



# Facebook Ads

## Troubleshooting Guide

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# Introduction



Welcome! I want to give you a little background about me and how I came to write this guide. I started using social media 17 years ago to promote my own side businesses after being laid off from my full time job. I started helping friends and entrepreneurs get on board with Facebook and Twitter and watched as they increased their sales. I wanted to help more people increase their business with social media and I decided to do some online social media tutorials.

But I wanted to be a little different. I blended my improvisational comedy background with social media to create Grandma Mary, a Social Media Edutainer. I grew my blog and following and was

offered to co-author Facebook Marketing All-in-One for Dummies along with Amy Porterfield and Phyllis Khare.

I have successfully use Facebook Advertising to grow my business and have helped many businesses design and execute their own successful campaigns. I've spent millions of dollars in Facebook ad campaigns as well as run campaigns for clients spending anywhere from \$20/day to \$10,000/day.

What I'm truly passionate about is helping other entrepreneurs and owners grow their business using Facebook ads and get GREAT results. Mark Zuckerberg does not need to be overpaid for your ads.

I also love to help people start their own Agency running Facebook Ads for clients – and have had over 700 people take my Facebook Advertising Secrets Course (find out more here: <https://fbadvertisingsecrets.com/>) I love this business because you can run it from anywhere in the world and work with a huge variety of businesses. The possibilities are endless and that's what I want for you – the ability to choose the life you want either by starting your OWN business or by growing the one you have.

To Your Success,

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## Basic Facebook Ads Troubleshooting

The biggest problem I see when people say that their Facebook Ads don't work is that they haven't run enough tests to even get some basic benchmarks. It's hard to troubleshoot when you've only run 1 or 2 ads because you don't know where you stand with your numbers.

**The three biggest things to troubleshoot are:**

- 1. The Optimization – what is the goal that you are telling Facebook to shoot for?**
- 2. The Audience – your targeting and keywords.**
- 3. Ad itself – the creative aspects of the ad.**

**Big questions to ask about your Optimization:**

- **Are you optimizing for the right goal?** I mostly will optimize for Leads or Sales. Traffic can give you cheap traffic but higher cost sales. Video Views or Engagement should be used more at the top of the funnel and won't lead to link clicks.
- **Do you have the Pixel set up properly?** If you are optimizing for Leads or Sales, you need to have the Lead Pixel or Purchase Pixel in place on your website or your checkout system.
- **Do you have any Cost Caps in place?** Cost caps will restrict your Reach if you don't know what you are doing. I only typically use Cost Caps when I've done a lot of testing and am scaling ads up with higher budgets.

- **Do you have the right budget?** Are you spending too much (and burning out your audience) or not spending enough so that pixel isn't getting enough data (more on the Learning Phase later).
- **Do you have the right placements?** Advantage+ placement isn't always a good thing.

## Big questions to ask about your Targeting:

- **How wide is your targeting?** - Typically I don't suggest testing an audience larger than 2-5 million but you can have different reason to try that. Although wider is working better these days with the Pixel in place in particular. I do suggest grouping keywords into logical groups so that you can test ideas together (i.e. job titles in one Ad Set, similar keywords in another, Fan Pages in another)
- **Is your targeting too narrow?** - It's a mistake to subdivide your targeting into 10,000 people slices because Facebook won't be able to optimize that well. An exception is retargeting audiences or Local audiences. And once you do some initial tests you may find that your audience of 100,000 people out performs a larger audience but it will get fatigued faster.
- **Have you tried at least 5-10 different audiences?** - Make sure you test enough before you draw any big conclusions about whether Facebook Ads work for you. An exception here is local targeting which will be essentially the same and you will vary different creative elements.

- **Are you testing high-value Lookalike Audiences?** - Lookalikes of your customers, people who have purchased multiple times, audiences with high CLTV (Customer Lifetime Value).

## Big questions to ask about your Ad Creative:

- **Is your offer and call to action clear on the ad?** - Having an ad that is interesting is the biggest
- **Is your ad text interesting?** - Having a good “hook” for your ad is key.
- **Is your ad image bright, readable, and eye-catching?** - Make sure any text is clear on the image if you have text there. Have the product be visible and take up a lot of the space if it’s for a product. If you have people in the ad make sure there is good lighting - but it could even be more of a “candid” shot so it looks more like a regular post.
- **Are you getting good CTR?** - Low CTR - click thru rate - can mean the ad isn’t interesting to people. It could also be the targeting and not reaching the right people with your message.

Troubleshooting can be a matter of figuring out what is going wrong with an existing ad that had been performing well (can be ad fatigue or increased competition) or troubleshooting ads that aren’t performing well from the start and figuring out what to try next.

## Troubleshooting Specific Issues

**High CPC or CPLC  
(Cost per Click  
– or Cost per  
Link Click)**



- If low link click cost is the whole goal, then Traffic is the right optimization. Are you optimizing for Traffic? If you are seeing high cost per Link Click and your optimization is Leads or Purchases, that can be common.
- Are you getting the other metrics you want? i.e. Leads or Purchases?
- Is your CTR over 1%? If not then the creative may not be good.
- Do you have multiple ads running in one ad set? If so is one ad performing better than the others?
- Do you have a small audience (less than 10,000)?

**Low CTR  
(Click Thru  
Rate)**



- Have you tested multiple images?
- Have you tested multiple versions of text?
- Does your ad have social proof?
- Have you tested a different ad type?
- Are you emphasizing the pain points?
- Are you in a challenging industry? (dentistry isn't going to get as good CTR as a puppy business) Test different ads and see which one is the best.

**Low Reach**



- Has the Reach changed suddenly or has it been low from the start?
- Do you have a small audience (i.e. lower than 10,000)?
- Is your budget lower than \$10/day?
- Is your CPM over \$30? (Could be competition or Facebook is restricting your ad)
- Are you getting the other metrics you want (i.e. Conversions or Clicks)
- Is your CTR over 1%
- Is there high competition? (Delivery Insights)

## Not Getting Conversions or Leads



- Is your Facebook Pixel set up correctly with a Standard event or Custom Conversion?
- Are you getting link clicks?
- Is your CTR over 1%?
- Is the Landing Page compelling?
- Have you tested multiple audiences?
- Is your offer compelling?
- Is your Landing Page converting with other traffic? If so, then something might be wrong with an offer mismatch or your targeting in the ads. The Landing Page should be converting before you run a lot of ads to that page!

## Your Ads aren't Delivering



- Is your target audience too narrow?
- Are you running a Conversion ad with a new pixel?
- Do you have multiple ads under each Ad Set? Or are you using Campaign Budget Optimization? Facebook doesn't deliver each ad equally
- Are you looking at the right date range?
- Are you manually bidding with a low budget?
- Do you have spend limits on your account?
- Are your Ads approved and on at each level?
- Do you have too much text in your images?
- Is your billing set up correctly and current?

## High CPM



- Are you optimizing around a Pixel event that doesn't have a lot of actions (conversions)?
- Do you have a small audience (i.e. lower than 10,000)?
- Are you advertising something that Facebook doesn't like as much (weight loss, making money)?
- Are you advertising at a competitive time of year (December)?
- Do you know if your ad account is restricted in some way? Have you run other ad campaigns that have done fine?
- Does your audience have high competition?
- Do you have a lot of negative feedback on the ad?



**No Sales**



- Are you advertising to a cold audience or using retargeting?
- Are you optimizing around a Pixel event that doesn't have a lot of actions (purchase)? Consider moving the optimization to Add to Cart.
- Have you tried multiple creatives – Carousel, Single Image, video?
- Are you getting CTR over 1%?
- Is your sales page compelling?
- Is the ad fatigued? Check First Time Impression Ratio.
- Do you have a limited time or urgency in the offer? Special deal, closing, etc.
- Is your sales page converting with your warm traffic? If you haven't gotten any sales at all, then it's not a good idea to run ads yet. You want your sales page to be converting at some level.

During your troubleshooting make sure you are always creating a new ad rather than tweaking an existing ad. Also use a good naming convention so that you can easily keep track of what you've tested and tried.

## Best Practices in General

Some of these cases will depend on your specific niche, budget, and goals but here are some good best practices for Facebook and Instagram Ads.

- **Don't make big edits to ads or audiences** - ALWAYS duplicate into a new Ad or Ad Set (data gets muddy)
- **Let the ad run 3-4 days** before making any decisions. Give your ads time to normalize
- **Increase the budget slowly** - 20-30% every 3-4 days
- **Have different ads for different segments of the funnel** - what does your customer need to know at that stage of the buying journey?
- **Wider audiences typically are performing better** with Conversion Ads when you have the Pixel installed. Facebook's Algorithm optimizes well as machine learning and AI are improving.
- **Shut down ads or ad sets that aren't working** and create new tests
- **Start your testing with Ad Set Budget Optimization rather than Campaign Budget Optimization.** That structure allows the budget to be dedicated to that audience so that you can really understand what is working: <https://www.andreavahl.com/facebook-advertising/how-to-structure-your-facebook-and-instagram-ad-campaigns.php>
- **Create a solid test plan:** <https://www.andreavahl.com/facebook-advertising/10-day-beginner-facebook-ad-test-plan.php>

# Troubleshooting Common Random Issues

## Ad is Declined:

- Check the Ad Level to see what the specific reason is. You can also dispute the ad from there as well.
- Check Ad Guidelines: <https://www.facebook.com/policies/ads/> (Can dispute if you feel declined incorrectly)
- Check text – good grammar, capitalization
- No Facebook logos in image, can't mention Facebook in the text (or very limited mention)
- Can't call out specific conditions – see my post about the word “You” in your text and Personal Attributes: <https://www.andreavahl.com/facebook-advertising/facebook-ad-policies-understanding-personal-attributes.php>
- No “Play button” image to cause someone to click
- Challenging markets: Making money, working from home, losing weight
- If you are in Housing, Finance, or Employment, you cannot use all of the targeting features and you will have to declare you are in that category. Sometimes Facebook thinks you are in that category due to a word or phrase you use and you will have to dispute the ad.

## Facebook Pixel Issues:

- Use the Chrome Pixel helper: <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/facebook-pixel-helper/fdgfkebogiiimcoedlicjlajpkdmockpc?hl=en>
- Understanding the Facebook pixel: <https://www.andreavahl.com/facebook/facebookadspixel.php>

## **Contacting Facebook:**

Facebook is notorious for having poor support but when you are spending money you can typically get a little better support. Sometimes they do have a Live chat available here:

<https://business.facebook.com/business/help>

I also have some more support links here:

<https://www.andreavahl.com/facebook-advertising/contact-facebook-support-advertising-help.php>

## Yikes - What If Your Ad is Tanking

Gahhhh what's happening? The ad was doing so well! When changes happen it can be so frustrating. This is an actual picture of me after seeing ad performance decline suddenly.



I did recover.

Here are some reasons an ad can start tanking:

- **Any changes or edits to an ad** - do not touch an ad that is doing well - don't even look at it wrong.
- **High frequency** - keep it less than 3 (but if it's continuing to convert, don't worry too much until the performance starts changing).
- **Sudden increase in budget** - Only increase the budget 20-30% every 48-72 hours and then let it settle and let the algorithm work again.
- **Stopping and starting an ad.** If an ad is doing well, don't pause it if you don't need to. That can stop the performance. This includes editing (in general, don't edit an ad - duplicate into a new ad or ad

set to make changes.

- **Burnout of audience** - Keep your Frequency below 3-4 for cold audiences and below 7-8 for Retargeting (exceptions can be made for promotions that are still working). Watch your Delivery Insights (available only after the Learning Phase is over, at the Ad Set level).
- **Facebook Glitches** - Facebook does have random issues with reporting and delivery sometimes. So don't pull the trigger too soon on stopping ads until you see that the trend is real.
- **Higher competition** - This can be especially the case during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the year when a lot more advertisers are participating in Black Friday and year-end deals.

## Andrea Vahl and What's Next for You



Hope you got value out of this troubleshooting guide!

Here's a little bit more about me:

I am a **Facebook Advertising Speaker and Consultant** who is passionate about helping businesses understand and leverage the power of Facebook Ads to actually grow their business. I am the co-author of **Facebook Marketing All-in-One for Dummies** with Amy Porterfield and Phyllis Khare and my newest book is **Facebook Ads Made Simple**.

I have appeared on top lists on **Entrepreneur.com**, **Inc.com**, and other influential sites. I am the **founder of Facebook Advertising Secrets** an online learning program with over 700 students and have managed over \$6M in ad spend for my clients. My super-power is to make Facebook ads mar-

keting easy to understand and implement. I have directly impacted the bottom line of thousands of companies through my training and one-on-one consulting. I am also a stand-up comedian.

I know Facebook Ads can be a challenge but I've seen them work for EVERY business. What are you trying to accomplish with Facebook Ads? Do you have the right overall strategy? Feel free to contact me to find out about my ads management and one-on-one consulting: [andrea@andreavahl.com](mailto:andrea@andreavahl.com). Also, I have ongoing events and training that you can learn about here: <https://www.andreavahl.com/events>