INFO-TYPERS · FREE GUIDE

who sees my ad on Meta?

Who sees your Meta ad? Your ad is your targeting

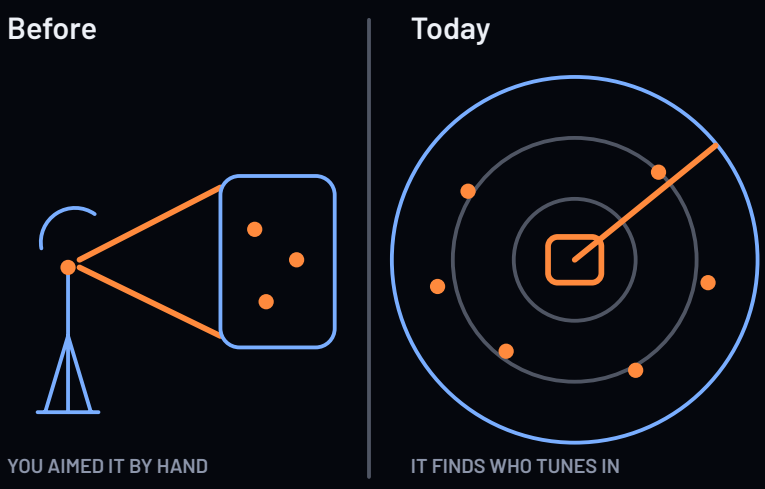
What Meta respects and what it treats as a hint when you target, how Meta finds people today, and 8 templates to build 3 versions of your ad, one for each type of customer.

Interactive version: typersagency.com/en/blog/who-sees-your-meta-ad

TYPERS

THE IDEA IN ONE SENTENCE

What you pick is a hint. Your ad is the signal



What you pick when you build the audience (age, gender, interests) is a hint, not a filter. Meta's AI looks for who to show your ad to, and what tells it the most about who to reach is the ad itself: what it shows, what it says and who it speaks to.

- The old idea: you aimed the antenna by hand. You picked “women, 25 to 35, who like yoga” and expected the ad to show only to that group.
- Today, in Meta's words: “We'll show ads to people matching your suggestion, and other audiences when it's likely to improve performance.” With Advantage+ audience, “you allow us to look outside your set targeting parameters.”
- What Meta does respect: location, minimum age, language and the custom audiences you exclude. Meta calls them strict criteria “where AI should not expand beyond.”
- The twist: your ad is a signal and a radar looks for who tunes in. Example: the same yoga studio with three ads, one for someone who's never tried yoga, one for someone with a sore back and one for runners, gives Meta three different signals to search with.

If you ever set up “perfect” targeting and still heard from people who had nothing to do with your business, this guide is for you. We won't ask you to pick better boxes: we'll show you how to make the ad itself speak to your customer.

“Your ad is your targeting” and the 3-version method are our advice, from people who've been there. The rules and quotes come from Meta's official pages, as of November 2026. The yoga studio is an example, not a real case.

STEP 1 OF 5

01

Limits and hints: what Meta respects and what it treats as a suggestion



Meta goes past the hint, never the limit.

- When you build an audience, Meta splits what you pick into two groups. Audience controls are hard limits: your ad doesn't go outside them. Audience suggestions are hints: Meta starts there and also looks for other people if it thinks the ad will do better.
- Where to find the controls: hover over Locations and select Edit, then select Show more options to get to Exclude these custom audiences, Minimum age and Languages.
- If something truly has to be a limit (for example, a service only for women), Meta has a way to further limit your audience. Our advice: use it only when your business really requires it, not out of habit.
- Interest exclusions are gone: Meta removed detailed targeting exclusions in 2025. What you can still exclude is your own custom audiences, like your list of current customers.

Heads up: Inside your limits, Meta looks for who to show the ad to. Your hints help it get started, but they don't fence it in.

COMMON MISTAKE

Piling interests into the audience, thinking the ad will only show to that group.

STEP 1 · THE TABLE

Limits and hints

What you pick when you build an audience on Meta, split the way Meta splits it:

LIMITS (AUDIENCE CONTROLS): YOUR AD STAYS INSIDE

- Locations
- Minimum age
- Languages
- Custom audiences you exclude

HINTS (AUDIENCE SUGGESTIONS): META LOOKS FURTHER

- Age range
- Gender
- Interests (detailed targeting)
- Custom and lookalike audiences you add

IN META'S WORDS

Today, in Meta's words: “We'll show ads to people matching your suggestion, and other audiences when it's likely to improve performance.” With Advantage+ audience, “you allow us to look outside your set targeting parameters.”

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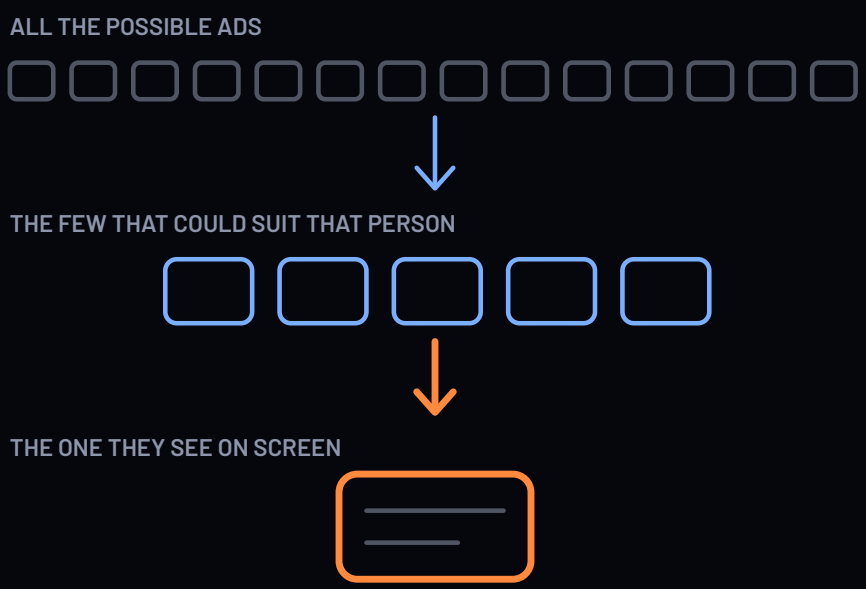
If something truly has to be a limit (for example, a service only for women), Meta has a way to further limit your audience. Our advice: use it only when your business really requires it, not out of habit.

Inside your limits, Meta looks for who to show the ad to. Your hints help it get started, but they don't fence it in.

STEP 2 OF 5

02

How Meta finds people today



What your ad shows weighs on that choice.

- Every time someone opens Instagram or Facebook, Meta has a huge number of ads it could show them and room for very few. Its system chooses, and it learns from what people do with each ad: whether they watch it, tap it, send a message or buy.
- That's why your ad carries so much weight. What it shows and how it says it draws in some people and not others, and Meta learns from those reactions who to keep showing it to. An ad for someone shopping for a gift doesn't draw the same people as one for someone comparing prices.
- Meta says it on its performance marketing page: “Diversify ad creative to deliver the relevant message to the right person.” And it explains that in the learning phase “the delivery system explores which audiences and placements work best for your ads.”

Heads up: “Your ad is your targeting” is how we put it. Meta doesn't use that phrase, but its pages point the same way.

COMMON MISTAKE

Making one ad “for everyone” and hoping Meta guesses who it's for.

FOR THE CURIOUS

Andromeda, Meta's first filter

Meta explained on its engineering blog (December 2024) that it has a system called Andromeda for the first step of ad delivery: out of tens of millions of possible ads, it picks a few thousand that could be relevant to each person. Then other models decide which one is shown.

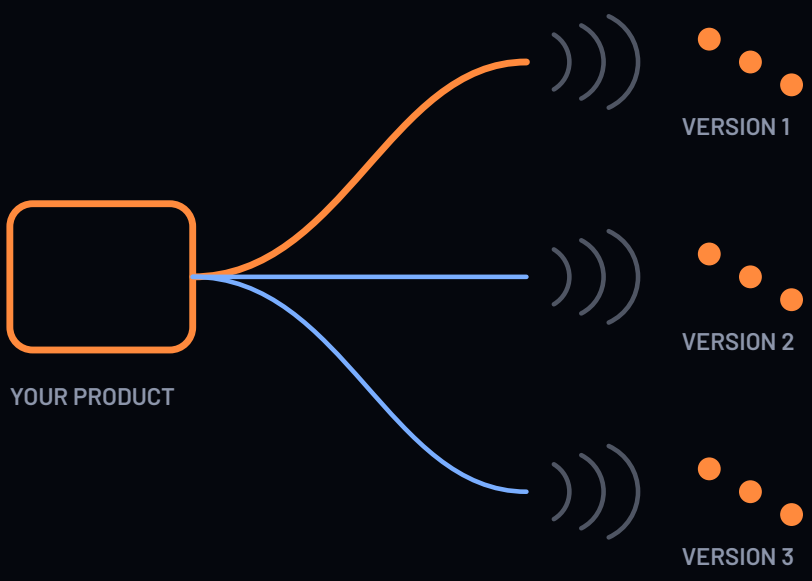
In the same post Meta says that more variety in ads can improve people's experience and advertisers' results. You don't need to know any of this to run ads: it just explains why the ad itself carries so much weight.

Source: Engineering at Meta, December 2, 2024.

https://engineering.fb.com/2024/12/02/production-engineering/meta-andromeda-advantage-automation-next-gen-personalized-ads-retrieval-engine/

BUILD YOUR 3 VERSIONS

One product, three signals



Type what you sell, pick three types of customer and get one version of your ad for each.

1. Write what you sell in a few words.
2. Pick three different types of customer from the 8 templates on the next pages.
3. For each one, build an ad with its angle, its hook, what it shows and its format. Use the worksheet.
4. Launch all three versions together and let them learn for a week.

We wrote the templates and they are a starting point: say the hook in your own words.

Do it online: typersagency.com/en/blog/who-sees-your-meta-ad#armador

THE 8 TEMPLATES

Types of customer

Example with "yoga classes." Swap in your own product.

First-timer

Angle: They don't know you, or they've never bought anything like this. What holds them back is not knowing if it's for them.

Example hook: "First time trying yoga classes? Here's what you get."

What to show: The product up close and in use, start to finish: what it is, how it's used and what they get.

Suggested format: A 15 to 30 second Reel that shows more than it explains.

Comparing prices

Angle: They already know what they want and they're comparing. They want to know what they pay and that it's worth it.

Example hook: "Yoga classes: what you pay and everything that's included."

What to show: What's included, a clear price and what comes at no extra cost (shipping, warranty or advice, if you offer them).

Suggested format: A carousel of 3 to 5 images, one per thing that's included.

Shopping for a gift

Angle: It isn't for them: they want to get it right for someone else and they're afraid of getting it wrong.

Example hook: "Looking for a gift that really lands? Yoga classes, ready to give."

What to show: How it arrives: the packaging, the card and the moment it's opened (with permission from whoever appears).

Suggested format: A short Reel, or a photo of the packaging in Stories.

Needs it now

Angle: They need it today. What matters is how long it takes and whether you answer quickly.

Example hook: "Need yoga classes now? Message us and we'll tell you how fast we can help."

What to show: How fast you respond: the order going out or the open appointment, your hours and how to order in a single message.

Suggested format: An ad that opens a WhatsApp chat, with one clear image.

Types of customer

Example with "yoga classes." Swap in your own product.

Picky about quality

Angle: They're afraid of paying for something that isn't what they saw. They want proof, not adjectives.

Example hook: "Yoga classes: how it's made, up close, no filters."

What to show: The process, the materials, close-ups of the details and who makes it.

Suggested format: A 20 to 40 second behind-the-scenes video.

Already bought from you

Angle: They know you and they liked it. They need a reason to come back: something new or a reminder.

Example hook: "Already tried yoga classes? See what's new."

What to show: What's new, reviews from real customers (with their permission) and how to order again.

Suggested format: A Story or a carousel. If you have your customer list, use it as the audience.

Buying for a business

Angle: They buy for a company: they need volume, an invoice and someone who delivers on time.

Example hook: "Yoga classes for your business: in volume, with an invoice and dates you can count on."

What to show: Large orders, your team at work and the steps to get a quote.

Suggested format: An image or carousel with a form to leave their details.

Has a specific problem

Angle: They aren't looking for your product: they want to stop dealing with a specific problem you solve.

Example hook: "If this sounds like you, yoga classes can help."

What to show: The problem first (without exaggerating or making anyone feel bad), then how you solve it.

Suggested format: A 15 to 30 second Reel, from the problem to the solution.

YOUR WORKSHEET

Your 3 versions

Fill it in by hand or copy it into your notes. One version for each type of customer.

VERSION 1 · TYPE OF CUSTOMER

ANGLE

HOOK

WHAT TO SHOW

FORMAT

VERSION 2 · TYPE OF CUSTOMER

ANGLE

HOOK

WHAT TO SHOW

FORMAT

VERSION 3 · TYPE OF CUSTOMER

ANGLE

HOOK

WHAT TO SHOW

FORMAT

STEP 3 OF 5

03

Your own audiences



Adding them is a hint.

Excluding them is a limit.

- Besides the hints, you can give Meta your own data. These are good starting points because they come from people who already know you.
- Meta Pixel: a piece of code on your website that tells Meta who visited or bought. With it you build an audience of your website visitors.
- Customer list: you upload your customers' details, only if you have their permission to use them that way, and Meta builds an audience with the ones it matches. Use it to speak to people who already bought from you, or to exclude them.
- Lookalike audiences: Meta looks for new people similar to a source audience. The smaller the percentage, the closer the match. Meta recommends starting from your best customers.
- Remember the table: adding a custom audience is a hint; excluding it is a limit.

Heads up: A lookalike audience is only as good as its source: start from the customers who buy the most, not from everyone who ever liked a post.

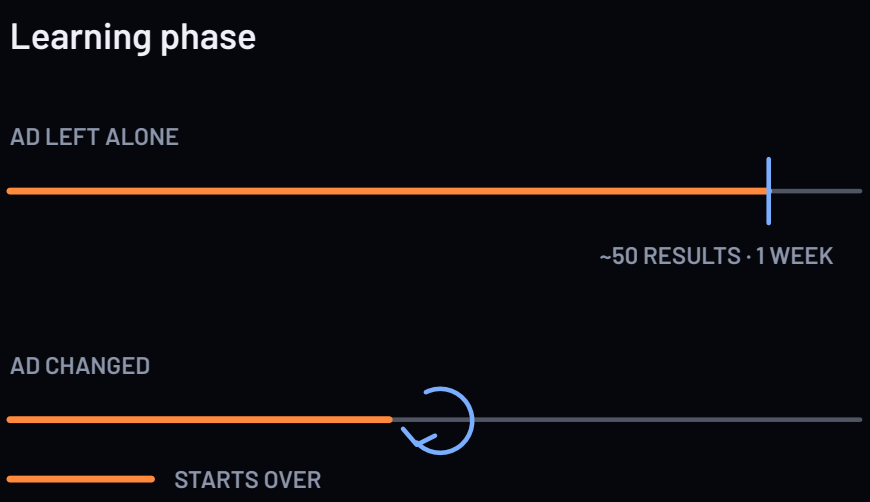
COMMON MISTAKE

Uploading an old list, or contacts who never bought, and expecting Meta to find people "like your customers."

STEP 4 OF 5

04

Let it learn



Launch your 3 versions together. Let them run.

- Every new ad set goes through a learning phase. Meta says it ends once delivery stabilizes, after about 50 results in the week following the last significant edit.
- Changing the ad counts as a significant edit: the learning phase starts over.
- Our advice: launch your 3 versions together from the start, let them run and review calmly. Change things when you have data, not every time you get nervous.

Heads up: If you don't reach about 50 results in a week, don't rush to change the ad: first check whether the result you're asking Meta for is realistic for your budget.

COMMON MISTAKE

Changing the text or the image every couple of days because "it isn't taking off."

STEP 5 OF 5

05

Common mistakes



NEARLY THE SAME

TOO NARROW

CONSTANT CHANGES

Three different types of customer,

three different ads.

- Versions that are nearly the same. Changing the background color or one word doesn't give Meta a new signal. Each version has to speak to a different type of customer: another angle, another hook, another image.
- Targeting too narrow. Ten interests and a tight age range don't make the ad show only to those people: they're hints. And if you add limits you don't need (one neighborhood when you serve the whole city), you take away room Meta needs to find your customers.
- Changing things all the time. Every big change restarts learning. Give it a week before you decide.

Heads up: When in doubt, go back to the builder: three different types of customer, three different ads.

COMMON MISTAKE

Making three versions with the same message in different colors and deciding that "testing versions doesn't work."

LEARN MORE

Want us to take a look with you?

If you already run ads on Meta and you're not sure your ads are speaking to your customer, we can review them together.

Get your free diagnosis. We review your ads and tell you what to adjust.

FAQ

So is picking interests on Meta useless now?

They work as a hint, not a filter. Meta treats age range, gender and interests as suggestions: it can show your ad to other people if it thinks it will perform better. What tells it the most about who to reach is the ad itself.

What can I actually control?

Location, minimum age, language and the custom audiences you exclude. Those are hard limits. If something else really has to be a limit, Meta has a way to further limit your audience.

Why am I getting messages from people who don't fit?

Because what you picked is a hint and Meta also looks beyond it. Check who your ad is speaking to: if it speaks to everyone, Meta has little to search with. Make one version for each type of customer.

How many versions should I make?

We recommend starting with 3, one for each type of customer, that are truly different in angle, hook and image. It isn't a Meta rule: it's a starting point you can manage.

Can I exclude my current customers?

Yes, with a custom audience (your customer list or the buyers your pixel records). Excluding a custom audience is a hard limit. What you can no longer do is exclude by interests.

How long should I let an ad run before changing it?

Meta says the learning phase ends after about 50 results in the week after the last significant edit, and changing the ad restarts it. Give it at least a week before you decide.

What is Andromeda?

It's the system Meta uses for the first step of ad delivery: out of tens of millions of possible ads, it picks a few thousand that could be relevant to each person. You don't have to set it up: it works on its own.

GLOSSARY

The words you'll see

Targeting: Telling the platform who you want to show your ad to.

Audience controls: Hard limits on Meta: locations, minimum age, languages and the custom audiences you exclude.

Audience suggestions: Hints for Meta: age range, gender, detailed targeting, and the custom or lookalike audiences you add. Meta can go beyond them.

Advantage+ audience: Meta's way of using its AI to find who to show your ad to.

Custom audience: An audience built from your own data: your website visitors (with the pixel), your customer list or people who interacted with you on Meta.

Lookalike audience: New people similar to a source audience, like your best customers.

Meta Pixel: A piece of code you add to your website so Meta knows who visited or bought.

Learning phase: The first days of an ad set, while Meta gathers results to learn who to show it to.

Angle: Where you speak to a type of customer from: what bothers them or what they want.

Hook: The first line or image of the ad, the one that makes someone stop scrolling.

WHAT THIS GUIDE DOESN'T PROMISE

What this guide doesn't promise

- Results: a good ad helps Meta find your customer, but what you sell, your price and how you serve people matter just as much or more.
- That 3 is a magic number: it's our method to get started, not a Meta rule.
- That your ad will only show to the people you want: outside the hard limits, Meta decides.
- This guide sums up Meta's official pages and its engineering blog, as of November 2026. Meta changes its options: check them in your account before you run ads.

SOURCES

Where each fact comes from

The rules and quotes in this guide come from Meta's official pages, consulted in October and November 2026:

Meta for Business · Meta Advantage+ audience: https://www.facebook.com/business/ads/meta-advantage-plus/audience

Meta Business Help Center · About Audience controls and Audience suggestions in Advantage+ audience: https://www.facebook.com/business/help/938372127764391

Meta Business Help Center · About Advantage+ audience: https://www.facebook.com/business/help/273363992030035

Meta Business Help Center · Updates to Detailed Targeting: https://www.facebook.com/business/help/458835214668072

Meta for Developers · Graph API and Marketing API v22.0 (detailed targeting exclusions): https://developers.facebook.com/blog/post/2025/01/21/introducing-graph-api-v22-and-marketing-api-v22

Meta Business Help Center · Custom audiences: https://www.facebook.com/business/help/744354708981227

Meta Business Help Center · Lookalike audiences: https://www.facebook.com/business/help/164749007013531

Meta Business Help Center · About the learning phase for ad sets in Meta Ads Manager: https://www.facebook.com/business/help/112167992830700

Meta for Business · Performance marketing on Meta: https://www.facebook.com/business/ads/performance-marketing

Engineering at Meta · Meta Andromeda (December 2, 2024): https://engineering.fb.com/2024/12/02/production-engineering/meta-andromeda-advantage-automation-next-gen-personalized-ads-retrieval-engine/

RUNNING ADS ON META?

We review your ads and your audience. Get your free diagnosis.

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