

Search Engine Marketing Guide

Using AdWords and Other Cost-Per-Click Services to Grow Your Business

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Introduction

1. A Note About This Guide

Although we will be discussing Google AdWords at length in this document, the tips here are by no means limited to using only that service. The basic principles covered, including keyword selection and ad copy writing, apply to just about any cost-per-click campaign you are using, whether it be adBrite, Yahoo & Microsoft Search Alliance or otherwise.

In fact, you might even find that one of the alternatives to Google is a better choice for your situation. Different ad locations reach different people, so your ideal ad exposure could be to users who search with Yahoo rather than with Google. Because of this, it is recommended that you try multiple advertising outlets to see what works best for you.

While we will occasionally touch on Google-specific topics such as Quality Score, most cost-per-click ad services have a similar (if not nearly identical) feature set for your advertising needs. In most instances, the term “AdWords” can be replaced with the name of another ad service and the tips detailed here will still apply. This guide will primarily refer to AdWords for simplicity’s sake, and because it is one of the most commonly used advertising methods which runs ads on the most popular search engine in the world.

This guide will help you run and maintain an effective keyword-based ad campaign for your product, service, website or business.

2. What is Google AdWords?

Google AdWords is one of the most prominent forms of advertising on the Internet. Through AdWords, you can generate advertisements that run on Google search result pages and/or targeted websites in Google’s content network. These ads are the primary source of income for Google.

Ads are displayed according to targeted keywords specified by the user while creating an ad campaign. AdWords campaigns are typically paid for on a “cost per click,” (CPC, sometimes also referred to as “pay per click” or PPC) basis, meaning the account holder pays a certain amount any time their ad is clicked on. Additionally, ads can be bought on a “cost per impression” (CPM) basis, which means a payment is made each time the ad is displayed whether it is clicked on or not.

3. How it Works

The basics of using AdWords are rather simple. You create an ad campaign using strategically chosen keywords so your ads show up when users search for those terms in Google. You create the text for the ad (a headline of 25 characters and two additional text lines of 35 characters each) and place a bid on how much you are willing to pay per click—that is, any time a user sees your ad and clicks on the link to go to your product page, you pay a small fee. In most cases a higher bid results in higher ad placement on the search results page, which is desirable because a higher rank tends to yield more click-throughs.

Some campaigns are targeted to specific websites rather than Google search results. These ads are often paid for based on the number of times your ad appears to users on the targeted site, even if they don't click on it. As mentioned above, this is called an impression.

4. Do You Need Search Engine Marketing?

You probably know you need Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to boost your website's search ranking, but does your business really need Search Engine Marketing (SEM)?

Actually, SEO is a component of SEM. Search engine marketing involves actively marketing your site through the search engines, as opposed to passively letting it get picked up by Google and other search engines.

Most people lump SEO and SEM together, but the truth is they are two different things. While optimization is the most commonly used method of gaining traffic online, there are many other options that fall under search engine marketing.

If optimizing your site can bring you impressive traffic, then marketing through search engines is even better. While SEO effects can change and your site will most likely move up and down in the search rankings, SEM can help you stay in front of the public's eye permanently. Because you are actively marketing, it becomes easier to ensure your place among other sites.

As any business owner knows, ending up on the tenth page of Google pretty much guarantees you won't get much search engine traffic. However, if you have a Google ad on the front page, you'll easily get clicks from targeted visitors just the same.

By using other methods apart from just keyword optimization, it is possible to increase your rankings and gain more traffic. This is an area that is often overlooked by business people simply

because they confuse it with SEO. A combination of optimization and active search engine marketing is the best way to increase sales online.

5. The Goal: Conversion

The primary goal of an AdWords campaign is not just to get a high click-through rate (CTR), but to turn those clicks into customers, subscribers, etc. In other words, the objective is to turn *potential* customers into *actual* customers.

In order to do this, you must strategically target your ads to appear to the type of person that would most likely be interested in your product or service. We accomplish this by trying to predict what our ideal customer might be searching for. These terms are called keywords.

The percentage of users that click through to your product page *and* become customers is called the conversion rate. (This percentage can be determined by dividing the number of conversions by the number of click-throughs and multiplying it by 100.) Conversions are the primary metric for assessing the success of an AdWords campaign.

Before You Begin

6. Creating a Strategy

The first thing you'll want to establish before launching an AdWords campaign is what your primary objective is. Is it to:

- Increase traffic to your website?
- Increase your number of subscribers?
- Increase your sales by x%?
- Increase your profits by x%??
- Acquire customers at a certain price?

Knowing this ahead of time is the only way to track if your AdWords campaign has been a success or if it needs some adjustments.

Additionally, you should consider the product or service you're offering before you start.

- What are its biggest selling points?
- What makes your product stand out from the competition?
- Why would someone who may not be searching for a specific product such as yours be compelled to click on an ad link?

These questions are important because they will come into play when writing the copy for your advertisements. The headline and text will directly reflect the answers you come up with here.

7. The Landing Page

Another important factor to consider before you begin is your landing page. This is the page that potential customers will see after clicking on your ad. The general question to ask is: If someone found your site through an ad, would they feel as though they had been directed to a quality, reputable landing page?

Your landing page is where you get to make your full sales pitch, which you will have to shorten to a relatively tiny length in the ads themselves. Take advantage of this opportunity to provide your prospective customer with details about the many benefits of what you're selling. If you get someone to click on your ad but fail to grab their attention on the landing page, it won't matter how great your ad copy was.

A quality landing page actually has importance besides the obvious function of directly selling your product. It can affect your Quality Score, a number which has significant ramifications on the effectiveness of your ad campaign.

The Quality Score will be discussed in more detail later in this document, but it is important to note that Google hires actual humans to click on ads to determine the quality of a landing page, which is why the questions being asked here are more than just philosophical.

8. Tracking Your Progress

Google conveniently provides several useful tools for tracking the progress of your campaigns. Because conversions are the most important aspect of any advertising campaign as we previously noted, it is imperative that you have a way to accurately track your conversion rate. Otherwise, you will only be able to guess at the effectiveness of your AdWords results.

Google provides an easy and effective way to do this with its “Conversion Tracking” tool. With AdWords conversion tracking, you place a single piece of code on the “confirmation page” of your site that people reach after they take your desired action (purchase, subscribe, etc.) that records how many of your AdWords visitors converted into customers.

AdWords can also conveniently link up directly with your Google Analytics account to provide conversion tracking. We will touch on this again later, but for now it’s a good idea to create an Analytics account for your website if you haven’t already (you can do so at <http://analytics.google.com>).

If you’re using a service other than AdWords, be sure you have some way to monitor your conversion rate. This cannot be stressed enough.

9. Making Your Budget

Since click-through numbers will vary on any given day, the potential cost of your campaign will also change constantly. Therefore, you’ll want to determine what your maximum advertising budget will be before you get started. That way you’ll have a better understanding of how much you can afford to bid on CPC.

Since your strategies may change over time as you gain more experience using AdWords, your budget needs may also vary. This will be determined as you go. You’ll also be able to establish how much specific keywords are worth to you; this will be discussed later.

10. What's Your CPA?

You are paying per click and making money from conversions. In order for your campaign to be successful, you'll need to translate your costs from a per-click basis to a cost-per-action (CPA) basis. The CPA is the price you are effectively paying for every sale, or the acquisition cost.

Before running your campaign, you should determine your target and maximum CPA. The maximum CPA will cause you to break even. Remember to calculate this using your profit margin, not your product sale price. After you run your ad campaigns, you can determine whether or not you're hitting the right CPA for your investment to be worthwhile.

11. Be Ready to Experiment

When it comes down to it, there are many strategies for running a successful CPC ad campaign, but only a few hard and fast rules. As a result, you'll need to be flexible and creative. The only way to figure out the best possible strategy for your ad campaign is to try several different methods, or even make up your own. Tracking their results will allow you to see which is working the best.

It may even be worthwhile to try new strategies even if your current campaign is working well. You could potentially find an even better method; if not, you have a proven method to fall back on.

Keywords & Ads

12. Choosing Keywords

Keyword choice is the most important decision you'll have to make while creating your AdWords campaign. Keywords trigger Google to display your ads to on search results pages and content sites. They should be relevant to your product or service in order to target users who are most likely to become customers and to boost your Quality Score.

For example, you wouldn't want to advertise an ebook on social media promotion to people searching for the keyword "music" just because it's a popular term.

Finding the optimal keyword choices will likely take some trial and error, but there are tools to help you in the process.

13. Keyword Tool

The first step in choosing keywords should be to use Google's Keyword Tool (which can be used even if you're not planning on running your ad on AdWords) which can be found at <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>. You can use this tool to research the popularity of any terms or phrases that are relevant to your site. The tool provides a glimpse into:

- How often your keyword or any related keywords have been searched for globally
- How often these keywords have been searched for locally
- How steep the competition is for a given term

You can tweak the tool to search for exact results and phrases or take advantage of several other advanced options.

One of the very useful aspects of the Keyword Tool is that it can give you ideas for other relevant keywords that you may not have thought of otherwise.

In addition to the tool, do a Google search for any keywords you're considering to see what kinds of ads are displayed. Would it make sense for your ad to show up among them? Would it make *more* sense to see your ad than the others? Consider these questions when choosing terms.

14. Match Types: Broad, Exact and Phrase

When it comes time to pick your keywords, you will have several options, or “match types,” to choose from:

- Broad
- Exact
- Phrase

So what exactly is the difference between them?

Broad matches allow flexibility to include variations on your terms, including plural/singular forms, phrases and synonyms. Not only does this provide some flexibility, the results might even give you a few new ideas for keywords. However, be careful, as this match type is known to cause your ads to show up for a wide range of keywords, including some that may not be extremely relevant to what you’re advertising.

Phrase matches are exactly what they sound like: keyword phrases such as “free guitar lesson.” Phrase keywords must be in the order you specify, but they will also target searches that include other terms, like “free guitar lesson online.” When entering terms for a phrase match, you will put them in quotes: “keyword phrase.”

Exact matches target an exact phrase exclusively, with no variations. If we use “free guitar lesson” as an exact phrase, your ad will not be shown if someone searches for “free guitar lesson online.” Exact phrase matches will be put in square brackets: [exact keyword phrase].

The ideal match type for your ad will depend largely on what you’re trying to sell or promote. You can cover more ground with broad matches, but exact and phrase matches allow you to focus your scope and potentially reach more serious and relevant customers.

One way to determine which match type your situation calls for is simply to try all three with your keywords. Eventually, you should be able to see which one performs best.

15. Negative Keywords

Negative keywords are exactly what they sound like: search terms that specifically *exclude* your ad from being displayed. The function of negative keywords is to reduce the number of click-throughs from customers who probably aren’t interested in your service, therefore minimizing the cost of non-converting click-throughs.

For example, if your service is legal advice but you don't offer free consultations, you might consider using "free" as a negative keyword to filter out searchers who are just looking for freebies.

Negative keywords can be an extremely useful tool to cut down on reaching your AdWords budget limit prematurely on low-quality leads, thereby maximizing your return on investment (ROI).

16. Misspelled Keywords

It's important to remember that not everyone is a perfect speller. In fact, even excellent spellers make typos frequently. Many companies address this by buying multiple domain names for misspellings of their brand name (try going to googel.com for example). Others buy misspelled domain names to use as link bait for unsuspecting web surfers.

You can use a similar strategy by targeting your ads to misspelled keywords. The bonus here is that typo keywords are usually less expensive than their properly-spelled counterparts. Get creative with misspellings to see if you can find ad traffic sources that have untapped potential.

Similar to typos is shorthand terms. Many times, searchers use shortened versions of terms or omit spaces between words. Therefore, "concerttickets" could be a good keyword target for your online music ticket site. This is another area to experiment with to find clever ways of maximizing or AdWords campaigns.

17. Long Tail Keywords

Long tail search terms are those at the far end of the spectrum that are very specific and have far fewer users searching for them. "Surfboard" is not a long tail term; "8 foot blue surfboard with flames" is long tail.

While long tail keywords might not provide click-through visitors in large quantities, if one is relevant to your product it can be much more likely that the user clicking on your ad is looking to buy something specific that you offer.

18. Middle of the Road Keywords

It may also be a good strategy to find the balance between the most popular terms and the more obscure long tail keywords. This would involve finding those middle-of-the-road keywords: terms that are still searched for frequently, but with a little less competition than the big ones. This can still yield a good CTR while managing to remain slightly more cost-effective.

19. Dynamic Keywords

Dynamic keyword insertion (DKI), is an AdWords trick that involves inserting {keyword} in your ad headline. This results in Google changing your ad's headline on the fly to exactly match the keywords that people are searching for.

For instance, let's say you're selling gingerbread cookies. You put {keyword} in your headline and target the keyword "gingerbread." Someone searching for "gingerbread houses" would see that phrase as your headline instead of the word gingerbread.

If their search term is longer than 25 characters—say they searched for "the most awesome gingerbread houses ever"—it's too long to be your headline. The solution here is to set your headline as something like {keyword:Best Gingerbread}. Now, if your ad is triggered by a search phrase longer than 25 characters, you have told Google to display your headline as "Best Gingerbread."

DKI is popular because it's a no-brainer way to make sure that your headline contains your searchers' keywords. But it encourages poor market research, takes some control out of your hands and runs the risk of making your ad seem more generic. You might be better off finding the best keywords for your ad, tailoring separate headlines and ad copy for each one, and creating separate landing pages for each. It will make your ad stand out more, plus it refines the experience of your potential customers.

20. Keyword Relevance

It is important to note that your keywords should be relevant to your product not just for the sake of your conversion rate, but because it can affect your site's Quality Score. Simply pursuing the most popular keywords might seem like a good plan, but you run the risk of being penalized by Google if it deems those terms irrelevant to your site's content. A penalized AdWords campaign will not rank as highly as one with a good Quality Score, even if you place higher bids.

Quality score is discussed in more detail below.

21. Writing Your Ad

Now comes the time to write your ad copy. Remember, you only have 25 characters for the headline and two more text lines of 35 characters each, so you're going to need to be able to say all you need to say in a very concise manner. A few tips here:

- Use space-saving techniques such as replacing "and" with "&" or using universally recognized abbreviations. Symbols in general can also help your ad stand out.
- Be sure to use very specific wording and phrases rather than vague, general statements.
- Using your targeted keywords in the headline helps with keeping your ad specific, and makes your ads more relevant in Google's eyes (plus, as an added bonus, terms matching the user's search will be bolded, making them stand out even more).
- Try to give your potential customer a clear, concise idea of why they want to click on your ad with phrases like, "Increase sales by 15%."

In writing your ad, one thing you should be sure to have is a clear and eye-catching call to action. Some of the most enticing calls to action involve the word "free," like Free Shipping or Free Trial. If you don't have anything free to offer, go with something like "Order Today" or "Start Now."

When possible, include keywords in the actual URL that your ad links to. If your online bookstore is running ads targeting the keywords "self help," your URL should be www.onlinebookstore.com/selfhelp if you can make it happen.

Keep in mind that you're in direct competition with other companies that are most likely advertising a similar product to yours. Whatever you can do to stand out among them is important to note. Anything unique that you can bring to the table should be stated at this stage.

22. More Tips on Better Ad Copy

As you improve and refine your ads, here are a few more tips to take into consideration.

- Although you may choose to include the price of your service in the ad, avoid using the \$ symbol, which makes people focus too much on cost. Including your price without the dollar sign can proudly display your ability to beat the competition; it also helps ensure

that people who aren't willing to pay for something won't bother clicking through to your site.

- As with any sale, customers respond to *benefits* over *features*. Consider all the benefits of your product and write a different ad for each one.
- Always put yourself in the buyer's shoes. What would you want to hear? What would you *not* want to hear? What would make *you* want to click on the ad?
- Make sure your ad is clear about what you're selling and about why they should click on your link.
- Unless your company is a household name like Amazon, Walmart or Coca-Cola, don't waste your precious headline space by announcing the name of your company. The only people who will recognize your company name and click on your ad are those who are already aware of your business and are probably already a lead or, even worse, a current customer themselves. As for those who have never heard of you, they don't care what your company is called; they just want to know how you can solve their problem.
- If you're a local business, mention the location you're serving. If you're a dermatologist in Nashville, Tennessee, put "Nashville" in your headline. Remember, it's all about grabbing the searcher's attention. You have to make the headline as relevant to them as humanly possible. What better way to do this than to put their location in big blue letters right at the top of your ad? If you're doing this, make sure you're geotargeting your ads or all of your keywords include "Nashville."
- Try reverse psychology: "Don't Buy < x >," "Don't Try < x >." Replace x with your product or service. If you use this technique, the first line of your ad should lead with something like, "Unless you buy from us." This will almost certainly stand out against other ads in your industry (unless your industry is Internet marketing).
- Make a bold claim, like "Acne Free In 3 Days." But make sure that your landing page backs it up, or you could hurt your Quality Score. You don't need scientific reports (necessarily), just be sure you have some information on the page that supports your claim.
- Include quotation marks. Studies have shown that human beings' eyes are drawn to quotation marks.
- Use emotional trigger words, such as "cheap," "fast," "free," "special," "now," "limited time," etc.
- Make it memorable, eye-catching and informative!

In order to determine what strategy provides you with the best CTR, create several different versions of your ad's copy and compare their performance. The more successful ones will end up being run more frequently by Google, and you'll be able to discard the least effective

versions and replace them with better ads. This sort of experimentation may also lead you to discover new target markets that you didn't even realize you should be targeting.

The minimum you can spend for testing an ad on AdWords is \$10, so it doesn't cost much to start testing out variations.

Launching the Campaign

23. Create a Campaign

By this point you are finally ready to create an AdWords account if you haven't already done so. Log in and create a new campaign. On the first page you come to you can name it, then choose which countries you would like your ads to reach. Keep in mind that advertising in a non-English speaking country may not earn you quality traffic if you don't have alternate translations of your site!

During this first step you'll also be able to select specific networks and devices for your ads if you choose (the default is for all to be selected).

Towards the bottom of the page, you can also choose "ad extensions" which allow you to include multiple links to subpages on your site, location information, and/or a phone number listing.

24. Campaign Structure

It's important to understand the hierarchy of your AdWords account, which is split into several levels:

Account > Campaign > Ad Group > Ads & Keywords

Ad groups are where your ads and keywords reside. As you create more and more ads, you can use this structure to better organize and manage them.

For example, let's say you run an online clothing store that sells shirts, pants and hats. Within your account, you could create three campaigns, one for each product. Within each campaign, you would create ad groups for more specific items, say one ad group for jeans and one for khakis within the campaign for pants. These ad groups will contain variations of ad copy for their respective products, plus a list of keywords for them to target.

25. Place Your Bids

Now it's time to put your budget to work! Here is where you place your bid for cost-per-click (CPC), or how much you're willing to pay every time a user clicks on your ad. As we'll see later, it can pay off in the long run to place your CPC bid a little higher initially. Not only is it likely to increase your CTR because your ad will have a higher ranking on the search results page, this

could potentially affect your Quality Score as well. We'll talk more about what the Quality Score is later, but for now you just need to know that a higher Quality Score can save you money on your CPC bids, so bidding higher at the beginning might lower your costs later on.

Your CTR, or click-through-rate, is a percentage determined by taking the total number of clicks your ad gets, dividing it by the total number of ad impressions, and multiplying that number by 100. So a 25% CTR means your ad gets 25 clicks for every 100 impressions.

When bidding, you can also set a daily budget so that you don't run the risk of spending far more than your budget allows, particularly if you have chosen very popular keywords. Keep in mind that the daily budget isn't guaranteed to be met every day.

26. Bid Management

As your campaign rolls on, you'll wind up tweaking your bids multiple times. Changing them all manually will become too much work at some point—especially if you are dealing with a large number of keywords. AdWords has its own rules engine for managing and adjusting bids, but its options can be a bit limiting.

There are also plenty of third party software options available to help you out with bid management. Typically, these services charge a percentage of your monthly AdWords spending as a fee. Having a little extra help can be time-saving and convenient, but the disadvantage is that it can be something of a pricey option.

AdWords does have a few automatic bid options, but these may end up costing you more at the end of the day.

27. Scheduling

In the advanced options section, you have the option to schedule a starting and ending date for your ad, and if you've chosen the manual bidding option instead of automatic, you can even choose specific hours for your ad to run. If you are just starting out with AdWords, it's recommended that you stick with automatic bidding initially.

28. Rotation and Frequency Capping

Some more advanced options allow Google to choose which ads to run depending on certain situations. You can either have your ads rotated in a way that's expected to result in a higher

CTR, a higher conversion rate (only if you have conversion tracking set up), or simply have your ads displayed in an even rotation without any regard to these statistics.

Frequency capping is similar to the daily budget, but instead of stopping your campaign when a spending limit is reached via click-through, it stops running the ad when a certain number of impressions have been reached for the day. This means you can limit your ad to appearing a maximum number of times whether users have clicked on it or not.

29. Demographic Bidding

Demographic bidding applies to ads run on content network sites, not search results pages. (Since Google doesn't gather demographic information every time someone makes a search, it can't target search result ads to specific demographics.) As the name implies, demographic bidding allows you to choose specific gender and/or age group targets based on the websites in Google's content network.

30. Multiple Campaigns

In addition to multiple copy versions for the same ad, consider creating multiple AdWords campaigns for different products to compliment a broader campaign covering your complete line. You can then target more specific keywords and demographics for each individual product you offer, assuming they perform different functions. This way you can get a little bit of both worlds: a general campaign that can be exposed to a larger number of people, plus more long tail, targeted ads.

Striking a balance between these two strategies should help you develop a campaign to maximize CTR and conversions.

Further Steps & Refinement

31. Custom Alerts and Reports

Now that your ads are running, you'll need to monitor them and track their success. You can do this in several ways.

First and foremost, you should set up a Google Analytics account for your website if you haven't already. Even without AdWords campaigns, this is an essential tool for discovering who is visiting your website, what content they're clicking on, who they're being referred by, etc. Linking your Analytics account to your AdWords account will result in even more detailed and insightful statistics.

In AdWords, you can set up custom alerts that notify you of certain situations. For example, you can set up an alert that tells you when your daily budget has been reached. These alerts allow you to make adjustments to your campaign as you go, and can be particularly useful to beginners who are just figuring out how best to use AdWords.

You can also create customized reports to provide you with statistics on your campaign that allow you determine what you need to adjust in order to optimize performance. These reports can be scheduled to be sent to you on a regular basis.

It's worth noting again that conversions are the most important thing to be keeping track of. Be sure your AdWords conversion tracking is set up properly so you can establish the true value of your ad campaigns.

32. Quality Score: Why You Should Care

We've mentioned the Quality Score several times so far, so you may be wondering what it is exactly. Google's Quality Score is a more recent addition to the AdWords game which was introduced to reduce the number of irrelevant ads shown to users. Rather than simply selling ad space to the highest bidder, Google now factors in a site's Quality Score to ensure that the user sees only ads that are truly appropriate to their search terms and that link to higher quality websites and services.

With the advent of the Quality Score, having your ad displayed no longer is contingent solely on placing the highest bid. Therefore, if you have a smaller budget but a high quality product or website (and you know how to run a great AdWords campaign), Quality Score provides you with a better chance of beating out a competitor with a larger budget but more questionable

content. Quality Score determines how much you have to pay for your CPC bids and how high up your ads are placed on the page. You can see why Quality Score can be a huge factor in the success of your ad campaign.

There are several ways to increase the Quality Score of your site:

- High CTR
- Great landing page
- Relevant keywords

CTR is the most important factor for your Quality Score. The idea behind this is that if more people are clicking on your ad, it's more likely that you are actually placing a quality ad in relevant places rather than simply trying to take advantage of the most-searched keywords.

As your CTR increases so does your Quality Score, and as a result your minimum required bid will slowly decrease. With a higher score, you'll be able to reduce your bid amount while still retaining a higher ranking among the ads.

It may be possible to increase your score by bidding high early in your campaign (and thereby increasing your ad's rank and CTR), but keep in mind your CTR is compared to other ads in the same slot, so this strategy might not always work. High ranking also isn't the only thing factoring into your CTR. A well-worded, unique ad is equally important.

One notable strategy for increasing CTR is by bidding high on your own brand name. People who search for your company are usually looking for your site anyway, and if you have the top-ranked ad, they are very likely to click on it.

Quality Score is determined differently for search result ads vs. content network ads. Instead of CTR, content network Quality Score is mostly based on relevance to the content of the site, the past performance of the ad, and the quality of your landing page.

Overall, no one knows *exactly* what Google's method of determining Quality Score is (much like no one knows exactly how their search results are generated), and there are some minor variations and exceptions to each rule. But here's the bottom line: Quality Score and your maximum CPC bid work together to determine your ad's rank. So it's important to pay attention to both.

33. Conversions: What's a Keyword Worth?

You'll notice that some keywords have far more competition than others, and therefore wind up being more expensive. After running a campaign for a little while, you'll be able to determine how much an AdWords keyword is worth to you in the first place.

AdWords conversion tracking will show you roughly how much you're spending before a new visitor click-through leads to a sale. Using this, you can establish how much is truly worth your while to bid on any given keyword before your investment outweighs the return. This gives you an easy guideline to work from on future campaigns to maximize your ROI.

34. Going Beyond Words

Text-based ads are not your only option for CPC advertising. You also have the choice to use banner ads, a more visually-oriented method. There may be some situations where graphics are a more effective way to catch a customer's eye or convey what your product is all about. But some people believe that after years of seeing banner ads, many Internet users may have subconsciously trained themselves to ignore them. This phenomenon, referred to by some as "Banner Blindness," may help explain why AdWords has had so much success.

35. Integrating SEM into Your Marketing Plan

Marketing is something that every business owner understands as being necessary. However, many feel that online marketing should be free, because of the fact that so much online is available for nothing. If you really want to be successful, some investment is required. It is usually considerably cheaper than offline marketing, but the old adage "you have to spend money to make money" can certainly be applied here.

Getting started in SEM is not as complicated as it may sound, but in many cases, it is beneficial to hire an expert in the field. That's because these methods do carry some risk and are not as simple as things like social media which can be easily learned and used by the business owner.

36. Experimentation

At the end of the day, only you can determine what type of CPC ad campaign is ideal for your product or service. What works best for someone else might not be what works best for you, and vice-versa. Therefore, it's important to experiment and get creative until you achieve the optimal results for the goals you laid out before you started.

Get rid of keywords that aren't working for you. Change the wording of your ad copy. Try banner ads. Try other ad services than AdWords. Tweak your bids. Always be checking in on how your ads are performing, and constantly think of ways to improve your success rate and up your Quality Score. Your AdWords account should be ever-evolving and adjusting to the needs and tendencies of your potential customers.

Tools & Resources

37. Tools

Keyword Tool

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

Ad Preview Tool

<http://www.google.com/adpreview>

Google Analytics

<http://www.google.com/analytics/>

38. Help & Troubleshooting

Glossary of AdWords Terms

<http://adwords.google.com/support/aw/bin/topic.py?hl=en&topic=15464>

AdWords Help

<http://AdWords.google.com/support/>

AdWords Forum

<http://www.google.com/support/forum/>

AdWords Advertising Policy

http://adwords.google.com/support/aw/bin/static.py?hl=en&page=guide_toc.cs&path=policy&rd=1

AdWords Small Business Center

<http://www.google.com/adwords/smallbusinesscenter/>

AdWords Online Classroom

<http://www.google.com/adwords/onlineclassroom/>