

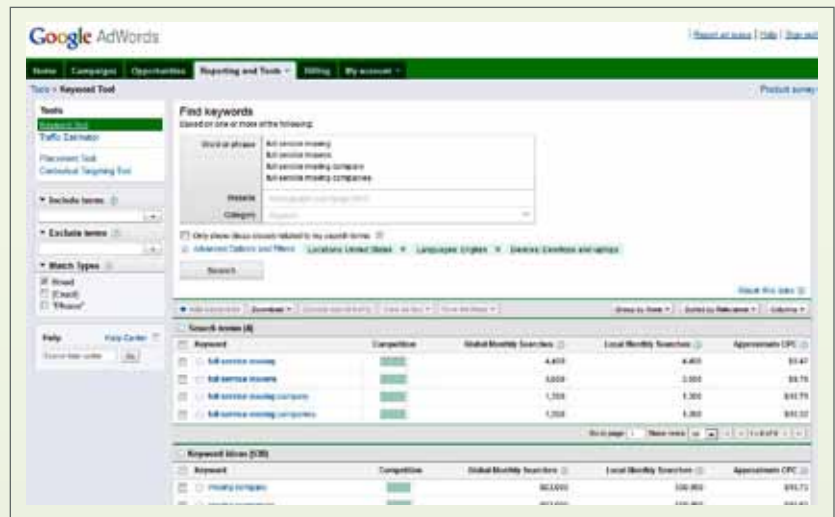
Steps to a More Effective Pay-Per-Click Campaign

Running a pay-per-click (PPC) campaign is a cost-effective way to drive a substantial amount of qualified traffic, leads, and sales to your website. However, if you're not seeing the results you had hoped for, it's probable that your campaign was not set up with best practices in mind.

There are a number of PPC platforms available, such as Google AdWords and MSN adCenter. Regardless of the platform you are running your campaign on, there are best practices you should follow to ensure the success of your PPC efforts.

Keyword Research

Every campaign should begin with keyword research. This is where you can begin to group keywords into different categories that will essentially be your ad groups. By taking the time to establish your search strategy, you will be able to identify your keywords' search volumes, estimated cost-per-clicks (CPC), uncover other keyword opportunities, and ensure that you do not have duplicate keywords across ad groups competing with each other. You will also gain insight into how people that are looking for your product or service are actually searching for you.



The Keyword Tool in Adwords is especially useful if that is where you are running your campaign. It's a good idea, though, to utilize other keyword research tools to compare search volume and CPC estimates.

Your keyword research should generate ideas for other terms you can optimize for, but it will also probably trigger keywords that you DON'T want to target and are unrelated to your business. These should be documented as you can exclude them from your search campaign by adding them as negative keywords.

It is also important to note that different match types you apply to keywords can impact search volume and CPC results. Match types include:

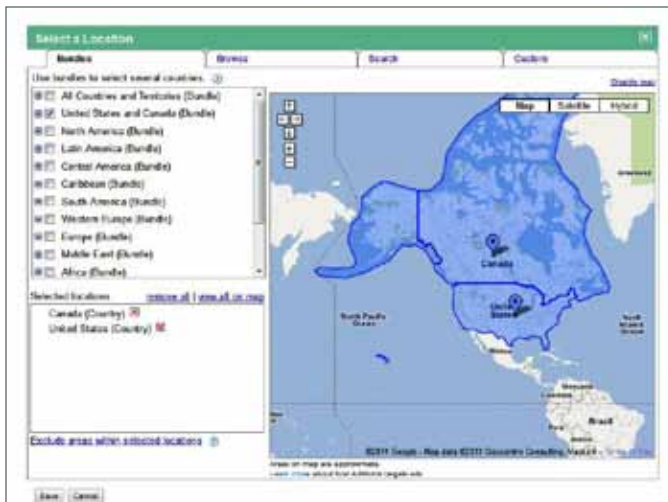
- Broad match – Allows your ad to show on similar phrases and relevant variations
- Modified +broad +match – Leaves the first word broad and the subsequent words as phrase match
- “Phrase match”- Allows your ad to show for searches that match the exact phrase
- [Exact match] - Allows your ad to show for searches that match the exact phrase exclusively

One thing that is very important to your keyword targeting is what quality scores you receive for each keyword in your campaigns. These are affected by many factors but campaign structure, ad group structure, keyword relevance, ad copy and click-through-rate (CTR) are some of the main factors.

Campaign Settings

After completing your keyword research and identifying what ad groups and keywords you want to target, you can establish your campaign settings. These may seem intuitive, but if set up incorrectly they can quickly jeopardize the success of your campaign.

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1. Geographic Targeting

This is where you define what locations you want your ads to appear in. It can be as general as a country to as specific as staying within a certain radius of a single address. You can also exclude areas within your targeted locations.

2. Networks – Search vs. Display

The search network in AdWords refers to Google and Google's search partners, whereas adCenter's search network refers to Yahoo and Bing. The search network only serves text ads, which have the ability to be served when someone types in a search query that matches one of your keywords.

The display network is a collection of websites where you can serve text, image, video, and rich media ads. You can target these websites based on your keyword themes, manual placements (if the website is opted into the display network), topic selections, or specific audiences (such as retargeting). You can also exclude specific websites or certain types of websites from displaying your ads.

3. Device

You can choose to target users by device, such as only targeting desktops and laptops or smart phones and mobile devices. In AdWords, you can even get as specific as targeting certain mobile carriers or types of tablets.

4. Bidding Options

Whether you want to focus on clicks or conversions will dictate your bidding strategy. When you focus on clicks, you only have to pay when someone clicks on your ad and not when it is only shown (an impression). You can choose to manually bid for clicks, or set up automatic bidding which will adjust your bid to attempt to maximize clicks for your budget.

If your campaign triggers a lot of conversions, you can choose to focus on automatic bidding for conversions, referred to as cost per acquisition (CPA).

5. Budget

This is where you define your daily budget. It is important to note that occasionally you may see your daily budget exceed the amount that you set it at. This happens when you do not meet your daily budget on certain days. AdWords will attempt to make up for previous lost clicks by serving up to 20% more of your daily budget on subsequent days after not hitting your budget.

These are the main settings that you will want to establish when you set up your campaign, but they are not exhaustive of all of the different options that pay-per-click platforms offer. As your campaigns get more complex you can take advantage of options such as day-parting, demographic bidding, ad rotation and frequency capping.

Writing Ads

Once you have established your settings and imported your ad groups and keywords, the final thing you need to do in order for your ads to begin serving is create them. It is important to tailor your ad copy to the specific ad group that you are writing it for, because a user is more likely to click on your ad if the copy matches the search query they typed in. Words in your ad copy that match the user's search query will be bolded, which also helps explain why they are more likely to click on it.

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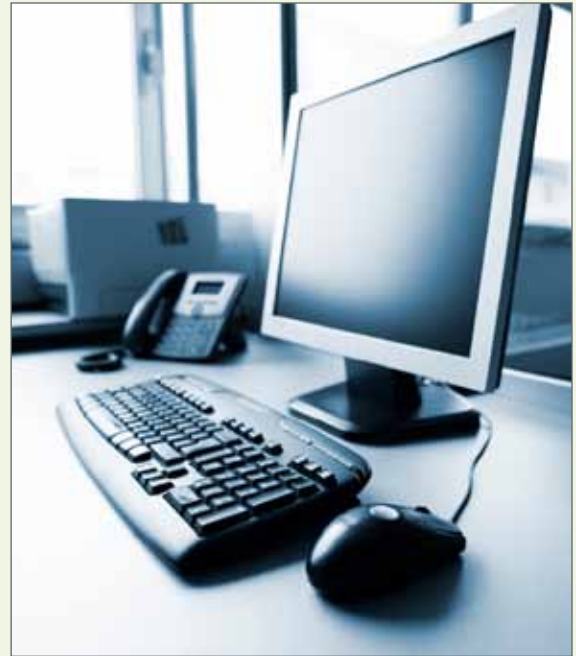
A common template for writing ads is as follows:

Headline
Benefit statement
Call-to-action
Display URL
Destination URL

The root domain of the display URL (what is actually shown in the ad) must be the same as the destination URL, but an ad generally performs better if you write the display URL as `www.example.com/keyword` even if that is not the actual URL you are taking them to.

Another option to appeal to the user's search query is to use dynamic keyword insertion (DKI). If you use DKI, your ad will look something like this:

{Keyword:Headline}
Benefit statement
Call-to-action
Display URL
Destination URL



If the character count of the search is small enough, it will be replaced where the brackets are found. If it is too long, the headline inside the brackets will be defaulted. While this strategy may increase click-through-rate (CTR), it is important that your ad and destination URL are still thematically relevant to what the user is searching for. If not, you will be paying for clicks with high bounce rates and users that will be unlikely to convert.

You should NOT, however, use DKI with an ad group that includes competitors' branded keywords. This goes against policies because it can mislead users into thinking they are going to your competitors' websites when in fact they are going to your own.

On-Going Management

Even though your campaign is set up and serving ads, you should never "set and forget" a PPC campaign. In order to get the most out of your budget and ensure you are receiving high quality traffic, you need to consistently monitor and manage your PPC account.

- Keyword monitoring

Several times a month you should review the list of search queries that are triggering your ads. Not only will you discover negative keywords to exclude, but you could also uncover new keyword opportunities that you can target. These may just be keywords that you will want to add to your ad groups, but there could also be an opportunity to break out an entire new ad group. Remember to monitor and test the changes that you make as well.

- Split testing ad copy

You can always work to improve your CTRs by split testing ad copy. The most important thing about split testing ad copy is to ensure that you have a control between ads. For example, you could have two ads with the exact same benefit statement and call-to-action but different headlines. Keep everything the same except for the variable that you want to test.

After the ads have generated a significant amount of data, you can compare CTR and conversions and determine which headline (or call-to-action, display URL, etc. depending on what you are testing) performs better and move forward with the better performing copy.

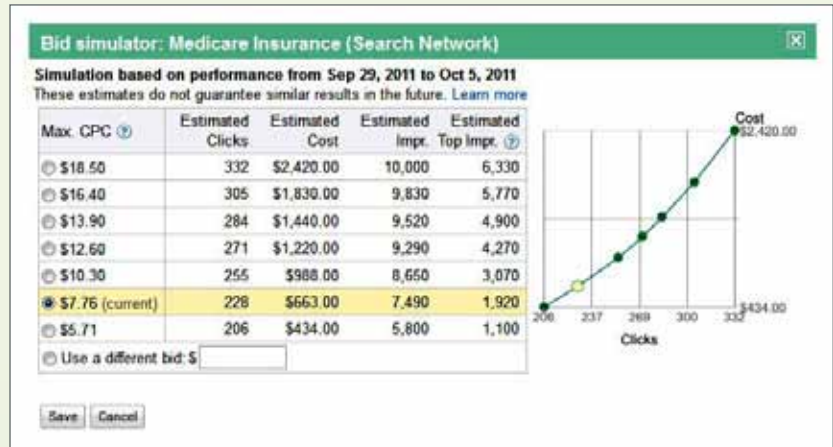
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- Network exclusions

If you are running ads on the display network, it is a good idea to view and monitor what actual domains your ads are serving on. In order to protect the integrity of your brand, you only want to appear next to content that is appropriate and relevant to your products or services. You will see a mix of qualified and unqualified sites, or sites that are broader than your specific target. Exclude these to keep the sites that your ads are displayed on tightly grouped. By consistently monitoring automatic placements, you can identify and exclude these domains sooner than later.

- Bid monitoring

You will also want to regularly monitor your ad group and keyword bids in order to obtain the position you want your ads to display on. It is important to determine a balance between not bidding enough to achieve an effective position and overpaying for a bid. You do not necessarily always want or need to strive to be in the first position, as it will deplete your budget much faster, but a good strategy is to appear somewhere in the first 4 ad positions. The competition is constantly changing, and you will need to monitor and adjust your bids accordingly.



- Conversion tracking

Depending on how your website is set up, there are different ways that you can track conversions in your campaign. A conversion is a defined action that a user completes after clicking on your ad. This could be anything from visiting a contact page, filling out a form, requesting a quote, making a purchase (if you have an e-commerce website), etc. This gives you a better understanding of the value of your clicks. It can also give you insight into any changes you may want to make to your website, such as expanding or relocating call-to-actions.

Google Analytics Integration

In order to view post-click statistics and optimize your PPC campaign, you will need to link a Google Analytics account with your Google AdWords account. This is done through the “Reporting” tab in the Adwords interface. Analytics provides you with metrics such as pages per visit, time on page and bounce rate which help indicate what your best performing ad groups, keywords and ads are.

To make tracking post-click statistics for other platforms such as adCenter possible, it is necessary to append custom Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) tags to the destination URLs in your ads. In the tags you can define the source, medium, and campaign of the ad. By doing so, you will be able to see in Google Analytics where your traffic is coming from and therefore directly attribute leads or sales to the campaigns you are running.

Campaign Optimization

There are always ways to further refine and optimize your PPC campaigns, and it is important to regularly monitor the performance of your campaign to ensure you are maximizing the ROI of your budget. Similar to split testing ad copy, further optimization can be done through A/B testing keywords, landing pages, day parting, network targeting, and conversion optimization. Determine what performs best for your audience and move forward with that strategy.

For more information regarding launching or optimizing a PPC campaign and how you can drive more traffic, leads, and sales to your website, please contact Bevelwise today.