SIX FAILURE PATTERNS FROM LIVE META ADS · 29 SEP – 1 OCT 2026

The click still works. The page behind it doesn't.

Between 28 September and 1 October I found 15 online stores with active Meta ads whose own links led to deleted products, error pages or the homepage instead of the advertised item. Each was reproduced twice, at least an hour apart, from a US phone-width browser. These notes show six of them, one for each way the failure happens.

#	PATTERN	BRAND TYPE	GRADE	SEVERITY
1	One retired product, nine ads	DTC self-tanning brand	GRADE A	HIGH
2	A silent redirect to the homepage	Women's apparel brand	GRADE A	HIGH
3	A retired landing page	DTC subscription brand	GRADE A	HIGH
4	A re-listed product	Apparel brand	GRADE A	HIGH
5	One card in a multi-product ad	Event and party supplies retailer	GRADE A	HIGH
6	A catalogue restructure	DTC footwear brand	GRADE A	MEDIUM

HOW EACH WAS CHECKED

Ad found in Meta's public Ad Library. Tapped through the ad's own link, as a shopper would, in a 390 px phone browser on a US connection. Reproduced on two checks at least 60 minutes apart, with a working control from the same brand each time. Then I tried to kill it: other versions, direct loads, moved or renamed products.

WHAT THESE NOTES DON'T CLAIM

No ad spend, traffic, lost revenue or conversion figures: those need account data. Each record is a photograph of its check window, not a live feed. Some of these may be fixed by now; none has been re-dated. Brand names, product names, Library IDs and URLs are withheld.

Ordered by severity, then by the number of ads or versions affected.

GRADE A FINDING 1 OF 6 · ONE RETIRED PRODUCT, NINE ADS · VALIDATED

Nine active ads still pointed at one product the store no longer sells

SEVERITY **HIGH** | CONFIDENCE **HIGH**

The ad · Meta Ad Library · ID withheld

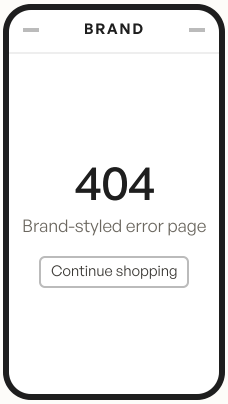
DTC self-tanning brand
Sponsored

Ad copy withheld. Nine separate ads, each linking to the same tanning-set product page.

Tanning set · product ad

Shop now

Where it lands · phone · 390 px



HTTP status	404
Page type	Branded error
Ads affected	9 of 9
Path to product	None

AD LIBRARY IDS	Withheld · 9 active ads
DESTINATION	One product page, under two collection paths
CHECKED	29 SEP · 30 SEP 13:01–13:02Z · US · 390PX · VIA AD LINK AND DIRECT
STATUS	All 9 ads Active at the 30 Sep check

WHY IT MATTERS

Any click served through the versions read stops on an error page before reaching a product. One retired product took nine ads with it. No spend or traffic figure is claimed: that needs account data.

FIX

Retire or re-point the nine ads, or redirect the retired URL to the closest live product. Then search the full ad set for the old URL before the next product is retired.

WHAT I RULED OUT

Site-wide outage: the brand's other ads I checked opened working pages. Referral or session effect: the URL also returned 404 when loaded directly, outside the ad. Path quirk: both collection paths returned 404.

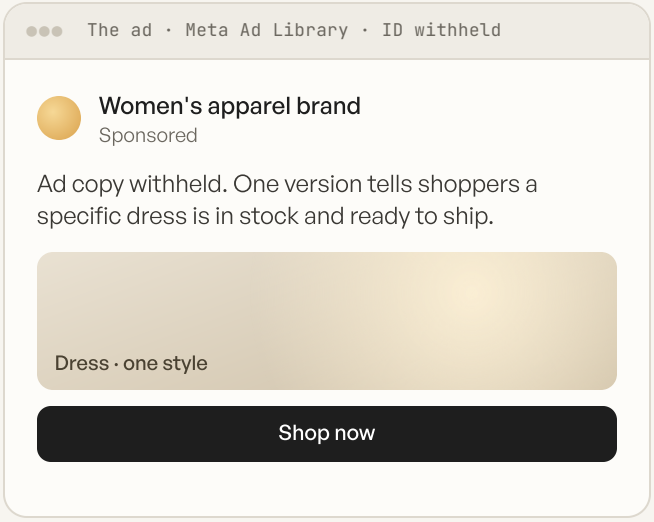
KNOWN LIMITATION

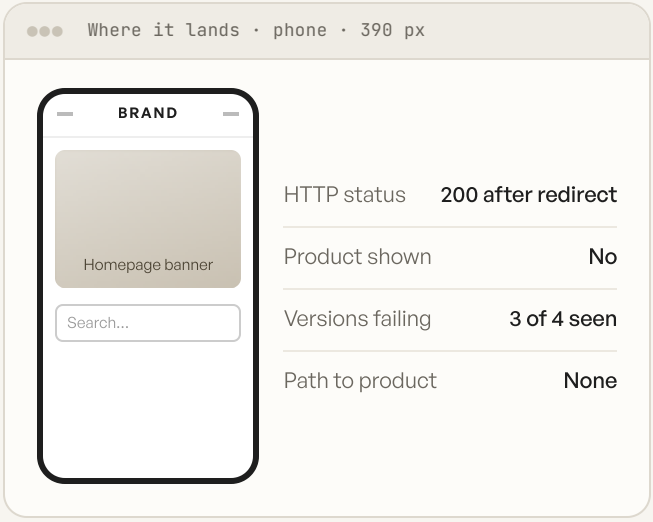
One version of each multi-version ad was read; other versions were not enumerated. Three of the nine were loaded through the ad link on 30 Sep; the other six were read from the Library.

GRADE A FINDING 2 OF 6 · A SILENT REDIRECT TO THE HOMEPAGE · VALIDATED

An “in stock, ready to ship” ad sends shoppers to the homepage

SEVERITY **HIGH** | CONFIDENCE **HIGH**





AD LIBRARY ID	Withheld · multi-version ad
DESTINATION	Product URL now redirects to the homepage
CHECKED	30 SEP · 1 OCT · US · 390PX · 3 CHECKS VIA AD LINK
STATUS	Ad Active at each check

WHY IT MATTERS

The ad promises a dress that ships today; the click delivers the homepage, and the dress is not in the store to find. Because the page loads normally, a routine broken-link check would report this path as working.

FIX

Retire the three versions, or point them at a live style. If retired products should land somewhere, send them to the matching collection rather than the homepage.

WHAT I RULED OUT

The whole ad failing: the fourth version, for a different style, opened its product page. A moved product: no live product under that style name was found in the store.

KNOWN LIMITATION

Whether the dress is gone for good or coming back is unknown from outside, and that decides which fix is right. No spend or revenue figure is claimed.

GRADE A FINDING 3 OF 6 · A RETIRED LANDING PAGE · VALIDATED

An advertorial ad kept sending clicks to a landing page that no longer existed

SEVERITY **HIGH** | CONFIDENCE **HIGH**

The ad · Meta Ad Library · ID withheld

DTC subscription brand
Sponsored

Ad copy withheld. A long-form advertorial ad pointing to a page on the brand's landing-page subdomain.

Advertorial · landing subdomain

Learn more

Where it lands · phone · 390 px

Not Found

The requested URL was not found on this server.

HTTP status	404
Page type	Bare server error
Sibling pages	Load fine
Path to offer	None

AD LIBRARY ID	Withheld · 2 versions, same URL
RUNNING SINCE	6 Jul 2026
CHECKED	29 SEP · 30 SEP 12:56Z · US · 390PX · VIA AD LINK AND DIRECT
STATUS	Ad stopped running by 2 Oct; page still 404

WHY IT MATTERS

Every click the ad earned ended on a server error before reaching the offer. Pages on a landing subdomain sit outside routine store checks, so they can be retired while ads still use them.

FIX

Pause the ad, or restore or redirect the retired page. Then check every active ad pointing at the landing subdomain.

WHAT I RULED OUT

Site-wide outage: a sibling advertorial on the same subdomain loaded at both checks. Session or geography: reproduced through the ad's own link and by loading the URL directly.

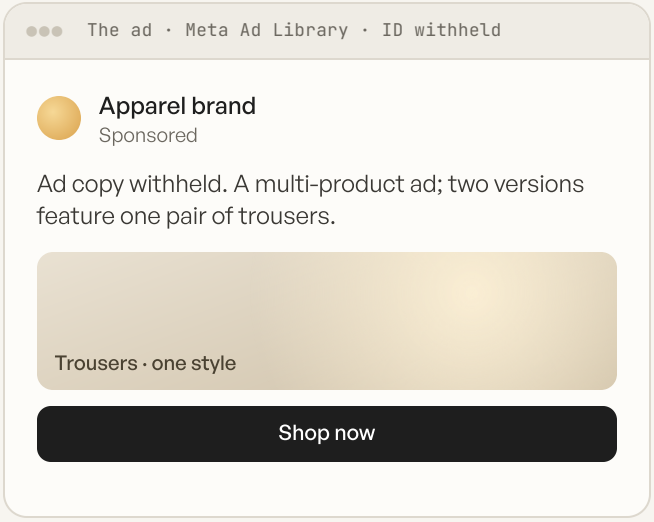
KNOWN LIMITATION

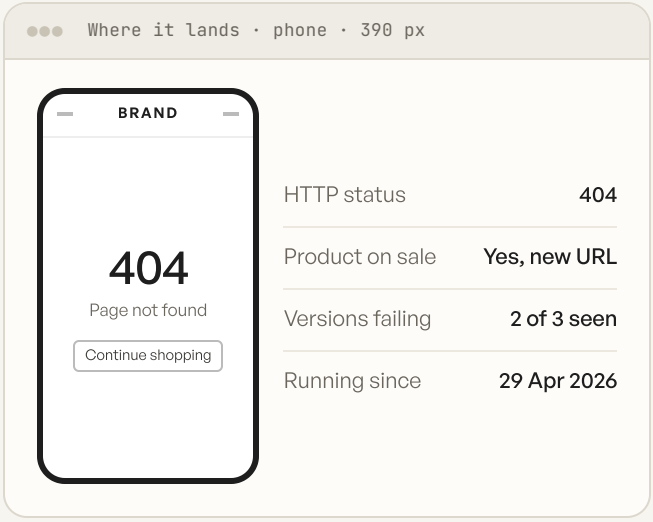
Which team retired the page is unknown from outside. The ad has since stopped; this record documents the period it ran.

GRADE A FINDING 4 OF 6 · A RE-LISTED PRODUCT · VALIDATED

Ads for a product the store still sells open “Page not found”

SEVERITY **HIGH** | CONFIDENCE **HIGH**





AD LIBRARY ID	Withheld · multi-version ad
DESTINATION	The product's original URL, which no longer exists
CHECKED	30 SEP · 1 OCT · US · 390PX · 3 CHECKS VIA AD LINK
STATUS	Ad Active at each check

WHY IT MATTERS

A shopper who taps for a product the store is still selling gets an error page. A check for deleted products would miss this, because the product exists. It just lives at a different address.

FIX

Point both versions at the product's live URL. Then check other ads for products that were re-listed, since each would keep its old link the same way.

WHAT I RULED OUT

A discontinued product: it is still for sale under new URLs. The whole ad failing: the third version, for a different style, opened its product page.

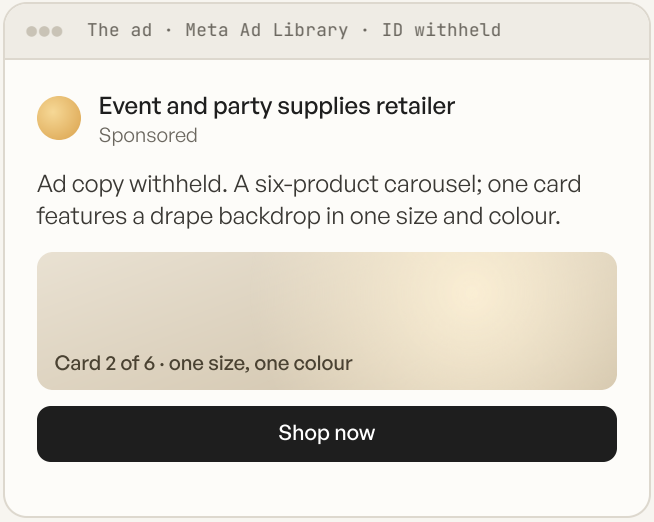
KNOWN LIMITATION

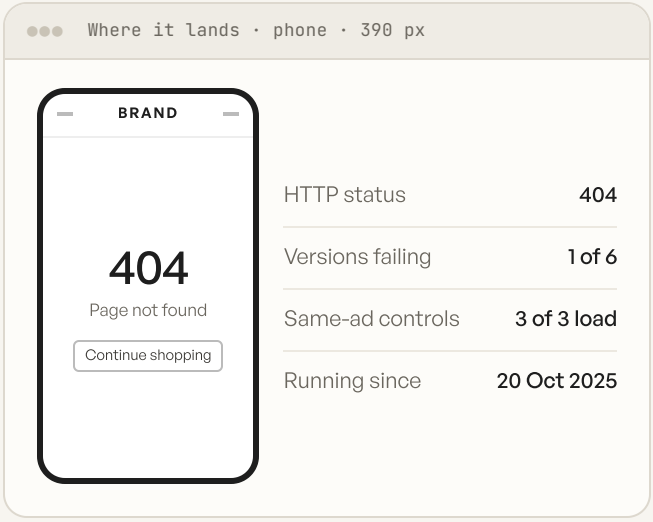
The new URLs carry a numbered suffix, which usually means the product was re-created; that cause is inferred, not confirmed. No spend or revenue figure is claimed.

GRADE A FINDING 5 OF 6 · ONE CARD IN A MULTI-PRODUCT AD · VALIDATED

One card in a six-product ad opens “Page not found”

SEVERITY **HIGH** | CONFIDENCE **HIGH**





AD LIBRARY ID	Withheld · 6 versions
DESTINATION	A retired size-and-colour listing
CHECKED	1 OCT 13:08Z · 14:46–14:49Z · US · 390PX · 4 LOADS VIA AD LINK
STATUS	Ad Active at both checks

WHY IT MATTERS

Only one card fails, so the ad looks healthy at a glance and in most spot checks. A shopper who chooses that item lands on an error page.

FIX

Retire the card or point it at the nearest live size or colour. The same product family in another size works, so the fix is one link.

WHAT I RULED OUT

The whole ad failing: three other cards from the same ad, including the same product in another size, opened their product pages. Referral effect: the URL typed directly, without the ad, also returned 404.

KNOWN LIMITATION

A catalogue probe read 4,500 products, not the full catalogue, so a replacement listing under a different name cannot be ruled out.

GRADE A FINDING 6 OF 6 · A CATALOGUE RESTRUCTURE · VALIDATED

Colourway ads land on the homepage, not the shoe they show

SEVERITY **MEDIUM** | CONFIDENCE **HIGH**

The ad · Meta Ad Library · ID withheld

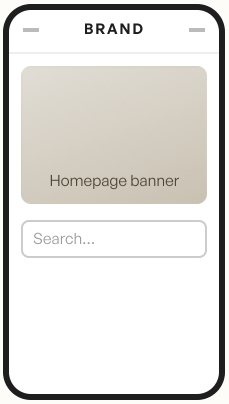
DTC footwear brand
Sponsored

Ad copy withheld. The creative features one specific colourway of one shoe.



Shop now

Where it lands · phone · 390 px



Product shown	No
Colourway page	Live
Ads failing	2 of 2
Path to product	Search

AD LIBRARY IDS	Withheld · 2 active ads
RUNNING SINCE	18 Jun 2026
CHECKED	30 SEP 12:12Z · 13:25Z · RECHECK 2 OCT · US · 390PX · 6 LOADS
STATUS	Both ads Active at each check

WHY IT MATTERS

Any shopper served either ad lands on the homepage instead of the product it shows, and has to search for it. The shoe is still for sale, which is why this one is Medium, not High.

FIX

Point both ads at the colourway's live product page. Then check other colourway ads created before the store moved to one page per colourway.

WHAT I RULED OUT

A retired product: the colourway has its own live page. One ad working: both ads fail, on every load.

KNOWN LIMITATION

The cause (a move to one page per colourway) is inferred from the catalogue, not confirmed. No spend or revenue figure is claimed.

What a sweep adds to records like these

- **Coverage, stated.** Every active ad checked, up to 50, listed in a register with where it lands.
- **Working paths, confirmed.** What's fine, so you know what not to touch.
- **Every finding, recorded like the six above.** Grade, severity, confidence, what I ruled out and what I couldn't.
- **The smallest fix.** A correction path in plain language, not a rebuild.
- **Rechecked before delivery.** Anything fixed mid-sweep is reported as resolved, not counted against you.

FIXED FEE

$500

Up to 50 active ads. Report within 24 hours. Paid after delivery, by US bank transfer.

No account access. Everything checked is public.

START WITH ONE BRAND

tevin@toog.pro · ads.toog.pro

Agencies: one sweep per client brand, with the report sent to you.