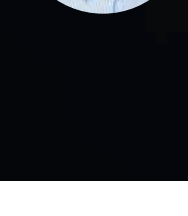
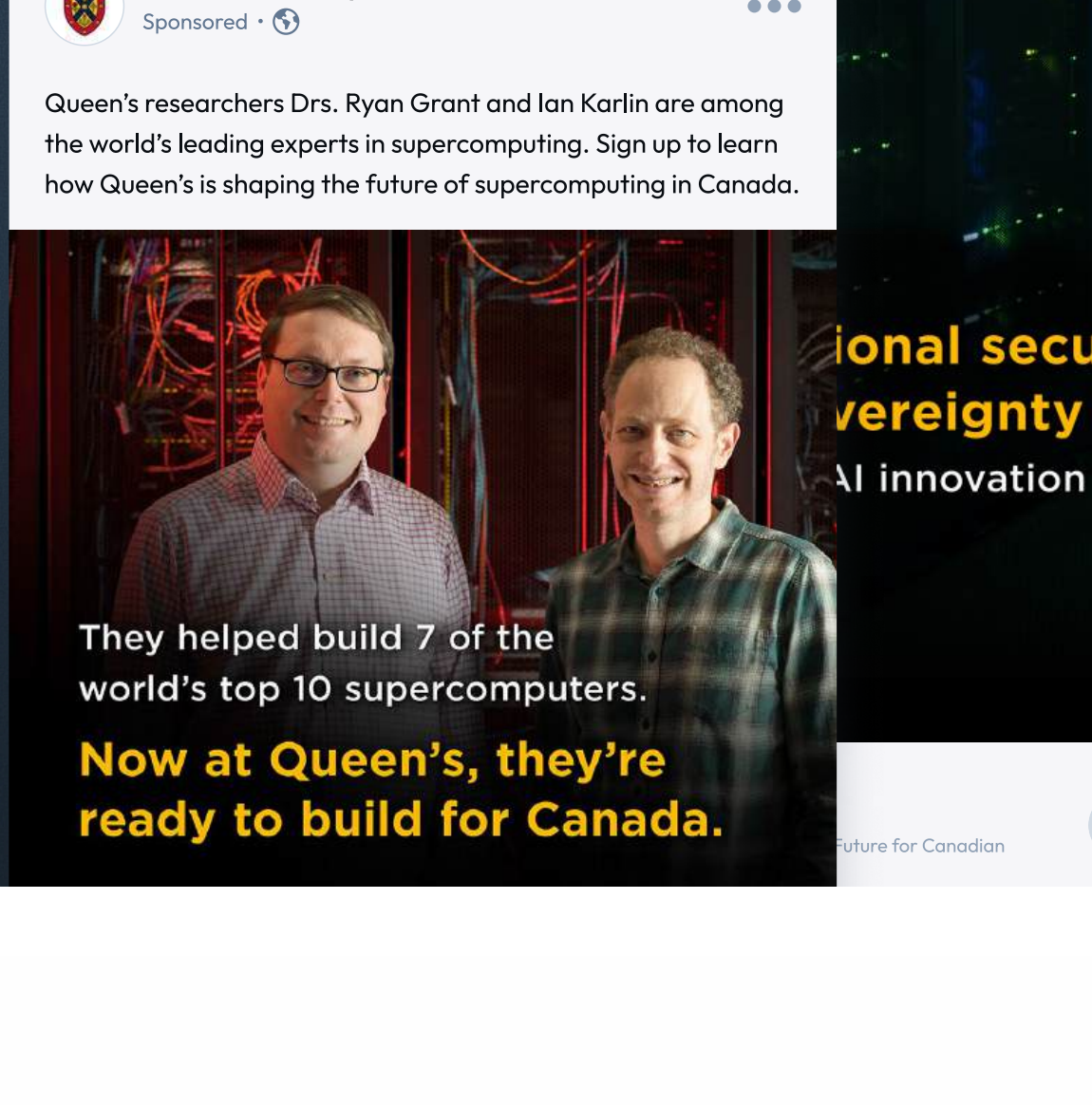
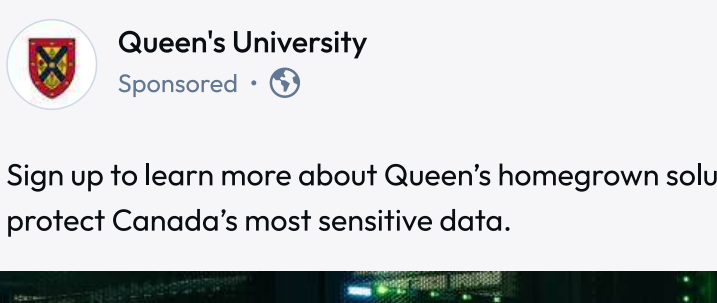


Paid Ads

Advertising AI Innovation to Canadian Government Officials



Santiago Granados
Paid Ads Specialist



Introduction

Queen's University wanted to strengthen its position as a national thought leader in artificial intelligence and supercomputing. This effort had a centralized focus: highlight Queen's groundbreaking research and influence in the conversations shaping Canada's AI future. To make that happen, the university worked with seoplus+ to launch a highly targeted digital advertising initiative. The campaign was designed to build a direct line of communication with policymakers, government officials, and public-sector stakeholders.

Newsletter subscriptions were used to measure conversions for a curated publication featuring timely AI-innovation news, research breakthroughs, and insights from the institution's top labs. The strategy concentrated on reaching officials in Ottawa and across Ontario, using a dual-platform mix of Meta and LinkedIn to engage audiences where they are most active professionally and personally.

Goals

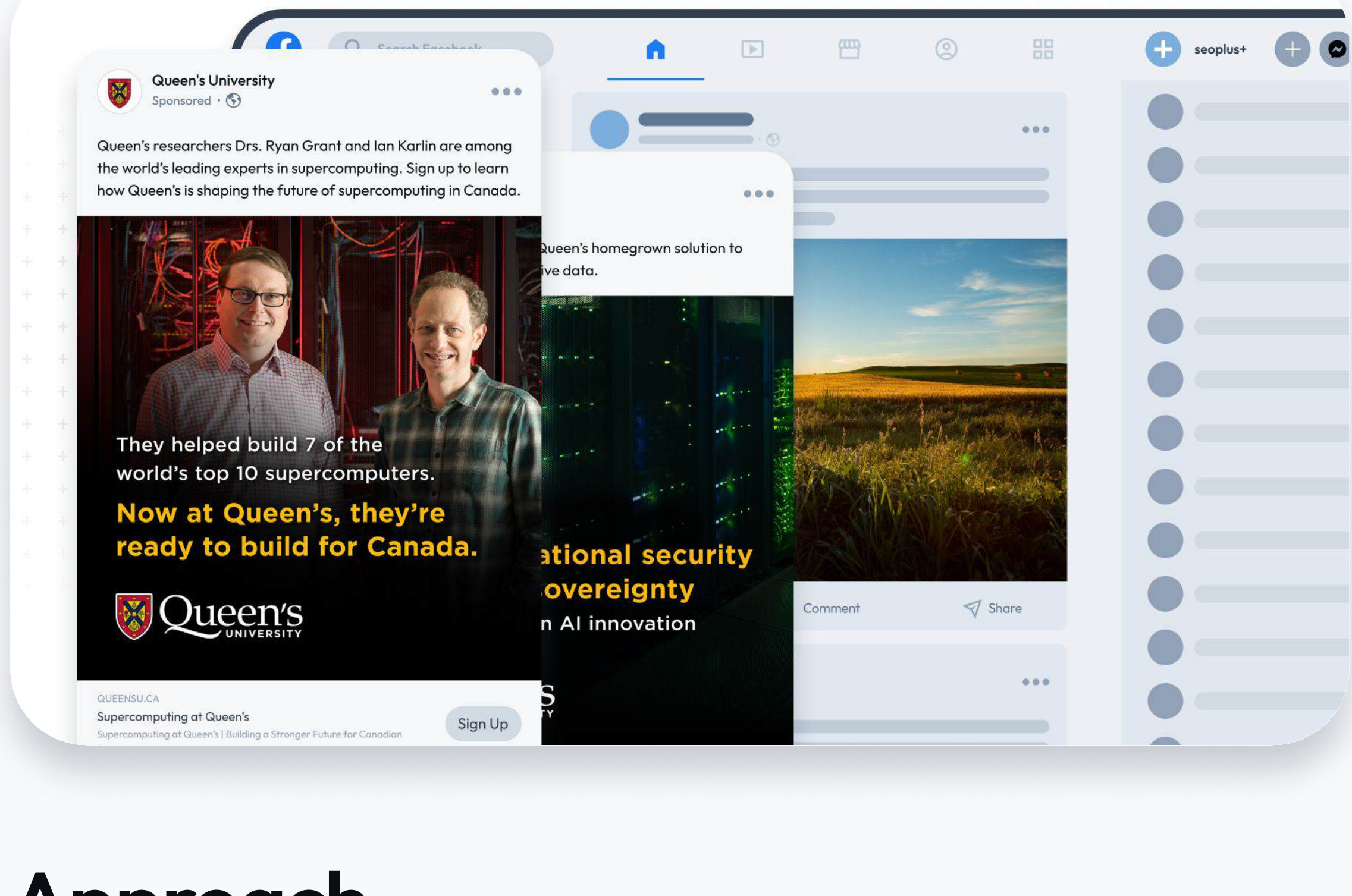
- Generate qualified leads (in this case, newsletter sign-ups) among government officials in Ottawa and Ontario.
- Maintain a cost-per-acquisition (CPA) that fits within the client's budget.
- Build brand authority and trust by showcasing the university's AI research capabilities and lab infrastructure.
- This is a key differentiator for the institution compared with other general-interest AI newsletters.
- Establish a scalable acquisition channel for ongoing communications and policymaker engagement.

By the numbers

- Achieve ≥500 total sign-ups across the campaign duration.
- Maintain an average CPA well below \$100, particularly on Meta, to ensure cost efficiency.

Challenges

- **Narrow, high-value audience:** Targeting government officials and policymakers significantly reduces the available audience size, which can drive up CPA or limit reach.
- **Mid-funnel friction:** Officials may be skeptical or indifferent to "yet another newsletter," making conversion harder without strong trust signals and clear value.
- **Budget constraints relative to LinkedIn costs:** Professional targeting (job titles, seniority) on LinkedIn tends to be expensive; the risk of overspending vs. return was real.
- **Ad fatigue and creative sensitivity:** The audience is busy and likely exposed to many messages. We knew poorly designed creatives or irrelevant messaging would hurt performance.



Approach

Our strategies were diversified among a few critical efforts. We knew there needed to be a platform-diversified approach to balancing cost and precision. Next, we had to tackle creative messaging to build trust and authority. Finally, we leveraged data-driven allocation and optimization by moving spend to the highest-performing channels and creative types.

Strategic targeting & platform mix

We prioritized LinkedIn for highly qualified leads where cost was justified, and Meta for bulk volume at lower CPA.

- **On Meta:** Ran both prospecting (broad reach among target geos/job titles) and remarketing (to those who engaged but didn't convert) campaigns. This balanced scale and efficiency.
- **On LinkedIn:** Used job-title / seniority targeting to zero in on government officials, with a mix of lead-gen forms for frictionless sign-up and reach objectives to maximize visibility among a tight audience.

Creative & value-signal strategy

Part of our approach called for developing creatives that emphasized the university's lab infrastructure, computing power, and research credentials. This was key to building authority and differentiating from generic newsletters.

After creatives were locked, we used concise, high-quality copy and visuals (e.g., clean design, university branding, real data/research hooks) to communicate professionalism and seriousness.

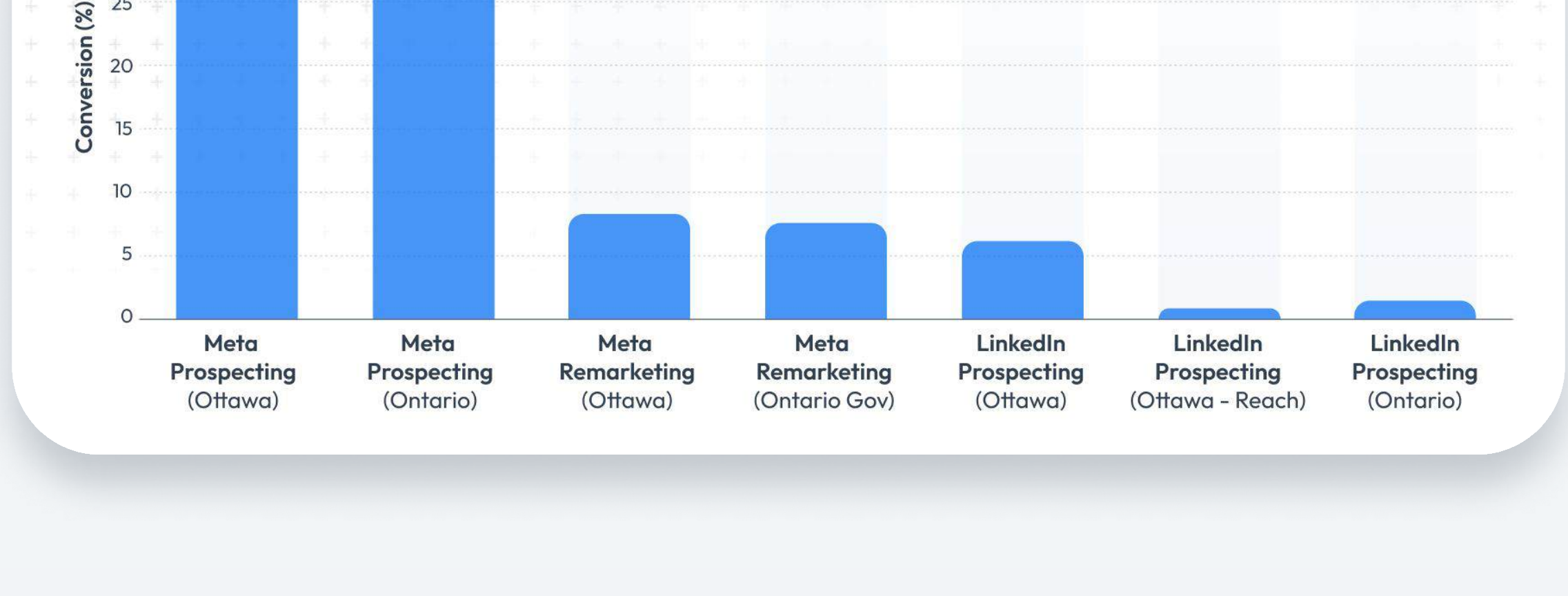
Lastly, we offered gated value in the form of previews or teasers of research summaries, case studies, or policy-relevant insights to entice sign-ups.

Funnel & messaging optimization

Throughout the campaign, we continuously monitored LinkedIn CPA and conversion quality. When applicable, we shifted budgets between Meta and LinkedIn, depending on performance (leaning more on Meta when volume and CPA were favourable).

- **Remarketing on Meta:** We leveraged tailored messaging for those who had previously interacted (e.g., visited the site, engaged with content), making calls to action more direct ("Subscribe now for exclusive AI research briefings").
- **On LinkedIn:** Wherever possible, we leveraged Lead Gen Forms for one-click sign-ups. This helped minimize friction, especially for busy professionals.

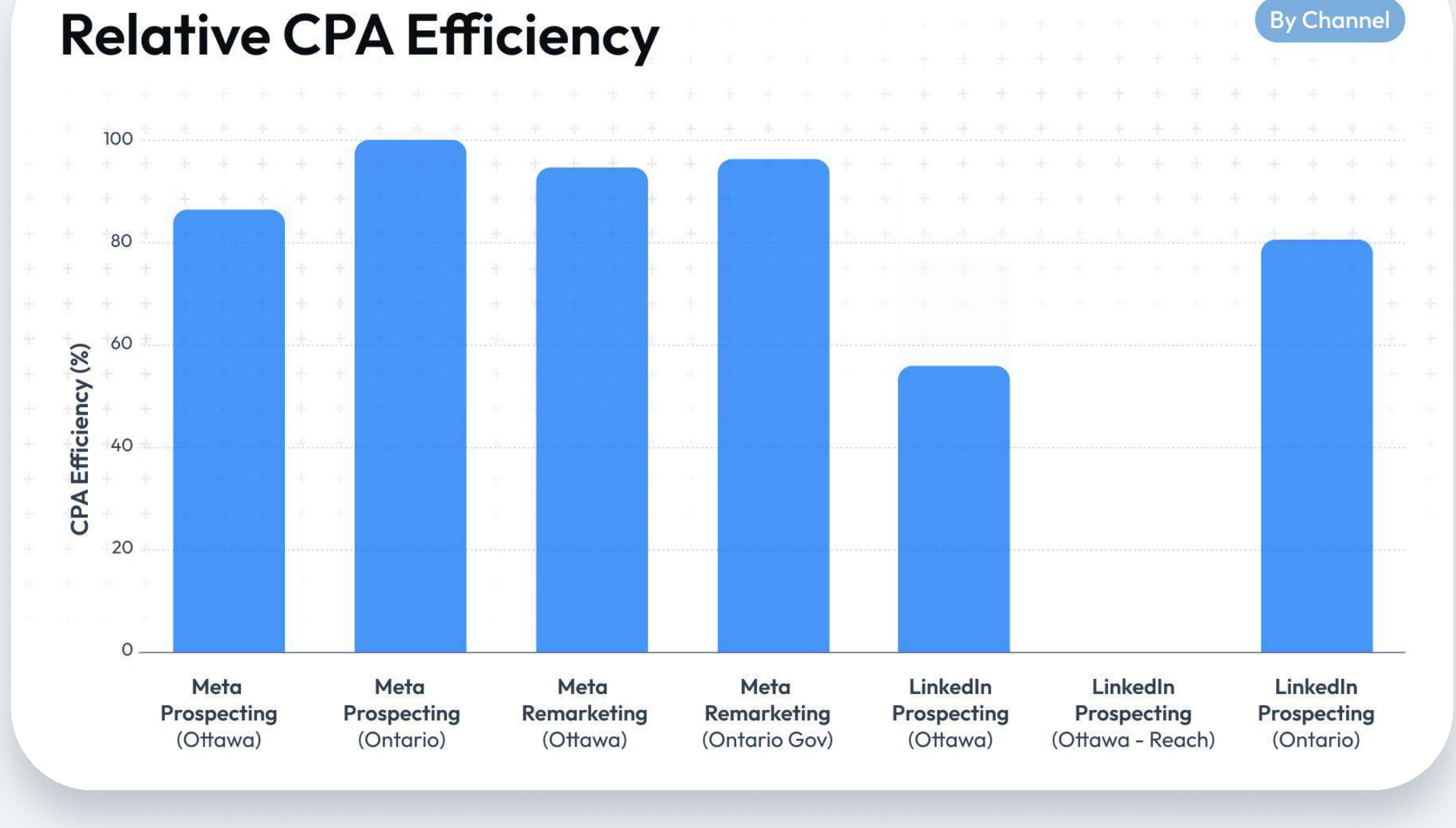
Results



Percentage share of total conversions by channel

The first chart illustrates how each campaign contributed to the overall lead volume, expressed as a share of total conversions.

Meta's prospecting campaigns, particularly those targeting Ottawa and Ontario government audiences, generated the largest proportion of all leads, significantly outperforming LinkedIn.



Relative CPA efficiency by channel

The second chart highlights the relative cost efficiency of each campaign by normalizing CPAs to a percentage scale. A higher percentage indicates a more cost-effective channel. Meta campaigns once again lead in performance, with Ontario Gov prospecting achieving the highest efficiency index. LinkedIn campaigns show comparatively lower efficiency, aligning with typical benchmark expectations for higher-education and public-sector advertising.

The campaign ran from September 21, 2025, to November 21, 2025.

- The campaign delivered ~567 total leads, exceeding the 500-lead goal.
- Meta significantly outperformed LinkedIn in volume-to-cost-efficiency, delivering the bulk of leads at a much lower CPA.
- LinkedIn provided fewer leads but helped reach a highly targeted, professional audience.
 - This validates Lead Gen Forms as a complement to landing-page conversions.
- Creative messaging featuring the university's technical infrastructure and research authority resonated, helping overcome mid-funnel skepticism and boost conversions.

Qualitative Impact

- Elevated the university's visibility among government circles as a credible AI-policy thought leader.
- Created a pipeline of subscribed officials, opening opportunities for future communications, policy briefings, or collaboration outreach.
- Demonstrated that a hybrid Meta + LinkedIn approach can balance cost, efficiency, and quality when targeting niche professional audiences.

Conclusion

By blending prospecting and remarketing efforts on Meta with precision lead-generation and reach campaigns on LinkedIn (and pairing them with high-credibility creative assets that highlighted research papers, advanced lab facilities, and the university's technical expertise), the campaign converts mid-funnel curiosity into tangible engagement.

Even in a narrow, high-value segment, like government officials interested in AI research, a strategic blend of platforms, targeting, and credible creative can deliver solid results.

Want to see similar results?

Reach out to our team to find out how we can help you take your online presence to the next level.

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