THE ULTIMATE PPC PLAYBOOK:

Mastering Google & Microsoft Ads

From Setup to Success

LOGICAL POSITION

A 9-Chapter Guide to Building, Managing & Optimizing High-Performing Campaigns

Whether you're new to PPC or refining your strategy, this ebook delivers proven tactics and expert insights to maximize your ad performance.

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Your Ultimate PPC Guide Awaits!

Master Google Ads & Microsoft Advertising

Get the Complete PPC Playbook

INTRODUCTION

Google Ads helps businesses find and connect with their customers online. The concept is simple, but it's powerful. Businesses of all sizes have successfully used the platform to reach new audiences, drive greater revenue, and grow more quickly all while delivering trustworthy and valuable ads! But with the introduction of rapid changes to the platform, managing consistently effective Google Ads campaigns proves to be challenging and time consuming, even for a seasoned advertiser. We composed this eBook to walk you through all the steps and strategies needed to run campaigns that meet your key objectives.

For those new to Google Ads, the ebook provides a complete guide to building your account from the ground up. And for more veteran Google Ads advertisers, it offers the advanced strategies and insights our agency uses to optimize accounts every day. So regardless of your experience level, you're sure to learn something about managing Google Ads that you didn't know before. Ultimately, by the end of the ebook, you'll have a clearer vision of where Google Ads can take your business and a detailed roadmap of how to get there. The first, most important destination is setting a goal.

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SETTING GOALS

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SETTING GOALS

Many Google Ads users struggle to set goals that accomplish their larger business objectives. One of the reasons is simply that the platform can be tricky to understand. Without a firm grasp on how it works, it can be tough to know what sort of results to expect from campaigns, what to aim for, and how to evaluate performance. The bigger challenge of setting goals in Google Ads, though, is that it can be difficult to translate business objectives—like increasing the number of quality leads or decreasing the cost-per-lead—into choices about account structure, settings, and strategy. That's why the key to setting successful goals is drilling down into the specifics of what you want people to do on your website after they've clicked your ads.

On-Site Actions

"How do I want users to engage with my site?" This question is so simple that it's easy to overlook, but answering it is the first step to developing effective goals for your account. Because even though the function of Google Ads is to target active searchers and draw them to your website, your ultimate goal as a business is to turn those site visitors into paying customers. Depending on your business, this might mean you need site visitors to complete more online purchases, or to submit more contact forms or requests for quotes. It might also mean you need them to sign up to receive weekly emails with special offers. There really is no be-all end-all answer for what on-site actions you should care about, so take a step back, and consider what actions best align with your business. To help you get started, take a look at how these hypothetical businesses defined their goals with Google Ads.

> "How do I want users to engage with my site?"

TIM, OWNER OF PLUMBER PROS CHICAGO, IL

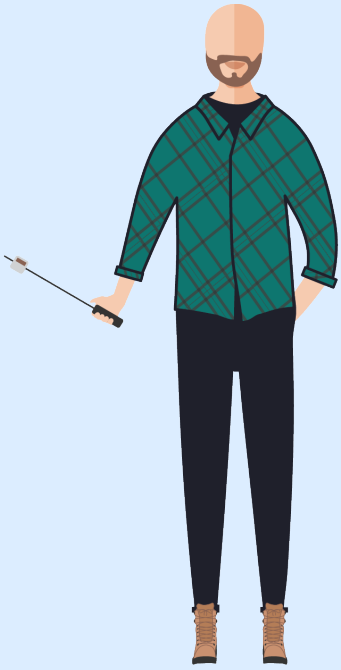
Tim is the owner of Plumber Pros, a local Chicago company that specializes in emergency plumbing services. He had been successful with old-school advertising like direct mailers and directories, but recently he has noticed a decline in new business. In order to reach more customers in the larger metro area, Tim decided to take a more digital approach. A marketing agency has built him a new mobile-friendly site, and he has signed up for his own Google Ads account.

Since emergency services are Tim's primary business, and since his emergency customers always contact him over the phone, Tim recognizes phone calls as his most valuable on-site action. That's why, in building his Google Ads account, Tim's going to choose the campaign types and targeting options that are best for putting his phone number in front of the customers who need it most.

CHARLOTTE, MARKETING MANAGER AT ATTIC TRUNK BOUTIQUE PORTLAND, OR

Charlotte is the Marketing Manager for a hip, vintage boutique in Portland. The boutique gets a lot of foot traffic, but Charlotte was brought on to better promote the store to a wider community. She has a strong understanding of digital marketing basics, but has never built and managed her own Google Ads account.

Attic Trunk has a website, but there's very little traffic to it because the store's currently running no online ads. Working backwards from her goal of increasing exposure for Attic Trunk, Charlotte identifies site visits and email newsletter signups as her most valuable actions. If she can increase the number of people who visit the store's homepage, then she'll have taken a major step towards achieving her goal. And by growing her list of email subscribers, she'll help ensure those site visitors stay engaged with the brand. In shaping her Google Ad campaigns, Charlotte will keep her focus on both these desired actions.



BEN, OWNER OF S'MORES CAMPING GEAR PHILADELPHIA, PA

Ben runs an online camping gear store that's based in Philadelphia and sells all across the country. Sales are steady but he knows there's room for growth in his Google Ads account. He's been running the account for years, but it's never been a priority. He's invested only what he needs to get his ads to run every now and again. Rather than searching for new areas of opportunity, Ben prefers to just check-in on his account once a month to make sure everything's running.

In order to see a better return on his ad spend, Ben knows his first step is to set up better conversion tracking to monitor more of the actions his customers are taking on his site—like adding items to their cart and visiting the checkout page. His larger goal, though, is to double his Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) by investing more thought and resources into campaigns focused on his most popular products, tents and camping stoves. With that goal in mind, Ben can begin restructuring his account for better performance.

QUESTIONS TO ASK: ON-SITE ACTIONS

What are my most popular products/services?

What do I want users to do when they visit my website?

How many phone calls do I currently get? How many of those calls turn into sales, and how many do I hope to get?

How about form submissions and emails?

What are my profit margins and how many sales do I need to turn a profit?

Campaign Goals & Budget

Once you've got a clear idea of the overall business objectives you want to accomplish, you can start setting more specific goals and budget within the platform. Although it can be intimidating to make these decisions, remember they're just your starting point. Your goals and budget will need to be adjusted as your campaigns evolve over time.

If you already have an account, your own historical data is your best resource to create a baseline of what metrics to expect and how to improve upon them. And if you're creating a new account, there are a number of tools you can use to set a new baseline for measuring performance. In either case, there are several key performance indicators (KPI's) you'll want to track.

Key Performance Indicators

Conversions: The most meaningful actions performed by a user on your website. Conversions are the key data points demonstrating campaign performance. Refine and control your conversion data further by tracking micro conversions and adjusting your conversion counting options to get an accurate story of how a click leads to a sale.

Conversion Rates: The average percentage of conversions per ad click. Conversion rates vary and change, depending on industry, so don't get caught up in what you may be reading about "ideal" conversion rates. What's important is identifying areas in your account that might be pulling rates down, making adjustments to those areas, and monitoring results.

Cost-per-Acquisition: The amount you pay for a conversion. In general, the more relevant your ads are, the more likely a user is to convert, and the lower your CPA will be. However, don't be alarmed to see your CPA higher than your CPC—keep in mind that everyone who clicks your ad doesn't go on to complete a conversion.

Conversion Value/Cost (ROAS): A measure of your Return on Ad Spend (ROAS). This metric takes your conversion value and divides it by the total cost of your ad spend. Use this metric to calculate the effectiveness of your advertising dollars in generating new business. Don't get ROAS confused with ROI, though. While ROAS measures the direct return of your ad campaigns, ROI takes all overhead costs (like your time) into account.

Cost-Per-Click: While cost-per-click should play a vital role in determining your budget, ultimately the final cost is out of your hands. You do, however, have control over one large factor that can impact the price you pay: Quality Score. So rather than focus solely on your cost-per-click data, focus on the relevance and performance of your ads. If you put your attention into making your campaigns the best they can be for users, you may notice a natural decline in your cost-per-click.

The goals you set for these KPI's will depend heavily on factors related to your individual business and industry. If you're creating a new account, you can use Google's Keyword Planner to identify how much search volume you could expect from a given keyword as well as the average Cost-Per-Click. For example, let's say Tim the plumber wants to target the keyword "24 hour plumber." Using the Keyword Planner, he finds out that bids range from around $7- $45. He can make a mid-range estimate of $20/click and, given that a minimum budget should allot you at least 4 clicks/day, set a starting budget of $80/day to target that one keyword. Since Tim is new to Google Ads, the next step is letting his campaigns run for a short test period. Once the dust settles after a few weeks, he can evaluate performance and decide whether to shoot for a higher goal and raise his budget.

FREE ACCOUNT REVIEW

Evaluate Keyword Performance & Find the Right Budget

If you already have a Google Ads account but aren't sure whether your budget and KPI's are where they should be, focus first on the areas where you are spending the most money. These areas should be your most popular products or services, as well as products or services with the highest margins or best chance of showing a return. Make it a goal to improve those costly campaigns by identifying your weakest KPI's and taking steps to improve them. To get started with this, you can compare your campaigns' KPI's against common benchmarks for your industry.

Now if you've only been tracking ad clicks— not on-site conversions— you won't have the proof of sales needed to make major improvements to your campaigns. You'll need to set up conversion tracking but, in the meantime, you can take advantage of the Search Terms Report, which shows exactly what keywords users search before clicking your ads. The Report can be extremely helpful in determining where your budget can best be spent to achieve your goals.

The results of your Google Ads campaigns always start with your goals. Given the dizzying number of variables you can customize and control within the platform, it's essential that you have a clear vision of where you're going. Otherwise, you'll likely end up spinning your wheels and going nowhere. Remember, though, that the goals and budget you set now are just a starting point. Once your campaigns get rolling, you'll need to continually reevaluate both. We'll cover more on tracking conversion goals and KPI's in later sections, but for now let's turn to the way in which your goals should shape the structure of your account.

ACTION ITEMS

Determine what on-site actions are most valuable to your business.

Ensure that you're recording those actions through proper conversion tracking.

Establish KPI goals and budget levels based on your business, industry, and account's historical performance.

QUESTIONS TO ASK: SETTING BUDGET

- How much time do I have to dedicate to my campaigns?
- Do I have accurate data in my account?
- How much budget do I have to work with?
- What are my estimated CPCs?
- How much am I currently spending?
- How many clicks does it take to generate one conversion?
- Are my current campaigns generating revenue?
- How much revenue do I need to make in order to break-even?

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STRUCTURING YOUR ACCOUNT

You've accomplished the first important step in making Google Ads more profitable—identifying exactly what goals you want to achieve with your campaigns. The next step is setting up your account in a way that reflects those goals. Although the specific structure of your account will depend on your company's unique situation, there's a process for developing that structure that every business should follow.

Choosing Campaign Types

Each Google Ad campaign type has a different set of capabilities and use-cases. Depending on your goals, you might want to select one campaign type over another, and/or combine campaign types that complement each other. To get a sense of how different campaign types align with different goals, consider how the advertisers in our previous examples approached this step.

SEARCH CAMPAIGN

TIM, OWNER OF PLUMBER PROS
CHICAGO, IL

Tim is focused on increasing the number of people who call him for emergency services. Since phone calls are his most valuable on-site action, he needs to start with a campaign type that puts his phone number in front of potential customers at the exact moment they're searching. For him, a Search Campaign makes the most sense because it gives him a number of options for reaching his goal of increasing call volume. Within the Search Network, Tim can set up a call asset for users to directly call upon clicking the advertised number in his ad. He also uses a variety of additional ad assets to showcase his services in a way that encourages searchers to use his services.

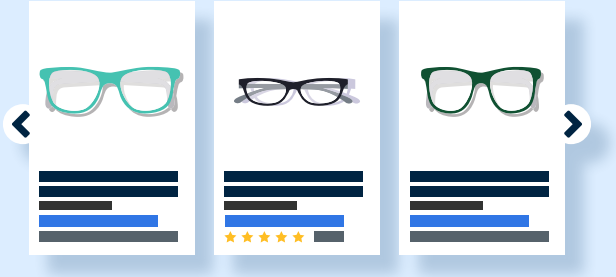
DISPLAY CAMPAIGN

CHARLOTTE, MARKETING MANAGER AT ATTIC TRUNK BOUTIQUE
PORTLAND, OR

Since Charlotte is building her online presence from the ground up, she's focused on using Google Ads to increase brand exposure. Site visits and email newsletter sign-ups are the key actions that will help her measure the effectiveness of her campaigns. With thousands of unique treasures sold on the site, she wants to use images and animated graphics to attract likely customers. She decides a Display campaign type will provide the best opportunity to reach a large audience. Charlotte has a firm understanding of her customer-base and knows the popular websites they like to hang out on, so she uses the specific targeting features within the Display campaign type to her advantage. To increase engagement and draw more attention to the brand, Charlotte created a series of animated display ads. Once she measures the effectiveness of her campaign, she plans to use the Display campaign type to create remarketing campaigns to re-engage site visitors and guide them towards her email newsletter. As Charlotte works towards her immediate goal of promoting the Attic Trunk brand and building an audience, she can explore other campaign types to adapt her strategy to fit each incremental step towards her larger vision.

SHOPPING CAMPAIGN

BEN, OWNER OF S'MORES CAMPING GEAR PHILADELPHIA, PA



Based on historical data from his account, Ben knows tents and camping stoves are his top-selling products. He's going to start small by focusing his budget on his two top-sellers, working patiently towards the eventual goal of doubling his ROAS. Ben plans to maximize his starting budget by creating Shopping campaigns to highlight his popular products.

To help draw in more immediate shoppers and set himself apart from competitors, Ben offers free shipping as a promotion to showcase on his Shopping ads. His Shopping promotion strategy will help him build a remarketing audience and increase customer loyalty. With more conversion tracking options set up, Ben can observe customer behavior like shopping cart abandons and time spent on certain product pages to influence his Shopping campaigns as they develop.

SEARCH NETWORK CAMPAIGN

Text ads show up on search results pages for your targeted keywords.

DISPLAY NETWORK CAMPAIGN

Image & video ads appear on apps, websites & social media platforms on Google Display Network across the internet.

SHOPPING CAMPAIGN

Campaign type within the Search Network for ecommerce sites. Shopping ads showcase product images, prices and descriptions to online shoppers searching for that specific product.

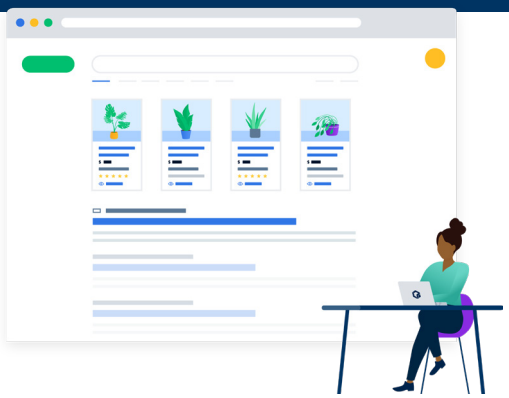
VIDEO CAMPAIGN

Within the Display Network, create compelling and eye-catching videos to promote brand awareness and expand your audience.

PERFORMANCE MAX CAMPAIGN

Automated campaign type that is eligible for placements in Search, Shopping, Discovery, Apps, Display, and YouTube. This campaign type combines Google's automation technologies across bidding, budget optimization, audiences, creatives, attribution, and more.

There are countless ways to choose and utilize campaign types— it's knowing how to segment and prioritize your performance data that will enable you to control the outcome of your account. We'll focus on how segmentation works within Search campaigns since it's the most commonly utilized campaign type. After developing an understanding of segmenting a Search campaign, you can apply the process to any campaign type.



Segmentation & Keyword Selection

Once you've decided on campaign types, you can start organizing and building out your account. Segmentation is the key to more control over your campaign structure. Segments are variables like time of day, day of week, and location, that help you prioritize Audiences and choose the tactics that are right for them. Through segmentation, you can isolate data points specific to your goals and base decisions off of factual evidence that will eliminate wasted spend and propel your campaigns forward. In Search, the main component to building a granular structure is segmenting the right keywords.

> "Segmentation is the key to giving you more control over your campaign structure."

Segmenting Keywords

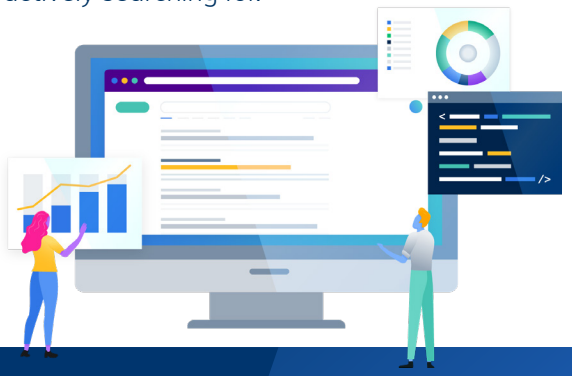
In deciding what keywords to select for their campaigns, many businesses fall into the trap of choosing keywords that they think are best— rather than the ones data shows their customers use. Keep in mind, your customers' behaviors and tastes are likely to change, so be flexible with your keyword list because they'll evolve with your audience. Looking through your Search Terms should provide enough evidence to adapt your keyword lists in the best way possible.

SEARCH TERMS

Plumber pros 24/7
How to dress like a plumber
Plumberpros
Plumber pros help me
Plumber pros emergency services
Plumbers near me

For those with existing accounts, the Search Terms Report provides instant feedback on the strength of your keywords, directly from the user. The Report is a compiled list of search queries entered by users who interact with your ad, and it's an essential tool for making data-driven decisions on whether or not a keyword is adding value to your campaign by bringing in relevant traffic.

If Search Term data isn't available to you, revisit the Keyword Planner to discover new, relevant keywords people are actively searching for.



Google Ads Keyword Match Types

Match Type	Special Symbol	Example keyword	Ads may show on searches that	Example Searches
Broad Match	none	women's hats	includes misspellings, synonyms, related searches and other relevant variations	buy ladies hats
Phrase Match	"keyword"	"women's hats"	are a phrase, and close variations of that phrase	buy women's hats
Exact Match	[keyword]	[women's hats]	are an exact term and close variations of that exact match	women's hats

Segmenting Your Campaigns 5 Ways

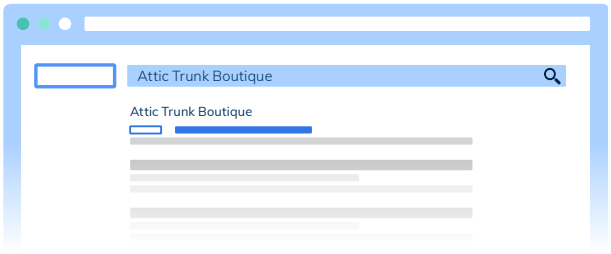
Segmenting, or in other words, organizing data, is the process of translating your goals into the structure of your account. Everyone will segment their campaigns differently, depending on what they're trying to achieve, but use the following examples of segmented campaign structures to guide your own process.

Top-Performers

Break out your campaigns by top-performing products or services to capitalize on Keywords already generating great results.

Branded Terms

Build awareness and encourage engagement by targeting keywords related to your brand name.



User Intent

Create campaigns based on the user's stage in their purchasing journey.

Single Keyword Ad Groups

Isolate a strong keyword into its own ad group to create a niche target.

Campaign	Ad Group	Keywords
Emergency Plumbing	24 hour plumber	[24 hour plumber]
		"24 hour plumber"

High vs. Low Volume

Separate high and low volume keywords to evenly distribute budget and avoid overshadowing by the more expensive, high volume keywords.

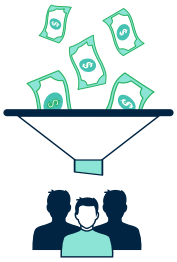
*Be careful not to over-segment your campaigns. Getting too granular could make it difficult to identify strengths in your account that, otherwise, could have stood out as big opportunities to invest in.

Refining Your Keywords

To effectively refine your keyword list, you first need to find and prioritize the value of your keywords with the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

Cost-per-click

Click-Through-Rate



Conversions

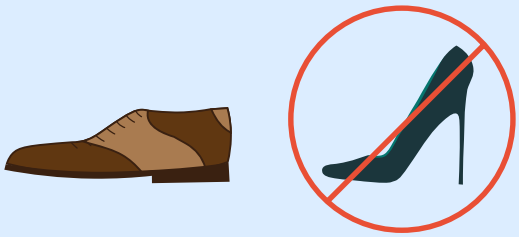
User Engagement Metrics
(Time on site, pages per session, bounce rate)

A clear indication of a strong keyword is one with a low CPC, high CTR, and high conversions. Once you're able to isolate your top performing keywords with the data you have, long-tail and negative keywords can be utilized to create highly relevant targeting.

Long-tail keywords are made up of multiple keywords (phrases) and are very specific to what you're selling and what a user is looking for.

Keyword: blue shoes
Long-tail Keyword: size 7 women's blue running shoes

Negative keywords prevent your ad from showing up for specific searches. They eliminate irrelevant searches from triggering your ads & protect your budget from being spent on wasted clicks.



Keyword: dress shoes
Negative Keyword: [women's dress shoes]

A custom tailored set of keywords is a necessary step in achieving high-performing campaigns. A step further is to have control over how your keywords are triggered by searches, using keyword match types.

At this point, we've covered: choosing the appropriate campaign type, selecting, refining, and handling our keyword lists, and understanding the correlation between goals and the structure of your campaigns. With the bulk of the internal setup complete, the excitement of seeing your careful planning transforming into meaningful, measurable growth can begin.

ACTION ITEMS

- Identify appropriate campaign type(s) according to your goal(s).
- Examine your Search Terms or use the Keyword Planner when building your keyword list.
- Vary your use of keyword match types.
- Determine how to segment your campaign based on your goals.
- Implement longtail and negative keywords.

Have more questions about structuring your account?
LET'S TALK!

3

CONVERSION TRACKING

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CONVERSION TRACKING

If you're not sure you're properly tracking conversions, you should pause all your campaigns right now. The ability to know whether your ads are producing the results you want is what makes Google Ads such a powerful marketing tool, yet many advertisers don't take advantage of it. Although it can be complicated, setting up conversion tracking—whether for contact form submissions, phone calls, quote requests, online purchases, or other valuable actions—is crucial to your campaigns' success.

What to Track

Reflect on the on-site actions that meant the most to your business. How do users get in contact with you or engage with your products? Those actions are what you want to track as conversions. You're not limited to tracking one action, and the more data you collect, the more evidence you'll have to influence future decisions. So take some time to think through all the trackable steps you want your customers to take.

When determining what to track on your site, don't look past smaller engagements that may eventually lead to a conversion. Metrics like pages-per-session, time on site, contact page visits, and cart adds are all known as micro conversions— and they play just as big a role in your campaigns as the conversion itself. We'll go over how to track micro conversions, but before going further, you need to align your website with your campaigns to generate the best possible results.

COMMONLY TRACKED CONVERSIONS

Website Actions: Purchases, quote forms, contact submissions, page views, and more.

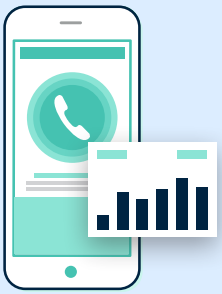
Phone Calls: Call directly from your ads, calls to a phone number on your website, and clicks on a phone number on your mobile website.

Import: Customer activity that begins online and finishes offline, like when a customer clicks an ad and submits a contact form online, then signs a contract in your office at a later date.

Campaign Performance & Your Website

Many businesses underestimate the importance of their website to the overall success of their Google Ads campaigns. While Google Ads is a powerful tool to bring in new and additional traffic to your website, ultimately it is up to your website to push them further down your marketing funnel towards completing a conversion.

Let's see how our example advertisers implement conversion tracking and prepare their website to ensure accurate and reliable data.



TIM, OWNER OF PLUMBER PROS CHICAGO, IL

Within his Search campaign, Tim is setting up call tracking to collect conversion data on variables like time and duration of the calls received through his ads. Through Google, he uses a dynamically-generated forwarding number that replaces the phone number displayed at the top of his current site. However, during the initial setup, Tim realized the phone number on his website was published as a static image and wouldn't be affected by Google's dynamic number. To avoid inaccurate data, he replaced the image with live text to ensure the calls received are trackable. Tim now has direct insight into which keywords, ads, ad groups, and campaigns lead to his call conversions. With his website aligned with his call-tracking initiative, phone calls are twice as valuable to his business since he can use the data collected from them to strengthen overall campaign performance.

CHARLOTTE, MARKETING MANAGER AT ATTIC TRUNK BOUTIQUE PORTLAND, OR

To measure her specific goal of generating email newsletter sign-ups, Charlotte implements tracking for the newsletter submission form on her site. After setting up the tracking code, and letting her ads run for a few weeks, she notices a huge spike in conversions measuring newsletter sign-ups. This is great news, but there's a problem: her email list shows no new subscribers. The problem, Charlotte realized, was that she forgot to include a "thank you" page that follows the sign-up form and tells Google that the conversion was completed. To address this, she edits the newsletter sign up tracking code to track every time someone lands on the "thank you" page. Charlotte plans to keep an eye out for red flags in her data, but she can now trust and act on her newsletter subscriber conversion data.

BEN, OWNER OF S'MORES CAMPING GEAR PHILADELPHIA, PA

Ben aims to create a streamlined checkout process for his customers by offering the option to pay with PayPal. His conversion tracking is set up to count all purchases as conversions, but when he compares the revenue data in his Google Ads account to the balance in his bank account, he notices a big discrepancy: his bank balance is much higher than his revenue data indicates. Ben figures out that any purchase made using PayPal isn't getting tracked because customers are being redirected to a third-party site to complete the conversion action. He's able to solve the tracking issue by taking the necessary steps on PayPal to make his Paypal account and website communicate. Now that his Paypal, Google Analytics, and Google Ads accounts are all connected, his revenue data is accurately tracked across all channels. Ben is excited to experiment with his cross-channel metrics, in full confidence, to further push the boundaries of his campaigns.

Conversions influence most major decisions made within your campaigns, and if you're not accurately tracking them, your performance could suffer. Establishing proper conversion tracking is becoming increasingly important as goal-oriented automated campaign types become more prevalent. Ensure the best opportunity for success by aligning your website with your campaigns. A great tool to help keep your data in check is Google Analytics.

Google Analytics

Google Analytics works seamlessly with Google Ads, syncing data across each platform and telling the full story of how users interact with your website. In analytics, use customer insights, create custom audiences, and analyze user behavior to enhance your Google Ads campaigns and provide the best experience for your target audience.

Like conversion tracking in your Google Ads campaigns, it's important that your Analytics data is accurate and reliable, too. In the case that your tracking is setup incorrectly, it's crucial that you can identify that something is wrong.

ANALYTICS METRICS TO TRACK IN GOOGLE ADS

These 4 metrics are imported from Google Analytics and only account for sessions originating from Google Ads clicks.

Average Session Duration
Keep track of how long users stay on your site. This metric provides valuable insight if your ads are serving the right people and if your site content is meaningful and engaging.

Pages-per-Session
The average number of pages on your website viewed per session. You can use this metric to measure visitor quality.

Percentage of New Sessions
The percentage of first-time sessions (sessions from people who had never visited your site before).

Bounce Rate
A "Bounce" happens when a user lands on your website and exits without taking any meaningful actions on-site. Bounce Rate measures the percentage of users that are "bouncing" from your site without taking any meaningful action. This metric is a good indicator of the quality of your traffic and can help identify opportunities to increase site engagement by optimizing landing page experiences.

Troubleshooting

It's common for mistakes to happen when dealing with tracking codes and the back-end of your website. That's why it's so important for you to know how to troubleshoot issues when they arise. Making decisions based on conversion data is what moves the needle on your campaigns, but if you're making decisions based on inaccurate data, you could easily move that needle in the wrong direction. When using Analytics and Google Ads together, simply knowing what to look for could save you from digging a hole in your pocket. Look out for the following red flags that could be skewing your data:

Red Flag #1: No Auto-Tagging

Auto-tagging is what allows Google to track conversion data generated by your Google Ads and then share the data with your Analytics account. When auto-tagging is disabled, there's no way to see in Analytics how many conversions are generated from your ads unless you set up your own tagging in the ads. Therefore, you can't accurately use conversion data with other metrics in Analytics to gauge performance. Be sure to enable auto-tagging and import your site metrics to gain the full benefit of Analytics.

HOW TO CHECK FOR AUTO-TAGGING

1. Sign in to your Google Ads account.
2. In the left page menu, click Settings.
3. Click Account settings along the top of the page.
4. Click the Auto-tagging section.
5. To enable Auto-tagging, check the box next to "Tag the URL that people click through from my ad."
6. Click Save.

Red Flag #2 Dramatic Decrease in Conversions

A huge decrease in conversions could be a sign that you're tracking wasn't set up correctly or that tracking codes have fallen off the site. If you notice an immediate drop-off in conversions coming through or if none came through from the start, a change in your website or campaigns could have thrown off your tracking code.

Red Flag #3: Extremely High Conversion Rate

If the conversion rate across your account is above 30%, you may be tracking the wrong page. For example, rather than tracking a thank you page following a form submission, your code could've been installed on your home page. As a result, every visit to your site is coming through as a conversion. We recommend setting your lead count to One instead of Every for non-ecommerce conversions. With this setting, Google Ads counts only one conversion per ad click. This is a good choice if you're not interested in the number of sales, but instead whether or not a certain kind of lead was generated. This is because usually only one, unique lead per ad click likely adds value for your business.

FREE ACCOUNT REVIEW
Get Answers to Unexplained Conversion Tracking Issues

Conversion tracking is an essential component of growing a Google Ads account— without it, it can be extremely difficult to confirm that your campaigns are contributing to business success. It's easy to set up an account and run a few campaigns—but setting your campaigns up for long-term success requires a stream of accurate data to observe, analyze, and actively manage. Conversion tracking is a major step towards your vision, but it is only one piece of the puzzle. Ultimately, if the right people aren't finding your site, proper conversion tracking will not make a difference. Let's dive into the various strategies to target audiences to connect you with the ideal searcher.

If any data point within your account looks or even feels off, go with your gut and dig into it. It's much easier, (and more affordable), to troubleshoot one potential tracking error from the start than to scrap an entire campaign that has suffered months of inaccurate data.

ACTION ITEMS

- List every on-site action that has an impact on the success of your business.
- Set up conversion tracking for as many on-site actions on your list as you can.
- Align your website with the actions you're tracking to maximize conversion performance.
- Determine how to segment your campaign based on your goals.
- Create a Google Analytics account and link it to your Google Ads account.
- Import your Google Analytics conversion goals into the Google Ads account

4

CREATING ADS

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CREATING ADS

Your ad's first impression is important to capture a potential lead before that searcher clicks the next best link. That's why it's vital to create relevant ads that connect customers to your business. Remember that there really is no single formula for creating the perfect ad. Effective ads are the product of continuous testing and refinement over time. Before diving into best practices you need to follow to create high ranking ads, it's important to take a step back and look at how ad rank is assigned in the first place—the Ad Auction.

The Ad Auction

The ad auction is Google's behind-the-scenes gauntlet that takes place every time someone searches the web. The auction determines where your ad will show up on the SERP (Search Engine Results Page) and ranks each advertiser based on bid amount, ad quality, ad format, keyword bid, landing page experience and more. The following graphic will help you visualize the process of the ad auction and how your ads play a vital role:

All About The Ad Auction

TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Ad Rank

Ad rank is the order in which your ad appears on the search results page. It's determined by a number of factors, including your bid, auction-time ad quality, the context of the search, and the impact of ad extensions.

Quality Score

Quality Score is an estimate of the quality of your ads, keywords, and landing pages. Higher quality ads can lead to lower prices and better ad positions.

Ad Quality

The overall quality of your ad—taking into account expected clickthrough rate, ad relevance, and landing page experience. Your ad quality is a component of quality score, so the more relevant your ads are to a user's search, the better your chances are of increasing quality score.

Max CPC Bid

The highest amount you would pay for an ad click. It's common for a higher max CPC to help your ad rank higher, but regardless, your actual CPC should never exceed your max bid.

HOW ADS ARE RANKED

It starts with a search...

Google

Vintage clothing in Portland

A user enters a search, including keywords that advertisers are bidding on.

In the auction...

AD RANK = MAX CPC BID X QUALITY SCORE

Ads are ranked and positioned according to the combination of their Max CPC Bid and their Quality Score.

ADVERTISER	AD RANK	AD POSITION	QUALITY SCORE	MAX CPC BID
You	24	1	8	$3.00
PPC Agency	20	2	5	$4.00
ABC Brands	15	3	3	$5.00
ACME	12	4	2	$6.00

Although your Max CPC Bid is lower than competing advertisers, Google values a good quality score—ranking more relevant ads higher on the page for a smaller cost.

With an understanding of how your ads affect the rest of your campaigns, let's break down the process of creating high-quality ads that drive conversions.

Creating High Quality Ads

A high-quality ad, designed to convert, needs to address a need and provide a solution. It sounds simple, but there are many ways to miss the mark, turning away valuable traffic and potential sales. To capture more traffic, isolate the questions users are asking and answer them in your ad copy. Having well-thought-out messaging could be what stops a user's search and starts a relationship with your business.

Ad Copy

Consider these five best practices when brainstorming what you want your ad to say.

1. FOCUS ON USER BENEFIT

How does your product or service help customers? Tell searchers the impact your business will have on them.

10% Off All Vintage Jewelry | Shop Today
Ad www.attictruckboutique.com/jewelry
One Of A Kind Jewelry To Transform Your Wardrobe!

2. INCLUDE KEYWORDS

Add a targeted keyword in the first headline. In your second and/or third headlines, highlight your major selling points. Try to incorporate relevant keywords in your description lines as much as you can without sounding redundant.

Camping Food | Delicious & Ready To Eat
Ad www.smorescampinggear.com
Jerky, Salmon, Nut and Seed Bars And More. The Perfect Food For Your Next Adventure. Order Yours Today!

3. INCLUDE A CALL-TO-ACTION

Tell searchers what you want them to do. Include a call-to-action to push searchers in the direction you intend for them to go.

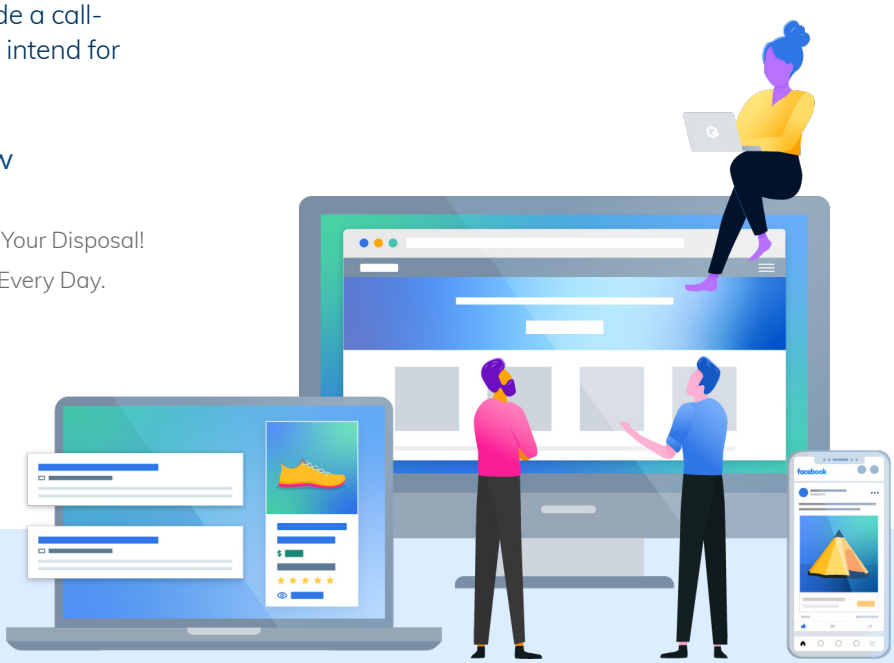
24-Hour Emergency Plumber | Call Now
Ad www.plumberpros.com
Emergency Plumber With 20 Years Of Expertise At Your Disposal!
We Provide The Help You're Looking For— All Day, Every Day.

4. BE PERSONABLE AND DIRECT

Write your ads as if you're speaking directly to the person searching. People come across your ads because they know what they're looking for. Don't waste ad space reiterating the question they're trying to get answered—provide a solution.

Plumber Pros | 24-Hour Emergency Plumbing
Ad www.plumberpros.com
Working Tirelessly To Deliver The Help You Need When You Need It! Call Us Today.

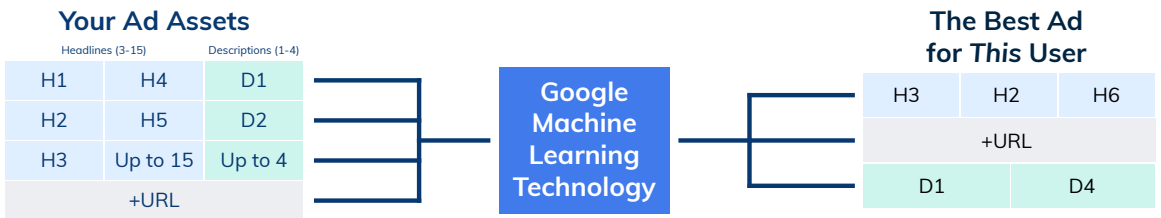
While the words that make up your ad are important, Google provides additional strategies to increase your chance of generating clicks that lead to conversions.



Responsive Search Ads

Google is always looking for ways to improve their platform experience to advertisers and marketers. Responsive Search Ads are flexible text ads that are tailored to each user based on their search behavior, device, language, and more. Advertisers provide multiple headlines and descriptions and Google's real-time algorithm intuitively displays the assets that historically have the best performance. The more the merrier, too! Google allows up to 15 headlines and 4 descriptions. We recommend at least 4 headline assets and 4 description assets. Keep in mind that any combination of headlines and descriptions could appear in the search results.

How Responsive Search Ads Work in Real Time Google Ads Auctions



Assets (Extensions)

Assets (formerly referred to as ad extensions) are another opportunity to increase the visibility and engagement of your ad, as well as provide more beneficial information to users. Assets are either manual or automated, but regardless of type, they all add incredible value to your ads with virtually no risk.

MANUAL ASSETS

Certain assets require manual set up within your campaigns. Manual assets include direct links to specific pages on your website, your phone number, or a promotion you're running.

AUTOMATED ASSETS

Google can automatically create ad assets for you based on data pulled from a number of different sources. Although you can pick and choose which automated assets to add to your campaigns, you have zero control over the information Google decides to show on your behalf. In theory, it sounds convenient, but when the trajectory of your business is at stake, it pays to have control over as many areas influencing campaign performance as possible.

GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

Google Ads is a powerful platform because it integrates with many other platforms, syncing valuable data to influence ad performance. One of those platforms is Google Business Profile (GBP). GBP is a space to create free business listings that can appear in more places on Google. For instance, when you perform a local search and see a business showing up in Google Maps, it's because they're utilizing GBP. Google Ads users can sync their GBP to their Google Ads account. Enabling this feature will allow their business locations and information to appear in Google Ads as a location asset.

Ad Assets

Manual	Automated
Affiliate Location	Dynamic Sitelinks
App	Dynamic Callouts
Call	Dynamic Structured Snippets
Callout	Seller Ratings
Image	Longer Ad Headline
Lead Form	Automated Apps
Location	Automated Location
Message	Dynamic Images
Price	
Promotion	
Sitelinks	
Structured Snippets	

Although you have quite a variety of ad extensions to choose from, they all can work alongside each other across your campaigns and ad groups. Add as many extensions as necessary, as long as they're relevant to the purpose your ad is serving and will genuinely provide value. Let's see how implementing certain extensions can help the advertisers in our examples move closer to their goals.

24-Hour Emergency Plumber | Call Now
Ad www.plumberpros.com
Working Tirelessly To Deliver The Help You Need When You Need It! Call Us Today. Available 24/7.
Toilet Repair • Pipe Bursting • Drain Cleaning • Emergency Services
321 Memory Lane Chicago, IL 60605

TIM, OWNER OF PLUMBER PROS CHICAGO, IL

Situation: Tim wants the location asset set up correctly so people in emergency situations looking for his services can quickly see how close he is to their location.

Solution: Since Tim already has a Google Business Profile (GBP) listing, he links his GBP to his Google Ads so that his listing information can be utilized in his ads. Alongside his search ad are multiple assets such as sitelinks, callout, call and location to enhance his ads. With the location asset setup, when someone searches for Tim's keyword, "emergency plumbers near me," his asset could appear with information that will influence people to click and convert.

Attic Trunk Boutique | One Of A Kind Vintage Clothing Online
Ad www.attictrunkboutique.com
Transform your wardrobe with retro fashion from across the world. Shop vintage styles from every era. Free your true spirit with clothing as unique as you!
Dresses • Shoes • Clearance • 10% Off Entire Order

CHARLOTTE, MARKETING MANAGER AT ATTIC TRUNK BOUTIQUE PORTLAND, OR

Situation: Charlotte already has a Display Campaign running but wants to improve areas of visibility for her ads.

Solution: Charlotte creates a branded Search campaign to reinforce the Display campaign. Her ad copy is direct, telling searchers the name of the boutique, what types of products it offers, and her major selling points. Charlotte includes sitelink assets directing users to specific category pages on her site making it easily accessible for searchers and providing a positive user experience.

20% Off All Camping Gear | Shop & Save Today
Ad www.smorescampinggear.com
Shop Now To Prepare For Next Camping Season.
About Us • Free Shipping • Camping & Hiking
Deal End Of Summer Sale • 20% Off Your Entire Order
Code ENDOFSUMMER • Valid Aug 1- Aug 31

BEN, OWNER OF S'MORES CAMPING GEAR PHILADELPHIA, PA

Situation: Ben wants to use his free shipping promotion to improve his ads & spread the word of his special offer.

Solution: Ben uses promotion assets to help shoppers instantly recognize the benefit of purchasing from S'Mores Campaign Gear. His ads provide a visual difference because of the promotion symbol, alerting shoppers of a special deal for the listed product. Along with this risk-free addition, Ben utilized price assets to show the gear sold on the S'Mores site is extremely affordable, making Ben's prices competitive and his products great candidates for Shopping campaigns

Writing great ad copy and utilizing Google's ad extensions are two immediate strategies to include in your campaigns to enhance performance. Although creating ad copy and extensions is a key first step to successful campaigning, long-term growth requires continuous testing.

Ad Testing

Testing different versions of your ads will help you determine which advertising strategies are most effective with your customers. When creating a sampling of ads for your campaign, consider these six best practices:

Include Headline & Description Assets with Slightly Different Messaging

We recommend keeping your different audiences and demographics in mind while creating your ad headlines and descriptions! Highlight something different in each headline and description to appeal to the different user types. Keep your brand voice in mind. We suggest aiming for at least 4 headlines and 4 descriptions so Google can craft the best ads for individual users.

Tailor Messaging to the Appropriate Device

Consider the device your ad is going to be viewed on. People searching on mobile are typically searching with a different context than someone on a desktop. Chances are, they want immediate access to your most important information, like location, phone number, and/or business hours.

Test Different Calls to Action

If the action you want a user to perform remains consistent across all ad variations, play with how you word the call to action (CTA). For example, people may respond better to 'Buy Now' than to 'Browse Our Selection Today.' If you're hoping to generate multiple types of interactions (phone calls, newsletter sign ups, and purchases), try varying the CTAs across your ads to see how users respond.

Try Different Landing Pages

The landing page you think aligns best with your ad may not be well received by searchers. Experiment with directing clicks to different landing pages, like sending ads to product landing pages versus the home page. You can do this by using the ad variation experiment tool in Google Ads to better identify which landing page is most optimal. Relevance is still a big factor in whether or not your ad will rank, so make sure the landing pages you test are appropriate for the user's experience. Keep in mind, the domain of the URL linked to your ad must be the same for ads within the entire ad group.

Test Ways of Quantifying Promotions

If you're highlighting discounts in your ad copy, get creative with how you choose to word your special offer. Try comparing a hard, number value with a more general term for a discount. For example, you can test out versions such as, "50% Off All Sleeping Bags," "Half-Off All Sleeping Bags," and "Sleeping Bags as Low as $30."

!%$ Play With Punctuation

Symbols and punctuation are great tools to make your ads more engaging. Tagging an exclamation point at the end of your description will add excitement to your copy that could easily translate to the person searching. Symbols are a nice visual element to test as well. Rather than writing out "dollars" or "percent," use the symbols and see how searchers respond.

We've said it before, but it's so important, we'll say it again— Google Ads is about providing relevant information to people searching the web. So much so, in order to even show up for a search, the relationship between your keywords, ads, and landing pages have to be aligned. Be transparent with your audience and use your ads to show them exactly who you are and exactly what they're going to get from you.

ACTION ITEMS

Follow best practices to write high quality ad copy and provide the best opportunity for your ads to rank and convert.

Utilize ad assets and the responsive search ads.

Create headline & description variants in each campaign.

5

TARGETING AUDIENCES

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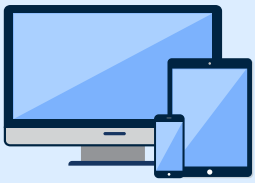
TARGETING CAPABILITIES

Once you've established the foundation of your account, you can choose to layer in audience targeting to hone in on your customers even more. The process alone will help you to develop a better understanding of who your customers are, where they spend time on the web, and the intent behind their searches. By employing the right mix of Google Ads and Google Analytics audience targeting tactics, you'll be able to turn curious shoppers into a loyal customer base that drives long-term growth.

Default Targeting Functions

The possibilities are seemingly endless when it comes to targeting your campaigns, but the best place to start is the standard functions that come with every campaign type:



Devices:

The device targeting feature is as it sounds: you can target users based on whether they're searching on desktop, mobile, or tablet. Segment out your data to see which device brings in the most traffic, and adjust your bids accordingly to narrow or broaden your focus.

Ad Scheduling:

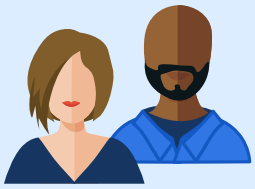
Maximize your budget by giving your ads priority to run on days and times that align with your business. Only available to customers during the work week? Try scheduling your ads to run only from Monday to Friday.

Locations:

Reach your audience wherever they are, targeting them by specific cities, states, and even zip codes. Tighten your control over performance by including and excluding specific geographic locations your ads can or can't show up in.

Demographics:

Deliver your ads to ideal customers by targeting users by age, gender, and household income. If your product or service is geared towards a very specific demographic, this targeting option can be extremely helpful in increasing the impact of your campaigns.



Building Audiences

While the above targeting functions provided in Google Ads are uniform across every campaign type, the platform's Audience Manager feature has its own set of rules and options depending on the campaign type you're running. Identify specific characteristics of your customers to build a focused audience for your ads.

Audience Types

Audiences are built around three major categories, each with their own advantages and use cases.

What Users are Interested In:

Interests & remarketing

Affinity Audiences

Fashionistas

Beauty Maven

AFFINITY

Choose from Google's list of predefined audience groups based on general interests. Target relatively broad groups of people who may find interest in your ads. For example, a beauty salon could use affinity audiences to target people interested in beauty and wellness as well as people who frequently visit salons.

What Users are Researching Or Planning:

- ☐ Beauty Products & Services
- ☐ Spas & Beauty Services
- ☐ Hair Care Products

IN-MARKET

These audiences will help you target users who are actively searching for your products or services and are considering making a purchase. Choose from Google's list of in-market audiences to target individuals searching for anything from activewear to boats.

Leveraging Custom Segments:

hair styles (Interest) ✕

beauty (Interest) ✕

everydaybeauty.com (URL) ✕

hairhealthtips.com (URL) ✕

TARGETING OPTIONS

Custom audiences are a targeting option that allows you to reach specific user segments based on their interests, intent and past behavior. Create your own audience segments by combining keyword phrases, interests or purchase intentions, website URLs, and apps that align with your target audience.

How Users Have Interacted With Your Business

REMARKETING

Target users who have already engaged with your brand, either by visiting your website, using your mobile app, watching your video, and/or giving you contact information.

Audience Targeting for Remarketing

Remarketing is a targeting strategy to re-engage previous site visitors. Any advanced Google Ads user will confirm, remarketing is a powerful and cost-effective tool to supplement any campaign. Most advertisers use remarketing as a simple reminder, but it works best when the advertiser can offer something familiar to the viewer that they have already viewed on your website.

FREE ACCOUNT REVIEW
Learn How Remarketing Can Increase Revenue

Keep frequency capping in mind with remarketing. Frequency capping allows you to adjust the number of times your ad can appear for the same person. You want to engage people, not annoy them, so find a good balance of how often people see your ads.

Remarketing Lists for Search Ads (RLSA)

You can link Google Analytics up to your Google Ads account to integrate your audience data across both platforms. Once they're linked, you can create specific audiences in Analytics, access them within Google Ads, and apply them to any Search campaign as a remarketing list for Search ads (RLSA). Once an audience list is applied to a campaign, you can utilize it in one of four ways:

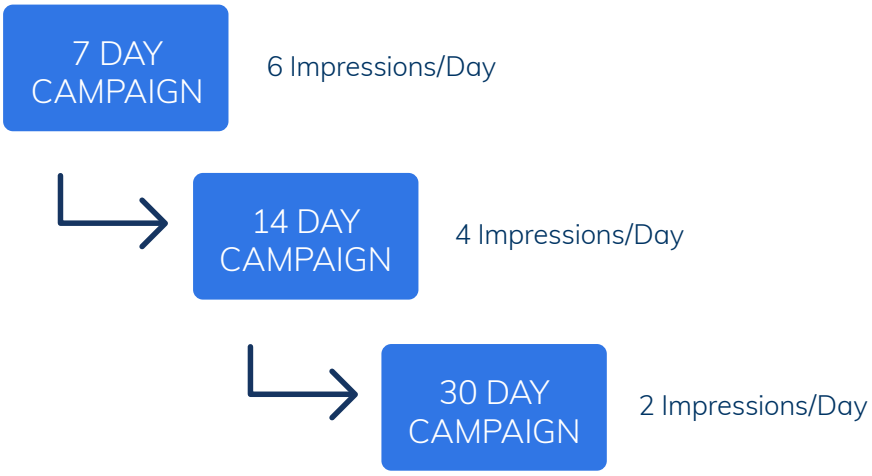
1. Only target people in your selected audience list.
2. Exclude people in your selected audience list from seeing your ads.
3. Bid up on your selected audience list because those people are more valuable.
4. Bid down on your selected audience list because those people are less valuable.

Audience Segmentation

You can segment your audiences just like you segment your campaigns, categorizing like users and/or behaviors into groups and targeting them separately. By splitting out your campaigns using audience segmentation, you can create different messaging in your ads and monitor retention, acquisition spend, and revenue without having to dig through data from multiple campaigns.

TIME SEGMENTATION:

Time segmentation is an advanced strategy used to break up your campaigns by the length of time following a user's initial visit to your website. Depending on how long it's been since a user has been to your site, adjust impression frequency caps or customize ads to serve a unique experience to the people who fall within the time-segmented campaign you're targeting.



Each advertiser will utilize Google's targeting capabilities in his or her own way, based on the outcome he or she is working to achieve. Continue to learn from the examples we've been following through each section and identify ways you can utilize Google's targeting to best serve your campaigns.

TIM, OWNER OF PLUMBER PROS
CHICAGO, IL

Tim is focused on showing his ads to people searching on mobile devices, so he uses device targeting to increase his chance of reaching those users. Under the “Devices” tab, he lowers his bids for desktop and tablet users to -30% to free up his budget to rank for mobile searches. Since it’s rare for mobile to completely outperform ads that run on desktop, he adjusts his bids to still show for desktop. Tim also utilizes call extensions to provide more value to his ads and make it easier for mobile users to convert once they see his ads.

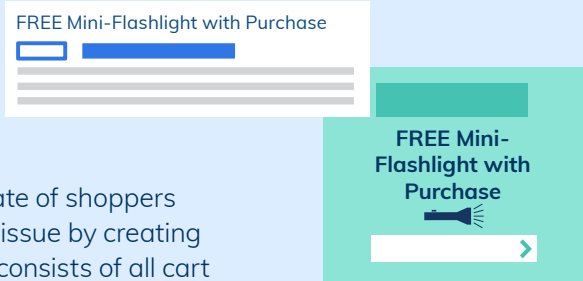
Keeping in mind his goal to expand services to the larger metro-area, Tim also adjusts the geo-targeted locations his ads are eligible to appear in. Tim operates out of Northeast Chicago, so rather than target all of Chicago, he narrows his focus to zip codes he can quickly service.

CHARLOTTE, MARKETING MANAGER AT ATTIC TRUNK BOUTIQUE
PORTLAND, OR

Charlotte’s Display ads have collected data showing a clear pattern of engaged users coming from France and New York, so she experiments with expanding her targeted locations to fashion-forward countries around the world. To continue expanding the reach of the Attic Trunk brand, Charlotte includes France, Italy, Spain, and Japan to her geo-targeted locations.

To move towards her goal of increasing email newsletter sign-ups, Charlotte also creates a new ad for her Display campaign, offering a discount to anyone who signs up for her newsletter. She uses custom audiences in Google to target users who shop at fashion-related websites similar to Attic Trunk. Charlotte also builds another custom audience to reach shoppers actively searching for related products. To shape an audience that reflects her customers, Charlotte targets related keywords like “vintage dresses” as well as an additional list of URLs of sites visited by her target customers.

BEN, OWNER OF S'MORES CAMPING GEAR PHILADELPHIA, PA



In his Analytics data, Ben notices a high rate of shoppers abandoning their carts. He addresses the issue by creating an audience in his Analytics account that consists of all cart abandoners. Ben creates a remarketing campaign within Google ads and applies his cart abandoners audience to his ads. His ads entice cart abandoners back with a free, mini-flashlight gift with purchase. With the ability to create such granular targeting, Ben's campaign is a win-win, providing the user with the best experience and himself with the best opportunity to generate a new customer.

Helpful Tip:

Try using an unbeatable offer that users may have missed on your website.

Between the Google Ads platform and Analytics, you have numerous targeting options to fine-tune your campaigns to fit your exact needs. Rather than assume you know your audience, utilize the targeting tools available to you to understand exactly who your customers are. Having factual data that gives such specific insight on who your buyers are and where they're coming from is a huge advantage in creating your Google Ads campaigns. Your chances of creating ads that convert will increase simply by understanding what users need and assuring them that you've got it just a click away.

ACTION ITEMS

Set up Google's standard targeting options according to the needs of your business.

Create a remarketing campaign and implement Google's audience types to target specific groups in your target audience.

Apply audiences created in Analytics to your Google Ads campaigns.

6

SETTING ADS FOR SUCCESS

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SETTING YOUR ADS FOR SUCCESS

To create a successful account that drives long-term growth, you need to choose the campaign settings that are right for your business. With each campaign type, your settings act as levers to control a range of factors that impact the way your ad is searched, the way it's seen by searchers, and the strength of its performance. When settings go unnoticed, Google activates default settings on your behalf, which may or may not be appropriate for the goals you're trying to achieve. Develop another layer of control over your campaigns and follow along as we break down key settings for Search and Display campaigns.

Search Ads

Controlling the outcome of your campaigns is a matter of knowing where to access and how to select the right settings for your goals. Below, we'll walk you through each setting as though you're setting up a new Search campaign. To give you the freedom to decide what's best for your campaigns, we'll unpack each default setting and explain the associated options that may or may not align better with your goals.

Networks

With both Search Partners and Display networks checked, your text ads are eligible to show up for searches across the Display network as well as any of Google's Search Partner websites that fall within the Search network.

Default Settings

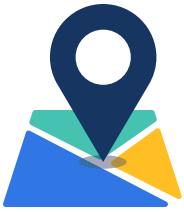
Search Partners & Display networks are checked

SEARCH PARTNERS:

Search Partners are a great option for new accounts needing to generate data to build their campaigns upon, but they have the potential to overexpose your ads and cost you money on irrelevant clicks when gone unmonitored. If you choose to utilize Search Partners, be sure to plan regular check-ins to ensure its effectiveness. You may find better performance by opting out of the Search Partners network entirely.

DISPLAY NETWORK:

Although Google gives you the option to add Display advertising to your Search campaigns, we've found better results by creating separate Display and Search campaigns and running them simultaneously. This helps to keep data separate and allows you to analyze each network's impacts on your business, intentionally targeting searchers in different levels of their buying journey.



Location

Location is an important factor for many businesses, especially ones targeting locally. Aside from the physical location, you have control of who your ad can reach based on that person's relationship with the location you're targeting. Targeting specific people based on your location is controlled in the 'Target' and 'Exclude' location options.

Google's default is to allow your ad to reach people based on the location they're likely to physically be located in or places they're interested in. This option could lead to another source of irrelevant traffic. For example, the default setting could be helpful for a hotel in Boston, running ads to book a hotel stay. Now, someone in Idaho researching Boston hotels could see the ad and potentially become a customer. The same information above applies to your excluded locations.

Default Settings

- Targeting the USA
- Targeting "people in, or who show interest in, your targeted locations"
- Excludes "people in, or who show interest in your excluded locations"

To avoid advertising to users outside of your targeted locations, you can opt to target "people in or regularly in your targeted locations". This is best for local advertisers that only want to generate local region traffic.

Languages

For advertisers targeting customers who speak a different language, utilizing the language setting will open up their ads to a bigger, audience. For individuals who speak English as a second language, it's common for their browsers to be set to their native language. Based on your audience, it could be beneficial to your business to Include the languages your potential customers may be searching in.

Default Settings

English

Audiences

The default observation audience setting allows your ads to run and rank for searches as they normally do, but enables you the option to adjust bids on selected criteria after viewing performance. Whether it makes more sense to target people solely within your audience or leave more room for opportunity, both settings are beneficial depending on the situation.

Default Settings

Observation

If you want to target a specific set of users or individuals who have purchased from you previously, for example, you can switch your audience segments setting to "targeting" to narrow down on the people viewing your ads.

Bidding

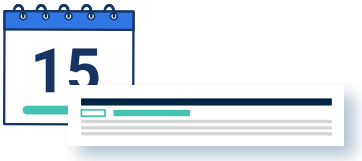
Default Settings

Maximize conversions

Bid strategies are intended to align your ads to help you, but in order to properly align your ads with the result you hope to get out of them, you need to adjust your bid strategy as needed. Google's default bid strategy is to maximize conversions, but not every advertiser running a Search campaign wants Google to optimize their bids for conversions. Instead, to maximize your control and maintain your ability to adjust ad group and keyword bids, you may want to consider manual bidding – this will require more hands-on maintenance of the account, but may yield better results depending on your goals.

AUTOMATED BID STRATEGIES:

Google has a number of automated bid strategies that could be helpful to many businesses, depending on the complexity of the campaign. Automated bid strategies are a great option for lead generation campaigns that are focused on achieving one result.



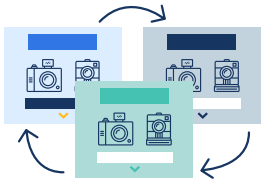
Ad Scheduling

Default Settings

All Day

If targeting specific days and times of day are beneficial to your goals, the ad scheduling setting is where you can make customizations. All search campaigns default to making ads eligible to show 24/7 so ad scheduling is more something to be cognizant of in the chance it could help refine your target.

Ad Rotation



Ad rotation settings allow you to control how often the ads in each campaign rotate when triggered by a search. Google is set to automatically optimize your ads to show the ones with the best chance of getting clicked or converting. The other setting to choose from is, "do not optimize," which values all your ads the same, evenly showing them despite performance. Both settings serve beneficial purposes. If you're focused on building momentum within your campaigns, the "Optimize" setting will continue to push your best ads to show. For a completely unbiased look at how your ads perform, try the "do not optimize" setting.

Default Settings

Prefer best performing ads

Display Ads

Remarketing campaigns created in the Display Network are valuable to any account type. It is important to use this type of ad inventory alongside Search so you can reach your potential consumers in more places.

Devices

Default Settings

All devices

Depending on how well you know your audience, you can use device settings to narrow your reach down to the exact device type someone may be searching on. By Google's standard, ads are shown to users across all devices, but you should utilize this setting if your ad dollars are better spent targeting one device over another.

Frequency Capping

Default Settings

No limit on viewable impressions

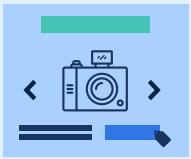
Like we touched on in the previous chapter, frequency capping allows you to adjust the number of times your ad can appear for the same person. The standard setting puts no restriction on the number of times your ad is viewable by a user. Not being aware of this setting could get you into trouble because you don't want to bombard your audience with ads to a point where it's recognizable and quite frankly, annoying. Set custom time parameters at the campaign, ad group, or ad level, down to the day, week, or month.

Campaign URL Options

Default Settings

N/A

Use the Campaign URL setting to insert tracking code information from any third party tracking systems you choose to utilize. Including additional tracking to your campaigns is up to you; therefore, Google has no default for URL options. Additional tracking is highly recommended to add a deeper level of insight to your campaigns and another lever to push and pull. For example, if you were utilizing a third party system to track and record phone calls coming from your ads, this is where you would insert the code and set the parameters.



Dynamic Ads

Default Settings

N/A

Dynamic ads are a useful tool to use when creating a dynamic remarketing campaign, enabling you to show previous visitors ads with products or services they've interacted with on your website. Dynamic remarketing ads work best for ecommerce advertisers, allowing you to link up a data feed that Google can pull from to dynamically create ads including your price, image, and text based on the actions of your website visitors.

Content Exclusions

Default Settings

Show ads on all content

Since the Display Network is vast, there's a chance your ad could appear among content that your brand may not wish to associate with. Content exclusions are a good cautionary measure to take to protect your brand's image and integrity. Along with protecting your image, setting content exclusions will eliminate the potential to pay for irrelevant clicks.

Optimized Targeting

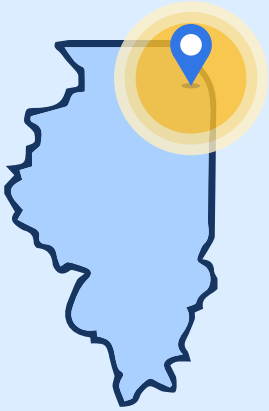
Default Settings

Conservative automation

Google automatically enables conservative optimized targeting which allows Google to show your ad in places it thinks will reach people like the ones you've already targeted, and for the same cost per customer. Choose between letting Google target new customers more aggressively, to turning off the setting altogether. If you're going through the steps to create more control over the outcome of your campaigns, opt for "disabled" optimized targeting, and make decisions off data you've set up yourself to collect.

While Google provides simplified options for your campaign settings, your performance has a much higher chance of success when you can choose settings that work in your favor. To put it simply: to take control of your desired outcome, you must first take control of your campaign settings.

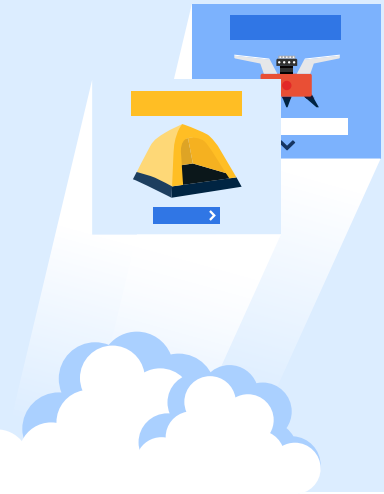
TIM, OWNER OF PLUMBER PROS CHICAGO, IL



Tim has been receiving phone calls from his ads, but from people outside of the locations he thought to be targeting. He noticed a pattern, that some of the people calling were considering moving their families to the areas he targets and were looking for pricing information of local businesses they would need to utilize. After looking at the geographic location segment in his campaign, he saw data to back up his theory of something being off, showing a number of clicks and conversions from people in irrelevant locations. In search of a solution, he goes into the 'Settings' tab to examine the location options for his campaign. Tim's location targeting was set to Google's recommended setting: People in, or who show interest in, your target locations. With the default setting selected, Tim's ads were showing up for people outside of his targeted locations, searching for his services. He adjusts the location setting to only reach people in his targeted locations but now sees a new opportunity to consider.

CHARLOTTE, MARKETING MANAGER AT ATTIC TRUNK BOUTIQUE PORTLAND, OR

Charlotte has noticed some unwanted attention on the Attic Trunk Boutique Facebook page, regarding online shoppers who are annoyed with seeing an overwhelming amount of Attic Trunk ads wherever they seem to be when they're online. After digging into the problem, Charlotte discovered the frequency capping setting in her remarketing campaign had no limit. Therefore, Attic Trunk's remarketing ads were showing up for previous site visitors as many times as Google's algorithm felt necessary—unfortunately, Charlotte's target audience felt otherwise. To restore the integrity of the Attic Trunk brand, Charlotte fixed the problem by setting a limit to only show her ads 5 times per day.



BEN, OWNER OF S'MORES CAMPING GEAR PHILADELPHIA, PA

Because of his promotion, Ben's tents and camping stoves are the highest converting products in his Shopping campaign and are also generating the most revenue from his Ads. He looks through his settings to find more ways to refine his shopping campaigns and maximize performance and notices the bid strategy is set to maximize conversions, giving Google full control of bids. In order to better allocate his marketing dollars to the products that are performing the best, Ben decides to switch his bid strategy to manual so that he can control the bids for each individual product, ultimately pushing traffic for his top performers and pulling back on products that might be high spending and not performing as well.

When it comes to campaign settings, don't expect to see the results you really want with Google calling all the shots—and what most advertisers don't realize is that Google Ads comes with the full capability to control most aspects of your campaign to create the desired outcome. Yes, there are a number of uncontrolled factors that could impact performance—maybe there's just not enough search volume for the keywords and locations you're targeting, maybe you simply don't have a big enough budget at the moment to realistically compete. But regardless of your campaigns' shortcomings, Google comes with all the tools to create your vision, it's up to you to understand your options and choose what makes the most sense for your campaigns.

ACTION ITEMS

Uncheck the default network setting option to target only one network per campaign.

Customize your location targeting to reach customers in the areas you intend to target.

Adjust your bidding strategy based on your business goals.

Need more help with campaign settings?
LET US KNOW YOUR QUESTIONS!

7

OPTIMIZING FOR GROWTH

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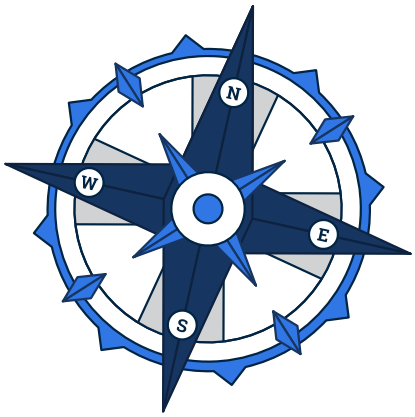
OPTIMIZING FOR GROWTH



Now that you've established a strong foundation for your account, you're ready to start the ongoing work of optimization. Optimization is the process of identifying areas of improvement in each campaign and adjusting your budget accordingly. Like many aspects of Google Ads, there is no single formula for optimizing your account—your business's unique goals will dictate which areas of your account require more or less attention as it grows. Even so, there are a few fundamental types of optimizations that every business should consider as they move their campaigns forward. In implementing these optimizations, it helps to work from the top-down: from evaluating performance across campaigns, to focusing in on specific ad groups, to analyzing individual keywords and/or products.

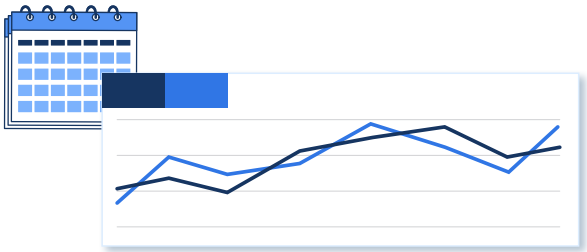
The Campaign Level

Analyzing your account at the campaign level provides a snapshot of all your campaigns, allowing you to quickly assess which ones are most in need of attention. Spend time at the campaign level getting to know patterns in your data, identifying how your budget is being spent, and refining your targeting.

What to Focus on at the Campaign Level

- Daily Budgets
- Conversion Data
- Automated Strategies
- Device Targeting
- Location Targeting
- Ad Scheduling
- Settings

Get Familiar With Your Data



Get comfortable with reading your data by looking at the last 30-90 days to identify inconsistent trends that may uncover potential tracking errors or outside factors like seasonality, special promotions, or cultural events that may be impacting performance. It'll be easy to spot holes in your data once you establish meaningful KPIs that act as indicators of whether or not campaigns are moving in the right direction. You can also use the comparison tool to look at your data compared to the previous period, or the same period last year to gain better historical data insights.

Your business's unique goals will dictate which areas of your account require more or less attention as it grows.

TIM, OWNER OF PLUMBER PROS CHICAGO, IL

Tim, the plumber, is using Google Ads to generate more phone calls and increase business; therefore, he's keeping an eye on conversions (phone calls) and budget (cost, CPC, cost-per-conversion).

CHARLOTTE, MARKETING MANAGER AT ATTIC TRUNK BOUTIQUE PORTLAND, OR

Charlotte's immediate focus is building an engaged audience, so she is monitoring conversions (newsletter sign-ups) and engagement metrics (site traffic, time on site, bounce rate).

BEN, OWNER OF S'MORES CAMPING GEAR PHILADELPHIA, PA

Ben is concerned with tracking revenue goals therefore he's monitoring conversion value (purchase value) and spend as well as his return on investment (conversion value/cost).

After getting acquainted with your influx of data, shift your focus to the 'Cost' column to investigate how and where your money is being spent. Understanding where your budget is going will help you make data-driven decisions to get more out of your budget.

Manage Your Budget

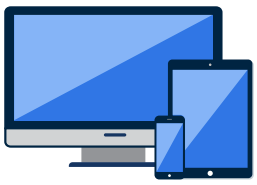
The budgets you set for each campaign rank the importance of each campaign; however, that idea doesn't always translate in the data. There's a chance your campaign with the highest daily budget won't even reach it, and what you thought would be most effective isn't showing up for any searches. Use your data to pinpoint the real value in each campaign and shift budget to maximize performance.

> BEGIN BY ASKING YOURSELF:
>
> **Which campaigns are spending the most budget?**
>
> **Are my daily budgets being met?**
>
> **Are my high spend campaigns generating conversions?**

Take notice of where your budgets are being spent and if it aligns with the goal you set for your campaigns. Is your campaign with the lowest budget generating the most conversions? Optimize budget by taking some budget from a lesser campaign to give your successful campaign more opportunities to generate leads. If your campaigns are struggling to meet daily budgets, they may be over-segmented or limited by budget. The problem might also be that your keywords' search volumes are too low.

Refine Your Targeting

Optimize Google's standard targeting options to help your ads show up more often in places they perform better. Adjust bids up or down depending on performance within the following targeting options:



DEVICE TARGETING
Adjust bids to target users based on whether they're converting on desktop, mobile, or tablet.

LOCATION TARGETING
Adjust bids on target cities, states, or countries that convert better than others.

AD SCHEDULING
Adjust bids to give more opportunities to higher converting days and times that align with your business.

Like you did with budget, evaluate the performance across each targeting option by looking at the KPIs you identified.

> ASK YOURSELF:
>
> **Are my ads converting well on computers, but not at all on mobile phones?**
>
> **Are people clicking my mobile ads, but not converting?**
>
> **How much am I spending on mobile ad clicks that don't convert?**
>
> **How does spending this much on mobile ads drive my campaigns further towards my goal?**

Apply these kinds of questions when optimizing any of the above targeting options. The feedback needed to refine your targeting for better performance comes with answering these questions.

Every campaign optimization process should start at the campaign level to evaluate overall performance and highlight any immediate discrepancies, but depending on what shows up in the data, there are a number of ways you can choose to optimize. If your data isn't clearly showing you where you should advert your attention to next, take your most expensive campaign and work your way down.

Automated Strategies

One of the largest-changing aspects of Google Ads in the past year has been the surge of automated strategies, especially Performance Max campaigns. Picking and choosing the correct strategy can be a difficult process, but knowing your goals and budget can help immensely.

When optimizing these automated campaigns, most adjustments will take place at the campaign level since you give up control to individual key-words or products. You can adjust the target Return on Ad Spend or the target Cost Per Acquisition to adjust how your ads are performing.

BEGIN BY ASKING YOURSELF:

Do I need to drive vastly more traffic to my site?

Do I need more conversions or sales, regardless of return?

Are my goals being met consistently?

MAXIMIZE CLICKS

Google will push as much traffic to your site as possible via low cost-per-clicks. Keep in mind, this may rank you lower on the page, but will drive more people to your website.

PERFORMANCE MAX

Automated campaign where you're only able to use Maximize Conversion Value and set a target return on ad spend, so use your target as a way to optimize results.

MAXIMIZE CONVERSIONS AND TARGET CPA

Google will try to push as many conversions as possible in a campaign. You can try to stabilize it by adding a target Cost Per Acquisition, but as mentioned above, it may impact how the campaign performs.

MAX CONVERSION VALUE & TARGET ROAS

Similar to maximize conversions, except specifically pushing revenue. Adding a target return on ad spend can help steady the campaign, but can also have profound effects on the campaign if not set correctly.

TIP: Be careful when doing device adjustments for campaigns on automated strategies! For standard search and shopping campaigns, ONLY your device adjustments will apply to the campaign, so location or ad schedule adjustments will be disregarded by Google. However, instead of the adjustment increasing or decreasing your bid, it adjusts the target itself. For example, if my goal is $100 Cost Per Phone Call, and I set mobile bids at +10%, my goal on mobile phones would be $110 per phone call.

The Ad Group Level

Diving deeper, any adjustments made at the ad group level will apply to all of the keywords and ads within the select ad group. Your account is still in its early stages of growth, so it's more important to focus on generating qualified traffic with ad group bid adjustments.

What to Focus on at the Ad Group Level

- Bids (Max CPC)

Adjusting Your Bids

By setting bids (Max CPC) at the ad group level, you place equal value on all of the keywords within the ad group. As your account grows and generates more data, top performing keywords will separate themselves from the more unimpressive keywords in your list. Until then, by setting equal bids at the ad group level, you're allowing your keywords to work it out amongst each other to dictate which ones are most successful.

AD GROUP: EMERGENCY PLUMBER **MAX. CPC: $7**

☐ Keyword	Ad Group	Max. CPC
☐ "emergency plumber"	Emergency Plumber	$7
☐ [emergency plumber]	Emergency Plumber	$7

Creating a level playing field for your ads is the best method when growing a new or recently rebuilt account. After giving Google a chance to run your campaigns, the data will speak for itself and you can choose to optimize your bids further at the keyword level.

The Keyword Level

The keyword level is your direct insight into the individual performance of each keyword. Optimizing at the keyword level is how you'll clean up your keyword list, eliminate wasted spend, and focus on showing up for relevant searches and generating qualified leads.

What to Focus on at the Keyword Level

- Irrelevant Search Terms
- Extremely Broad Search Terms
- Negative Keywords
- New Keyword Opportunities
- Keyword Match Types

Eliminate Wasted Budget

If your keywords aren't converting but you're spending your full budget, that's a clear indication of a disconnect within your keywords. One of the most valuable tools to eliminate wasted budget and maximize performance, at any stage of your optimizations, is your Search Terms.

KEYWORD OPTIMIZATION

Optimizing your keywords is a good way to truly ensure your budget is being spent efficiently. You can easily increase your bids on keywords that are hitting your goals, and decrease bids on keywords that aren't hitting your goals.

PRODUCT OPTIMIZATION

Optimizing products in Google Ads is not quite as straightforward as keywords. Increasing a shopping bid tells Google to cast your net wider, so you'll see more general terms in your Search Terms report. In contrast, lowering your product bid tells Google to be more specific, so it may show less, but to more qualified searches. Optimizing products takes a bit more time and effort which is why Performance Max or an automated strategy like target ROAS will take some of that work off your plate.

SKIM YOUR SEARCH TERMS

Look at the irrefutable evidence in your Search Terms to understand exactly how your keywords are searched, which ones are costing you the most, and if they're worth paying for. Listening to your audience is critical to the direction of your campaigns because keywords you thought would perform well might not generate any conversions, and your top converters might be out-performing all your keywords. If certain keywords aren't converting, pause them and give more exposure to keywords that are generating results. Set aside all expectations and let the data in your search terms open up new opportunities to refine and target your keywords.

WHEN SKIMMING THROUGH YOUR SEARCH TERMS, LOOK FOR:

- Irrelevant searches
- Negative keyword opportunities
- New keyword opportunities

NEGATIVE KEYWORDS AND KEYWORD MATCH TYPES

Tighten up the quality of searches your ads show up for by adding negative keywords and adjusting match types, inspired by your Search Terms. For example, Tim, the plumber, was targeting "plumber" on broad match and saw that his ads were generating clicks for some completely irrelevant searches:

SEARCH TERMS

Best plumber clothes
Plumbers crack
How much does a plumber make

To fix this issue, Tim got rid of the keyword "Plumber" altogether to put his budget towards longer tail keywords. He also added negative, exact match keywords for [best plumber clothes], [plumber's crack], and [how much does a plumber make] to avoid these potential searches in the future.

Through optimization, you'll regain control of your campaigns and redirect them towards your goal, based on data. This is an ongoing practice, but it requires stepping away from your campaigns to let them collect data, then diving back in to refine targeting or redirect your budget to more successful opportunities.

ACTION ITEMS

Identify your most expensive campaign and your highest converting campaign.

Adjust bids on targeting options to show ads in more places with a higher chance of converting.

Set equal keyword bids at the ad group level.

Skim your Search Terms to add negative keywords, find new keyword opportunities, and adjust keyword match types.

Pause keywords that aren't generating conversions.

CONCLUSION

Although the work of managing Google Ads is never really finished, this ebook is! You now have all the tools you need to start building campaigns that drive real growth. As you deepen your knowledge of the platform, you'll continue to discover new ways to leverage it to your business's unique advantage. If you get stuck, remember to step back and look at the bigger picture of what you're trying to accomplish with Google Ads. Staying grounded in your goals in this way will make it much easier to see the right choices to make for your business. If you feel like you've tried everything and still aren't seeing results, just reach out to our team and we'll be happy to help. We'll sit down with you to review your account and provide free advice on how to improve its performance. No fees, no commitments.

Not seeing the results you want? Schedule a call with one of our experts today for a free review of your account.

GET YOUR FREE REVIEW TODAY

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