



THE PAID ADS SCHOOL

15 signs you're not ready to run ads (yet!)





Hi! I'm Silvia, Paid Ads Specialist & founder of the Paid Ads School.

My job is to follow people around the internet until they buy from my customers.

Over the past six years, I've worked with solopreneurs, small businesses, start-ups, up to businesses in both the B2B and B2C space that were spending \$100,000 a month in paid advertising.

Recently, I decided that my experience is better spent with the small businesses, who have to be extremely careful with how much they invest in advertising and can't afford to just "turn on ads and see what happens."

So, instead of teaching you how to create ads (**spoiler alert:** that's the easy part. You push a few buttons and you create the ad. Simple!), I'm going to give you something more valuable:

I will help you recognize **whether or not you're actually ready to run paid ads.**

#1. You don't know exactly who your client is

If you can't accurately describe your ICA -- especially the things they're struggling with and how they would benefit from working with YOU -- don't start running ads just yet! This is the #1 thing you need to know before you begin running paid ads. (See, it's even listed #1!)



#2. You Can't Describe Accurately Your Customer's Buyer Journey

What do people do on your specific buyer journey? What do they usually do to get to the final purchase decision? What websites do they visit? What questions do they have? What problems are they trying to solve?

Think of all of the touchpoints in your customer's journey before they pull out their credit card

- Organic search for what they're looking for
- Visiting your website
- Going into a competitor's website
- Reading generic blogs
- Email marketing
- Asking for opinions from family and friends

The way people would like it to happen is that you advertise, potential customers go to your website, and they buy from you. But, remember: **the customer journey isn't linear.**

What actually happens is that **only 3% of the people who visit your website buy from you straight away, while the other 97% are not there yet.**

That 97% is going to go through all the other touchpoints before they make a purchase decision -- but you don't know when that one is.

This means that all of your other marketing channels need to be consistently active. Paid advertising is not a substitute. If all your marketing isn't completely on point, paid advertising is not going to work as well as you think (and I'll touch more on that later!).



#3. You Don't Have a Defined Offer

The more specific your offer (and the better you can articulate it) the better your chances of reaching a conversion.

The question that you have to ask yourself is this: **do your customers know exactly what you're going to do for them?**

If your potential customers don't know what you can do for them or what problems are you going to solve, they will be hesitant to hand over their money.

Would you pay for a product or service if you didn't know what results you could expect?
No!

Your potential customers are exactly the same way. You have to be crystal clear on what it is you have to offer. Vagueness -- and I'll say this and I will say this forever -- is the death of advertising

I'll say it again: vagueness is the death of advertising.

You can't afford to be vague. Vague means that you're not getting what you're looking for.

One more time! Vagueness is the death of advertising (I should trademark this, I really should).



#4. You Don't Know What You Want Your Ads to Achieve

What's the goal of your advertising? Is it website visits? Webinar signups? Freebie downloads? Phone calls? Direct purchases? Inquiries? *What is it?!*

If you don't have a clear call to action, you're just running an ad for the sake of running an ad. **If your prospects don't know what you want them to do, they're not going to do it.**

How do you know if your calls to action aren't clear enough? Here's a hint: you'll find yourself shouting: *Ahhh! I wasted my money, I don't want to advertise anymore!*

But -- it's not that the ads don't work, it's likely that you haven't been clear enough.

#5. You Don't Have a Complete Sales Funnel

You need to have a watertight sales process. Once you collect your leads, where do they go? What's the next step? What's your plan to push your prospects closer to a sale?

There's no point in paying for leads just for them to fall through the cracks. It's one thing if you don't convert leads into sales because your prospects chose another option. But, you can't risk losing sales simply **because your process is leaky.**

Remember: your sales process doesn't have to be complicated; it just needs to be watertight.



#6. You Don't Know Your Numbers

Out of all of your leads, how many convert? One in five? One in six? One in 10? Whatever that is, right now, **that is your baseline number.**

If you know your baseline number, you know how many inquiries you need to get to a sale (it's math!), how many inquiries you need overall to hit your sales targets, and how much you can afford to spend per lead.

Why is your baseline number so important?

Let's take a deeper look, shall we?

A common mistake that business owners make is calculating their cost-per-inquiry as the cost of one sale, but this is only accurate if the purchase is a one-time transaction. Repeat buyers or subscription services change the lifetime value of your customers.

#7. You're Expecting Instant Results

I'm going to introduce you to one of my favourite phrases: **you can't have ROI before you try.**

(I'm trademarking that one as well, by the way)

Oftentimes, business owners ask: what's the ROI on paid advertising? -- *before they've begun advertising.*



The answer is simple: you aren't going to know your ROI before you do the "I" part.

Sure, you can look at industry standards and benchmarks, but that's the closest estimate you're going to get without actually running your advertising campaigns.

Every ad is unique. Every account is unique. Even if you run exactly the same ad as your competitor, you could get wildly different results. There are thousands upon thousands of factors in the Google or Facebook algorithm. You need to test and chop and change and test, test, and test again. After 2-3 months of consistent advertising, you'll be able to make projections based on your results.

Until you actually run the ads, you don't have the data.

And anybody who tells you that they can work that out beforehand is lying to your face. So, don't trust them. They're just there to take your money.

#8. You're Not Making Any Organic Sales

If you're not selling your products or services organically, paid ads are just going to amplify the problem. So, in essence, you'll be spending money to lose money (and THAT'S not a good deal!)

Whatever is stopping you from making sales organically -- whether it be your pricing, your product, your messaging, or your presentation -- will still be the reason you aren't making sales from paid ads.



#9. Your Website isn't Mobile Responsive

You cannot afford for your website to not be mobile responsive. Right now, on average, 80% of website traffic comes from mobile. If your website isn't mobile responsive you have lost without even leaving the game.

Tip: because mobile users are very often on the go, your load speed needs to be between 3-5 seconds at the VERY longest.

#10. Enquiries Drop into an Unmonitored Inbox

Letting your inquiries slip into an inbox can be a recipe for frustration. Think about it: how many emails do you get daily? Weekly? Monthly? How often are you checking your 'spam' folder? Enquiries, ideally, should be filtered into a CRM where you can categorize and respond appropriately.

Even if you pride yourself on your responsiveness to emails, even one lost email can cost you dearly in the long run.



#11. You Don't Have a "Click to Call" Button On Every Page of Your Website

Click to call is a functionality that allows visitors to tap and automatically call your business. If your website doesn't offer this feature, you're depending on your prospects to have the time (or attention span) to write your number down, save it correctly in their phone, and not lose it.

This is the 21st century, and people want instant gratification. Some people simply can't be bothered to do it. Having a click to call button is no longer an option; if you want your business to succeed, it's a requirement.

#12. You don't have Google Analytics installed

Without proper analytics, you don't really know what's happening on your website.

There's no point in spending money on paid advertising if you don't know what's happening with the traffic and the leads that come through.

Beyond paid ads, there are a myriad of traffic sources: email, social media, organic traffic, direct, referral partners, the list goes on. But if you don't know what's happening once those visitors land on your site, you're missing out on the quality data that can drive up your retention rate.



#13. Your Website isn't Managed by You or Your Team (or at Least a Very Close Third Party)

When you have control of your website, you have complete access to what is, and isn't holding you up.

I cannot stress this enough. Trusting an agency to handle your website is trusting them with your entire business.

If a third party is in control of your website, you need to ensure that they answer emails (and answer them *quickly*), give you access to the backend, and add any necessary functionality on your website (remember those analytics we talked about?) before you run any paid ads.

#14. You Don't Have Conversion Tracking Installed

Conversion tracking means logging information from form submissions, downloads, phone calls, or any activity in your ecommerce store.

Similar to Google Analytics, conversion tracking provides information on where leads are coming from. With conversion tracking, you will understand which campaigns are converting better than others, so that you know where you can improve or place additional focus.

You can't just make an assumption when you don't have the data. *The data knows all!*



#15. You're Not Present or Consistent Where Your Customers are Spending Their Time

We live in an age where online scams are rampant, and consumers know that if they don't like what they see on your online platforms, they can go elsewhere and get a similar product or service.

Being present and consistent where your customers spend their time means showing up where your customers are searching for you. If your customers are on Facebook, strategize a strong Facebook presence. The same goes for Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, LinkedIn, Yelp, or any other channels where your prospects are spending their time.

And to do that, you need to truly understand who your customers are (and look! That was #1. We've got full circle!)

Are You Ready to Run Paid Ads?

If you realise 10 or more of these apply to your business, you are not ready to run paid ads.

And if you do still decide to run paid ads while you're not ready - I promise you you're going to waste your money. So please don't do that, because I don't want you to waste your money!

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