FREE GUIDE

THE 5-STEP AD BUILDER

Plan Facebook andInstagramads that attract the right customers, in about 20 minutes.

For service businesses, professional firms, consultants and coaches.

Offer	Audience	Awareness	Problem	Angle	Format

Lock the first four. Test the last two.

WRITTEN BY

Malope Mashifane

CEO and Founder of Cliqworks

cliqworks.co.za

WELCOME

Better ads start before you open Ads Manager

Mostad problems aredecided before thead isbuilt. Thewrong offer,amessageaimedateveryone, or a problem the buyer does not feel will weaken even a well-made video.

This guide walks you through the five decisions I work through when planning an ad, plus the offer step that comes before them. Follow them in order, and you will finish with a clear plan and a first draft you can test.

Malope Mashifane, Founder of Cliqworks

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Why most ads fail before they launch	The building blocks and how to test them
Choose your offer	Direct and indirect offers, and how to strengthen each
The five decisions	Audience, awareness, problem, angle and format
Menus for problem, angle and format	Pick from clear options instead of a blank page
Proof you can use	Credible proof, even without client results
A complete worked example	From the five decisions to a finished video script
Multiply your winning ad	New angles and formats from one proven message
Launch checklist and measurement	What to check before and after you publish

> **How to use this guide**
> Read it once through, then complete the five decisions for one ad. Come back to the problem, angle and format menus whenever you feel stuck. Plan one ad at a time.

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Why most ads fail before they launch

An ad is not one thing. It is a set of building blocks, and each block can be tested on its own.

When an ad does not work, most business owners change the creative. A new image, a new video, a new colour. Often the real problem is the message. A strong creative format cannot rescue an offer nobody wants, or a message aimed at the wrong person.

Offer	Audience	Awareness	Problem	Angle	Format

Lock these once they work	Test these next
Offer, audience, awareness and problem make up the core message. Find a combination that produces qualified leads, then stop changing it.	Angle and format are how the message is framed and delivered. Once the core works, you can multiply it with new angles and new formats.

The method in three lines

1	Find the message	Choose one offer, one audience, one awareness level and one problem. Write a first ad.
2	Prove it	Run it long enough to judge lead quality, not only clicks and cost per lead.
3	Multiply it	Keep the core message and create new versions with different angles and formats.

Plan to test, not to get it right first time. Most ads you launch will not become your best performer. A system that produces several clear tests will always beat one carefully polished ad.

STEP 0

Choose your offer

Before the fivedecisions,decidewhatthead is promoting. The offer matters more than any creative choice that follows.

	Direct offer	Indirect offer
What it is	You promote the service itself and ask for a conversation or a booking.	You promote something useful that starts the relationship, then follow up.
Examples	Free marketing plan, free audit, discovery call, application form.	Guide or checklist, webinar, free tool, short course, low-cost starter product, or a resource people get by commenting a keyword and receiving it through automation.
Works best when	The buyer already understands the outcome, the sale is higher value and you can state a clear promise.	The buyer needs to trust you first, the audience is broad, or the service is harder to explain in one ad.
The ad needs	A specific promise, proof and a reason to act. More convincing is required because the ask is bigger.	A resource so useful it earns attention on its own. The ad is shorter and the value does the selling.
Typical fit	Professional firms, consultants, agencies.	Consumer brands, local service businesses, coaches building an audience.

Make a direct offer stronger

A direct offer needs onespecific promise and, where you can honestly provide it, a way to reduce the buyer's risk. Good examples include a clearly defined deliverable, a transparent process, a free first step or a satisfaction commitment you are able to keep. Never promise results you cannot control.

Make an indirect offer stronger

Ask one question. Wouldsomeone inyour audience value this enough to pay for it? If the answer is yes, you have a strong free offer. If the answer is no, improve the resource before improving the ad.

> **A strong offer can carry average creative. Strong creative cannot rescue a weak offer.** Spend your first hour on the offer, then move to the five decisions.

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The five decisions

Oncetheofferisclear,answerthesefivequestions in order. Complete one set for each audience and problem.

Decision	Ask yourself	Example
1. Audience	Exactly who is the buyer? Specify industry, role, size and stage.	Managing partner at an established law firm
2. Awareness	What does this buyer already know about the problem and the solutions?	Knows referrals are inconsistent
3. Problem	What one specific obstacle or missed opportunity will this ad address?	Website enquiries do not receive prompt follow-up
4. Angle	How will you make the problem interesting and credible?	Common mistakes, proof, a new way, a story
5. Format	What is the clearest way to communicate the message?	Founder video, carousel, static image or demonstration

Read your answers as one line

Agoodplancanbereadasasinglechain.Ifyou cannot say it in one line, the ad is probably trying to do too much.

Managing partner at a growing law firm	**Problem aware**	**Slow follow-up on enquiries**	**Mistakes**	**Founder video**

Choose the right order for the job.

Planning a new ad, start at the audience and work down to the format. Found a format in the Meta Ad Library that you like, work backwards. Ask which audience, which problem and which angle it is really using, then decide whether your business can use the same structure.

My principle. Sell the next useful step, not every service at once. A smaller firm may need one focused tool. An established firm may need a connected growth system.

STEPS 1 AND 2

Audience and awareness

Decisionsoneandtwodecidewhethertherightpersonrecognises themselves in the first few seconds.

Decision 1, Audience

Eachad speaks toonespecific person. It is better for one buyer to think "this is about me" than for ten buyers to think "this might be for someone like me".

Level	Example
Too broad	Business owners
Better	Owners of service businesses
Best	Managing partner at a growing law firm that already advertises

Decision 2, Awareness

Awarenessdescribeswhatthebuyer already knows. It decides what the ad should say first.

Level	The buyer	Lead with
Unaware	Does not recognise there is a problem.	A relatable symptom or observation. Do not mention your service yet.
Problem aware	Knows something is wrong, but not how to fix it.	Why it happens and what it costs.
Solution aware	Knows solutions exist and is comparing options.	Your approach and why it works.
Provider aware	Knows your business or your competitors.	Credible proof, a clear offer and a reason to act.

Default to problem aware for cold audiences.

A problem aware message also speaks to people who are further along, because they recognise the problem too. Unaware ads can reach the largest audience, but they are the hardest to make profitable. Use solution or provider aware messages mainly for retargeting people who have already seen you.

STEP 3

Choose one problem

Pick theone concrete problemyourbuyerfeelsmost. If you are unsure, start with the problem your best clients mention first.

Business type	Common problems to build an ad around
Law and professional firms	Enquiries are not followed up quickly. Leads arrive after hours and go cold. Referrals are drying up. Ad spend is not turning into signed matters. The website does not capture enquiries.
Consultants and coaches	Income depends on referrals. Organic content is not converting. No clear way for interested people to book. Stuck at the same revenue level. Premium offers attract low-fit enquiries.
Local service businesses	Customers message on WhatsApp and nobody replies in time. Missed calls after hours. Appointments are booked, then missed. Quotes go cold with no follow-up.
Any business running ads	Money has been spent on ads without results. The wrong people book calls. Cheap leads never buy. Revenue is inconsistent from month to month.

How to choose

1	Choose a problem the buyer already talks about, in their own words.
2	Choose a problem you can genuinely help solve, so the ad can keep its promise.
3	Choose one only. If two problems feel equally important, they are two separate ads.

Test it. Say the problem out loud as if you were speaking to the buyer. If it sounds like a feature of your service instead of something they feel, rewrite it from their point of view.

STEP 4

Choose your angle

Theproblemis whatyoutalkabout.Theangleis how you wrap it. The same problem can become manydifferent ads.

Angle	What it does	Sample hook	Use when
New way	Presents a fresh approach to a familiar goal.	"There is a simpler way to make sure every enquiry gets a prompt reply."	You have a distinct method or tool.
Fast way	Promises the same result in less time or effort.	"Reply to every new enquiry in minutes, without adding to your workload."	Speed is a real benefit you can deliver.
Mistakes	Names the errors that keep the buyer stuck.	"Three follow-up mistakes that cost firms potential clients."	You see the same errors again and again.
Proof	Shows a real result and how it happened.	"[Real client result] after changing how enquiries were handled."	You have a genuine case study.
Personal story	Tells a short, honest story that mirrors the buyer.	"When I first looked at how firms handle enquiries, I was surprised."	You have a real experience to share.
Simple process	Shows the steps from problem to result.	"Three steps between a new enquiry and a booked consultation."	The solution is easy to explain in steps.
Demonstration	Shows the result first, then how it works.	"What happens when a customer messages you after hours?"	You have a tool or system you can show.

The angle leads, proof supports.

Your angle decides what the ad opens with. Proof is what makes any angle believable, so even a mistakes or new way ad should include at least one credible proof point before the call to action. The next pages show what counts as proof.

No proof yet.

If you do not have a case study or a story you can share honestly, start with mistakes, simple process or demonstration. Those angles do not need results from past clients. Never invent results, names or numbers.

STEP 5

Choose your format

Formatishowthemessagereachesthebuyer.Pick the one you can produce well and consistently.

	What it needs	Watch out for
Founder or talking head video	45 to 90 seconds. A hook in the first three seconds. One problem and one next step. Clear audio and captions.	Long introductions and covering several problems at once.
Carousel	Five to seven slides. One idea per slide. A strong first slide, and the offer on the final slide.	Too much text on a slide and no clear closing step.
Static image	One short line of text and one clear promise. Strong contrast and plenty of space.	Several messages competing in one image.
Demonstration or screen recording	Show the result first, then how it works. Keep it under 60 seconds.	Explaining features instead of showing an outcome.
Selfie or B-roll with voiceover	Simple, direct and quick to produce. Works well for mistakes and story angles.	Poor sound and unclear subtitles.

Three rules for every format

1	The buyer should understand who the ad is for within the first few seconds.
2	Say one thing. If you need a second message, make a second ad.
3	Finish with one clear next step that matches your offer.

PROOF

Proof you can use

Proof turns a claimintosomethingabuyercan believe. Nearly every ad needs some, even when proof isnot theanglethatleads.

Proof type	What it looks like	Handle with care
Client result	"[Client type] went from [before] to [after] in [time]."	Use real figures and only with the client's permission.
Testimonial	A short quote with a name and business.	Get written consent and keep the wording as given.
Screenshot or evidence	A real booking, message or dashboard.	Hide personal and private details.
Process or demonstration	Show the system working, step by step.	Needs no past clients, so it suits a new business.
Your own results	Results from your own business or campaigns.	State clearly what was measured and over what period.
Experience and credentials	Years in the field, or [a real number] of campaigns managed.	Only state what you can verify.
Guarantee	A commitment you can honestly keep.	Never promise results you cannot control.

No client results yet

1	Demonstrate. Show how the system works, from enquiry to follow-up, so the buyer sees the outcome.
2	Run a pilot. Offer a low-cost or free pilot to one or two businesses in return for permission to share the results.
3	Share your method. Explain the steps and the reasoning clearly. A well-explained process builds trust on its own.

The proof rule. If you cannot show it or verify it, do not claim it. Placeholders in square brackets are better than invented results, and honest proof lasts longer than impressive proof.

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Turn your decisions into an ad

Writetheadinfiveparts.Eachparthasonejob,andtogethertheyfollowyour five decisions.

Part	What to write	Tip
1. Hook	Call out the ideal client and the problem in the first line. Under 15 words.	Name who the ad is for, so the right person stops scrolling.
2. Story or explanation	One short, honest story, or a clear explanation of why the problem happens and what it costs.	Two or three sentences is enough.
3. Proof	One credible element from the proof page.	Use a placeholder if you do not have it yet.
4. Call to action	One next step that matches your offer.	Make the step small and clear.
5. Claim check	Read every claim and ask whether you can show it.	Remove anything you cannot support.

Hook formula

Idealclient,thentheproblem they feel. Say it the way the buyer would say it.

Ideal client	Hook
Law firm partners	"Law firm partners, are enquiries going cold before anyone replies?"
Consultants	"Consultants, does your income still depend on referrals alone?"

The worked example on one page

Managing partner at a growing law firm	Problem aware	Slow follow-up on enquiries	Mistakes	Founder video

Part	Example
Hook	"Your firm may be losing potential clients before an attorney ever speaks to them."
Explanation	Someone submits an enquiry and nobody responds promptly. More ad spend is not always the answer, because the problem may be the system behind the advertising.
Proof	[Add one real proof point, or show the follow-up system working.]
Call to action	Book a free call.
Claim check	No invented results. The proof point is real and permitted.

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Worked example, the video script

Thisfoundervideorunsabout50seconds.Replacethebracketedlinewithrealproof before you film.

	Spoken line	On screen
1	"Your firm may be losing potential clients before an attorney ever speaks to them."	Speaking to camera, caption of the hook.
2	"Here is the mistake we see most often. Someone submits an enquiry, and nobody responds for hours, sometimes days."	Simple text overlay, slow response.
3	"By then, that person may already have contacted another firm."	Pause, then a close-up.
4	"More ad spend is not always the answer. Often the problem is the system behind the advertising."	Show a simple three-step diagram.
5	"A good system captures every enquiry, replies promptly and tells your team who follows up."	Diagram complete.
6	[Add one real proof point, for example a client result shared with permission, or a quick demonstration of the system replying to an enquiry.]	Result, screenshot or screen recording.
7	"Book a free call. The link is below."	Button on screen.

Before you film

☐	The first line names the ideal client and the problem.
☐	The proof point is real, current and shared with permission.
☐	Every claim can be shown or verified.
☐	The call to action matches the offer.
☐	Captions are on, and the hook is clear without sound.

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Multiply your winning ad

Whenanadproducesqualifiedleads,donotrebuildit.Keepthe core message and change one thing at a time.

Option	What stays the same	What changes
Same message, new formats	Offer, audience, awareness, problem and angle.	Talking head, carousel, selfie video, static, voiceover, demonstration.
Same format, new angles	Offer, audience, awareness, problem and format.	Mistakes, proof, new way, simple process, story, demonstration.

One problem, five angles

Core message, slow follow-up on law firm enquiries. Audience and offer stay locked.

Angle	Hook
Mistakes	"Three follow-up mistakes that cost firms potential clients."
Proof	"[Add a real client result] after changing how enquiries were handled."
New way	"There is a simpler way to make sure every enquiry gets a prompt reply."
Simple process	"Three steps between a new enquiry and a booked consultation."
Personal story	"When I first reviewed how firms handle enquiries, [add your own story]."

Testing rules

1	Change one thing at a time, so you know what made the difference.
2	Give each version enough time and budget to produce a fair signal.
3	Judge by lead quality and booked appointments, not only clicks.
4	Keep a simple log of the hook, angle, format and result for every ad.

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Before you publish, and what to measure

Use this checklist to pressure-test your campaign before spending money.

☐	The offer is clear and the audience would genuinely value it.
☐	The audience is specific enough that the right buyer recognises themselves.
☐	The ad addresses one concrete problem.
☐	The message matches the buyer's awareness level.
☐	The hook is understandable in the first few seconds.
☐	Claims are accurate and supported, without invented results.
☐	Any proof used is real, current and shared with permission.
☐	The landing page or WhatsApp experience matches the promise of the ad.
☐	Lead details are captured and it is clear who follows up, and how quickly.
☐	You know what success means, qualified leads, booked calls or sales.

What to check, and when

When	Check	Question to ask
Day 3	Delivery and attention	Is the ad being shown, and is the hook holding attention?
Day 7	Cost and lead quality	Are the leads the right people, and is the cost reasonable for the value?
Day 14	Appointments and early sales	How many leads were contacted, booked and became opportunities?

A cheap lead is not necessarily a valuable lead. Track contact rate, booked appointments and actual sales, not only clicks and cost per lead.

NEXT STEP

Put your first ad to work

Chooseonemessageyoucanstandbehind. Then launch one ad and measure what matters before changing anything.

1

Choose the message
Pick one offer, one audience and one problem. Not sure? Start with the problem your best clients mention first.

2

Make the first ad
Choose an angle and a format you can produce well. Write the hook, the message and one clear call to action.

3

Launch and measure
Check delivery at day 3, lead quality at day 7, and booked appointments at day 14. Then test a new angle or format.

Book a Free Ad Planning Call

Let us look at your offer, your audience and your current ads, and recommend what to test first. There is no obligation.

Book your free call

cliqworks.co.za/book-a-call

Prefer to chat first? WhatsApp us on **073 417 8334**

About the author

Malope Mashifane is the CEO and Founder of Cliqworks, a digital marketing agency in Johannesburg. Malope helps service businesses turn websites and ads into lead generation systems, using conversion focused websites, Facebook and Instagram advertising, CRM and automation. Follow along on social media.

LinkedIn linkedin.com/in/malopemashifane
Instagram instagram.com/malope.mashifane
Facebook facebook.com/malope.mashifane