A DUBAI BENCHMARK

Google Ads vs Facebook Ads

Which brings better leads?

Cost per lead, lead quality and revenue, from Forward Digital Consultancy's own campaign data and five client CRMs.



FDC
TAKING IT FORWARD

Forward Digital Consultancy FZCO
fwddigi.com/ae

AT A GLANCE

Cheaper leads. Costlier customers.

Facebook won on cost per lead every time. Google won on cost per customer every time we could count customers.

7 of 7

industries where **Facebook** was cheaper per lead, by 8% to 72%

2.1x

cheaper per insurance policy on **Google**: AED 2,784 vs AED 5,853

15.6 vs 0.5

AED of premium per AED spent: **Google** vs **Facebook**, insurance broker

35% vs 2%

of leads qualified from a **website form** vs a Facebook **instant form**

Cost per lead is the wrong scoreboard. Cost per customer, and what each customer is worth, is the right one.

Based on 416 campaigns run by 24 UAE businesses (AED 1.5M in ad spend) and CRM records from five of them.

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Google in burgundy Facebook in blue used in every chart

CHAPTER 1

01

The wrong question

“Which one gives cheaper leads?” has a reliable answer: Facebook. That is exactly the problem.

Two people become “a lead”

Cost per lead rewards the channel that makes it easiest to become a lead. Look at what each person had to do.

On Facebook: 2 taps, never leaves the app

Scrolling at 11pm › Taps the ad › Form already filled › Submit

On Google: 5 steps, by choice

Searches for it › Compares results › Clicks through › Reads your page › Types details

1 made a **tap**

1 made a **decision**

Both count as one lead in your report. Only one of them was looking for you.

The number that pays your bills

Cost per customer =
cost per lead ÷ share of leads who buy

Same insurance broker, same 90 days, both channels:

Facebook

AED 38 cost per lead	÷	**0.6%** of leads buy	=	**AED 5,853** per customer

Google

AED 179 cost per lead	÷	**6.4%** of leads buy	=	**AED 2,784** per customer

The lead that cost **5 times more** produced customers at **half the price.**

And that is before asking what each customer is worth. Chapter 3 shows it.

What we looked at

416
campaigns on Google and Facebook

AED 1.5M
in ad spend

24
UAE businesses in 18 industries

Five businesses, followed into the CRM

Who qualified, who bought and what they paid.

- **Insurance broker**
- **Online tuition provider**
- **Off-plan brokerage selling abroad**
- **B2B app development studio**
- **Glass and aluminium fit-out**

Terms used

Facebook: Meta's ad platform, Facebook and Instagram.

Google: Google Ads plus leads who found the business through Google search.

Qualified: a quote, information session, appointment or offer.

Customer: a policy issued, a student enrolled or a job paid for.

Currency: all figures in AED.

Some of these businesses sell inside the UAE; others are UAE companies selling to buyers in the Gulf, the UK and Europe. Clients are described by industry only.

CHAPTER 2

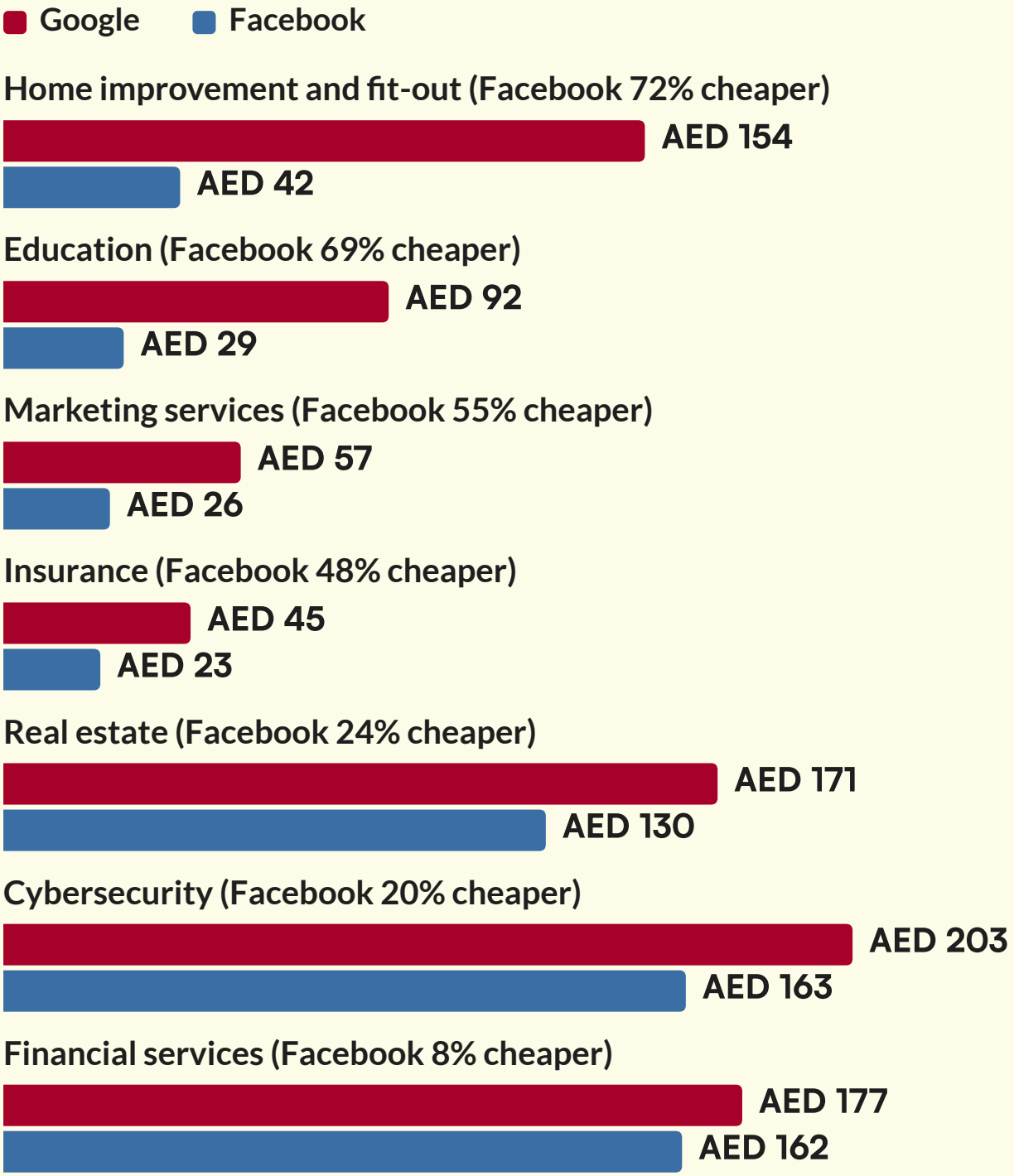
02

What the ad platforms tell you

Start with the numbers you see in Ads Manager and Google Ads, in the seven industries that ran both channels.

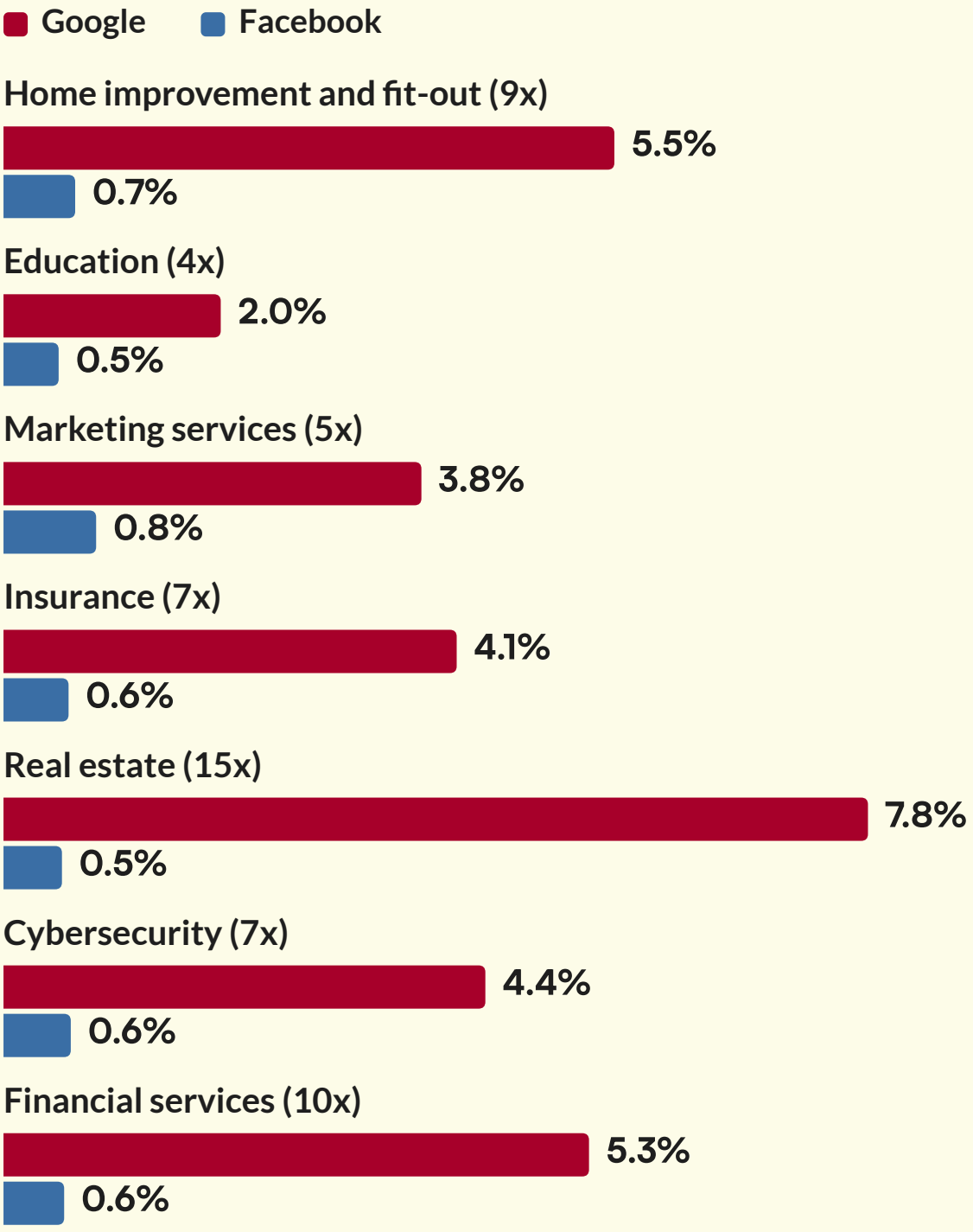
Facebook wins on cost per lead. Every time.

Cost per lead, all campaigns that recorded leads.



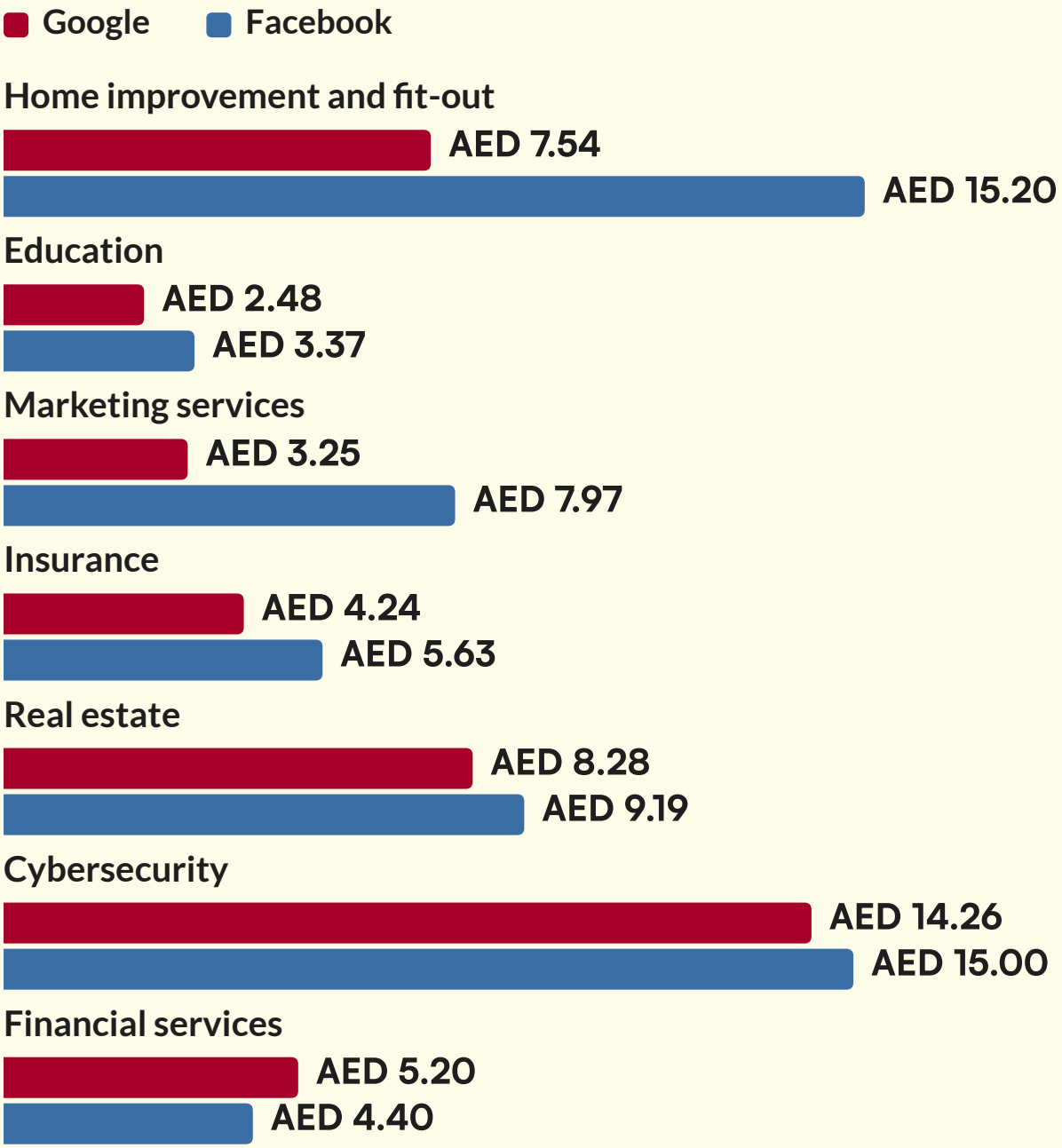
Google gets clicked 4 to 15 times more often

Click rate: clicks as a share of people who saw the ad. Someone searching for what you sell is far more likely to click.



Facebook clicks cost more. Its leads cost less.

Cost per click to your website. Facebook clicks cost more in 6 of 7 industries.



Why are its leads cheaper anyway? Instant forms collect them inside the app. Many never reach your site at all.

CHAPTER 3

03

From lead to customer

Ad platforms stop counting when someone becomes a lead. Your business starts counting there.

INSURANCE BROKER · 90 DAYS

Same share qualified. Very different share bought.

For every 1,000 leads from each channel:

Facebook

1,000 leads › 167 qualified › 6 bought

Google

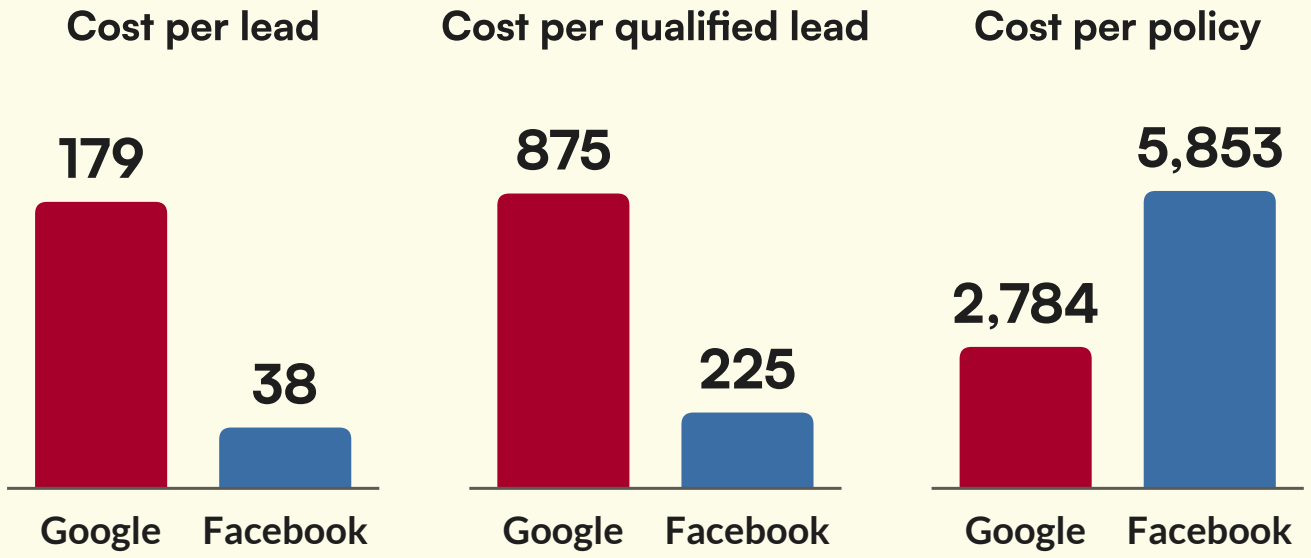
1,000 leads › 205 qualified › 64 bought

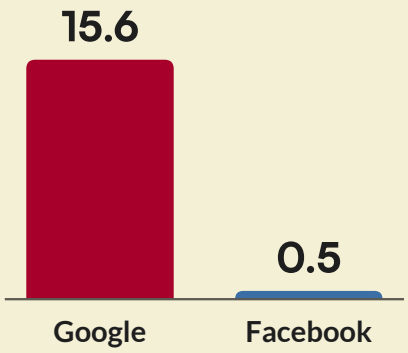
On a qualification report the two look equal. The gap opens one step later.

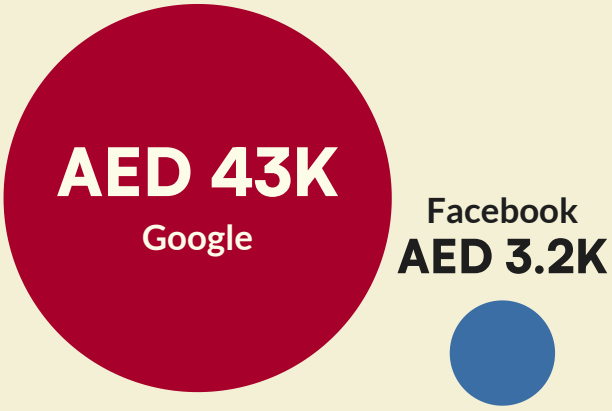


INSURANCE BROKER · 90 DAYS

Five times cheaper per lead. Twice as expensive per policy.





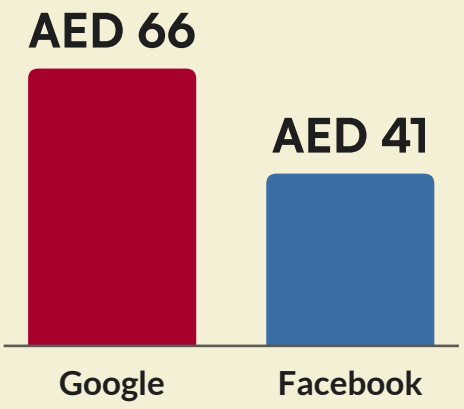


All values in AED. Facebook: AED 11,705 spend, 311 leads, 2 policies. Google: AED 30,627 spend, 171 leads, 11 policies, AED 476,525 premium.

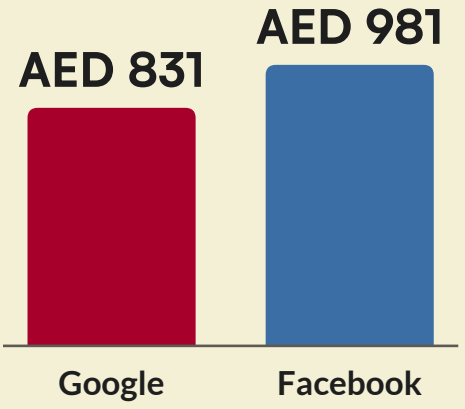
ONLINE TUITION PROVIDER · 90 DAYS

Cheaper lead on Facebook. Cheaper student on Google.

Cost per lead



Cost per enrolment



For every 1,000 leads:

Facebook

1,000 leads › 69 qualified › 42 enrolled

Google

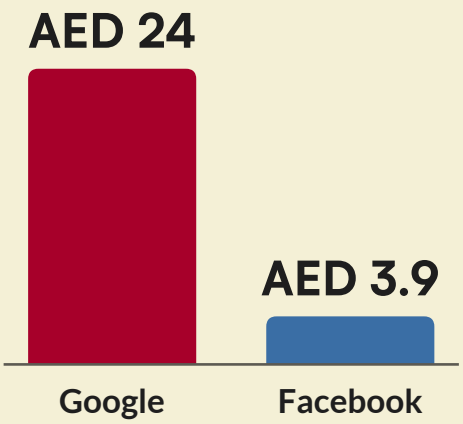
1,000 leads › 117 qualified › 79 enrolled

Facebook: AED 5,887 spend, 144 leads, 6 enrolments. Google: AED 20,764 spend, 317 leads, 25 enrolments.

B2B AND FIT-OUT

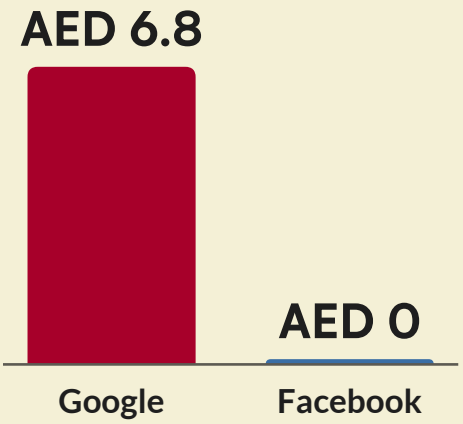
Revenue earned for every AED spent

B2B app development studio



Google was cheaper even per lead here: AED 114 vs AED 129.

Glass and aluminium fit-out



Facebook leads were 3x cheaper (AED 73 vs AED 229). None bought.

App studio: AED 150,000 won from AED 6,243 on Google; AED 60,000 from AED 15,400 on Facebook. Periods differ, so read these as campaign totals.

Fit-out: 2 customers and AED 48,400 from AED 7,085 on Google. A small campaign: treat it as a signal.

The off-plan brokerage sells Dubai property to buyers in Europe. No sales closed in the 90 days, and Google brought only 2 leads. Its story is about forms, in chapter 6.

The flip

Which channel won, depending on what you measure.

Business	Cheaper per lead	Better per customer
Insurance broker	Facebook	Google
Online tuition provider	Facebook	Google
Fit-out company	Facebook	Google
B2B app studio	Google	Google

"Better per customer" means lower cost per customer (insurance, tuition) or more revenue per AED spent (fit-out, app studio).

The cheap lead is real. It just isn't what you are buying.

In every business where we could count customers, the channel that was cheaper per lead was not the channel that was cheaper per customer.

CHAPTER 4

04

Where Facebook wins

Google can only answer demand that already exists. Facebook can create it.

Facebook is the stronger channel when...



The ticket is small

A few hundred or a few thousand dirhams. Decided in one conversation.



The risk is low

A trial class, a consultation, something easy to cancel.



The need is urgent

A visa deadline, a broken AC in August, an exam next month.



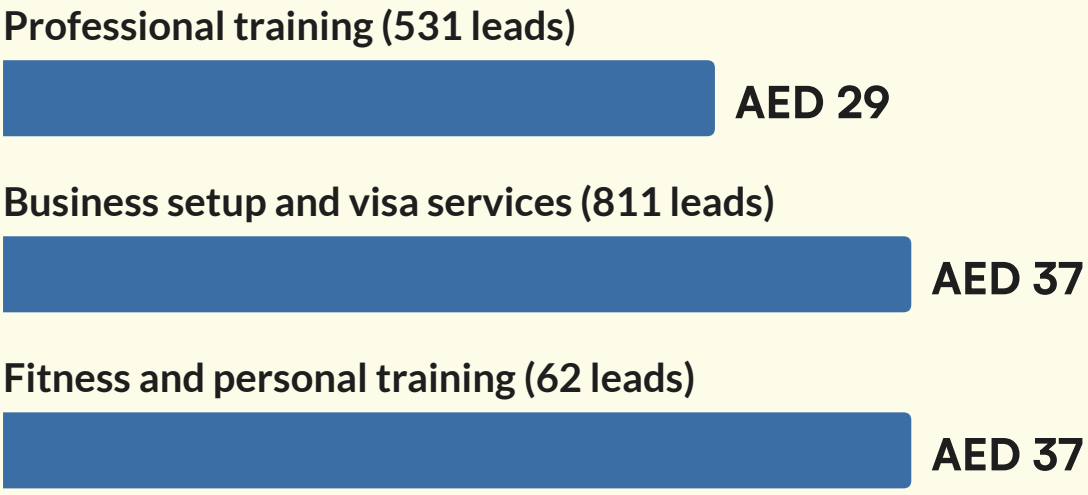
The decision is an impulse

A promotion, an event, a limited offer nobody thought to search for.

Facebook isn't a weaker channel. It is a channel for a different kind of purchase.

Where Facebook already works on its own

Cost per lead in industries that ran Facebook only, all selling quick, low-risk services.



AED 299

per enrolment from Facebook ads that sent people to a **website form**. The lowest cost per customer in this report.

Early signal: 20 leads, 4 enrolments.

AED 3.2K

average premium on Facebook insurance policies, against AED 43K on Google. Good for small policies, thin for large ones.

CHAPTER 5

05

Where Google wins

Past a certain price and risk, buyers stop acting on ads and start doing homework.

The commitment threshold

Below it, people decide on the spot. Above it, they search, compare and ask around before they hand over their details.

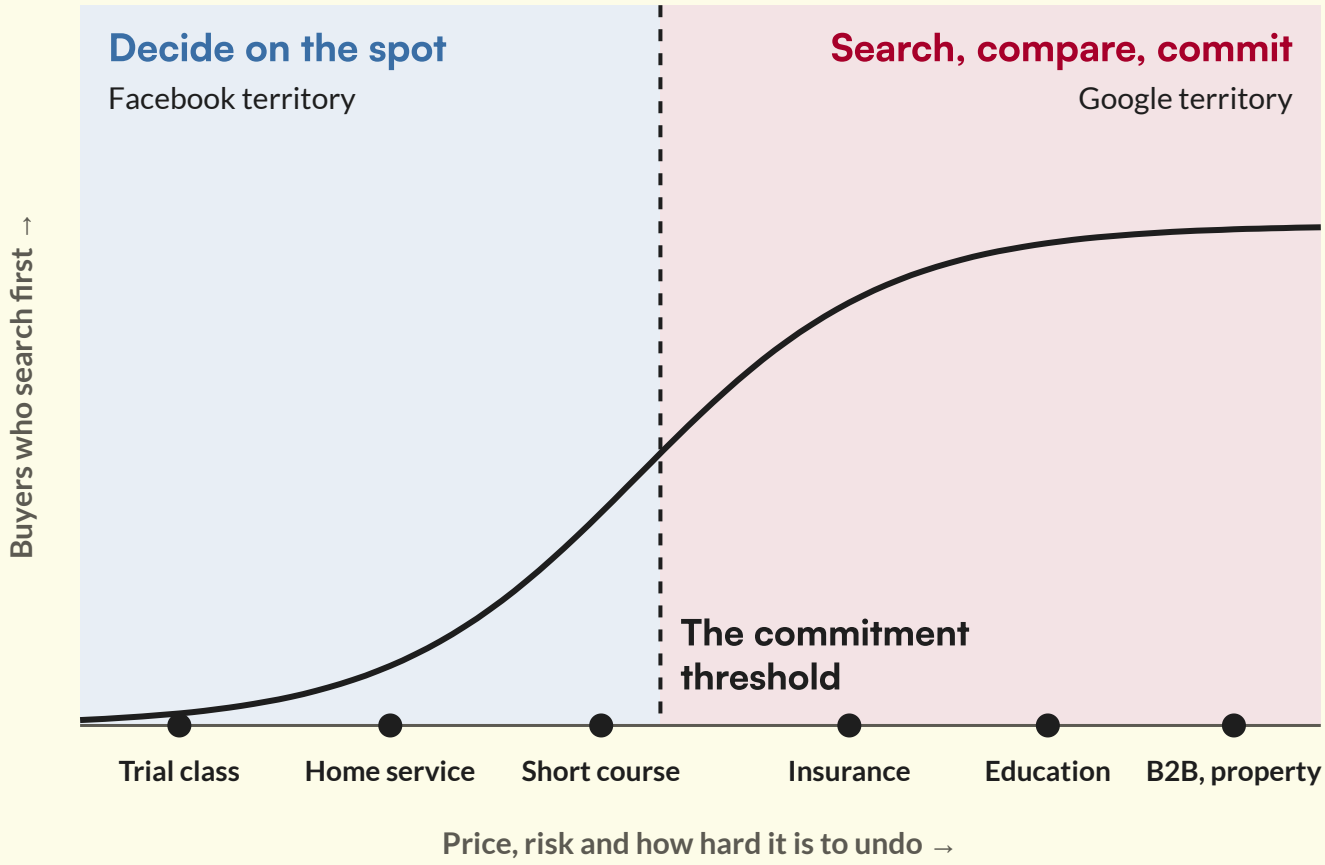
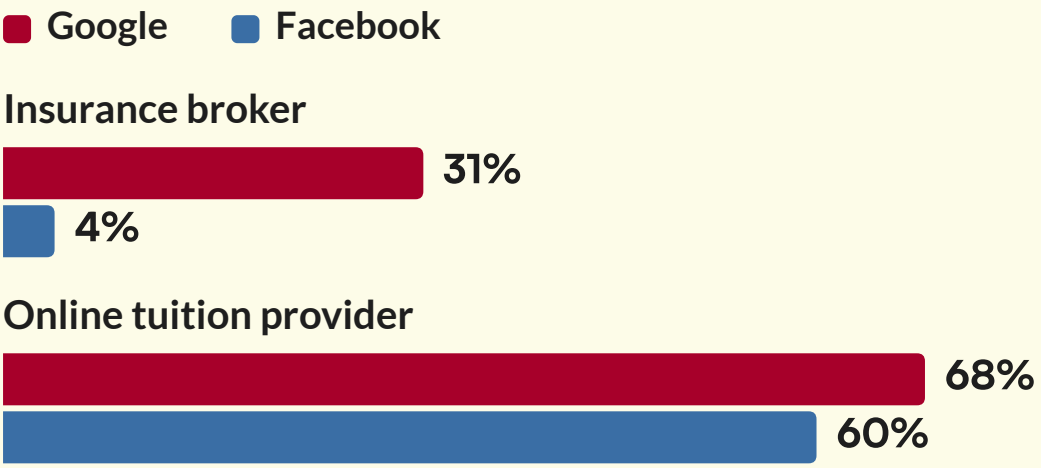


Illustration of the pattern, not plotted data.

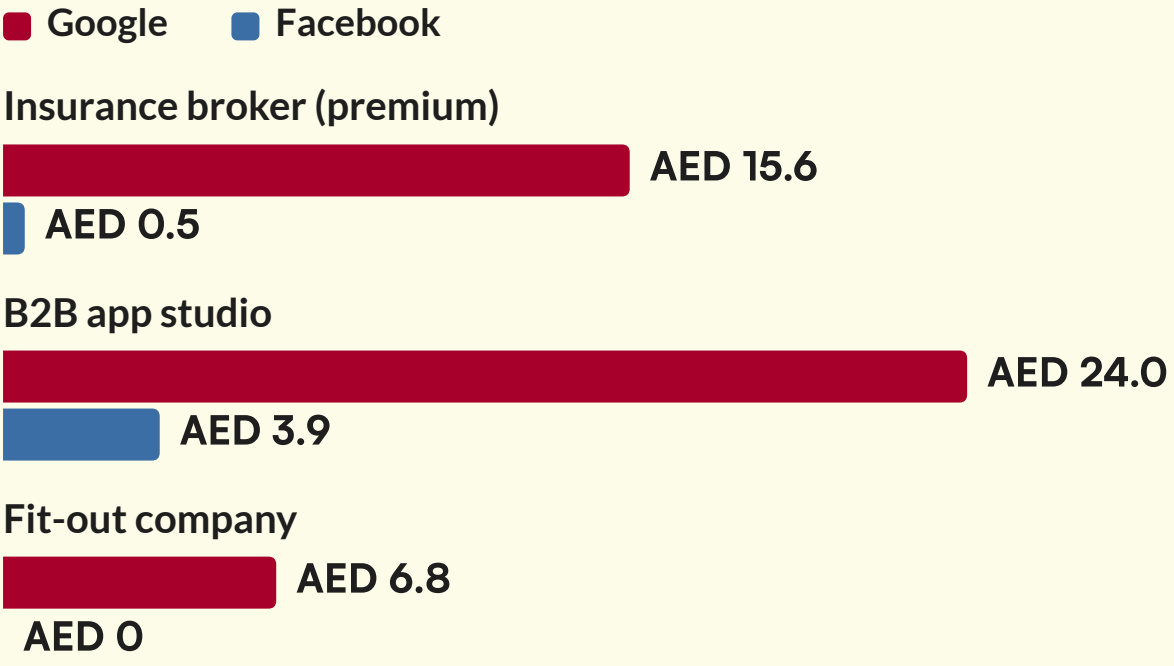
The person searching “professional indemnity insurance Dubai” has already decided they need it. You only have to persuade them to choose you.

Above the threshold, Google pulls away

Qualified leads who became customers



Revenue per AED spent



BONUS

Search pays twice

3 policies

and **AED 19,000** in premium came from people who found the insurance broker through Google search. No ad cost.

LIMIT

Google runs out

2 leads

in 90 days from Google for Dubai property sold to buyers in the Netherlands. Almost nobody there searches for it.

Google can only reach people who are already searching. No bid fixes a search that is not happening.

For a new category, a new market or a product people don't know exists yet, Facebook has to create the demand first. Google catches it once it exists.

CHAPTER 6

06

How you collect the lead

The biggest swing in lead quality was not Google vs Facebook. It was inside Facebook.

Two ways to collect the same lead

Instant form

Sees ad › Taps › Details pre-filled › Submit

Never sees your website. One or two taps.

Website form

Sees ad › Clicks › Reads your page › Decides › Types details

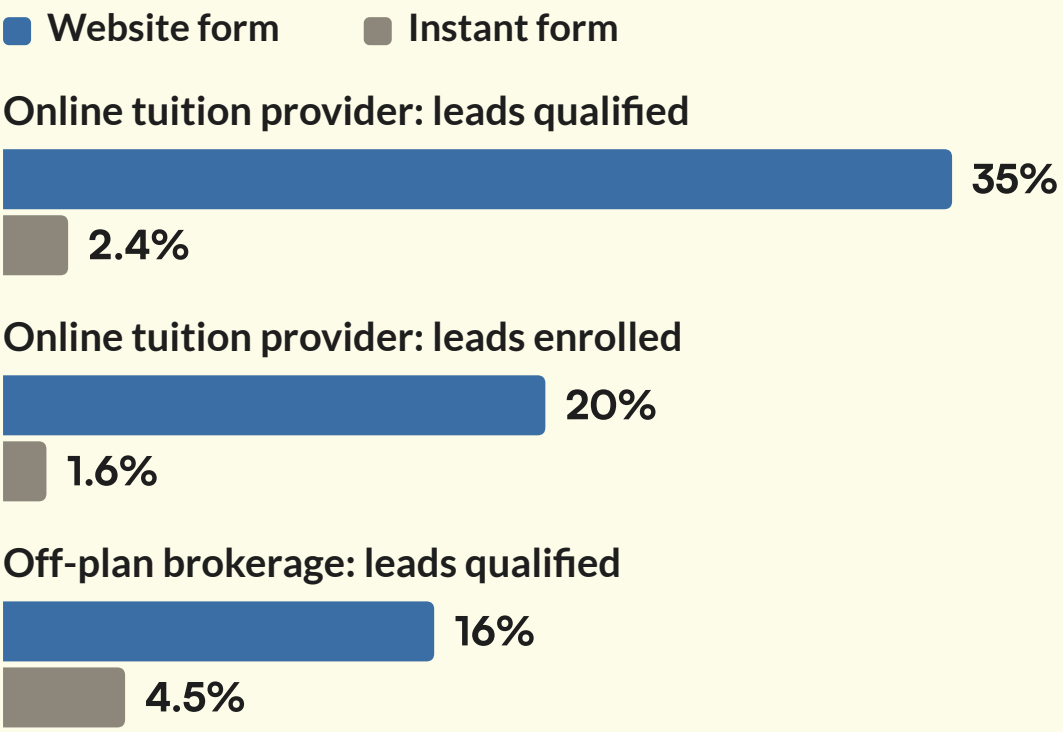
Has to want it enough to read and type.

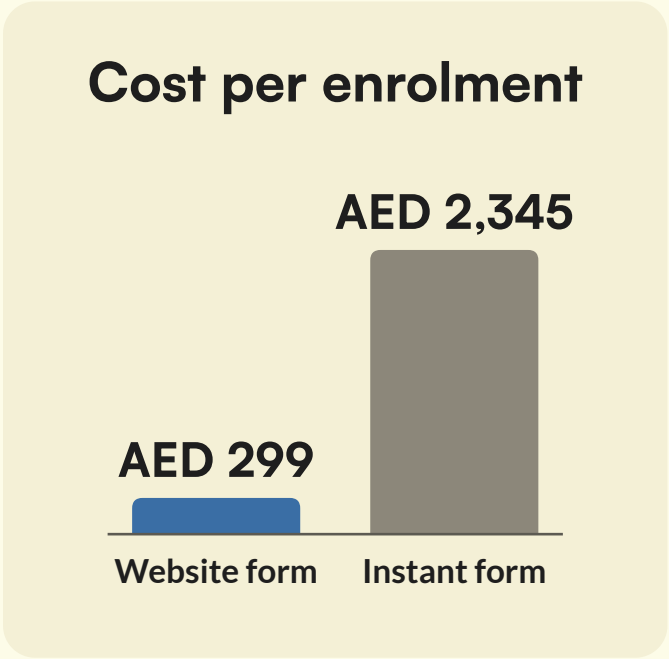
Every step you ask for is a small test of how much they want what you sell.

Instant forms remove almost every step, so they let through the curious, the accidental and the people who won't remember filling them in when you call.

Same channel, same months, up to 15 times the quality

All Facebook. Website form vs instant form, 90 days.





Tuition website-form figures come from 20 leads: an early signal. The brokerage compares 44 leads on each side and points the same way.

What to do about it



Send people to your website

On Facebook, optimise for enquiries on your site, not instant forms. Watch cost per customer, not per lead.



Make instant forms work harder

Use the higher-intent form type and add one question only a real buyer can answer: budget, timeline or company size.



Check where cheap leads come from

If instant-form cost per lead suddenly drops, check placements and countries. Switch off Audience Network and audience expansion.



Match the page to the search

On Google, send each search to a page about that exact service, not your homepage.

CHAPTER 7

07

What happens after the click

A lead is not a fixed thing. It loses value by the hour.

Why speed matters

A 2011 study published in Harvard Business Review, *The Short Life of Online Sales Leads*, found that businesses contacting a lead within an hour were:

7x

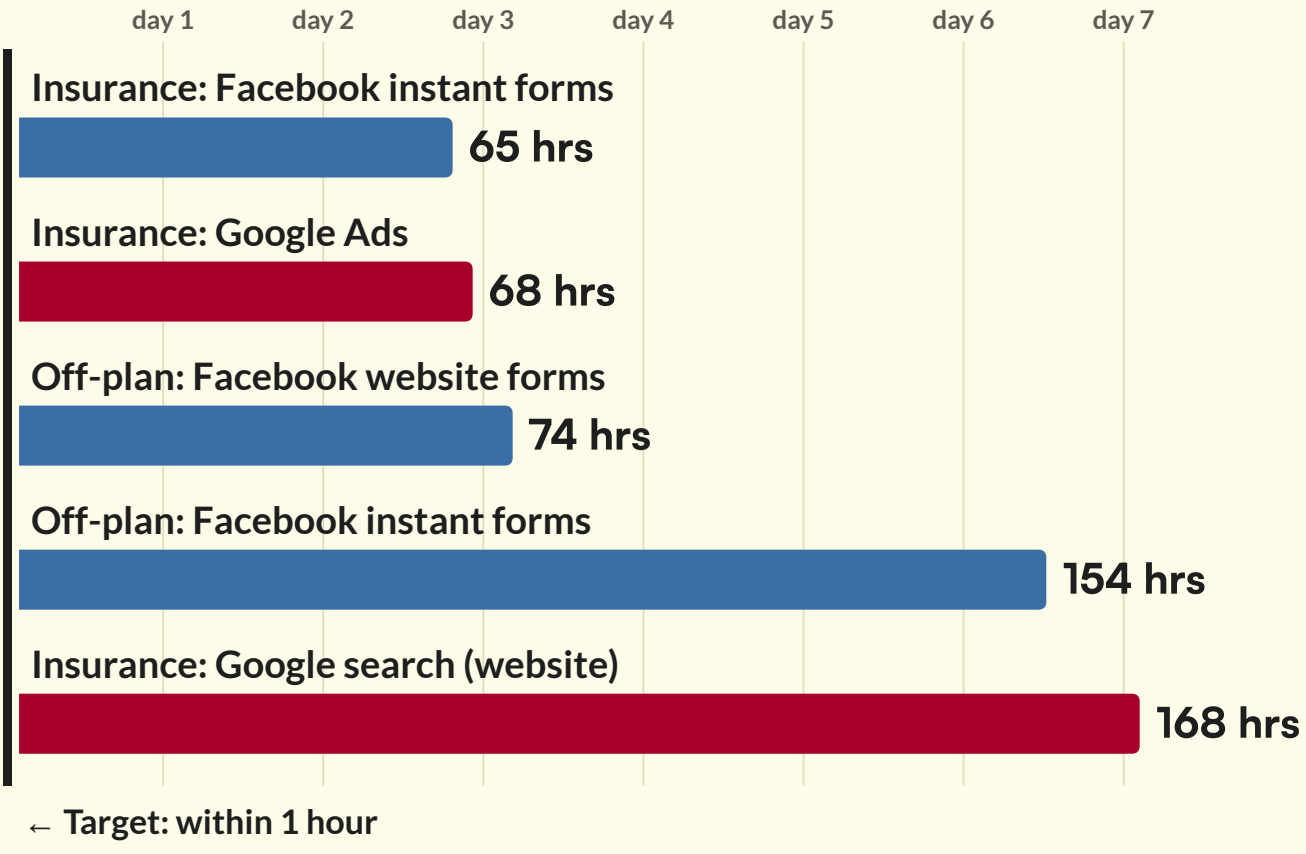
as likely to qualify it as those who waited one hour longer

60x

as likely as those who waited a day or more

How long leads waited in our data

Median time from lead to first contact attempt, 90 days.



Three to seven days

These are established businesses with sales teams. In a busy week, new leads queue behind meetings and existing customers.

The Facebook lead

Tapped a form between two videos. Has often forgotten by the next morning.

The Google lead

Moved on to the next search result. Talking to a competitor by the afternoon.

What to do about it

Reply in a minute

Send an automatic WhatsApp or email the moment a lead arrives, so they know a person is coming.

Call within the hour

During working hours, make the first call inside 60 minutes. Every hour after that costs you leads.

Track the source

Record where every lead came from in your CRM, so you can measure cost per customer by channel.

Every quality figure in this report was measured on leads that waited days. Some of the gap between channels is about who the leads are; some is about how many were still interested when someone called.

CHAPTER 8

08

The decision framework

Two questions about what you sell decide your split.

Find your box

Google share of budget Facebook share

	People already search for it	People don't search for it yet
Big or risky purchase	**Google-led** Insurance, B2B services, education, fit-out 70% / 30% Facebook on website forms, and to reach people who visited your site.	**Build, then catch** New B2B categories, property for overseas buyers 40% / 60% Facebook website forms build demand; Google catches the few searches. Expect a longer sales cycle.
Small or low-risk purchase	**Both channels** Home services, short courses, clinics 50% / 50% Google catches people ready now; Facebook adds volume at a lower cost.	**Facebook-led** Promotions, events, impulse offers, new products 20% / 80% Keep Google to your brand name and the searches that do exist.

Starting points, not rules. After 60 to 90 days, move budget toward the channel producing customers at the lower cost, measured in your CRM.

Three rules for any box

1 **Measure cost per customer, not cost per lead.**

It is the only number that tells you which channel pays for itself.

2 **Collect leads on a page you control.**

Website forms beat instant forms in every business where we could compare them.

3 **Call within the hour.**

Whatever you spend to win a lead, a slow first call spends part of it again.

Want to know where Google and Facebook fit for your business? Bring your numbers to a free strategy session. Details on the last page.

METHODOLOGY

How we did it

Ad account data. 416 campaigns run by 24 UAE businesses on Google Ads and Meta (Facebook and Instagram), from ad accounts managed by Forward Digital Consultancy FZCO, pulled from the Google Ads and Meta APIs in October 2026. AED 1.5M in spend across 18 industries. Each campaign is counted over its full run.

Cost per lead. Spend divided by platform-reported leads, on campaigns that recorded at least one lead.

Click rate. Clicks divided by impressions. Facebook uses link clicks.

CRM data. Leads, qualification, sales and revenue from five clients over the 90 days to 28 October 2026, matched to ad spend over the same days. The B2B app studio has no CRM: its figures come from its lead log and owner-reported revenue, with Facebook covering October to December 2025.

How Google is counted. Google Ads leads plus leads who found the business through Google search. At two businesses, Google Ads leads entered by hand before the CRM was connected are counted with Google; their revenue was confirmed by the client. Google Form leads are excluded.

Revenue. Premium written for the insurance broker; value of work won for the others.

Currency. All figures in AED. Other currencies converted at fixed rates, including AED 3.6725 per US dollar and AED 4.90 per pound sterling.

Exclusions. Campaigns with broken or duplicated tracking, recruitment campaigns, app install campaigns and businesses outside the UAE.

Small samples. Two Facebook policies at the insurance broker, 20 website-form leads at the tuition provider and two customers at the fit-out company are reported as signals.

APPENDIX

The seven paired industries

Industry	Cost per lead (AED)		Click rate		Cost per click (AED)	
	Google	Facebook	Google	Facebook	Google	Facebook
Home improvement and fit-out	154	42	5.5%	0.7%	7.54	15.20
Education	92	29	2.0%	0.5%	2.48	3.37
Marketing services	57	26	3.8%	0.8%	3.25	7.97
Insurance	45	23	4.1%	0.6%	4.24	5.63
Real estate	171	130	7.8%	0.5%	8.28	9.19
Cybersecurity	203	163	4.4%	0.6%	14.26	15.00
Financial services	177	162	5.3%	0.6%	5.20	4.40

Clients are described by industry only. Source: Forward Digital Consultancy FZCO campaign data.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Find out which channel is really bringing you customers.

Bring your ad spend and your CRM numbers to a free 30-minute strategy session. We'll show you where Google and Facebook fit for your business, and what your leads are actually worth.

Book a free strategy session

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