

How ChatGPT Ads Manager works

Ads now sit between the lines of your ChatGPT answers. Here is what the ad manager costs, how targeting works, and what marketers say after six months

Pavel Gurov · ORCID [0009-0001-0152-8056](https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0152-8056)

Written 13 August 2026 · 630 words · gurovdigital.com/research/chatgpt-ads-manager-pricing-mechanics

ChatGPT · OpenAI · Advertising · PPC · AI marketing · Digital marketing

DEFINITION

ChatGPT Ads Manager — OpenAI's self-serve advertising platform. It places sponsored cards inside ChatGPT's answers and lets any approved business buy them, with targeting written as a prompt.

People have spent the last year trying to sneak into what ChatGPT says - by poisoning its sources¹, gaming the data it reads², or hiding instructions inside a prompt³. That is the gray door. Now there is an official one, and it is paid: through targeting, you can appear inside ChatGPT's answers on a regular basis.

That raised one question for me right away: what stops someone from buying their way in with a political message? So I read OpenAI's ad policy. Political ads are banned outright - anything that argues for or against politicians, elections, public policy, or contested social issues⁴. Every ad also passes a three-step review: the advertiser is verified, the creative and landing page are checked by classifiers and language models, and the placement is checked so the ad shows only in a fitting conversation. Money-sensitive areas like finance, health, and legal get manual review on top.

The pilot, and how you get in

The ChatGPT Ads pilot launched six months ago, on 9 February 2026. At first the minimum ad budget was \$250,000. Then the threshold was removed. Now you can test ads with as little as \$5, and freelancers can advertise too⁵. You apply for the self-service Ads Manager at ads.openai.com, and approval takes about two weeks.

Set up your account in a few steps

We'll use this information to create your advertiser account.

 Tell us about your business

Share basic information about your business and website.

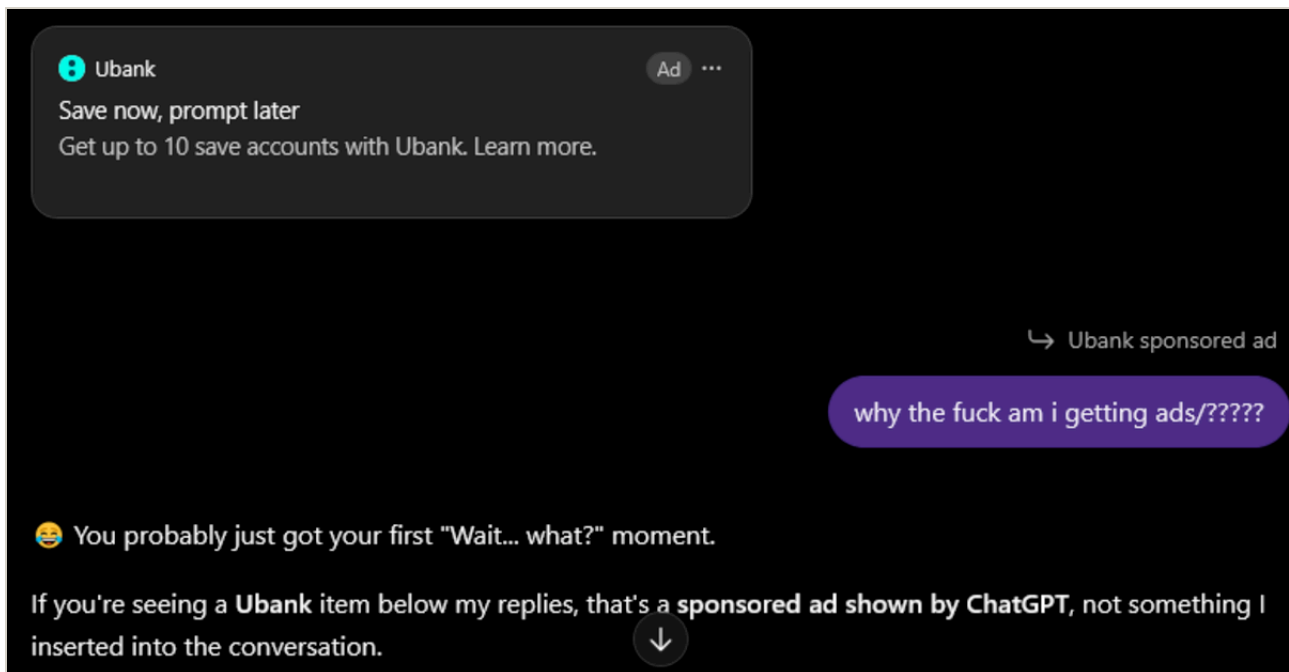
 Add your account details

Add details like your country, currency, and time zone.

Continue

The Ads Manager onboarding - two short steps, your business and your account details. Screenshot by Pavel Gurov, Gurov Digital, 2026. ads.openai.com. Author's screenshot of the ChatGPT Ads Manager interface.

The placement itself sits in a far more intimate space than we are used to - right between the lines of the dialogue. The first user reaction is rarely a pleasant one.



A Ubank ad inside ChatGPT and a user reacting to it. Screenshot, r/ChatGPT. reddit.com/r/ChatGPT. Quoted under §51 UrhG.

Only a few countries - and no European Union

There are still only a few markets. The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were recently joined by the United Kingdom, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, and Mexico - nine markets in total⁶. The European Union is not on the list. OpenAI says it is still building the infrastructure to comply with European law: the tracking pixel that measures conversions needs a European version that can exclude certain actions from tracking.

Ads Manager isn't available in your country yet

Ads Manager is only available in select countries right now. We'll share updates as availability expands.

If you have any questions, reach out to ads-support@openai.com.

Create account

Learn about ads in ChatGPT

What an advertiser in the European Union sees today. Screenshot by Pavel Gurov, Gurov Digital, 2026. ads.openai.com. Author's screenshot of the ChatGPT Ads Manager interface.

One European partner has already appeared: Zalando. Its ads can be shown when people ask ChatGPT about shopping. David Dugan, OpenAI's head of global advertising, announced it on [LinkedIn](#)⁷.

How much a click costs

A lot. People are reluctant to click - why click if ChatGPT has already told you everything? In real campaigns I have seen, a click costs around \$10-20, and the click-through rate is around 1-2%.

Impressions	Clicks	Conversions	Spend	CTR
3270	41	1	\$468.54	1.25%
7678	79	0	\$1,000.00	1.03%

A real campaign - \$1,000 spent, 79 clicks, zero conversions, a 1.03% click-through rate. Screenshot by Austin LeClear, Grow My Ads. growmyads.com. Quoted under §51 UrhG.

The first reviews from marketers are cautious. The Canadian agency Longhouse does not sound thrilled with its campaigns:

We're seeing the potential for strong visibility, but fewer immediate conversions than we would expect.

Longhouse

Advertising agency, Canada

Austin LeClear points at a deeper problem:

The audience problem is bigger than the numbers. Ads only show to free ChatGPT users - and business owners and marketers are almost all on paid plans.



Austin LeClear

Performance marketer, Grow My Ads, United States

[Publicity photograph, Grow My Ads](#)

So for B2B, where deal values are much higher, there is not much to do here yet.

Targeting is a prompt

The most interesting part: targeting in ChatGPT Ads Manager is written as a prompt. There are no keywords and no demographic audiences.

DEFINITION

Context hints — The targeting field in the ad manager. Instead of keywords or audiences, you describe, in plain language, the kinds of conversations where your ad should appear.

\$168.54 1360

Edit Ad Group

Ad group name

Google Ads Agency (2)

Maximum CPC bid
Set the maximum amount you'll pay for each click. A higher bid will win more auctions.

\$ 25.00

USD

Strong Delivery

Your bid is likely competitive for this ad group.

Context hints
Describe the conversations, topics, or keywords where your products or services may be relevant; these hints guide matching but aren't exact-match targeting rules.

Business owners and marketing leaders actively looking to hire a Google Ads agency, PPC management company, or paid search consultant — including people directly asking ChatGPT recommendations on the best Google Ads agencies for ecommerce, DTC brands, lead

Cancel

Save

The context hints field, filled with a plain-language description of the target conversation. Screenshot by Pavel Gurov, Gurov Digital, 2026. ads.openai.com. Author's screenshot of the ChatGPT Ads Manager interface.

What the ad looks like

For now there is only one very basic format: one line of text, up to 48 characters, plus a small square image, 512 × 512 px. Most advertisers simply drop in their logo.

That answer will tell us a lot.

📄 👍 💬 🔗 🔄 ⋮

shop

Shop · Sponsored

⋮

Chess'n'Boards

Chess set stays put with magnetic pieces for easy play on the go.



CountyComm

Complete Chess Set brings titanium & Ultem craftsmanship for a collectible,...



Ads do not influence the answers you get from ChatGPT. Your chats stay private.
[Learn about ads and personalization >](#)

Sponsored product cards shown under a ChatGPT answer. Screenshot, r/ChatGPT. reddit.com/r/ChatGPT. Quoted under \$51 UrhG.

In shape it is Google Pay Per Click advertising when it first appeared. History has come full circle: the most futuristic product of the decade is monetised like a search engine from 2002.

REFERENCES

- 1PoisonedRAG - a handful of malicious texts planted in a model's knowledge base make it return an attacker-chosen answer, USENIX Security 2025 - <https://arxiv.org/abs/2402.07867>↵
- 2Carlini and colleagues, *Poisoning Web-Scale Training Datasets Is Practical* - buying and poisoning a slice of the data a model trains on is cheap and practical - <https://arxiv.org/abs/2302.10149>↵
- 3Pavel Gurov, *Prompt injection has no fix: the architectural limit of AI security*, Gurov Digital - <https://gurovdigital.com/research/prompt-injection-ai-security-limit>↵
- 4OpenAI, *Ad policies* - political ads are banned, and every ad passes a three-part review of advertiser, creative, and placement - <https://openai.com/policies/ad-policies/>↵
- 5PPC Land - the pilot dates, the removal of the spend minimum, and the self-serve rollout - <https://ppc.land/chatgpt-ads-go-live-in-japan-and-south-korea-and-uk-gets-self-serve/>↵
- 6Digiday - OpenAI extends ChatGPT ads to the United Kingdom, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, and Mexico - <https://digiday.com/media-buying/expand-thoughtfully-openai-offers-chatgpt-ads-to-new-markets-including-the-u-k-brazil-and-japan/>↵
- 7Digiday - who David Dugan is, OpenAI's head of global advertising - <https://digiday.com/marketing/who-is-openais-global-head-of-ads-david-dugan/>↵

CITE THIS ARTICLE

Gurov, P. (2026). *How ChatGPT Ads Manager works*. Gurov Digital Research.
<https://gurovdigital.com/research/chatgpt-ads-manager-pricing-mechanics>