What to verify before launching a campaign on Meta and Google

Setting up a campaign on Google or Meta is straightforward on the surface. You pick a budget, write some copy, and hit publish. But a campaign that runs and a campaign that delivers measurable results are two different things. The gap between them is usually filled by a handful of checks that many teams skip in their rush to get live.

These checks are not about perfecting every pixel. They are about making sure the machine you are about to start has the right settings, the right data, and the right destination. Without them, you risk spending money on paid traffic that supports business goals only by accident - and accidents are not a strategy.

Campaign objective matches your funnel stage

Both Google and Meta ask you to pick an objective before you build anything else. This choice tells the platform what kind of result to optimise for. If you pick "traffic" when what you actually need is purchases, the algorithm will optimise for clicks, not conversions. You will likely get cheap visits and a high cost per lead that makes no sense for your margin.

Match the objective to the action that matters at this point in your funnel. For top-of-funnel awareness, reach or brand awareness objectives work. For lead generation, use the lead or conversion objective and tell the platform which event to target. The campaign objective is not a suggestion - it is the instruction that shapes every bid the platform places.

Conversion tracking fires correctly

No objective setting matters if the platform cannot see the result. Conversion tracking is the single most common point of failure in new campaigns. The pixel or tag might be on the page, but that does not mean it fires when a conversion happens.

Test the flow end to end before you spend a cent. Use the platform's testing tool to confirm the event registers. Check that the same event does not fire twice on page load, which inflates your numbers. If you are using Google Analytics as your source of truth, make sure the conversion events in the ad platform match the ones in Analytics. Mismatched tracking leads to confusing reports and poor optimisation.

Audience targeting is specific enough

Broad audience targeting can work, but only when your creative and offer are strong enough to filter the right people. For most campaigns, starting broad means paying to show ads to people

who will never convert. Audience targeting is where you narrow the pool to people whose behaviour or demographics suggest real intent.

On Meta, layering interests with behaviours often works better than using interests alone. On Google, combining keyword intent with audience lists (remarketing, customer match) improves efficiency. The goal is not to shrink the audience to the smallest possible size. It is to remove the segments that clearly do not fit your offer. A tight audience usually delivers a better click through rate and a lower cost per lead.

Ad creative matches the landing page promise

Consistency between the ad and the page it sends people to is often overlooked. If your headline says "50% off all boots" and the landing page shows full-price boots, people leave. That bounce hurts your quality score on Google and your relevance score on Meta. Both platforms charge more per click when your ad-to-page match is weak.

Check that the headline, the offer, and the visual tone carry through from the ad to the page. The landing page should also load fast on mobile and present a clear next step. A mismatch here is one of the fastest ways to burn budget without seeing return on ad spend.

Landing page is built for the action you want

A good campaign sends traffic to a page that is designed to convert that specific audience. A generic homepage rarely works as well as a dedicated page built around the offer in the ad. The page should remove distractions: no navigation bars that let people wander off, no competing offers, and a single primary call to action.

Form length matters for lead generation. Every extra field reduces completion rate. Test whether you really need the phone number or the company size at this stage. For ecommerce, the checkout flow should be as short as the platform allows. The difference between a three-step checkout and a one-step checkout can be twenty points in conversion rate.

When these fundamentals are in place, you are running paid traffic that supports business goals instead of just spending money. The platforms reward campaigns that deliver good user experiences with lower costs and better placement. It is worth the extra hour of checking before you press go.

Budget and bid strategy fit your real data

Many campaigns start with a daily budget that sounds reasonable but has no connection to the actual cost of getting a customer. If your average cost per lead is $50 and you set a $10 daily budget, the platform may not collect enough data to optimise. The algorithm needs

enough conversions per week to learn. A budget that is too low keeps the campaign in learning phase indefinitely.

Bid strategy also matters. Automated bidding (target CPA or target ROAS) works best when you have historical conversion data. Without it, manual or maximise clicks bidding gives you more control. Start with a strategy that matches your data maturity. Do not let the platform guess your target if you do not have enough past conversions to guide it.

Tracking parameters and UTM structure are in place

Without consistent tracking parameters, you cannot tell which campaign, ad set, or creative drove a conversion. Platforms show you their own numbers, but those numbers often differ from what your analytics tool reports. UTM parameters let you see the full picture in your own dashboard.

Set a naming convention before you launch. Use the same structure for every campaign so you can sort and filter later. Include the source, medium, campaign name, and creative variant. This small step saves hours of guesswork when you review performance after a week.

One final review before launch

Run through these points one more time. Confirm the objective matches the funnel stage. Test the tracking. Review the audience and the creative match. Check the landing page speed and focus. Set a budget that gives the algorithm room to learn. Add your UTM parameters. When all of those are solid, you can launch with confidence that you are running **paid traffic that supports business goals** rather than hoping for the best.