

Marketing on a *Real Budget.*

Spend Less. Convert More.

Marketing strategy built for businesses with actual budget constraints — not aspirational ad spend. Whether you have \$50 or \$5,000 a month, this guide shows you how to use it in a way that converts to real sales.

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01

What Each Platform *Actually Costs in 2025*

Before you spend a dollar, know what you're buying. Every platform operates on an auction model – you're bidding for attention. These are the real numbers, not the minimums listed in the help center.

PLATFORM	AVG CPM	AVG CPC	MIN TO START
Facebook (Meta) <i>Broad reach, strong targeting, older skew</i>	\$9–\$14	\$0.44–\$0.97	\$1/day
Instagram (Meta) <i>Visual, product-friendly, 18–34 audience</i>	\$2.50– \$6.70	\$0.20–\$2.00	\$1/day
TikTok (Promote) <i>Boost organic content – entry-level TikTok ads</i>	\$1–\$4	\$0.10–\$0.30	\$3–\$5/day
TikTok (Ads Manager) <i>Full campaign platform – higher minimums apply</i>	\$4.20– \$10	\$0.17–\$1.00	\$50/day campaign
Google Search <i>High-intent buyers actively searching for you</i>	N/A	\$1–\$6 avg*	\$10/day
YouTube <i>Video-first, Google ecosystem, strong awareness</i>	\$7–\$10	\$0.03–\$0.30/ view	\$10/day
Pinterest	\$2–\$8	\$0.10–\$1.50	\$2/day

*Product-heavy, longer buyer journey,
mostly women*

Snapchat

\$12-\$15

\$0.50-\$1.50

\$5/day

*Younger audience, high CPM – most
often skipped*

*Google Search CPC varies significantly by industry and keyword competition. Legal, finance, and medical keywords can run \$15-\$50+ per click.

CPM = Cost per 1,000 impressions (eyeballs). CPC = Cost per click. A lower CPM means cheaper reach. A lower CPC means cheaper traffic. Neither matters without conversion – someone taking the action you want after they see the ad.

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Tier 1: *\$50–\$250/Month*

At this budget, you are buying data and visibility – not volume. The goal is to learn what works before you spend more. One platform, one message, one audience.

\$50–\$250

NEW ENTREPRENEUR

At this level, your best investment is Meta (Facebook/Instagram) or TikTok Promote – not TikTok Ads Manager, which requires a \$500/campaign minimum you haven't unlocked yet.

WHERE TO SPEND IT

- **Meta (Facebook/Instagram):** \$5–\$8/day = ~\$150–\$240/month. Run one boosted post or one traffic campaign. Target a specific local area or interest-based audience. Keep it narrow – broad targeting at low budgets wastes money.
- **TikTok Promote:** \$3–\$5/day to boost your best-performing organic content. Not TikTok Ads Manager – the \$50/day campaign minimum burns through \$250 in five days with almost no data to show for it.
- **Pinterest:** If you sell a product with visual appeal, \$2–\$3/day on Pinterest reaches buyers earlier in their decision process at low cost.

THE STRATEGY

- Pick ONE platform. Spreading \$200 across three platforms means \$67 on each – not enough for any of them to learn anything useful.
- Boost content that already performed well organically. Paid amplification works best when the content has already proven it resonates.
- At \$150–\$240/month on Meta, expect roughly 10,000–25,000 impressions and 150–500 clicks. You are building familiarity, not closing sales at scale.

03

Tier 2: *\$500–\$1,500/Month*

\$500–\$1,500

GROWING BUSINESS

Now you can run on two platforms simultaneously, test creative variations, and begin retargeting — the most efficient ad spend available to a small business.

WHERE TO SPEND IT

- **Meta primary:** \$15–\$20/day (\$450–\$600/month). Run two to three ad sets testing different audiences or creative angles. Let the data tell you what to keep.
- **Google Search:** \$10–\$15/day (\$300–\$450/month) targeting high-intent keywords — people actively searching for what you sell. This is where buyers live.
- **Retargeting:** Allocate 15–20% of budget to retargeting website visitors. These are the warmest people in your ecosystem — they already know you exist.

THE STRATEGY

- Separate awareness spend from conversion spend. Not every dollar should be asking for a sale. Some dollars build recognition so the conversion dollars work harder.
- At this tier, begin building your email list through lead-generation campaigns. Email converts at higher rates than cold social media traffic and costs nothing to re-engage.

04

Tier 3: *\$2,000+/Month*

\$2,000+

ESTABLISHED BUSINESS

At this level, you run a full funnel – awareness, consideration, and conversion – across multiple channels simultaneously, with dedicated budget for testing and retargeting.

RECOMMENDED ALLOCATION

- **Meta (Facebook/Instagram):** 35–40% of budget. Mid-funnel consideration campaigns and retargeting sequences. Lookalike audiences built from your best existing customers.
- **Google Search:** 30–35% of budget. High-intent keyword targeting with dedicated landing pages matched to each campaign.
- **TikTok / YouTube:** 15–20% of budget. Top-of-funnel awareness. Video content that introduces your brand to cold audiences at scale.
- **Testing reserve:** 10–15% for creative testing – new angles, new formats, new audiences. What's working today may not work in 90 days.

THE STRATEGY

- Build the funnel: a cold audience sees you on TikTok or YouTube → visits your site → gets retargeted on Meta → lands on a high-converting offer page → converts. Each layer feeds the next.
- At this level, track cost per acquisition (CPA) – not just clicks. Know exactly what it costs to get one paying customer from each channel.

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What Actually *Converts*

CTA

CLEAR ASK

Every ad needs one specific action. Book a call. Buy now. Download this. Ads that try to do everything do nothing. One ask, one destination.

SP

SOCIAL PROOF

Results, testimonials, and client outcomes convert better than any copy you write about yourself. Build this into every campaign where possible.

LP

LANDING PAGE

Sending ad traffic to your homepage is a waste of money. Every campaign needs a dedicated page that matches the ad's message and drives one action.

Ad spend without a converting destination is not marketing – it's a donation to the platform. Before you increase your budget, make sure the page people land on gives them a clear reason to act. A great ad sending traffic to a weak page loses every time.