A Beginners Guide to LinkedIn Advertising

How to hyper-target your advertising for success

You're not in Kansas anymore. It's not like Google Ads. It's quite different.

Instead of focusing on people finding you using keywords in LinkedIn (that's best achieved by optimising your Profile, Company Page and Showcase Pages) you instead focus on selecting a target **audience** that you want to reach.
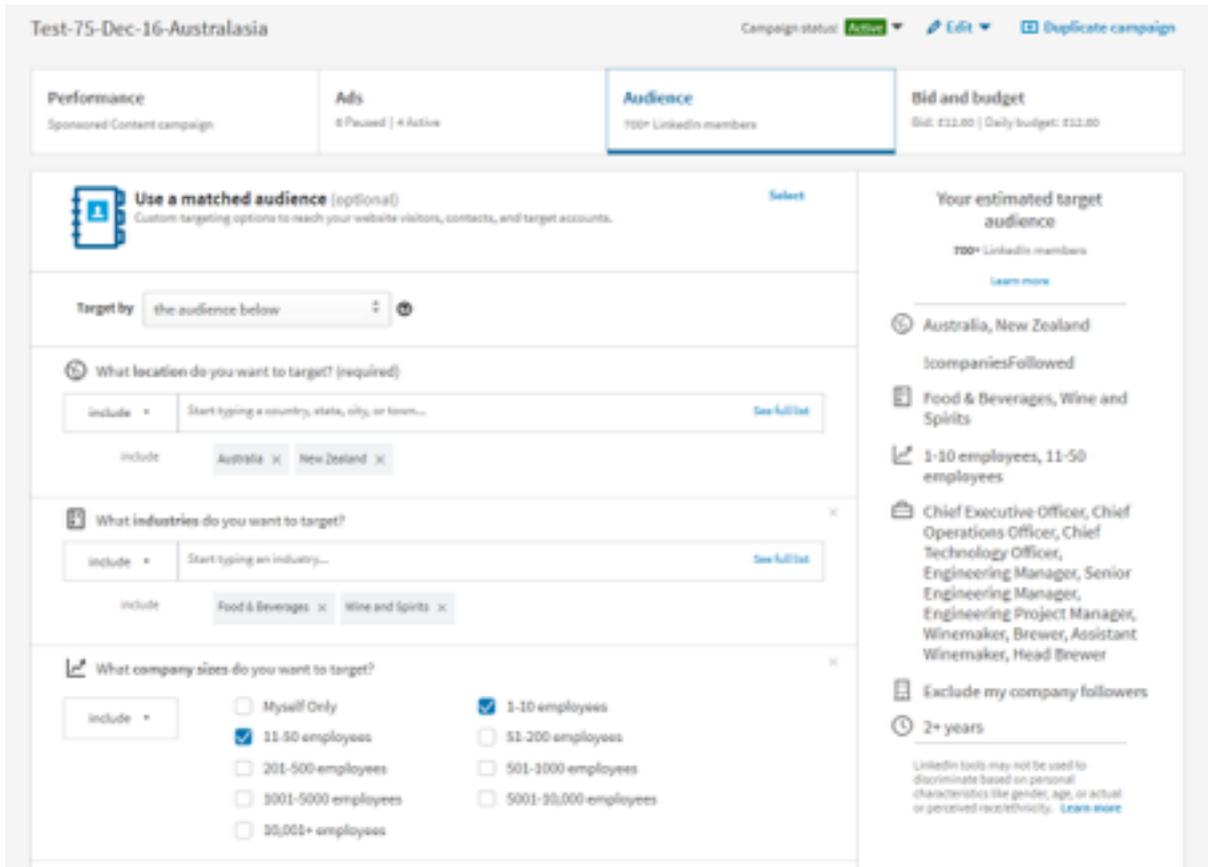
To get started, it's probably useful to show you an example.

The LinkedIn Ad campaigns shown below are split into three geographic areas, with different multimedia content that has been added to a company page being shown in each campaign to address specific geographical audiences. The example uses content which has case studies from customers in specific countries – so Australians and New Zealanders see an Australian customer's success story, US customers an American example, and so on.

The key element lies is in specifying the **Audience** you want to reach.

You start by specifying geographical reach. In the example below, it's Australia and New Zealand we are focusing on. You can choose specific countries or even cities and metropolitan areas. If you are targeting home ground, you may have to choose larger conurbations rather than individual cities and towns.

You can see that this test campaign for a manufacturer of bottling equipment is targeted to only reach a small, specific audience of around 700 people in Australasia. They are further narrowed down by including only two specific industries. For a list of industries you can target, see my article at https://mzs.es/30d17 which lists the industry classifications that LinkedIn uses. There is a drop-down list available in the ad tool that also shows these classifications. It's not perfect, and does not use SIC codes, so you may have to over-estimate your audience, or be unable to really find your special niche.
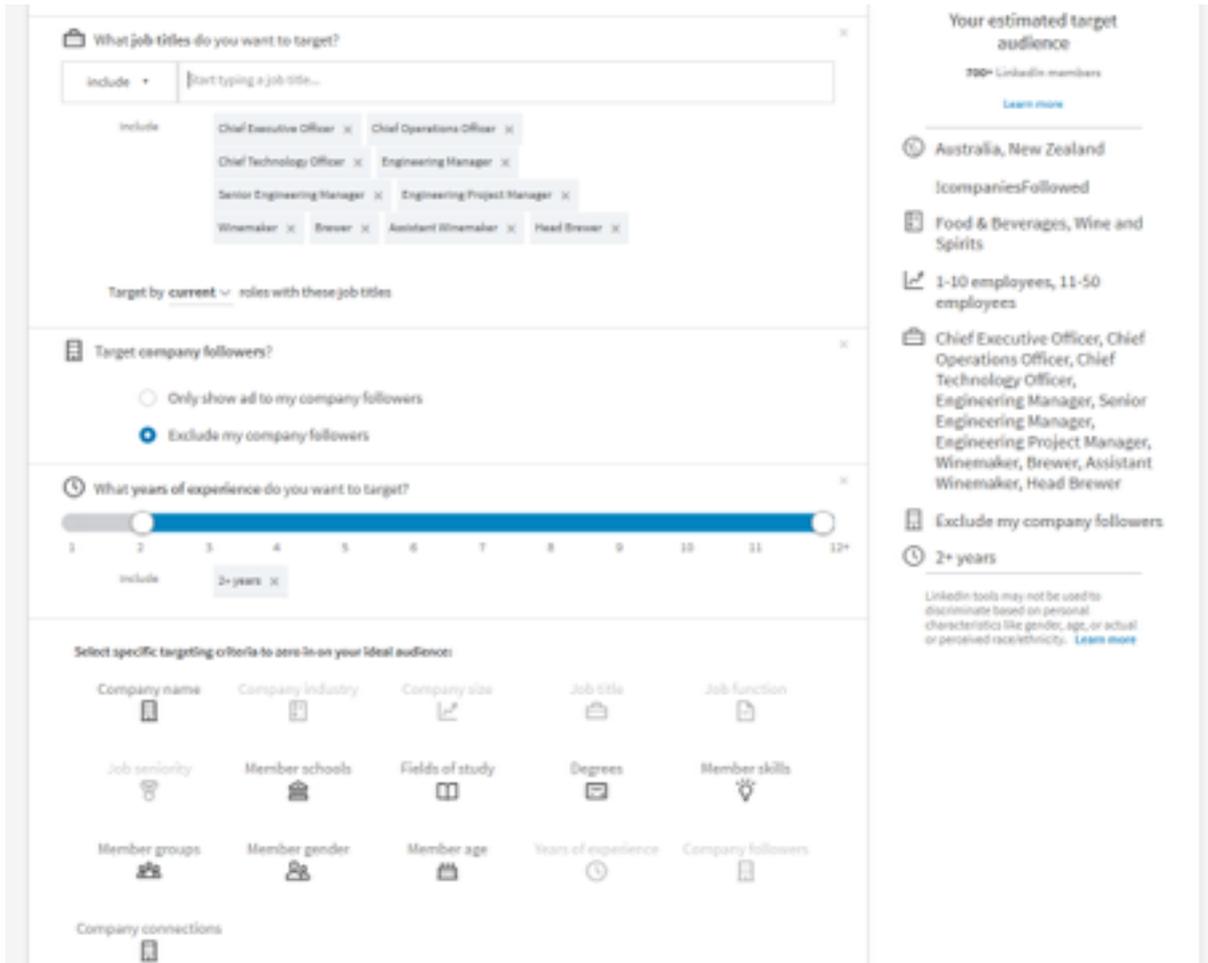
- *As ever with digital marketing, testing, trying alternative approaches and measuring results is the way to play this game. The example is not called Test 75 randomly!*

The selection shown above is further refined by targeting to include only relatively small companies with up to 50 employees. You can choose to filter by *exclusion* if you prefer – so choosing to exclude larger or smaller companies, or omitting or only including 'Myself Only' sole trader types.

You can save your audience profiles as *templates*, so that you can copy your audience targeting to other campaigns, and then change the geography, industry, job titles or other criteria as you need.

- *I recommend you start by brainstorming just who you need to reach, and being fairly brutal with your first tests to try them out on a smaller (and thus cheaper) subset of LinkedIn users. Start by looking at your company followers, or create a number of ideal 'customer personas' who have common criteria.*

The next screen shot is what you see when scrolling further down on the page:

You can see that only specific job titles are being targeted in this campaign. You don't need to use this filter (or indeed any filters aside from Geography) but the more **specific** you are in terms of defining an audience, the more targeted (and hopefully, effective) your advertising will be.

A useful summary of your audience selection as you work through the options is always shown on the right hand side of the screen and follows you down as you scroll. Don't ask me why [!companiesFollowed] appears below the Geography selection – it's just an irritating bug.

You could choose instead to focus on the fuzzier definition of 'Job Seniority' to reach the appropriate level of individual within an organisation.

This is illustrated below for a different, Glasgow and Edinburgh in a Scottish focused campaign to reach senior roles in smaller-sized Law, Accountancy and Banking outfits.

You can also choose 'Job Function' if you want to reach, say, Marketing or Operations functions within a company. Even if you discover you are being too prescriptive at first and reach too narrow an audience – you can refine to widen out (or narrow further) as you learn what is effective over time. It's all measurable. Test, measure, repeat.

If you have a good following for your Company Page (300 followers is the current trigger point), you can choose to just target **only** those people who have already shown interest in you by following your Company on LinkedIn – an excellent way to 'preach to the converted'.

It's a binary choice to include or exclude this group, so I often recommend creating two similar campaigns for a specific target grouping – one of which is targeted to your company followers, the other to those who are yet to discover you. The creative content can vary – one may be more focused on an informational 'discovery' download or white paper, the other on specific products or services for an audience that already 'knows' you.

The analytics tools built in to LinkedIn's Advertising service will show you which campaigns (and even which ads or content) are performing best. You can switch ads and campaigns on and off as desired, and can even set start and end dates for campaigns, so you can plan for future events, promotions or have a focus on a specific sector or geographical area.

You can see from this ad campaign above (the ad content is obscured for privacy) that the last piece of content is strongly out-performing the others. So you know that this is the one to invest in, and to show more to your prospects. You might choose to retire or pause the other variations and use just the content that gets the best results for you. And you can of course rinse and repeat this process.

- I am not trying to teach you how to suck eggs, but I recommend that you use **UTM tags** in all your advert URLs so you can see through your website analytics what's actually working best. A shortcut to Google's excellent free tool to let you add UTM tags is at https://mzs.es/utm - so I might use a URL with UTM tags added like this https://doctorlinkedin.com/?utm_source=Advertising%20Document&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=%20LinkedIn_Advertising_Guide_Jul_19&utm_content=v3

- By adding the tags, I can tell right away in my Google Analytics reports how many people clicked on this link in this version of this PDF Document

- No idea what UTM tags are or how to use them? Read this article (6 minutes read) https://www.koozai.com/blog/analytics/utm-parameters/

OK. Where do I get started with LinkedIn Advertising?

To get to the starting point for LinkedIn Advertising, log in to LinkedIn first, then click on https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/ads
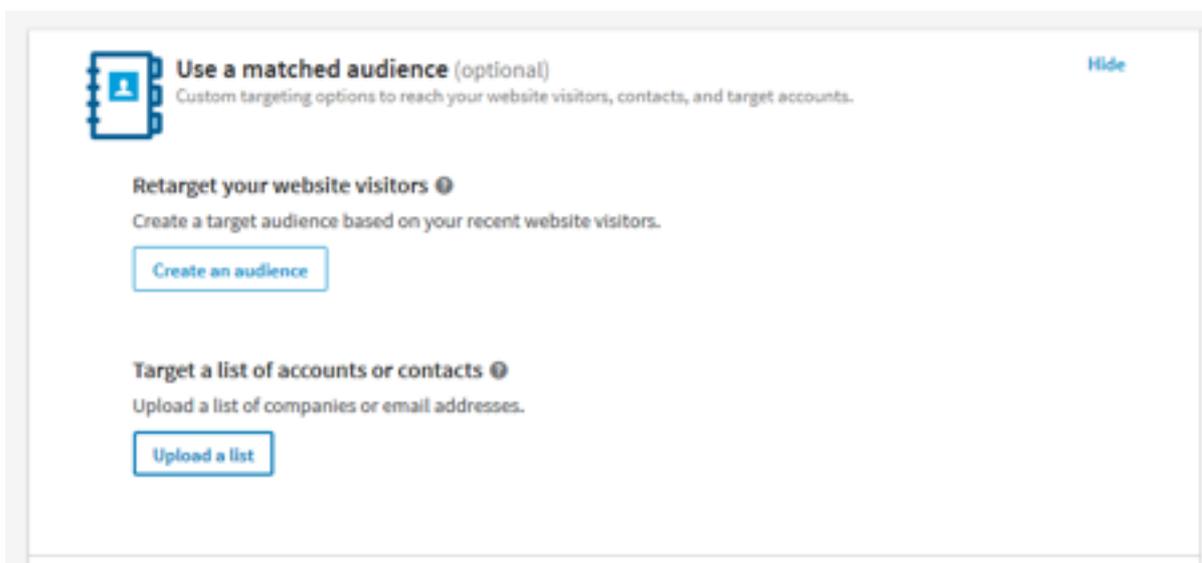
You'll need a plastic card to start spending on advertising, but the invoicing and reporting tools are fairly robust, so you should be able to integrate this into your advertising and marketing procedures quite easily. From time to time, LinkedIn will offer vouchers for a free spend – but this is normally only for new advertisers.

You can also choose whether you want to pay a cost per click or a cost per thousand impressions (CPM) for your campaigns. The choice depends on what you are trying to achieve. Again – you should experiment, measure and refine.

This Guide to Advertising on LinkedIn is <u>not</u> exhaustive

This is just an introduction to the basics and the most common use. And the goalposts will move, inevitably as LinkedIn evolve their advertising tools and services. There are other rather sexy options such as low-friction Lead Generation forms where your prospect just clicks a button to send you their details or ask for a download – with the data pulled directly from their LinkedIn Profile, without their needing to retype their details. See https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/native-advertising/lead-gen-ads

And I've not even touched on using matched audiences. With this feature, you can retarget so that ads will be shown to your website visitors, or you can import your mailing or contact lists to target specific people or specific companies, large or small. Importing a few thousand names from your mailing list so they see your ads when they are using LinkedIn can be very effective.

My aim with this process of introduction to LinkedIn Advertising is simple; to give you the knowledge and help to make your LinkedIn presence work harder for you and your enterprise and to attract more partners, customers and suppliers into your online network to give you, yes, an **edge** to make it a little easier to achieve business success.

I hope it helps you to be more visible, legible and credible online.

Do you have any questions or need more help?

If you have questions I have not answered here, or just want some quick advice from some experienced with working with LinkedIn Advertising, call me on 07712.105.711 or drop a line to david.petherick@doctorlinkedin.com

Best wishes, **David**

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- Book a ten minute phone, zoom or Skype call: https://mzs.es/free
- 30 Top Tips for a better LinkedIn Profile: https://mzs.es/30d