



PCC TOP TIPS FOR BUSINESS

by Jon Ranwell

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER

To create successful PPC campaigns, the first thing you need to understand is who your customers are and what they are searching for. Consider the products or services you are trying to sell them, and try to match these up with the right keywords - and it's important not to be too generic. For example, someone searching for "buy blue Nike Air trainers UK" is much further down the buying journey than someone searching for "running shoes". This means that although the keyword will have less traffic, it will be far more likely to convert into a sale!

CHOOSE THE RIGHT KEYWORDS

Good PPC practice demands the right keywords. You need to invest time in carrying out in-depth keyword research, to identify the keywords that are going to generate business, not just traffic. Now you need to consider your keyword matching options. First there is broad match, which is basically a matching option implemented by the search engines that matches your ad against a keyword and related terms. Or there is phrase match, whereby Google AdWords matches your ad only against keywords that include a phrase you designate. Finally, there is exact match which allows you to show your ad only when a searcher types the exact word or phrase you have included in your account.

You may also need to consider negative keywords in your campaigns. For example, if you sell golf clubs and equipment, you might want to add "Volkswagen" and "VW" as negative keywords so your campaigns are not associated with similar, but irrelevant, search terms.

SCHEDULE YOUR ADS

Timing also plays a fundamental role between ads that attract customers and those that don't. If you're B2B business, you might want to consider turning your ads off at the weekend as your audience won't be engaged. Alternatively, you may be targeting, for example, couples who browse the internet in the evening, so it would be beneficial to increase your bids automatically at those times when you customers are the most engaged.

A/B SPLIT TEST YOUR ADS

The quality of your ads will drive click-through rates (CTR), which in turn affects your paid search rank and costs. Try running two similar ads, with just a subtle change and run them in equal rotation to see which one works best. Then remove the worst performer out of the two and try another ad to split test against the better one. Repeat this until you have the best possible ad for your campaigns.

TRACK YOUR CONVERSIONS

Conversion is a key element in your paid search strategy; after all, if you're not actually turning lookers into buyers at a high rate, what are you advertising for? How do you know which keywords are generating enquiries or sales? You may not realise it, but you may be paying a lot of money for a keyword which never works for you? By tracking conversions, you can identify the right keywords to spend your budget on, and ultimately improve your ROI.

MONITOR YOUR COMPETITORS

Keeping an eye on what your competitors are doing is another key factor of running an effective PPC campaign. You need to analyse what ads your competitors are running as well as what keywords they are using. This isn't easy information to find out, but there are tools out there to help you. Take a look at www.spyfu.com, which is a very useful tool!

USE DYNAMIC ADS

Google automatically turns any word (or derivative) within your search query to **bold** in the results, so an ad whose title is exactly the same as the phrase used in the search will stand out from the competition. Use a dynamically generated title in your ads to exploit this to your advantage!

USE DEEP LINKS

If people can't find what they are looking for on your site within 2-3 clicks they will leave and look elsewhere, so it's essential you make it easy for them to find what they are looking for. You can use your PPC ads to improve the user journey on your website by linking your ad's destination url to the page on your site that's relevant to the search query.

MONITOR CTR AND QUALITY SCORE

One of the biggest single factors affecting the success of your Google AdWords campaign is the CTR (click-through-rate). If you can double your CTR, you can halve your bid, or alternatively keep the same bid and gain a better position. CTR is monitored at keyword, ad group and campaign level by Google, over the most recent 1000 impressions, so weed out keywords and ads with low CTR's or poor quality scores. This will improve CTR, reduce costs and improve your average position!