of your business.
- The sector you work in – niche sectors and audiences tend to be more affordable as the audiences are much smaller.
- How long you want your campaigns to run for.

One of the most important things you can do to keep your ads running successfully is to give as much attention and spend as you possibly can to your ads, particularly at the start of your campaign. By monitoring your ad performance closely you can make changes quickly to prevent any budget from being wasted on poorly performing ads, and get the results you want.

# What you Should be Tracking

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One of the great benefits of paid social media is how transparent the tracking and reporting process is. However, there are still a few acronyms and jargon phrases that it's good to understand and track when running paid social campaigns:

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## **First things first – Conversions and Revenue.**

These are the all-important, bottom-line metrics that tell you whether your campaigns are ultimately successful or not. The end goal for almost any marketing campaign is to drive sales and make money for the organisation, so if you only monitor one metric, it should be this.

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## **Engagement**

Your campaign engagement refers to likes, comments, shares etc. This is particularly important for organic social campaigns, but is still a really useful metric for paid campaigns too, as it helps you understand what resonates with your audience beyond just seeing an ad and scrolling on past.

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## **ROAS**

ROAS stands for Return on Ad Spend, and essentially represents your ROI on paid social in one number, and is the amount of revenue divided by the amount spent. For example, if you spend £100 on an ad campaign that generated £450 of revenue, you would see a campaign ROAS of 4.5

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## **New vs. Existing Customers**

Understanding the split between new and existing customers is a really important metric when you're targeting new users with paid social ads. If the aim of your campaign is to get more new customers, then this is one of the key metrics for success. Of course, if you're retargeting existing customers too, you'll use this metric slightly differently, but it's still just as important.

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### Demographics

One of the biggest advantages of paid social is the sheer volume of user data that it can offer companies. Understanding the demographics of your users allows you to tailor your ads and your overall brand voice to these users and create a more cohesive overall brand voice. It also allows you to understand the best avenues for targeting, that you might not have considered otherwise.

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### Conversions by ad

If you're running multiple campaigns, seeing how each is performing is always a good idea, as it allows you to allocate resources where they'll be the most useful and adapt your strategy in line with real-time results. For example, spending more on better performing campaigns to drive return, or carrying out additional testing on a lower performing campaign to improve results.

It's important to remember that when you first launch a paid social campaign, it will go through a "learning phase" where it optimises your campaigns based on your goals. Usually, the learning phase ends after 50 goal completions (this could be leads, conversions, sales or any other goal you've set), and it's **incredibly important** to let your campaigns go through the learning phase without making any changes or amends.

While you'll always be keen to see amazing results come through in a matter of days, the best thing you can do for success on social media, in the long run, is to leave your campaigns as they are until they come out of the learning phase. This allows the platforms to properly understand your campaign and the users it's targeting, and therefore more effectively optimise your ads going forward!

# Best Practices/Our tips

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Lots of organisations think paid social is easy, without realising how much consideration, strategy, testing, time and energy goes into the most successful paid social campaigns. While the results of paid social campaigns can be incredibly powerful, when managed improperly they can also lose organisations money, or make them think that social "just doesn't work for us", when in fact there is an extensive network of untapped potential customers waiting to be found on social networks – all you need is the right strategy.

Here are some top tips from our **Head of Paid Social, Harriet Tuite**:

- It's all about having a clear strategy – focus on what you are trying to achieve and how you're going to get there.
- Know your audience – unless you understand your audience, you will never be able to resonate with them.
- Test absolutely everything – the more that you test, the easier it will be to make informed decisions.
- Build as much data as possible – there's no such thing as too much data! Drive website visits, engagements, anything that you can monitor, analyse and retarget.
- Don't be afraid to experiment – there's no one size fits all for paid social success, if you have an idea, try it out! It might just work.



# Summary

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- 1 Paid social is a really powerful way to reach a larger audience
- 2 Paid social uses data and can learn about your target audience to optimise your campaigns and achieve your objectives
- 3 There are lots of different platforms you can use, but remember the different platforms require different strategies
- 4 Setting a budget will depend on a range of factors and you should monitor your spend
- 5 Track your results and if needs be make changes to your campaigns as they run

Remember there isn't one strategy that suits all. What works for one business or industry might not work for yours.

At the very top level, the goal of paid social is to drive conversions.

We do this by implementing highly detailed brand awareness and engagement campaigns. We then use this base as part of our retargeting campaigns which drive high-quality conversions.

With a 'deep-dive to understand your goals, how you should be portrayed, and how ads should be created, we can create highly successful long and short-term plans.

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