

HOW TO USE LINKEDIN FOR LEAD GENERATION



Sure, it's become known for executive humblebrags and 'diaries' from people who claim to be in the gym at 4am. But LinkedIn is still a marketer's best friend, if used properly.

Among its membership, LinkedIn counts executives from every Fortune 500 company. Users have an average household income of £80,000. And more than half of them are at senior-management level. Basically, LinkedIn users are affluent, experienced, ambitious and influential. They are frequently decision makers in their businesses.

LINKEDIN FOR B2B

LinkedIn is also arguably the most useful social channel for B2B marketers. In terms of lead generation, it's far easier to prove ROI on a paid LinkedIn campaign than it is with its nearest competitor, Twitter, which is better suited to brand awareness.

But when planning and delivering paid LinkedIn campaigns, many marketers are starting from scratch, with very little knowledge of what will help them obtain their campaign goals. Like...

- Properly setting targets for campaigns
- Reporting on how targets have been met (or not met)
- Lessons learnt for next time

All brands are different, so it's important to identify goals and see what works for your specific audience.

Here's our guide to doing just that. With advice from OG paid social experts as well as a case study with Earth-i that demonstrates how we've practised what we preach, with award-winning outcomes.

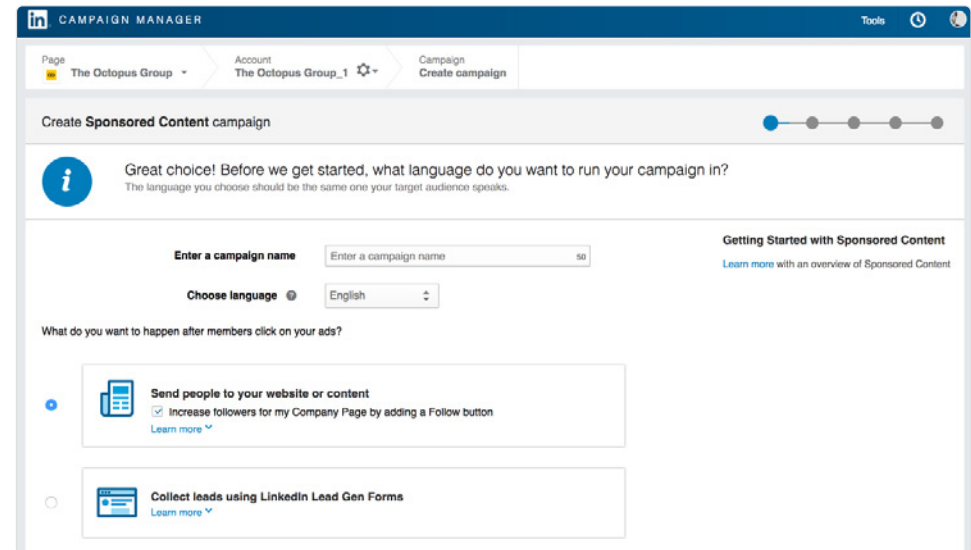
LINKEDIN SPONSORED UPDATES

With over 550 million registered users, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional online social network. So, if you're looking for more B2B leads, it's the place to be.

Sponsored Updates are an excellent way to increase the visibility of your posts and reach a new, specific type of prospect.

You can specify the type of user you want your update to be promoted to by using a combination of targeting options, including location, job title, company size, industry, skills, and age. As well as by visitor retargeting, company lists and accounts. Those same filtering options can also be used to exclude certain types of users.

LinkedIn will give you an estimate of the audience size for your Sponsored Update and once you've tweaked your combination of

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn Campaign Manager interface for creating a Sponsored Content campaign. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Page' (The Octopus Group), 'Account' (The Octopus Group_1), and 'Campaign' (Create campaign). Below this, the main heading is 'Create Sponsored Content campaign'. A message box says 'Great choice! Before we get started, what language do you want to run your campaign in? The language you choose should be the same one your target audience speaks.' Below this, there are input fields for 'Enter a campaign name' and a dropdown for 'Choose language' (set to English). A section titled 'What do you want to happen after members click on your ads?' offers two options: 'Send people to your website or content' (with a checkbox for 'Increase followers for my Company Page by adding a Follow button') and 'Collect leads using LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms'. A 'Getting Started with Sponsored Content' link is also present.

targeting options, you'll be asked to bid on the campaign. You can either pay each time somebody clicks on the post (cost-per-click or CPC), or for each time your update is shown (cost per 1,000 impressions or CPM). We usually recommend CPC for lead generation, though CPM may be relevant for campaigns that are purely for brand awareness.

Set either a daily or a total budget to ensure you don't overspend on the campaign.



PRO TIP

With the CPC model, you pay if somebody clicks on any of the following in the post: company name, logo, post title, or the link. You don't pay if they take a social action such as commenting on, liking, or sharing it.

WHY DO THEY WORK?

Audience targeting options let you create highly-tailored campaigns, so you know you're reaching the right professionals at the right companies.

For example, if you choose to target London-based IT directors at companies with more than 200 employees, you can specify that in the settings.

The ability to exclude certain types of LinkedIn user is an excellent way to keep costs down, as it reduces the chances of you paying for irrelevant clicks or impressions. For example, competitors and existing customers.

Updates show up in a user's newsfeed (marked as 'Sponsored') alongside activity from the contacts and companies they already follow, so they're easier to spot than ads that appear at the side of the screen.

Lead gen cards, which are relatively new to LinkedIn, allow users to fill-out forms without leaving the platform. This removes a barrier to entry for lead capture. All leads can then be downloaded from the platform. These cards work best when the main objective of the campaign is to generate leads, rather than website traffic. They can also remove the need for a gated landing page.

THE ANATOMY OF A GREAT LINKEDIN SPONSORED UPDATE

1

Create targeted audience settings

Set a combination of targeting options (specific job, location, industry, etc.) and ensure that the post is highly relevant for this type of audience, as well as the page you're linking to. The more targeted it is, the higher your CTR is likely to be, and the higher the conversion rate once your targets land on the page you're directing them to.

2

One call-to-action (CTA) and one link

You want to ensure that the people clicking are likely to take the next step and convert once they reach your landing page. The easiest way to do that is to have one clear CTA, and keep the number of clickable distractions to a minimum. By having just one link, you're giving prominence to that CTA, and prioritising clicks that are likely to actually convert. It doesn't have to be a URL. In the case of lead gen cards, sometimes it's best to direct people straight to a form fill.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn Campaign Manager interface for creating a Sponsored Content campaign. The top navigation bar includes the LinkedIn logo, 'CAMPAIGN MANAGER', and links for 'Tools' and 'Account'. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for 'Page' (The Octopus Group), 'Account' (The Octopus Group_1), and 'Campaign' (Create campaign). The main heading is 'Create Sponsored Content campaign'. A progress bar at the top right shows four steps: 1. Targeting (active), 2. Budget, 3. Creative, and 4. Review. The first step, 'Targeting', is highlighted. It contains a section 'OK, now let's target your audience' with the instruction 'Reach the right people by selecting specific targeting criteria like job title, location and more.' Below this is a 'Target by' dropdown menu set to 'the audience below'. A red circle with the number '1' is placed over this dropdown. To the right of the targeting options, there is a section 'Your estimated target audience' showing '400,000,000+ LinkedIn members' and a link 'How do I target the right audience?'. Below the targeting options, there is a section 'Select specific targeting criteria to zero in on your ideal audience:' with a grid of criteria: Company name, Company industry, Company size, Job title, Job function, Job seniority, Member schools, Fields of study, Degrees, Member skills, Member groups, Member gender, Member age, and Years of experience. At the bottom of the targeting section, there are two checkboxes: 'Help my campaign reach new audiences similar to my targeting criteria with Audience Expansion.' and '(BETA) Deliver my campaign to my target audience beyond the LinkedIn feed.' Below these is a 'Save audience as template (optional):' link with a 'Save as new' button. At the bottom of the interface, there are buttons for 'Cancel campaign', 'Save as draft', '< Previous', and 'Next >'. The footer includes 'LinkedIn Corporation © 2017' and links for 'Help Center', 'Certified Partners', 'Ad Guidelines', 'Ads Agreement', 'User Agreement', and 'Privacy Policy'.

3

4

5

5 Ultimately, you won't know whether a Sponsored Update is going to be effective until you put it out there and see how well it performs. Create a few different versions (experiment with the text and images) and see which performs best.



5

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The Octopus Group

• Sponsored

Congruamus si in natura ad natura quibusdam ab multo cogitatione.
Check it out our website for further informations: <http://hubs.ly/H04qVL40>



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Sed licet fas impleri saltem praescriptis velut
urbatur aliquotiens legum fas velut licet quicquid
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To get the most out of sponsored posts, it's worth creating one around a theme that you know is likely to perform well. Look at the open rates and CTRs of emails you've sent out in the past, as well as blog posts and LinkedIn posts that have generated the most engagement, and use them for inspiration.

If you don't have much to draw from, post a range of updates on LinkedIn (either via your profile page or your company's) and see which ones resonate with your audience. Not only does this give you an insight, it also provides some endorsement (via the comments and likes) should you decide to sponsor that post.

Case study

EARTH-I NATIONAL MAPPING AND CADASTRAL AGENCIES

Start and end date: 09/07/2018 - 08/08/2018

(Paid LinkedIn campaign only)

Social media advertising is a great platform for growing brand awareness and generating leads. But getting it right isn't always easy, especially when you've got a complicated brand message to promote.

It's one thing if you're selling hardware. Quite another if you're a global satellite company at the forefront of the commercialisation of space, trying to target execs at National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies (NMCA), like Octopus Group's client Earth-i.

Which is why we were delighted to learn that our NMCA campaign for Earth-i won the LinkedIn Marketing Award for Best B2B Brand Campaign for Small Businesses.



It's no wonder really; our paid LinkedIn campaigns delivered 118,000 impressions and over 2,300 clicks, with a CPL as low as £8.44 and a CPC of £1.57, generating more than 300 leads in 20 countries. When you consider the average CPL for a B2B marketing campaign can reach into the hundreds and the average CPC can go up to £13, you might call these 'out of this world' results!

So, how on earth did we manage this, you ask? Well here it is. Our astronomically successful eight-step plan:

1 Dissect the brief

Earth-i tasked us with identifying and creating a messaging framework and marketing strategy for its NMCA buyer persona. The key objectives were to:

- Reach Earth-i's specific addressable audience of around 1,000 national mapping agency executives in over 200 countries
- Raise awareness across language barriers and countries at different stages of development
- Drive leads to support and influence a long buying cycle of up to two years

We referred back to these objectives throughout the campaign to ensure we remained on brief, and created a marketing strategy that covered the stages described next.



How to use LinkedIn for lead generation

2 Put the right tools in place

As a HubSpot partner, we were well positioned to guide Earth-i through the integration process with their website and Salesforce. We built templates for landing pages and emails, using best practice to drive engagement and encourage form fills.

3 Get the messaging right

We ran a messaging workshop with key Earth-i stakeholders to paint a picture of the NMCA buyer persona, including who they are, what drives their behaviour, and how they think and buy. A second workshop gave us the information we needed to create Earth-i's overall NMCA proposition framework, which would underpin all campaign messaging.

4 Create engaging content

With the new messaging in place, we created sustainable content for prospects to engage with across the marketing funnel, including an infographic, eGuide, case study and NMCA proposition document. All the content was brought to life with Earth-i's own incredible satellite images to give it a creative edge and engage the audience.

THE INTEGRATED EARTH-i DATA SERVICE

Earth-i Constellations

DMC3 Constellation

- Wide area mapping
- 80cm VHR imagery
- Annual base map
- 4 band multi-spectral imagery

SuperView Constellation

- Wide area mapping
- 40cm VHR imagery
- Annual base map
- 4 band multi-spectral imagery

KOMPSAT 3 & 3A

- 40cm VHR imagery
- Urban mapping
- 4 band multi-spectral imagery

KOMPSAT 5

- High resolution SAR
- Defeating cloud
- Urban modelling



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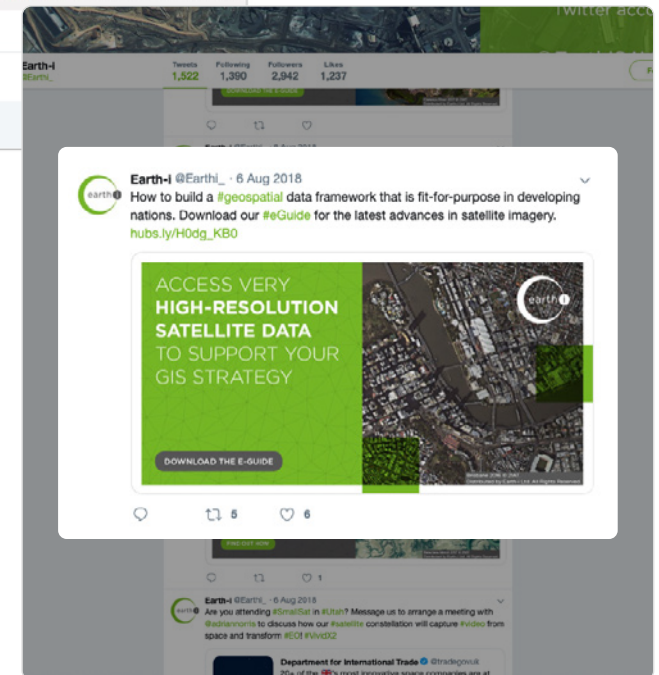
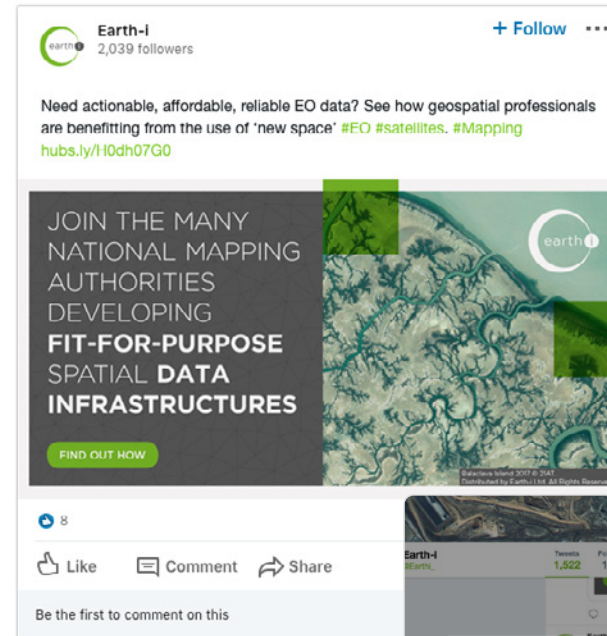
5 The paid LinkedIn platform

We decided to use the paid LinkedIn platform as it's a great tool for reaching niche audiences. We created bespoke ads using the NMCA messaging, and split tested the promotion between Sponsored Updates – to drive the audience to gated landing pages – and in-platform lead generation cards, with a reduced barrier to lead capture.

There was a total addressable audience of around 1,000 national mapping agency executives across 200 countries. We used our persona information for very specific audience targeting. And each ad format was divided into categories, targeting by seniority, job title, location or company, so we could be sure we were reaching the right prospects.

6 A multi-channel approach

Every successful marketing campaign needs a multi-channel approach that gets to all the platforms used by the key audience. So, we created an organic social campaign for LinkedIn and Twitter, blogs for the Earth-i website, and an email campaign to amplify the content further.



7 Capture and nurture leads

Our content was hosted on bespoke HubSpot landing pages, with copy that encouraged downloads. eGuide form-fills triggered entry to the campaign workflows, which helped push prospects through the funnel by feeding relevant content at each stage, turning leads into Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs).

Aim for the sky

8 Our aim for this campaign was to deliver bigger and better results for Earth-i. That meant regular analysis of our work, optimising activities, and then making improvements, whether that was A/B testing landing pages, switching-off lower performing ads, tweaking the creative, amending workflow paths, or experimenting with the time of day paid campaigns ran.

And we didn't stop there. If your target audience is hungry for your content, then making sure there's more to give them is a no brainer. We kicked off a second phase of activity to re-market relevant content to people who engaged with the initial campaign, and to push them through the funnel.

Paul Majmader, Commercial Director at Earth-i, said:
"LinkedIn has proven itself to be a good platform to reach our target audience in the mapping sector."

Jonathan Sumner, Business Development Director at Earth-i, said:
"We will continue to work with the Octopus Group due to their outstanding account planning and management and, now very much proven, paid social media strategies and expertise."



WHAT NEXT?

Using some of the advice we've offered up in this guide, you can try out – or improve upon – your own paid LinkedIn campaigns. Keep a close eye on the ads, try to identify which content performs best, and put money behind that format.

These are good guidelines for successfully using LinkedIn's paid advertising offering, but ultimately, you will find the most success if you're able to see what works best for your specific, targeted audience. The image design and copy you use will also depend upon your campaign goals: do you want webpage visits? Report downloads? Video views? Tailor your campaign accordingly.

Finally, at the risk of stating the obvious: once you've got those leads, make sure you have a plan in place to nurture them. Don't let them drop off! Continue to provide your new prospects with carefully tailored content, and coax them towards conversion.



Thank you for reading

Would you benefit from support
with your paid social strategy?

Get in touch to find out how we could
help you generate high-quality leads.

To see our other resources
visit **octopusgrp.com**

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