

Google AdWords

How to get better ROI

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Google AdWords

Seven Steps to Success Guide

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Introduction

What is paid search marketing?

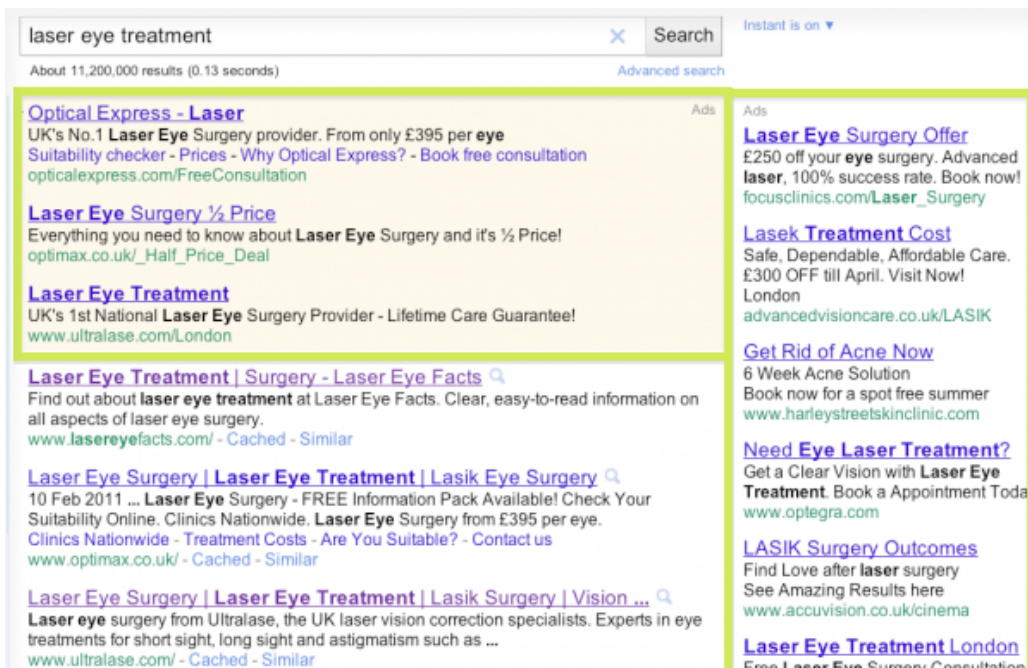
Paid search marketing or pay per click (PPC) is similar to conventional advertising; you pay a fee to display a relevant text ad with a link to a company page when the user of a search engine types in a specific phrase. Google calls its PPC ad programme 'AdWords'. In this guide, we focus on Google since in many countries Google is the most popular search engine. We'll see that today, AdWords offers opportunities for ads to be displayed beyond Google on many publisher sites and also YouTube.

What is it? Paid search advertising

A relevant text ad with a link to a company page is displayed on the SERPs (search engine results pages) when the user of a search engine types in a search phrase. A fee is charged to the advertiser every time someone visits their website as a result of clicking on one of these ads. The advertiser sets a bid (the maximum amount they are willing to pay for each click) and, the amount bid for the click mainly helps determine the position of the ad on the SERPs. Additionally, paid search advertising can include advertising through a content network of third-party sites.

Although many searchers prefer to click on the natural listings, a sufficient number do click on the paid listings (typically around a quarter or a third of all clicks). This makes paid ads highly profitable for companies such as Google and means that a well-designed paid search campaign can drive significant amounts of business for the advertisers.

In Google, text ads are displayed above and below the natural search results. Historically, as shown below in the screen capture from when this guide was first created in 2011, ads also appeared to the right hand side of the search results. However, as of February 2016, Google now displays up to four ads above the organic results and up to three ads at the bottom of the page. The current day screenshot on the next page shows how the format of both the ads and the organic results has changed over the past five years.



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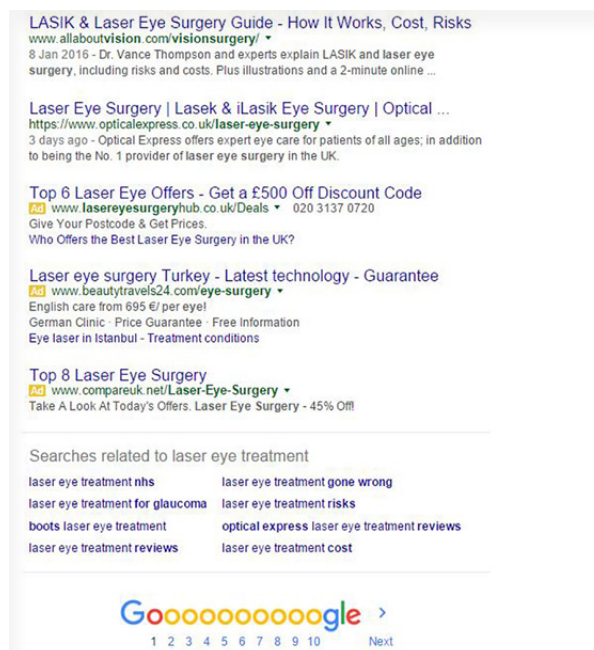
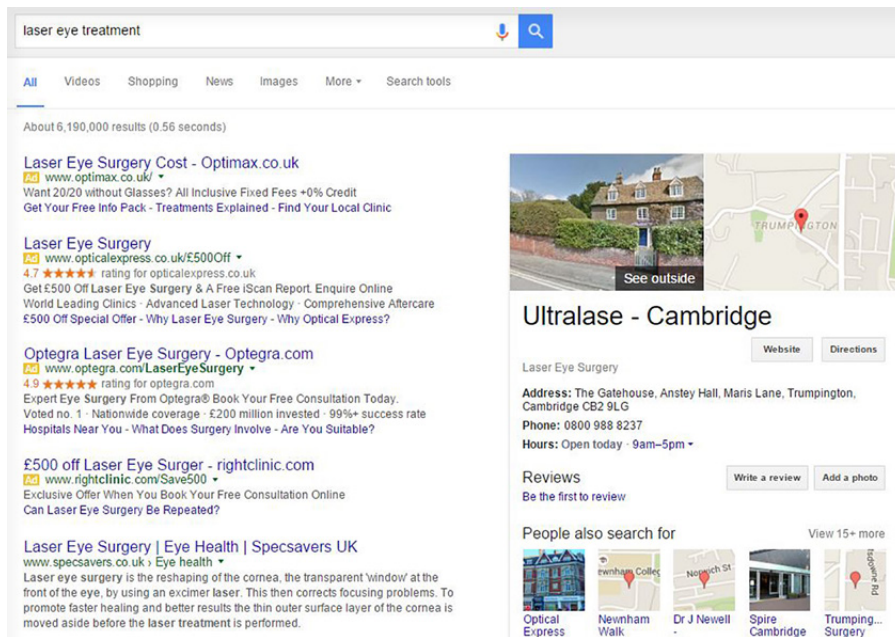
What is it? Google AdWords

The name of Google's paid advertising programme that we focus on this guide.

All the major search engines have PPC advertising programmes. This guide focuses on Google AdWords since, in European markets like the UK, it accounts for over 90 percent of searches¹. In the US, Google's share of search is lower, so Bing and Yahoo! are more significant.

Strategy Recommendation 1 Focus your paid search efforts on Google AdWords

Since Google is the most popular search engine by far in many countries, it makes sense to focus your efforts here.



¹ [Smart Insights: Online marketing statistics compilation](#)

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Innovation in Google AdWords

One of the reasons that Google and its paid advertising program has been successful is their ongoing quest to improve the experience for searchers and results for advertisers. Since we last updated this guide there have been some changes with the AdWords campaign management tool. This version of the guide will ensure that these new elements are covered.

Recent AdWords Updates

Google is constantly trialling new products and, less frequently, interface updates for the AdWords system.

The biggest change to AdWords in the past couple of years has been the removal of sidebar ads in February 2016. This means that instead of having up to eleven ads per page (three on the left hand side above the organic results and eight down the right hand side) there are now only a maximum of seven ads per page - four above the organic results and three below. In addition to this major change, there have been a number of small updates and changes that have given advertisers new opportunities.

New features often help to improve CTR, and staying up-to-date with these changes is a key factor in being able to compete in Paid Search. We update members via our [Paid search hub page](#) and newsletter updates to show the major changes, but we also recommend you bookmark this [updates page](#) which was launched in 2015.

Best Practice Tip 1 Keep on top of AdWords changes with these Google pages

We recommend bookmarking these pages:

- ✓ [Ad Innovations](#) - a top level view of major categories of service including Betas
- ✓ [New AdWords features page](#) - A new feature in 2015
- ✓ [Google AdWords blog: Inside AdWords](#) - Explains major new features
- ✓ [AdWords Policy Centre](#) - check compliance of ads with Google's policies

Remarketing can increase conversion by reminding previous visitors about your brand.

Recent updates over the last two to three years to be aware of include (most recent first):

- ✓ Removal of sidebar ads (as mentioned above)
- ✓ The launch of an official AdWords app that lets you manage your AdWords account via an Android or iOS smartphone
- ✓ Ability to add structured snippets to your ads
- ✓ The use of email lists to let you specifically target or exclude your existing customers
- ✓ A change to how the Search Terms Report is accessed
- ✓ Ability to add description text to Sitelinks
- ✓ Option to create Call-Only campaigns - these are ads that are displayed in response to searches on mobile devices, where clicking the ad initiates a phone call to the advertiser and there is no option to click through to the website
- ✓ An easy way to undo changes to your account - the Change History now includes the option to undo any of the changes listed
- ✓ Upgraded URLs - every ad can now have a Destination URL and a Final URL. This makes it easier to amend your ads when you need to change URL tracking parameters (see <https://support.google.com/AdWords/answer/6049217?hl=en-GB> for details).

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- ✔ Option to show a dynamic countdown timer in your ads - for example to show how many days are left until a sale ends
- ✔ New Ad Extensions such as Callout Extensions and Review Extensions
- ✔ Removal of the option to opt out of close variant matching for phrase and exact match keywords
- ✔ Changes in audiences for Display Network - now for remarketing there are “similar” lists and also for display network there are “in-market” lists and then there are many far more highly targeted audience types based on interests and life stages
- ✔ Click to call ads – there are now a number of different click to call conversion settings
- ✔ Definition of different conversion metrics – terminology has changed around click conversions and conversions
- ✔ App marketing improvements
- ✔ Transition from Product listing ads (PLAs) to Google Shopping. As well as the campaign transitional tools you can now have multiple ad groups to allow one product per ad group for SQR.
- ✔ Post ads on Google+ – Advertisers need to meet a minimum threshold of contacts on Google+ to be eligible for this ad type. It means that you can promote Hangouts on Air and also important pieces of content in a similar vein to FB newsfeed ads.
- ✔ Google Trusted stores integration
- ✔ 360 degree image son Google shopping
- ✔ Calls as conversions in AdWords
- ✔ Improvements to location targeting
- ✔ Importing offline conversion data to AdWords and Analytics

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Alternatives to Google AdWords

Google’s main competitor for search advertising in western countries is Microsoft’s Bing Ads platform, which powers the advertising seen on the Bing and Yahoo! search engines.

Although we’d advise not investing too much time away from Google outside of the United States, don’t simply ignore Bing. In some industries a lack of competition leads to lower cost per click (CPC) on this platform, so although it won’t generate a large amount of traffic it may still be an extremely efficient platform to use.

Also remember that in other countries the search engine market share looks very different, so it is important to consider this when planning your media investment. In the US, for instance, although Google is still dominant, the Bing-Yahoo! alliance has a much larger proportion of the market. Although Google is prevalent across Europe, the Americas, Australia and New Zealand, some non-English speaking countries do have their own search engines: China’s Baidu and Russia’s Yandex being the most obvious examples.

The Google Display Network (GDN)

It’s not well known that Google gets more than 20 percent of its revenue, not from people clicking on ads when they search on Google, but displaying contextual ads on other sites or searches linked from other sites. So this is a significant opportunity for search marketing or a source of a wastage for non-specialists who are unaware of it. These ads are displayed as part of the Google AdSense programme that website owners can subscribe to in order to generate revenue.

What is it? The Google Display Network and AdSense

The Display Network is a collection of third-party sites like online publishers and bloggers who have agreed to display Google 'AdSense' ads. Unlike ads on search results, which are text only, ads on the Display Network can be either text ads or image ads (banners or videos). Ads can be displayed based on what the publisher's website is about (contextual advertising) or on the demographics and interests of the person reading the site.

In the GDN, your ads are displayed entirely separately from Google, and for this reason it might be the biggest hidden secret to newcomers to PPC advertising. Our main message is 'beware of the Display Network'. Ignoring it or using it incorrectly will often lead to poor return on investment (ROI) since searchers often click impulsively on such ads as part of browsing sites, rather than when they are proactively searching within the search engine. Click-through rates and conversion rates tend to be much lower on these types of ads. However, it does give opportunities to increase awareness of your products and through remarketing to remind visitors about your brand. We'll talk a little more about the Display Network in Step 4.

Strategy Recommendation 2 Review the value of the Google Display Network

Users are in a different mode of web usage when browsing third-party sites, so your ads need to change to reflect this. You need to review it to see whether you will get returns from it and target users with different graphical ads to generate awareness.

Remarketing

The GDN also gives options for targeting users who have already been on your site, this process is called Remarketing. Again, we will look at this more in Step 5, but it's a key question when considering AdWords investment, so we wanted to flag it up here.

What is it? AdWords Remarketing

Remarketing enables you to display ads to previous visitors to your site to remind them about your offer.

Best Practice Tip 2 Consider AdWords Remarketing

Remarketing can increase conversion by reminding previous visitors about your brand and encouraging you to take the next step.

This is an example of Remarketing in action: here we have visited the site of Silverpop and then later we're browsing another site which is subscribed to Google AdSense and the offer on the right is displayed. The visits to the two sites are identified through a cookie used by AdSense for cross-site tracking. The advertiser can decide whether the site is related or not.

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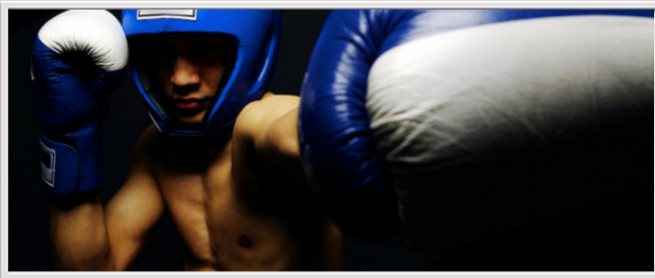
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Blog, News and Insights

Home » Blog, News and Insights » Google Adwords v LinkedIn PPC – Fair Fight?

Google Adwords v LinkedIn PPC – Fair Fight?

Posted by: Alex Ashley-Roberts



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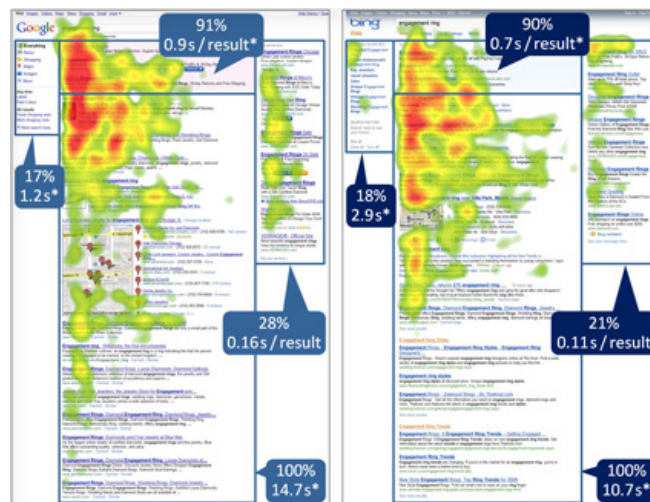
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Why is AdWords marketing important?

Although many searchers do prefer to click on the natural listings, sufficient numbers do view and click on the paid listings (typically around 30 per cent of all clicks). So with careful control, AdWords can drive quality traffic for which you get a good return. Recent research shows that surprisingly, [around 30% of Google's users are unaware of paid advertising](#).

You can see from this eyetracking research² that many do view the paid search ads, even if they don't click on them, so they can help with generating awareness as well as generating clicks. You can also see from the heatmaps that far more people see the ads on the left, which is presumably one of the reasons why Google has now stopped showing ads on the right hand side.



Heatmaps showing the aggregate gaze time of all 24 participants on Google (left) and Bing (right) for one of the transactional tasks. The red color indicates areas that received the most total gaze time (4.5 seconds and above). Each callout includes the percentage of participants who looked at the area and the time (in seconds) they spent looking there. The numerical data are an average across all four tasks. Asterisks indicate values that were significantly different between Google and Bing at alpha = .1.

² [SearchEngineLand: Eye tracking study.](#)

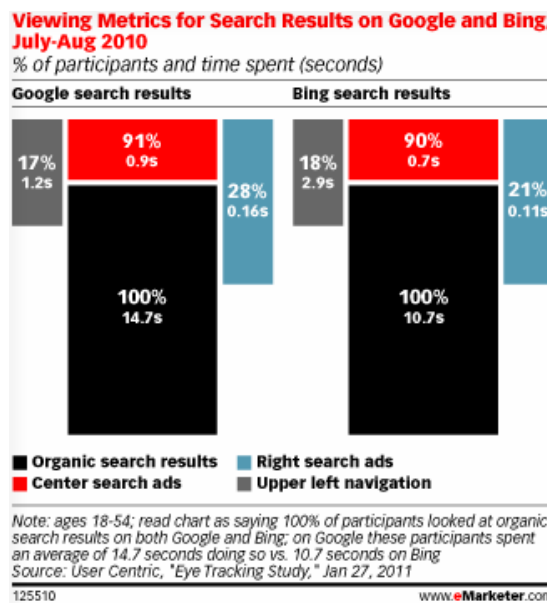
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In the UK, AdWords accounts for around 60 percent of all paid media spend,³ so it clearly works for many companies.

The main benefits of using Google AdWords is that it gives you:

- ✓ **1. Great targeting.** You can reach your target audience right at the time when they are looking for your products, i.e. high purchase intent.
- ✓ **2. Low wastage.** With the correct use of match types in Google AdWords including the, sometimes neglected, negative keywords, you can ensure that your ads are only shown when searchers are performing high relevant searches.
- ✓ **3. Predictability.** Traffic volumes, ranking, returns and costs tend to be more stable and more predictable than search engine optimisation (SEO), but this does vary depending on how dynamic the sector is.
- ✓ **4. Speed.** PPC listings appear much faster, usually in a few hours (or days if editor review is required). Ads can be activated or paused quickly in accordance with campaign, promotion or stock requirements. Acquiring search traffic through SEO has a much longer lead time of months rather than days before you will see significant results.
- ✓ **5. Control.** Unlike SEO, with sufficient budget and staff or agency with good PPC skills, it is more straightforward to achieve high rankings and direct visitors to the relevant page on your site. With the right technology and processes creative/copy, bidding and budgeting can be tightly controlled.
- ✓ **6. High conversion rates.** Because of its better targeting, PPC traffic tends to have higher conversion rates than SEO.
- ✓ **7. Branding effect.** Research⁴ has shown that there is a branding effect with PPC, even if users do not click on the ad. This can be useful for generating brand awareness during product launch or major campaigns.

Here is a different form of this analysis to show where searchers view – suggesting the branding impact of search advertising.



³ [IAB AdSpend figures](#)

⁴ [Google Brand Awareness Impact study](#)

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What can go wrong?

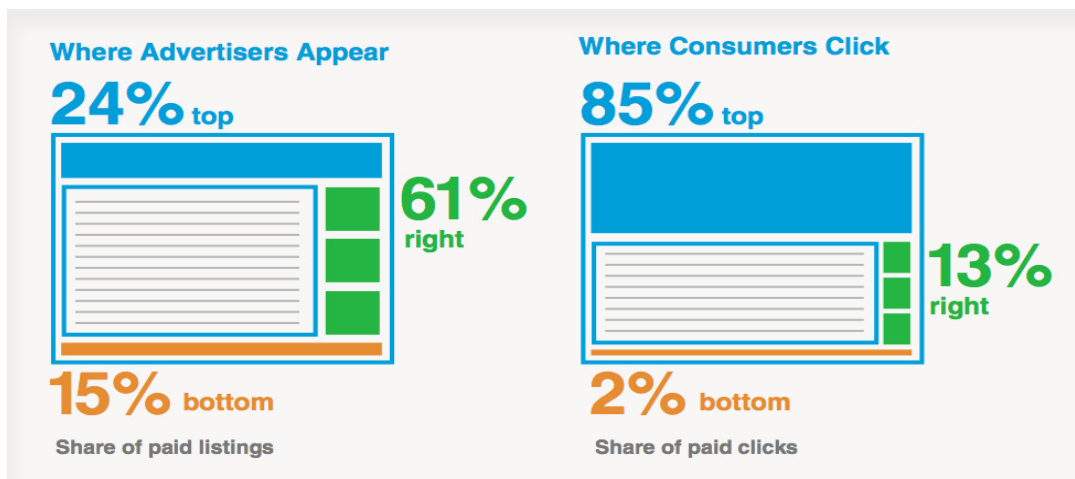
Paid search marketing is deceptively easy to start – all you need is the company credit card, set a daily budget, then create one or more ads and tell Google the keywords for which your ads should be displayed. However, implementing such a rudimentary campaign and relying on the default settings is very dangerous and is likely to lead to you spending a lot of money for very little return.

The AdWords arena is fiercely competitive and whether you get a decent ROI is down to a range of factors such as the relevance of your ads, your choice of keywords, and the keyword match types you use. So you have to ensure you know what you're doing, and that your offer is as strong as it can be and your ads are as well targeted as possible.

The main disadvantages of paid search that need to be managed or overcome in order to achieve success are:

- ❌ **1. Competition.** Since PPC has become popular due to its effectiveness, it is competitive and because it is based on competitive bids it can get expensive. Cost per click/bid inflation has led to some companies reducing PPC activity. Some companies may get involved in bidding wars that drive bids up to an unacceptable level – some phrases such as 'life insurance' may exceed £10 per click. The chart on the next page shows the challenge of competition.
- ❌ **2. Higher costs than other media.** If SEO is effective it will almost always deliver a lower CPC.
- ❌ **3. Favours larger brands.** For companies with a lower budget or a narrower range of products on which to increase lifetime value it may not be possible to compete. In addition, well-known brands will naturally receive a higher percentage click-through rate, meaning they pay slightly less, meaning less well-known businesses have to work slightly harder to compete.

This analysis from Compete effectively shows why AdWords favours brands who have the brand scale, familiarity and conversion to enable advertising at the top of the listings.



In 2011, Google introduced paid listings at the bottom of the page for some searches. But this hasn't really resulted in significant additional clicks.⁵

- ❌ **4. PPC is deceptively simple to set up.** But to compete effectively, particularly for a large campaign, requires ongoing optimising as well as knowledge of best practice which changes as Google and other search engines introduce new options.

⁵ [Compete Whitepaper based on 10s of millions of searches to a US consumer panel in 2011.](#)

- ❌ **5. Limited reach.** Not all searchers will see your ads, since many people scan and click on the natural listings. Your ad will only reach those who are proactively looking for a product or service, but not those who are unaware of a need. Here display advertising can be used to gain incremental reach, but the paid search content networks can help also.
- ❌ **6. Click fraud.** This is the term used to describe people (including competitors) repeatedly clicking on your ads in the hope of landing you with a large bill. Although Google has worked hard to eradicate click fraud, and is extremely good at detecting and refunding it where it exists, there are still some sectors where competitors or advertisers click on ads when there is no intention to buy.

The main success factors for AdWords advertising

This guide is all about helping you get the most from AdWords, to help with this it covers these main success factors:

- ✅ **Understanding search behaviour** – doing your keyphrase analysis so you know the best keyphrases to target for your audience.
- ✅ **Targeting through campaign structure and keyphrase match types** – making sure the right ad appears for the right search term.
- ✅ **Creative** – making your ads more appealing through copywriting and testing.
- ✅ **Using the Display Network effectively** – the Display Network enables you to create awareness of your products/services.
- ✅ **Landing page selection and optimisation** – you need to make your landing pages effective to convert as many visitors as possible to get the best return.
- ✅ **Testing** – you can access a lot of insight from Google AdWords and Google Analytics and test and revise your campaigns. We'll show you how.
- ✅ **Keeping up to date** – Google continually develops the AdWords platform and products. Deploying new additions may provide the opportunity so you can 'get the jump on your competitors' by keeping up with Google's enhancements.

Introducing Quality Score and Ad Rank

The mechanics of the Google auction that determine which ads appear and in what order for any given search are, on the surface, fairly simple. When someone types in a query your ad is given an 'Ad Rank' score based on your Quality Score (QS) and how much you're willing to pay for the click. The person with the highest Ad Rank gets the top position, the next highest gets the second position and so on. Ad Rank is calculated by multiplying your bid (or 'Max CPC') by your Quality Score. So achieving prominence in the AdWords results is not all about how much you are willing to bid for each click.⁶

What is it? AdWords Quality Score

Google helps you to get an idea of the overall health of your AdWords account by giving you an assessment of the Quality Score of each keyword on a scale of 1 to 10.

The [latest information on Quality Score](#) and how to see it for your keywords can be found at this Google Help page.

⁶ [Google Help: Ad Rank](#).t

Google calculates a Quality Score for each keyword in your account. The relevancy of your ads to the keyword is a major factor in determining a keyword's Quality Score. Google knows that only ads which are highly relevant to the user's search term are far more likely to will get a click, so it uses Quality Score to make sure only relevant ads are displayed. Many non-search specialists we talk to have not heard of Quality Score, and yet it is extremely important to understand the concept of Quality Score if you want to improve your're AdWords campaigns or discuss with an agency how to improve results.

Best Practice Tip 3 Review and improve Quality Score

Work on your Quality Score and you will pay less per click for the same position.

Know the drivers of Quality Score and how to improve them

- Q. Do we understand the Quality Score factors and work hard to improve them through testing?

Understanding Quality Score is difficult since Google is not completely transparent on its approach; it does refer to the main factors but it doesn't disclose 'other relevance factors' or the relative weighting between them.

Anyone working on paid search should stay up to date on the Quality Score – you can check the latest disclosure on Quality Score, noting the order in which items are listed by Google on their explanation of Quality Score.

So, what are the factors that influence Quality Score?

Google has become more transparent in explaining Quality Score over the years. I've always felt that it could be more transparent, but it hasn't, because it isn't in their interest to be too specific about how it works.

If you want the full low-down from their chief economist no less – watch this video from Hal Varian.⁷

The Quality Score formula according to Google

This is a method of explaining the Quality Score that Google no longer publishes, but we think it's a neat way of explaining it. We've added definitions next to the terms in case you're unfamiliar with them. Note, though, that there are other factors such as landing page speed which are now included in the QS calculation, and we'll look at these below. But the fundamentals are the same.

The Formula

We regularly improve upon how the AdWords system uses these signals to identify and show the highest quality ads. Although we continue to refine the Quality Score formula, the central idea remains the same; this score represents high quality advertising on Google AdWords.

Currently, the formula is best represented as:

Quality Score = (keyword's CTR, ad text relevance, keyword relevance, landing page relevance)*

*Where the interactions between the Quality Score variables change as we continue to refine how to measure and define quality in AdWords.

A keyword's Quality Score directly affects your keyword's status and your related ad's pricing and position on a given page.

Glossary:

CTR = Clickthrough rate

Ad text relevance = Match of headline and description to search term

Keyword relevance = Match of triggering keyword to search term

Landing page relevance = Match <title>, <h1..n> headings, copy

⁷ [Hal Varian: The Chief Economist at Google describes a worked example.](#)

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Around the same time their Help system also gave this guidance:

“For calculating a keyword-targeted ad’s position on a search result page:

- ☑ The matched keyword’s CTR on Google; CTR on the Google Network is not considered
- ☑ The relevance of the keyword and ad to the search query
- ☑ The historical performance of your account, which is measured by CTR across all your keywords
- ☑ Expected impact of ad formats
- ☑ Other relevance factors”

These are the implications you should consider from this guidance from Google:

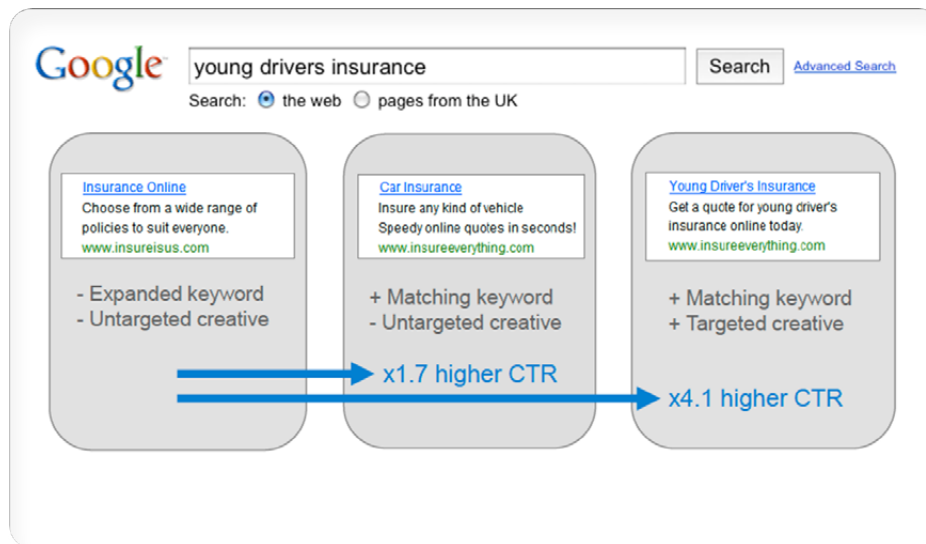
- ☑ **Implication 1. CTRs are crucial.** The CTR of a keyword is given as the first factor, and Google always say this is the primary factor in determining Quality Score. Higher CTRs will result from having more relevant ads, so this is why it is vital to ensure you have smaller, highly targeted ad groups which deliver creative with relevant ad text for the search term entered.

If you make extensive use of broad match for a limited range of phrases, your CTRs will be lower than if you use only exact or phrase match. When using phrase or broad matching, the use of negative keywords will reduce the number of irrelevant searches your ad is shown for, and this will help increase CTR and so improve Quality Score.

Note that the CTR used takes into account the expected CTR for a particular position, since higher ad positions naturally tend to gain higher CTRs. Also, there is no such thing as a good or bad CTR. What Google considers to be a good CTR will vary from one keyword to another, because your own CTR is judged against the average CTR for that keyword across all advertisers. The Quality Score calculation is not influenced by your CTR on the Display Network as display ads almost always have a lower CTR than search ads.

- ☑ **Implication 2. Make sure you have relevant ad text.** Ad text relevance is also important. This is the degree of match between the words in the ad creative compared to the search term entered. As well as directly influencing Quality Score, the relevance of the ad will also help increase CTR and this (as discussed above) raises your QS too. Thus, the relevance of your ads has both a direct and an indirect influence on your QS. You should therefore make sure your descriptions and especially your ad headlines contain the same keywords as the search terms entered by the searcher. Here is a model example provided by Google to its advertisers which shows how copywriting and having a great offer can combine to ensure you have a strong Quality Score through increased CTR:





- ✔ **Implication 3. Ensure keyword relevance.** You should also make sure you have good keyword relevance. This is the degree of match between the keyword triggering the ad and the search term entered. As we'll explain in later Steps, you'll have better keyword relevance if you create more focused Ad groups containing phrase and exact match terms that the searcher uses.
- ✔ **Implication 4. Ensure landing pages are of a good quality.** Your landing page should be relevant to the search query, in a similar way to your text ad. Make sure your page contains the query, or is specifically about it. In addition Google has recently increased its focus on the landing page experience and there are other factors you should take into account, such as providing unique content, ease of navigation and most importantly loading time. Google favours fast landing pages over slow ones.
- ✔ **Implication 5. You need to maintain a good history of Quality Score within your account.** The historical assessment of click-through rate suggests the importance of removing poorly performing keywords or Ad Groups. High volume brand keywords will have an effect in increasing CTR across the account which won't occur if brand bidding is not used.
- ✔ **Implication 6. You need to ensure you manage ad extensions well.** If you use an ad extension then your ads performance will be compared against other ads that also use the same extension and this will then be figured into your quality score. If you do not use ad extensions then your ad will be compared to other ads that do not have extensions showing in order to judge the performance and therefore your quality score.
- ✔ **Implication 7. You need to ensure you manage ad extensions well.** Since 2013, your ad extensions are taken into account when calculating your Quality Score. If two competing ads have the same bid and quality, then the ad with the better ad extensions will generally appear in a higher position than the other.

We have prepared this diagram to relate these terms to the AdWords account:

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The screenshot shows a Google search for 'laser eye surgery' with several sponsored links. Callouts point to specific elements:

- ↑ Clickthrough rate:** Inclusion of brand name can improve CTR and increase awareness.
- ↑ Clickthrough rate:** A good match between search term and Ad Headline.
- ↑ Ad Text Relevance:** A good match between search term and ad text.
- ↑ Clickthrough rate:** Value proposition – inclusion of competitive price and free pack increases CTR.

The 'Create an ad' form shows the following details:

- Example:** Optimax Laser Eye Surgery, Laser Eye Surgery From £395 Per Eye, Free Information Pack, www.optimax.co.uk/laser_eye_surgery
- Headline:** Optimax Laser Eye Surgery (Max 25 characters)
- Description line 1:** Laser Eye Surgery From £395 Per Eye (Max 35 characters)
- Description line 2:** Free Information Pack (Max 35 characters)
- Display URL:** http://www.optimax.co.uk/laser_eye_surgery (Max 35 characters)
- Destination URL:** http://www.optimax.co.uk/Default.aspx?page=0&adcode= (Max 1024 characters)

The 'Add keywords' table is as follows:

Keyword	Status	Current Bid
laser eye surgery	Active	£10.00
-overseas		
Content network total	Enabled	Content £2.00
Search total	Enabled	Default £10.00

Additional callouts for the keyword table:

- ↑ Clickthrough rate:** Use of negative keywords should increase clickthrough rate.
- ↑ Keyword relevance:** Triggering search term in account matches search term.

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Review your AdWords Quality Score

Q. Have we reviewed the range and distribution of Quality Scores?

Achieving higher Quality Scores for keywords should be a key goal for search marketers since this will deliver better campaign performance through:

- ✓ A higher ad position within Google search results and where relevant, the Google Display Network for that keyword at a given bid amount.
- ✓ A lower minimum bid amount necessary for an ad to be served for the keyword that triggers it. Ads with a low Quality Score may not be displayed at all until a higher amount is bid.
- ✓ Greater eligibility for an ad to appear on a site on the content network and potentially improved positions within competitive listings.

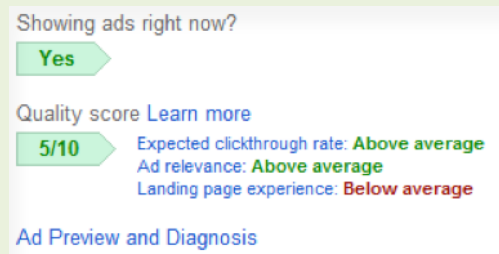
Assessing your keyword Quality Score in Google AdWords

Google gives you an indication of your Quality Score at keyword level by assigning each keyword within the account a score of between 1 and 10. This doesn't give you the complete picture of your Quality Score, so obsessing over these numbers is not the healthiest way to optimise your account. However, Google does a good job of enabling you to benchmark the overall 'health' of campaigns or ad groups.

Having seen hundreds of AdWords accounts it's fair to say these scores can vary wildly so it's difficult to answer the common question of what a 'good' number is. If you're achieving 7 or more on a non-branded keyword it's safe not to worry too much, but remember that Quality Score is comparative so it actually depends on the landscape and what your competitors are doing.

Best Practice Tip 4 Use the AdWords Diagnosis Tool to find out more about Quality Score

You can get more insight into what elements you need to improve in comparison to your competitors from within AdWords via the Diagnosis Tool. Hovering over the 'speech bubble' in the status column at keyword level will open a window that tells you whether or not your keyword is generating an ad, and also gives some insight to help you benchmark your performance in the three main areas of Quality Score.



Google rates your ads based on the expected CTR, the relevancy of your ad copy and your landing page 'experience' as either 'below average', 'average' or 'above average'. You'll achieve the best Quality Score by delivering the best experience of all eligible ads for that search query, so if you perform 'above average' in each of these factors you are doing well. If not, you know where to concentrate your efforts.

In the above example it seems that the landing page experience is really holding back this keyword, so the first thing to do is find out if we can make the landing page more relevant to the keyword, or if there are any other issues with page quality when compared to our competitors (content, speed, etc).

Assessing your keyword Quality Score in Google AdWords for mobile devices

Search no longer simply takes place on the desktop or laptop computer. Google's results pages, and the ads it serves, are also tailored for both smartphone and tablet traffic. As a result Google now calculates your Quality Score at a device level.

Best Practice Tip 5 Review and improve Quality Score for mobile devices

If your landing pages aren't optimised for traffic from mobile devices, don't expect them to get a high Quality Score for mobile devices.

Throughout this document we'll flag some best practices for attracting paid search traffic from different smartphone and tablet devices and show how to maximise its effectiveness.

How is the guide structured?

The guide is structured to enable you to complete a thorough review of the use of AdWords in your business or for your clients. As with all our guides, the best practice tips and strategy recommendations help make the guide actionable. You will be able to improve your process for managing your AdWords account(s) and identify quick win improvements and tests you can run.

The 7 steps we cover are:

- ✔ Step 1 Identify and select your target keyphrases
- ✔ Step 2 Set goals for your paid search

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- ✔ Step 3 Improve your campaign structure
- ✔ Step 4 Improve your targeting
- ✔ Step 5 Improving your offer and creative
- ✔ Step 6 Get your bidding and budgeting right
- ✔ Step 7 Optimising paid searchAdWords to increase ROI

About the authors



[Dr Dave Chaffey](#) is the editor of all Smart Insights resources. He has advised on search marketing since he created his first site in 1997 when AltavistaAltaVista was the leading search engine and switched to Google in '99. Ten years ago he ran the search marketing training courses for the Chartered Institute of Marketing and he also created the first Econsultancy Best Practice guide to Paid search.



[David Miles](#) is a digital marketing trainer, consultant and published author who been helping businesses use the internet to get more enquiries and more sales since 2003. He delivers regular training courses on Google AdWords, SEO, conversion rate optimisation, and Google Analytics. David has previously set up and run his own digital marketing agencies and today he is the Managing Director of [Business Training Made Simple](#) which provides training on all aspects of social media and digital marketing.

David is the co-author of 'Fusion - the new way of marketing', a book which explains how businesses can increase their sales cost effectively by making use of all the different marketing tools that are available in today's social media age.

Aside from running his own business, David is also a Director of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), the UK's leading business organisation, and spent seven years as a member of the FSB's National IT Committee with responsibility for helping determine the organisation's online marketing strategy. David is a strong advocate of small business and entrepreneurship and in 2010 was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs in recognition of his contribution to enterprise in the UK.

David updated the April 2015 and March 2016 editions of our AdWords guide.



[Joel Chudleigh](#) is the Founder of [Deep Footprints](#) who are a digital marketing agency focused on paid search and inbound marketing. They focus on helping small and medium sized businesses to grow sustainably for long-term success.

Step 1

Identify and select your target keywords

Complete a full keyword analysis

❑ Q. *Have we completed an in-depth keyword analysis?*

Your keywords are the foundation of your campaign. It's simple! If potential customers are searching for your products or services, they will be more likely to find you if you have selected the right keywords to target them with.

It is important to think like your customers. How might your customers search for your product or service? Some of the best keywords tend to be two to three words long. There are many keyphrase research tools⁸ to help you with this process providing suggestions for new keywords based on real search data.

What is it? Keyword analysis

Keyword analysis involves identifying the keyphrases your customers are likely to use when searching for your products or services and the sequence they use before conversion. Potential keyphrases to be used for promotion are then selected.

When a user searches on Google, the search term or search phrase they enter is assessed to see if it is a close enough match to one of your keywords. If it is, then your ad could appear. If you can offer relevant ads, triggered by the right searches, you will get better results.

Best Practice Tip 6 Think like a customer, use keyphrases!

Think of the sequence of search terms that users use to tailor your targeting and messages within AdWords.

Understanding customer search behaviour is so important since it enables you to:

- ✔ Understand customer behaviour to see whether the products, services and content you offer match customer behaviours.
- ✔ Set goals for how much reach and how many visits are possible within your market.
- ✔ Benchmark your performance against competitors (direct and publishers).
- ✔ Diagnose problems at a keyword or keyword group level on performance through a gap analysis.

For this to work you need a keyphrase master file that you use to review and control performance through gap analysis which we cover in the goals section.

Strategy Recommendation 3 Ensure you have good visibility of customer search behaviour against results delivered.

Use software or spreadsheets to help create this visibility on search marketing.

The next example from the Google Keyword Planner (which replaced the KeywWord Tool in 2013 - tutorial [here](#)) shows how such tools are great for understanding customer search behaviours and some of the factors which are important within their buying decision. In this example you can see that customers don't simply search for 'laser eye surgery', but add different qualifiers.

⁸ [Smart Insights: Keyphrase market potential software.](#)

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If we were to simply put this keyword into the account on a broad match we might be able to achieve impressions against all of the keywords shown in the tool, our relevancy would be very low, meaning less people would click our ad. In order to maximise the clicks through our ads we need to build a list of the keyphrases that our potential customers use and target them as specifically as possible.

What is it? Match types

The match types of **broad match**, **modified broad match**, **phrase match**, **exact match** and **negative match** are used to specify in AdWords campaign management how ads displayed are triggered by the keywords searched upon by the user. A broad match will cause ads to be displayed against a wide range of related keywords as we will explain in Step 3. You should also be aware of the [close variant match type](#) introduced in 2014.

The screenshot shows the Google Keyword Planner interface. The search term is "laser eye" and the match type is set to "Exact". The results are sorted by relevance. The table below shows the search terms and keyword ideas with their respective search volumes and approximate CPC.

Keyword	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches	Approximate CPC (Search)
[laser eye]	1,900	590	£3.83
[laser eye surgery cost]	8,100	2,400	£3.28
[best laser eye surgery]	480	260	£5.22
[laser eye surgery astigmatism]	590	260	£2.80
[laser eye surgery reviews]	1,600	1,300	£4.00

Example from Google Keyword Planner with Exact match volumes

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Best Practice Tip 7 Use Exact match to get realistic volumes of demand

When using the Keyword Planner, use exact match to get most accurate reflection of consumer searches since broad match gives inflated figures for each term.

The example also shows how ideas for more niche phrases to develop through new ad creative and new landing page content. Here, for example, content related to 'astigmatism' and 'review'.

Recommended resource? Using the Google Keyword Planner Tutorial

These [Paid Search video tutorials](#) feature a tutorial to using the Google AdWords Keyword Planner to get accurate estimates of consumer demand to avoid being misled.

As we'll see below, it's useful to build up a list of qualifiers or adjectives which describe the search.

Typical keyphrase variants used by search engine searchers are:

- 1. *Comparison/quality* – Compare laser eye treatment.
- 2. *Adjective* (price/product qualifiers) – Cheap laser eye treatment.
- 3. *Intended use/application* – Short sight laser eye treatment.
- 4. *Product type* – Lasik laser eye treatment.
- 5. *Vendor/brand* – Ultralase laser eye treatment.
- 6. *Location* – laser eye uk or laser eye treatment london.
- 7. *Action request* – Select laser eye treatment (or buy).

Tools such as the Google Keyword Planner enable you to see how popular these types of terms are.

Identify all the different types of search keyphrases to create groups of keyphrases

- Q. *Have we identified the main types of keyphrases searchers use?*

You're not going to be able to manage your keyphrases so well if you have a single long list of undifferentiated keyphrases, so check you're grouping them in a logical order.

Different types of keyphrases include:

- Strategic keyphrases* – These are the most popular short phrases that could potentially generate the bulk of your traffic for a particular market.

Examples: In a call centre example these would include 'call centre outsourcing' and 'call-centre-services'.

- Brand keyphrases* – These are keyphrases that include your brand name or misspellings. You need to separate these out so you can see how well your campaigns convert customers who aren't brand aware.

Examples: 'Confero', 'Confero call-centre services'.

- Category keyphrases* – These will be services or product categories and sub-categories likely to include some strategic keyphrases.

Examples: 'Call centre outsourcing' and 'call-centre-services'.

- Product keyphrases* – More specific than category keyphrases, these include individual products.

Examples: 'Credit card order line call centre services' or 'Outbound telemarketing of dormant clients'.

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- ✔ *Location keyphrases* – Particularly relevant to retailers or service providers who sell locally.

Examples: ‘Call centre services Glasgow’.

Group your keyphrases

- ❑ Q. *Are our keywords grouped logically to enable us to manage their performance?*

When identifying keyphrases, it’s essential not to simply have a long list but group them to make them manageable. Each keyphrase you identify as important should be placed in a group similar to the types above.

Best Practice Tip 8 Group your keywords logically for analysis and management

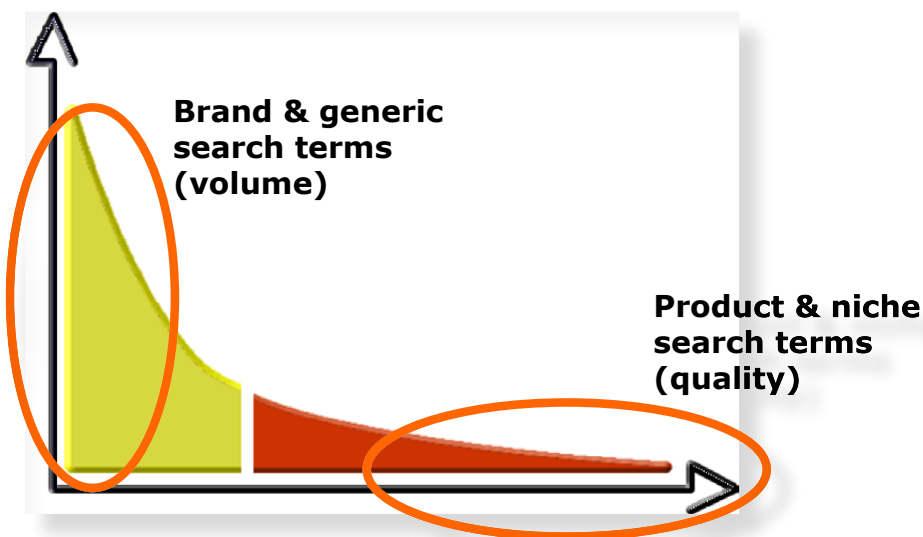
Logical grouping of keywords will enable you to manage the performance of your search marketing more effectively.

The type of grouping we recommend is in the section on campaign structure where we look at different options for grouping. The most common are groups of product or service categories and sub-categories.

Exploit the ‘long tail’ of search

- ❑ Q. *Are we taking the ‘long tail’ into account in our search marketing?*

If you base your search marketing strategy on just 10 to 20 keywords you will be limiting your exposure. There will be a large number of less popular keywords that won’t find you. This is shown by the long-tail pattern below.



To maximise visitor numbers, hundreds of keywords will be appropriate. To maximise quality, fewer more specific keyphrases will be needed.

For transactional e-commerce sites, the sky’s the limit. Some banks have thousands of keyphrases, while some e-retailers have tens of thousands. One shopping comparison portal has over one million keyphrases! All these depend on high volumes of traffic.

Strategy Recommendation 4 Ensure you review the relevance of the long tail

You should review the importance of the long tail within search and develop strategies to exploit it.

To help exploit the long tail it will be useful to understand the main qualifiers that are important within your market.

Identify the main qualifiers that are important in your market

Q. Have we reviewed all the qualifiers?

Of course different types of consumers search differently, so you need to understand different approaches they use to qualify their searches. They may also use more specific keyphrases as they narrow down their choices.

Best Practice Tip 9 Use the right keyphrase qualifiers

Summarise your search qualifiers so you can include them in headings and links.

Here are some common qualifiers we mentioned before, but with different examples to suggest what you should consider. We've used the example of insurance:

1. *Comparison/quality* – compare car insurance – this can be high volume.
2. *Action request* – buy car insurance – relatively low volume, but shows high intent.
3. *Adjective (price/product qualifiers)* – cheap car insurance, women's car insurance.
4. *Intended use* – high mileage car insurance.
5. *Product type* – holiday car insurance – an important strategic keyphrase.
6. *Product feature* – no claims bonus discount – car insurance – a long-tail term.
7. *Brand or Vendor* – churchill car insurance.
8. *Location* – car insurance UK.

Copywriters for SEO need to know the qualifiers used so they can target the most important keyphrases.

The best way to summarise these is through writing out the semantics of a sentence like this:

<qualifier> + <core term> + <post modifier>

Example: 'children's savings accounts in the UK'.

Your keywords should be organised by common themes or products. Think about and list all the keywords you want to use and then group similar keywords together. The next stage is to organise them into your account in a structured way.

Capturing all the keyword combinations

Sometimes you find that one or two keyword ideas can be expanded into a long list of keywords. For example, suppose you had laser eye clinics in several locations and had established that there were multiple ways people would describe your business when searching (e.g. laser eye surgery or laser eye clinic). In addition you want to make sure you target all the relevant qualifiers discussed above.

One way to do this is to put all the words into a keyword matrix like this:

best	laser eye clinic	billericay
private	laser eye surgery	brentwood
cheap	laser eye surgeon	chelmsford
compare		romford

By combining every word/phrase from each of the three columns you can build a comprehensive keyword list:

best laser eye clinic billericay

best laser eye clinic brentwood

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best laser eye clinic chelmsford
best laser eye clinic romford
best laser eye surgery billericay
best laser eye surgery brentwood
best laser eye surgery chelmsford
best laser eye surgery romford
private laser eye clinic billericay
private laser eye clinic brentwood
private laser eye clinic chelmsford
private laser eye clinic romford

and so on, until every combination has been captured.

If you don't want to do this manually there are free tools such as [Kombinator](#) which will do it for you. If you use an automated tool like this, do make sure that once you have got the full list that you check that all the combinations make sense and are relevant.

A note on low search volume keywords

Once you've added your keyword list to your AdWords account you may notice Google giving several keywords the status 'Low Search Volume'. Any keyword that is classified in this way will not be eligible to be entered into the auction. However, if the search volume increases to the required level then they will automatically become eligible. This is one of the most frustrating problems with AdWords – Google simply won't let you bid on a large part of the long tail. Instead you need to make sure that higher volume terms are within the account on a broad enough match type to cover off any searches for these lower volume queries.

Best Practice Tip 10 Find techniques to exploit low search volume terms

What this means in practice is that manually concocting thousands of keywords from every possible combination of the words we just discussed is not a productive use of your time. Let tools like the Keyword Planner help guide you into identifying the main ways in which people search, ensure they are covered and then look to evolve your keyword list over time based on actual user search queries (see Step 7).

Identifying international variation in consumer search behaviour

You can use the Google Keyword Planner to see differences in search volume and specific language used to describe products and services in different countries.

We recommend that you develop a standard common key phrase behaviour list and then amend this for each country.

Strategy Recommendation 5 Develop a common categorised keyword list and then tailor for each country

Defining common behaviours in a list will save time when reviewing effectiveness and help identify local variations in search behaviour based on language.

Here is an example structure and syntax you can use.

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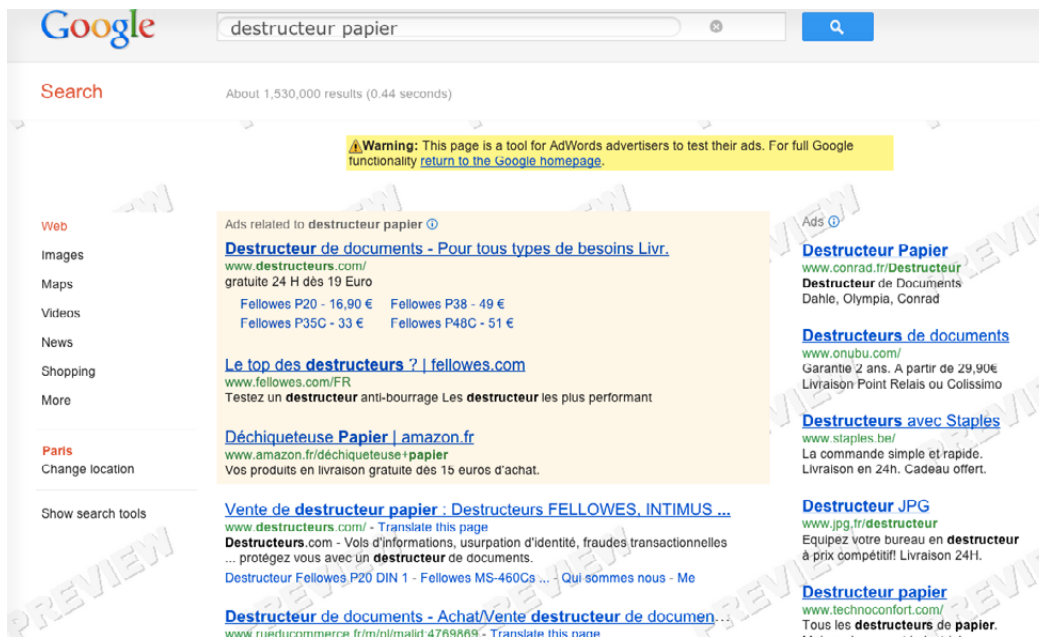
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	A	B	C	D	E
1	Keyphrase group + volume?	Keyphrase group + volume?	Example search terms	Typical landing page targeted	Targeting priority
2	1. Generic category searches	1. <Store type>	Garden centres (s)	Home page	1. High
3			Nurseries (s)	Home page	
4			Garden centre Reading	Home and featured	
5	1. Generic category searches	2. <Store type> + <location>	Nursery reading	Catalogue selection	1 High
6			Catalogue selection		
7	1. Generic category searches	3. <Generic plants>	Garden plants	Catalogue selection	1 Medium
8			Garden plant ideas	Catalogue selection	
9			Garden plant advice	Catalogue selection	
10			Catalogue selection		
11	1. Generic category searches	4. <Plant categories>	Shade loving plants	Category pages	1 High
12			Winter plants	Category pages	
13	1. Generic category searches	5. <Outdoor furniture>	Garden sheds	Sub-category pages	3 Low
14			Arbours	Sub-category pages	

In the next example you can see how French search behaviour is varying if you want to see individual country search results paid results from a different location use the Google ad preview tool:⁹



Using Google Suggest

You should also consider how Google Suggest varies in different countries. Google Suggest is useful in identifying additional keywords to select or exclude from your country-specific lists as the next example for shredder in French shows. Here 'C++' is completely unrelated.

What is it? Google Suggest

The autocomplete prompts Google provides in real time as users search. It's a common behaviour to choose from the list provided.

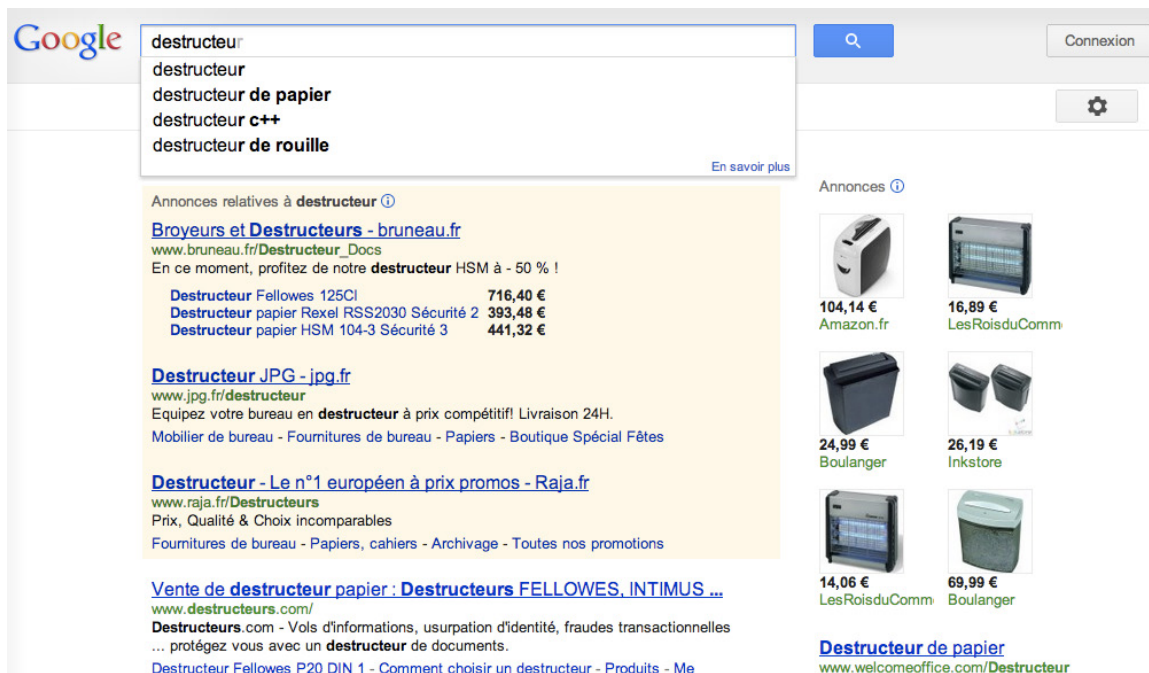
Best Practice Tip 11 Consider Google Suggest prompts when selecting keywords

You may find local language variations you hadn't considered and also negative matches for words you want to exclude.

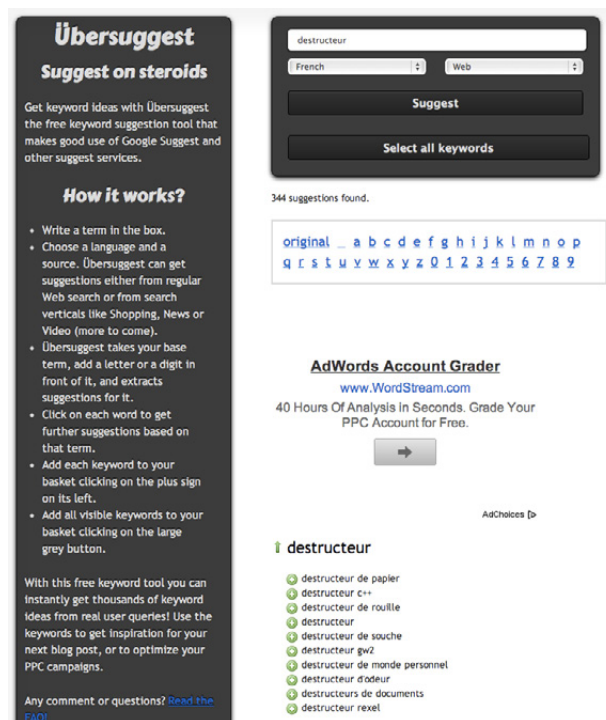
Best Practice Tip 12 Use Übersuggest to find country-specific search behaviours

Übersuggest can also be used to find local language variations you hadn't considered and also negative matches for words you want to exclude.

⁹ [Google's Ad Preview Tool](#).



This next example from [Übersuggest](#), again uses the example of Shredders in the French language. [KeywordTool.io](#) is a newer, similar alternative that is well worth checking out.



Identifying the main qualifiers that are important in your market for mobile devices

Whilst the same list of keywords may be deployed across multiple devices, the intent behind each keyphrase may well be different depending on the device used.

Strategy Recommendation 6 Review the potential from mobile and local search behaviour

As our tutorial shows, you can limit the search volumes to those from mobile devices including smartphones.

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In 2011, Google introduced a feature into its Keyword Planner tool (recently updated) so you could see how important mobile SEO is. Google Suggest varies for Google’s mobile site too – so it may be worth checking out what the main suggested phrases are to see how well you rank on these for mobile.

Keyword	Local Monthly Searches ?	Approximate CPC (Search) ?
"london"	7,480,000	£0.43
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Save all Keyword Ideas (800) 1 - 100 of 800		
Keyword	Local Monthly Searches ?	Approximate CPC (Search) ?
"london"	7,480,000	£0.43
"london weather"	135,000	£0.06
"london underground"	110,000	£0.06
"hotel london"	110,000	£0.46
"london bridge"	90,500	£0.29
"london marathon"	74,000	£0.25
"restaurant london"	74,000	£0.16
"london tube"	60,500	£0.06
"transport for london"	49,500	£0.09
"jobs london"	49,500	£0.27

For example, a search for ‘hotels in Brighton’ from a desktop computer may indicate someone thinking about booking a holiday, at any point of the purchase process.

When that search comes from a mobile device it may be more likely to indicate someone looking for the closest possible hotel, or directions to hotels. The mobile search probably won’t lead to an attributable e-commerce conversion in this case, but it may well be an opportunity to add more immediate value to a potential customer.

An example of mobile search volumes follows. For the keyword ‘London’, mobile is around 16 percent of searches, but for restaurants it’s around 30 percent.

The search volume available for mobile devices varies incredibly by business and the nature of your product or service. Ensure that you take this into consideration when both researching keywords and also developing your site and landing pages.

Google Suggest varies for the mobile site too – so it may be worth checking out what the main phrases Google prompts searchers with on mobile.



Step 2

Set goals for your paid search

Q. *Do we set and regularly review specific goals for paid search?*

There are a bewildering range of measures to consider when you need to review paid search effectiveness, for example:

- Impressions (share of searches within the market you target)
- CTR
- Average CPC
- Average position
- Number of conversions
- Conversion rate
- Sales revenue
- Average order value (AOV).

In this section we'll focus on the ones that matter most to proving you're getting a realistic return-on-investment from your investments in AdWords, and to improve it further...

Through their experience, search marketing specialists know intuitively the questions to ask to review and improve the contribution of search marketing to an organisation. But what if you're a business owner or marketer where search marketing is only a (small) part of what you do? Which questions should you be asking and where do you look in your web analytics to find the answers?

Firstly you should ensure that your Google Analytics account and Google AdWords accounts are linked together. This post from Google¹⁰ explains how to do this, it also explains the process of bulk linking accounts.

Our compilation of top-level questions in this section is intended to give you a framework of questions to ask yourself or colleagues or agencies who are managing search engine marketing. Your review frequency will depend on the importance of search to your business.

You'll want to review the time-series or trends through time of the key performance indicators (KPIs). This is the type of report you should produce to review effectiveness over time – there is a fairly stable performance in this case. We explain in more detail how to review the different search types in Step 7.

For each question we also give you an idea of dashboard KPIs you could use to review performance and some pointers for where you can look to in your web analytics to find the answers. As always, we illustrate this with Google Analytics, the most popular analytics tool.

This is a high-level review, so it looks at search overall, without drilling down into much detail about paid and natural search. We've designed the questions so they work both for a first-time audit and a more regular weekly or monthly review to keep tabs on your performance.

Remember that no single KPI will give you all the answers. You need to review a number of KPIs, with data over time and an understanding of the full picture before they become relevant and actionable! Analysing data with week-on-week, month-on-month and year-on-year views is a better way to get an understanding.

¹⁰ [Integrate Google AdWords and Analytics](#)

Onto the questions...

Question 1: Am I visible to all of my potential customers?

KPIs:

- Number of impressions
- Percentage impression share, budget.

If you're not targeting your keywords correctly, your budget isn't sufficient, or you're not bidding enough for your ad to be visible on the page you will be invisible for paid search.

The Google **Impression Share KPI**¹¹ will give you an idea of how much of your market you're tapping into for a campaign or the account overall (for the search network only, not the Display Network). If there are major players within your sector, then your figure may be low, but it shows the potential whether it's high or low.

Strategy Recommendation 7 Review impression share to identify your share of search

You can review impression share compared to what your aspirations are given your strength in the market and then set goals to improve it to reach more people.

If you understand how your budget is currently restricting you in terms of possible advert views then by overlaying other statistics like CTR and conversion rates you will quickly be able to see what increasing your budget/visibility will do to your sales.

Best Practice Tip 13 Use the Top vs Other report to assess the impact of ad position

Another great way to observe your competitive performance is to look at the number of times that your ad is shown at the top of the page versus the number of times it is shown on the right-hand side of elsewhere on the page.

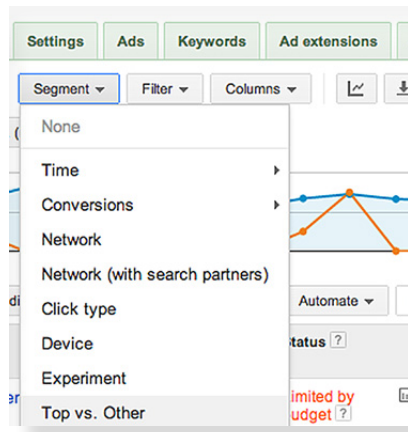
The CTR in the positions 1–3 above for ads that are shown at the top of the page above the natural search results gets a significantly higher CTR than the ad positions on for ads that appear elsewhere - i.e. at the bottom of the page on Google or down the side of the page on search partner sites, the right-hand side as this example shows:

Google search: Top [?]				241	2,958	8.15%	£0.79	£189.91	1.8	1	£189.91
Google search: Other [?]				82	4,683	1.75%	£0.78	£63.86	4.9	1	£63.86
Search partners: Top [?]				0	0	0.00%	£0.00	£0.00	0.0	0	£0.00
Search partners: Other [?]				0	0	0.00%	£0.00	£0.00	0.0	0	£0.00

You can see this data on a campaign, ad group and on a keyword level. Here is where this data can be found in the AdWords interface. Go to the 'Segment' button and then select 'Top vs Other'.

¹¹ [AdWords Help: Tracking Impression Share](#).

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Of course, when you see this data, you will realise how much more traffic is available to those in the top positions, but make sure that you also take a close look at the conversion rate and the cost per conversion variances. Often you will get just as much traffic by being in position 2 or 3 as you would from being in position 1, but your conversion rate will be higher. There also seem to be many cases where clicks on the side bar ads that *don't* appear at the top of the page have a much better conversion rate, perhaps because the user has already clicked on and discounted a few of the advertisers in the top positions. However, this higher conversion rate has to be set against the fact that you will almost certainly get a lower volume of traffic from a bottom or side ad compared to a top position ad.

Question 2: Is my website converting the traffic?

KPIs:

- Average bounce rate for AdWords (from Google Analytics)
- Average conversion rate for AdWords (from Google Analytics or AdWords if you have conversion tracking enabled)
- Average revenue per visit or goal value per visit (from Google Analytics).

Since you're paying for each and every click you need to convert as many visitors as possible. But what can you compare to? The best method is to benchmark your AdWords visitors against other sources. Since you should often have natural search visitors from SEO, this is the best way to compare them.

Best Practice Tip 14 Benchmark your AdWords for engagement and conversion measures

Compare bounce and conversion rates for the AdWords account overall and for similar phrase types, e.g. generic terms for services and products. It's best to exclude brand search terms.

As well as tracking the conversions that happen purely online on your website AdWords also allows you to track some of the offline activity that results from your advertisements.

Through creating a call extension with a Google Forwarding number (see [help page for details](#)), you can track the telephone calls to your business from mobile devices. You can then add telephone calls as conversions in your AdWords account so that you can see the calls at a keyword level.

It is possible to set rules around what constitutes a call conversion by using things like the length of the call – i.e. a short call may not be a serious inquiry but a call that lasts over 2 minutes is likely to be a more serious call.

We cover ad extensions and how to set them up in detail later in step 5.

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Call extensions do a good job of telling you how many people call you merely as a result of seeing your AdWords ad. But for complete tracking of phone call conversions you also need a way of tracking those people who call you after they have clicked your ad and gone to your website. To do this you need a way of displaying a different phone number on your website if someone has arrived there via AdWords.

You can achieve this using a Google forwarding number, and the procedure for doing this is described in [this article](#).

A better solution (albeit with a small monthly cost) is to use a dedicated third party call tracking solution such as [Call Tracking Metrics](#).

As well as the ability to track phone call based conversions it is also now possible to import conversions that happen offline into your AdWords account from a CSV file:

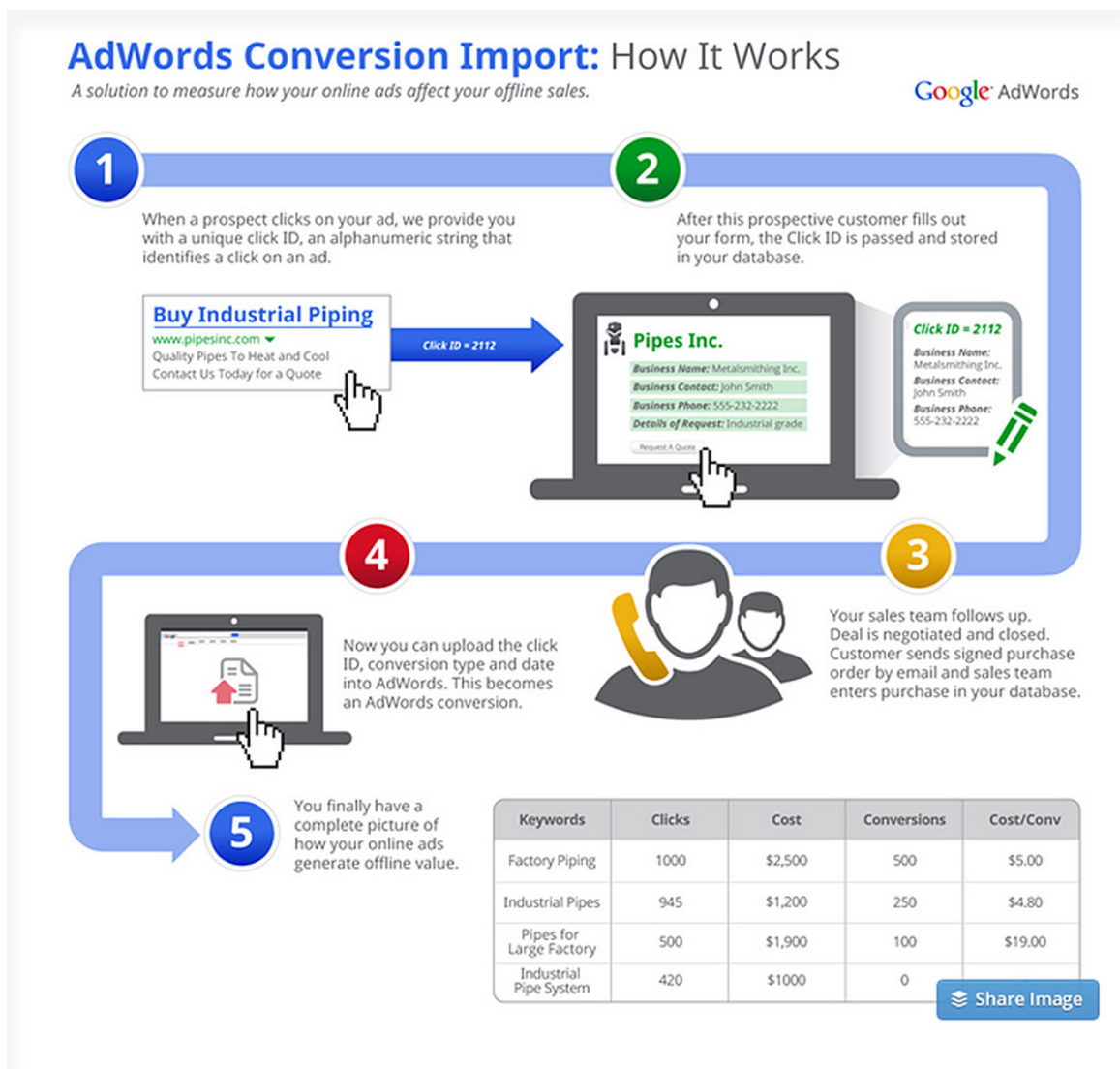


Image: AdWords offline conversion import

If you have a business with a longer and more complicated sales funnel then this functionality can be crucial to determining your real return on investment and not just your leads.

Question 3: Is AdWords giving me a ROI which makes it a worthwhile channel?

KPIs:

- Cost per sale (CPS) or cost per acquisition (CPA)
- Profitability.

This is really THE most important question, since you must be confident that the returns you're generating make the spend worthwhile. The best way to do this is to calculate an allowable cost per sale (or cost per acquisition).

For non-transactional sites, the maximum CPA can't be calculated directly, but it's still important you have a maximum CPA or maximum CPC to control spend.

Strategy Recommendation 8 Define a maximum allowable or target cost per acquisition and use CPA to compare performance within your campaigns

You need a maximum allowable CPA to control spend and make sure it's worthwhile. Use CPA at a campaign, ad group or keyword level to compare performance.

Question 4: Are we attracting sufficient branded and non-branded search visits?

KPIs:

- Volume:** n, percentage visits, goals or e-commerce transactions referred by search broken down by branded and non-branded search for natural and paid search
- Value:** £, \$, percentage value referred by each type of search
- Efficiency:** Index of 100 search volume or value divided by all visit volume or value. An index is used to compare performance of search and other channels. If it's higher than 100 then this is referring more value.

Strategy Recommendation 9 Isolate brand and non-brand search in your reporting

It's essential to separate out brand and non-brand search since non-brand search is most important as it represents incremental business from new prospects.

Of course it's relatively easy to attract visits through a search containing your brand name – that's the way Google works. So it's essential to report on the volume, value and quality of non-branded search traffic if you want to see the value you're getting from AdWords.

Anyone who has ever reviewed the keywords attracting visitors to a site will have seen that brand search terms usually dominate, often accounting for more than 50 percent of search-related visits for well-known brands.

In these cases, isolating brand search is essential if you're serious about using search to create incremental business, i.e. create awareness and sales from new customers.

It follows that it's futile to try to review and improve search engine marketing without taking brand phrases into account, but that's the default for the less than savvy.

Recommended resource? 7 Steps Guide to Google Analytics

Our [7 Steps Guide to Google Analytics](#) explains goal setup and advanced segments.

You need to try to build up a picture of the split between brand and non-brand search as shown in the following diagram. It can help to compare this against natural search and also to drill down into more detail for different product categories.

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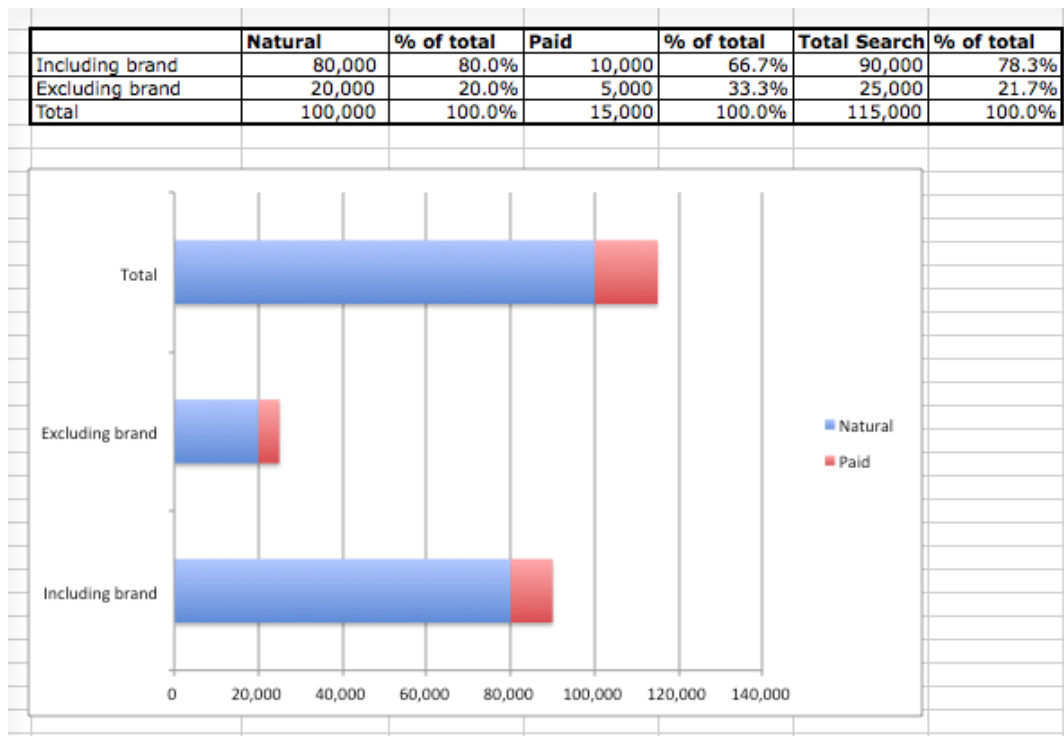
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Best Practice Tip 15 Isolate brand and non-brand search in Google Analytics

In July 2014 Google Analytics [added](#) a new Manage Brand Terms function. This is available under Channel Settings within the Admin tab, and it allows you to manage the list the list of keywords included in the Brand Paid Search Channel so they can be reported on separately from the non-brand terms. Paid and non-paid search terms visits and conversions can now also be easily shown in Google Analytics.



Question 5: How efficient is our campaign?

KPIs:

- Impression share
- Quality Score
- Bounce rate and conversion rates.

The final question looks at how well set up the campaign is overall in attracting interest from prospects, getting them to engage with your ads and then converting their visits to the site into action.

The capability to attract your audience is indicated by your share of search given the budget available. Impression share gives an indication of this.

The capability to engage is determined by relevance. This relates back to the Quality Score your adverts and keywords receive. While this can be affected by a range of different actions and configurations Quality Score is ultimately about how relevant your keywords are to the adverts displayed (as measured by clickthroughclick through rate) and landing page relevance of where visitors enter the site.

Set goals for your paid search for mobile devices

Since the introduction of Enhanced campaigns in 2013 it has become more difficult to separate out your PPC marketing by device. Previously you could create three campaigns

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for the same products/services using the same keywords and simply target different devices (desktop, tablets and mobile phones) with separate bidding strategies.

With the new Enhanced Campaigns you cannot target devices separately. You can opt out of targeting mobile phones by reducing your mobile-specific bid variance to -100 percent but there is no way to opt out of targeting tablets. Therefore if your site does not render well on tablets then your performance will suffer.

Google justifies this by saying that tablet-based searching and browsing is very similar to desktop behaviour whereas mobile behaviour is very different i.e. more local-specific searches and looking for quick answers.

You can still see the performance of your advertising by device in Google AdWords as shown here:

Campaign	Budget	Status	Enhanced	Campaign type	Campaign subtype	+Clicks	Imp.	CTR	Avg. CPC	Cost	Avg. Pos.	Conv. (1-per-click)	Cost / conv. (1-per-click)	Conv. rate (1-per-click)	Conv. (many-per-click)
	£160.00/day	Paused	Enhanced	Search Network only	All features	1,194	53,843	2.22%	£0.82	£981.77	4.5	11	£89.25	0.92%	13
Computers						668	30,408	2.20%	£0.84	£560.83	4.8	9	£62.31	1.35%	11
Mobile devices with full browsers						122	8,166	1.49%	£0.76	£92.97	3.1	0	£0.00	0.00%	0
Tablets with full browsers						404	15,269	2.65%	£0.81	£327.97	4.5	2	£163.98	0.50%	2

To see this data in your AdWords dashboard you need to click on the 'Segment' button that sits just above the graph in the main dashboard and then select 'Device'.

You can also see the importance of different devices in Google Analytics by reviewing mobile segments or setting a secondary dimension of User, device type from the reports within the Acquisition section of Google Analytics:

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics Acquisition report with the following configuration:

- Primary Dimension: Campaign
- Secondary dimension: Device Category
- Sort Type: Default

Campaign	Device Category	Acquisition
		3,469 % of Total: 100.00% (3,469)
1. Remarketing	desktop	1,642(47.33%)
2. Brand	desktop	817(23.55%)
3. Remarketing	mobile	617(17.79%)
4. Remarketing	tablet	144(4.15%)

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Step 3

Improve your campaign structure

- ❑ Q. *Has our account structure been optimised for ROI?*

Account structure is something that is very important to get right. However, what a good account structure looks like will depend heavily on both your business and your target audience. The key question to ask is:

- ❑ Q. *Does our account structure give us effective targeting, clear reporting and enable us to control spend?*

After selecting relevant keywords, having an effective account structure is crucial to getting the best results from AdWords for two main reasons. First, it will deliver more relevant ads which mean higher CTRs, better Quality Scores and lower costs. Second, it enables you to analyse and report more easily, thus allowing you to control spend by increasing investment on some areas and decreasing it on others in accordance with results. So it's essential to get account structure right.

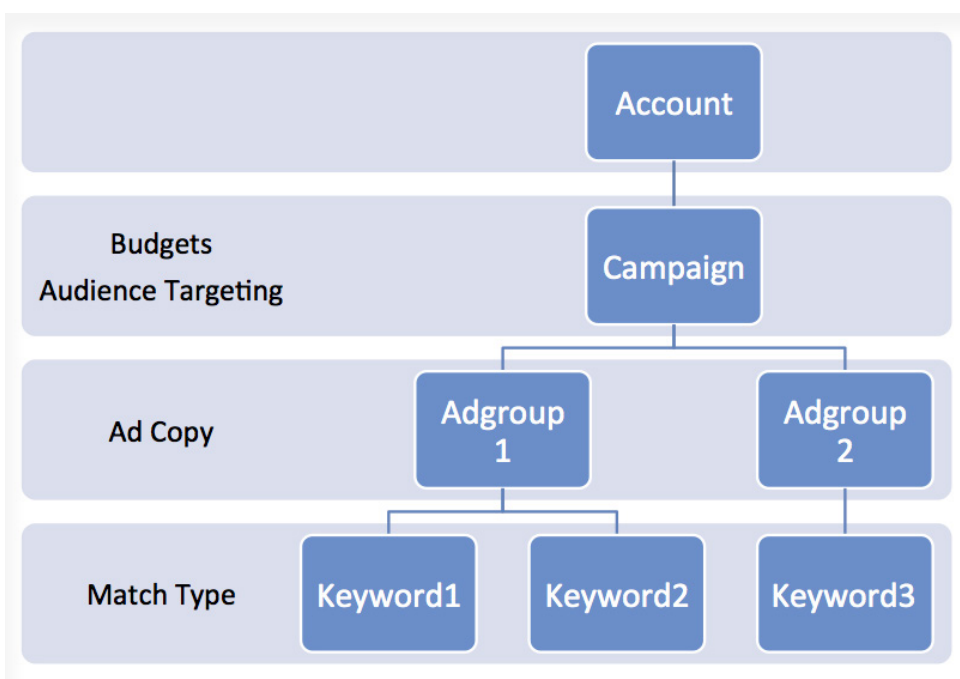
Strategy Recommendation 10 Adopt a sound account structure and refine it gradually

Spend time developing a logical account structure for your business before starting and then evolve it to enable better targeting.

What do we mean by account structure?

Account structure is the way in which your keywords are grouped within your paid search advertising account like Google AdWords or Bing/Microsoft adCenter.

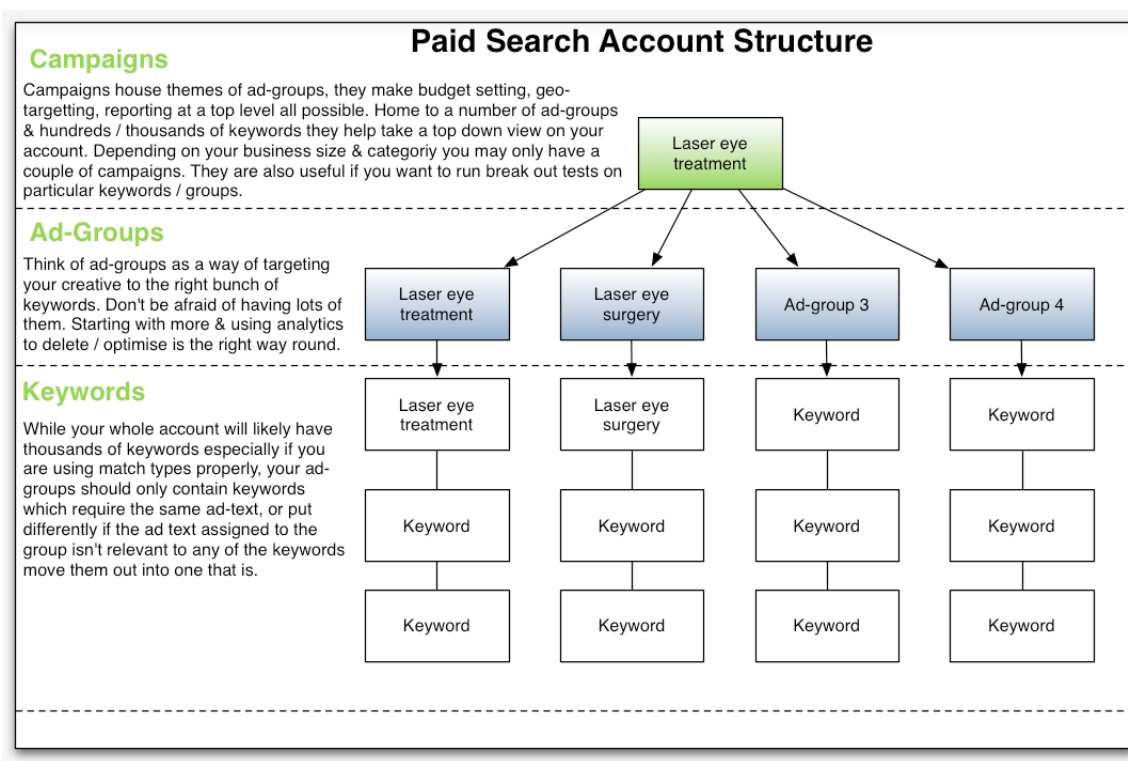
AdWords uses a hierarchical or tree structure in each account which enables you to deliver targeted adverts from each ad group for different keywords. If you're new to AdWords, the AdWords Help Centre has an excellent section on account structure which is regularly updated.¹² These are the terms used in the hierarchy:



¹² [AdWords Help: Account structure.](#)

Let's now look at an example relating to the laser eye surgery example given earlier in this guide.

CAMPAIGN Laser Eye Treatment				
AD GROUPS	Laser eye treatment	Laser eye surgery	Laser eye clinic	Laser eye correction
KEYWORDS	laser eye treatment	laser eye surgery	+laser +eye +clinic	"laser eye correction"
	laser eye treatment london	[london laser eye surgery]	"private laser eye clinic"	[laser eye correction]
	[laser eye treatment]	"laser eye surgery centre"	"laser eye clinic london"	+laser +eye +correction



To summarise, as our diagram shows:

- ✔ Your account is divided into **campaigns**, which dictate whether a user is eligible to view your ad due to your targeting and remaining budget.
- ✔ Campaigns are divided into **ad groups**, where you decide what ads will be shown to the user.
- ✔ Ad groups are comprised of **keywords**, which trigger your ad when the user searches for them on Google or its Display Network or Google Partner sites.

Ad group structure

Having identified your target keywords (See Step 1) you now need to group those keywords to form ad groups. The important thing to remember here is *that each of the keywords in an ad group will display the same ad copy*.

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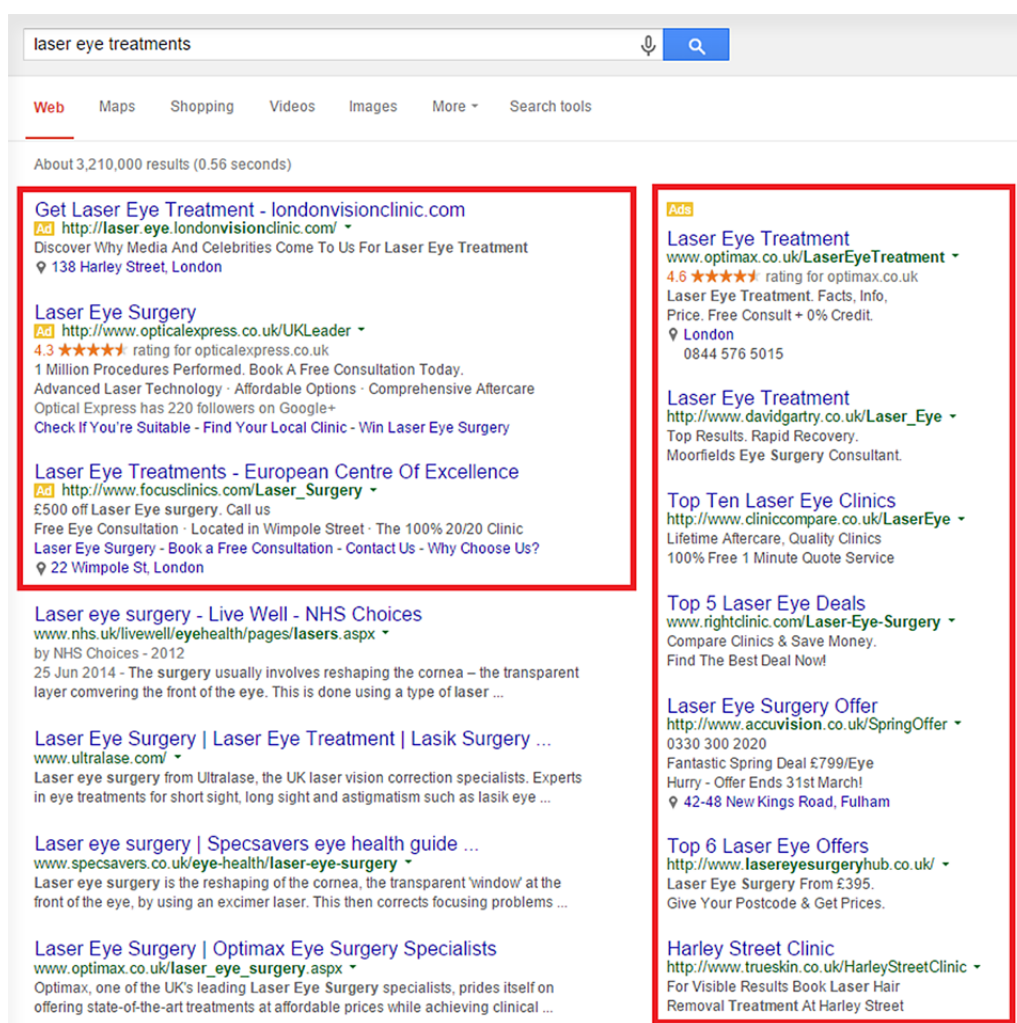
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One of the biggest factors impacting whether your ad receives a click is the inclusion of the user's search query within the ad copy. A strong call to action or unique offering will help too. A searcher is more likely to feel a "connection" with an ad that is highly relevant to their search and therefore they are more likely to click. Google enhances this effect by boldening words used in the search query wherever they appear within an ad's description lines or display URL. This makes the ad stand out a bit more and so, again, increases the chance it will get clicked. Until recently they also made words bold in the ad headline but that has now stopped. Therefore in order to maximise CTR (and maximise Quality Score and minimise CPC) you should make proper use of ad groups to make sure your keywords are grouped extremely closely based on what words you can include in the ad copy.

Q. Are we displaying ad copy that is highly relevant to the user's Search Query?

Let's take an example related to 'laser eye treatment' – [this link is to a live search](#) – the example is in the Introduction. When someone types this reasonably high volume search query, the best account structure will enable it to match to that exact keyword and display an ad containing 'laser eye treatment' at least once, if not more, to maximise relevancy and CTR.

In the example below the top ads is relevant to the 'treatment' query, whilst many of the other ads are about 'laser eye surgery/clinics/offers/deals' so will have reduced quality score. We can infer that these are either matching within the account incorrectly (see Step 4) or have wider, less tailored ad groups.



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Whilst we don't know individual bids, it's no coincidence that the companies in the top positions tend to be doing this better than the companies who appear lower down – their increased ad relevancy and Quality Score lowers the amount it is necessary for them to pay for these premium positions.

Best Practice Tip 16 Take a look at your own industry's ad landscape before embarking on your account restructure.

Quality Score is relative, so identify where you can get an advantage over your competitors by producing more relevant ad copy for high volume searches.

Example: keyword grouping

Using some of our Google Keyword Planner results for laser eye surgery from Section 1, we can divide the actual search queries Google returned into tightly relevant ad groups as below:

Generic	UK	Treatment	Cost
laser eye surgery	laser eye surgery uk	laser eye treatment	laser eye surgery costs
eye laser surgery	uk laser eye surgery	laser eye surgery treatments	how much does laser eye surgery cost
laser eye	eye surgery uk	eye laser treatment	cost of laser eye surgery
laser surgery for eyes	laser eye surgery in the uk		costs of laser eye surgery
eye surgery laser			laser eye surgery cost
eye surgery			
private laser eye surgery			
laser eyes surgery			

Lazer	NHS	London	Short sited
laser eye surgery	laser eye surgery nhs	laser eye surgery london	short sited laser eye surgery
	nhs laser eye surgery	london eye surgery	laser eye surger short sited
	laser eye surgery on nhs	laser eye surgery in london	

You can see that for each group it would be easy enough to create an ad which would have at least two or three words in common with the keyword, and would therefore be highly relevant to what the searcher typed in.

NB. You may decide that groups of keywords aren't directly commercial enough or otherwise right for your business. For example, 'NHS' keywords may not be relevant for a private surgery. In this case this exercise is equally valuable as it enables you to identify negative keywords to add in order to exclude those impressions/searches.

Campaign structure

The large number of ad groups you will have created now need to be grouped into campaigns. There can be a strong temptation to organise these ad groups by making the campaign structure thematic or by product or by website category. However, the important thing to remember is that campaigns should reflect your business goals, and how you want to allocate budget.

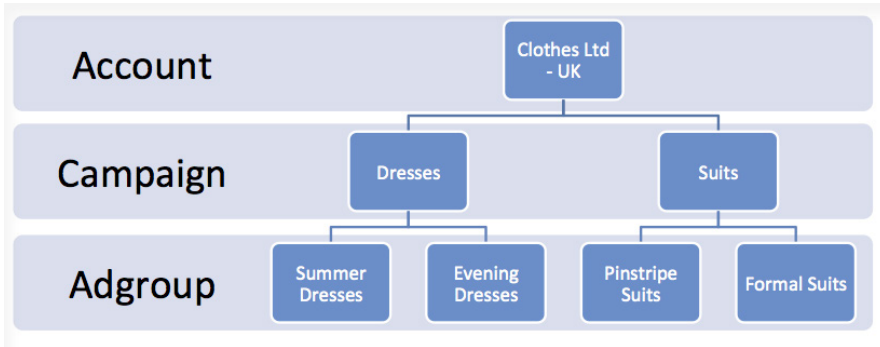
For example, if you're a clothing retailer who monitors your success by how many items of each brand you sell, then rather than having your campaigns structured by department, even though your website will probably be laid out that way, you may be better off structuring it based on brands. You'll want to control how much you invest in an individual brand, rather than on menswear or dresses, for example.

As well as budget, user targeting is also allocated at campaign level. The most obvious example of targeting is by user location.

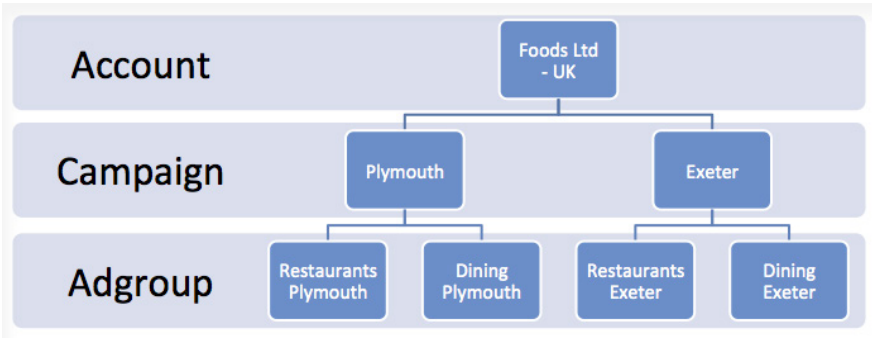
Q. Are we able to control our geographical distribution?

AdWords enables you to target the whole world or an individual village, depending on your requirements. This setting is controlled at campaign level, and again you'll want to structure your campaigns according to this business need. If you're a local service provider (e.g. a restaurant chain) you'll want to target local areas, and build a campaign structure that reflects that. If you're an online retailer, it may suit you to simply structure campaigns by targeted country.

Let's now look at two more examples for a typical situation. First, we have a campaign structure for a UK online clothes retailer. They monitor spend and budget by product type, so structure their campaigns accordingly and target them nationally.



Next is an example campaign for a national UK restaurant chain. They monitor spend and budget by outlet, so structure their campaigns accordingly and target them to local areas.



Q. Are we able to control our budget allocation based on different user segments?

Campaign targeting is not simply geographic. You can also segment your users by network, language, device or time of day, and adjust bids accordingly. For most accounts this level of granularity may not be necessary – it's important to balance the performance uplift available against the additional maintenance work required. You can use the 'segments' reporting functionality within AdWords to identify areas that perform very differently and will warrant separate bidding/budgeting strategies.

A note on campaign structure where you have a limited budget

Not all keywords perform equally. If you can't afford a 100 percent impression share on your campaign, then you need to make sure that the better performing keywords are picking up as many clicks as they can. One way to do this is to implement a campaign system that is tiered by performance.

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Best Practice Tip 17 Consider implementing campaigns tiered by performance

If you separate the highest performing ads into separate campaigns you can ensure these have sufficient budget to be displayed.

For instance, in our Laser Eye Surgery example, perhaps the low volume long-tail keyword 'laser eye surgery short sighted' achieves a seven percent conversion rate, whilst the head term 'laser eye surgery' only converts at a rate of one percent. Ordinarily both of these keywords would reside in the same campaign, but times are tight and our budget only allows us to show our ads 50 percent of the time..... We would always recommend attempting to achieve full delivery at the level you can afford as explained in Step 7 on budgeting. Obviously we want 'laser eye surgery short sighted' to generate its ad as frequently as possible, whilst letting 'laser eye surgery' be slowed if necessary – the only way to achieve this is to split keywords into campaigns by performance, allocating enough budget for the better performing keywords to achieve more impressions.

You may also need to do something like this if you have a couple of very high volume exact match head terms (e.g. 'car insurance') that you want to maintain visibility on, or perhaps deliberately limit spend on. Google slows your ad delivery based on how many impressions it believes your ads will get for the budget¹³, so campaigns containing high volume expensive keywords are far more likely to have a limited impression share than campaigns that simply contain longer tail or lower cost keywords.

Best Practice Tip 18 Remember ad extensions (see Step 5) exist at campaign level

They therefore display against all eligible ads in the campaign. Sometimes it might be necessary to consider how you fully leverage ad extensions when thinking about campaign structure.

Naming

We have seen that a good account structure will contain a large number of ad groups and can end up looking quite complex. There's no need for this to be daunting though – the key to managing it is in appropriately naming campaigns and ad groups so that keywords can be easily found and analysis can take place at the ad group (or set of ad groups) level.

Best Practice Tip 19 Use a campaign naming convention to ease account maintenance

If more than one person is in the account, make sure they all understand the naming convention being used!

Example naming convention

In a simple example, we want to analyse our ad groups in aggregate based on the following attributes:

- ✓ **Location targeting**
- ✓ **Publisher**
- ✓ **Network**
- ✓ **Device**
- ✓ **Campaign**
- ✓ **Match type.**

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¹³ [AdWords Help: If using standard delivery.](#)

Our laser eye surgery 'treatment' ad groups, that sit in our 'generic' campaigns, might end up looking something like this:

- ✓ UK-Google-Search-generic-treatment-exact
- ✓ UK-Google-Search-generic-treatment-broad
- ✓ UK-Google-Display-generic-treatment-keyword
- ✓ UK-Bing-Search-generic-treatment-exact

...and so on.

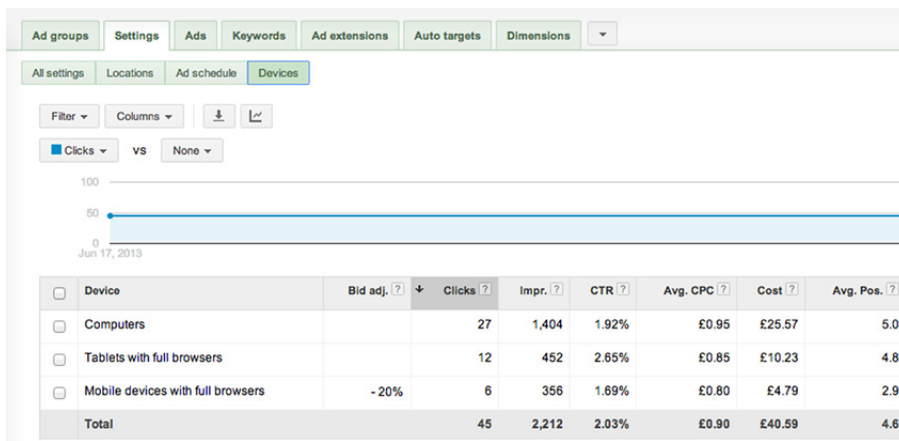
We're then very easily able to pick out and manage all of the exact match keyword targeted ad spend, for example.

Campaign structure for mobile devices

Different devices perform very differently and need to be managed differently in light of this. A typical retailer may notice tablet users tend to have higher CTRs and average basket values, whilst mobile users tend to have lower CTRs and lower conversion rates.

As noted earlier, until the introduction of Enhanced Campaigns in June 2013, it was possible to run separate campaigns for each type of device (desktop, tablet or mobile) and to have completely separate keywords and/or bids for each type of device. However, each campaign now has to target all devices.

This means it is currently impossible to set up a mobile only targeted campaign or a tablet only targeted campaign. However, it is possible to set different bid adjustments for mobile devices at both a campaign and an ad group level in Enhanced Campaigns - so you can bid either higher or lower for searches that are run on a mobile device. You can also stop your ads from appearing on mobiles altogether by setting the bid adjustment for mobile to -100%.



Best Practice Tip 20 Consider your bidding strategy based on the new Enhanced Campaigns account structure

Enhanced Campaigns allow advertisers to bid differently based on device, location and time of search. How should you factor these variances into your structure?

Why did Google implement bid adjustments in Enhanced Campaigns?

Google noticed that AdWords was becoming very complicated for small business owners as in order to structure an account effectively it was necessary to separate out campaigns based on location and device and sometimes even by day/time of day and then all the potential combinations of each of these. For international companies it was getting messy.

The idea was that there is a context around how people search based on the device that they use, the location they are in and the time of day when they search.



Take the example of someone searching the keyword “flowers”.

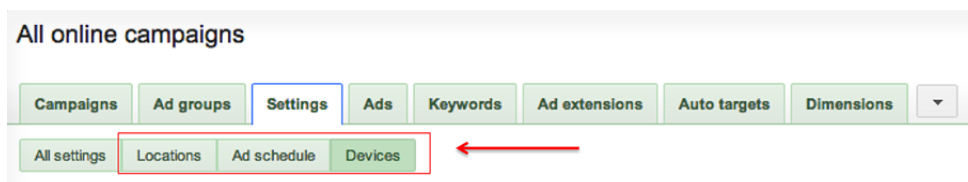
If they are on a desktop or tablet, in the evening then it is likely they are at home. This may suggest that they are looking to arrange a delivery of flowers for an occasion at some point in the next few weeks.

On the other hand if the search takes place on a mobile device at lunch time then it is likely that the individual is out shopping on their lunch break. They probably want the address of the closest flower shop to buy immediately.

Although these 2 users are searching exactly the same keyword the context and intent behind their search is completely different.

How should bid adjustments be managed?

AdWords allows you to use different bids based on a searcher’s location, time of day (ad schedule) and device. In the campaign settings below you can see the three tabs in the campaign settings for each of these preferences.



Bids can be both increased (by up to +300%) or decreased (by a maximum of -100%). We will take you through bidding by these three options:

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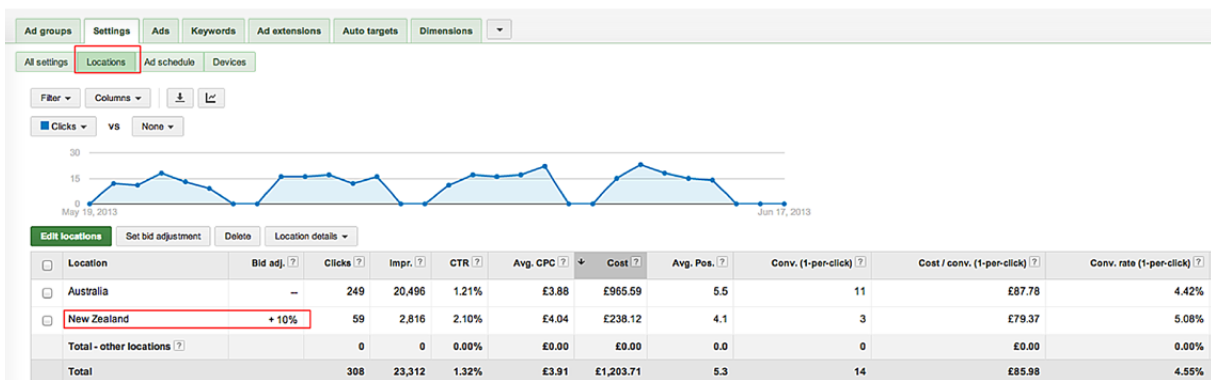
Bidding by location

Imagine that you have a campaign targeting both Australia and New Zealand. For whatever reason you notice that the New Zealand-based performance is much better than the Australian performance.

In the example below you can see that the cost per conversion is around 10 percent better in New Zealand than in Australia.

If your maximum target cost per conversion were £90 then you would want to increase the New Zealand bid by around 10 percent as shown below. However, if your target CPA were £80 then you may want to decrease the Australia bid by 10 percent. You simply click in the bid adj. box and switch to a variance of your choice.

These adjustments are not just at a country level. They can be based on towns and cities or even a certain radius around your business location. This is perfect in the case of the flower shop in our example above as they may want to bid higher for those within a mile of the shop.

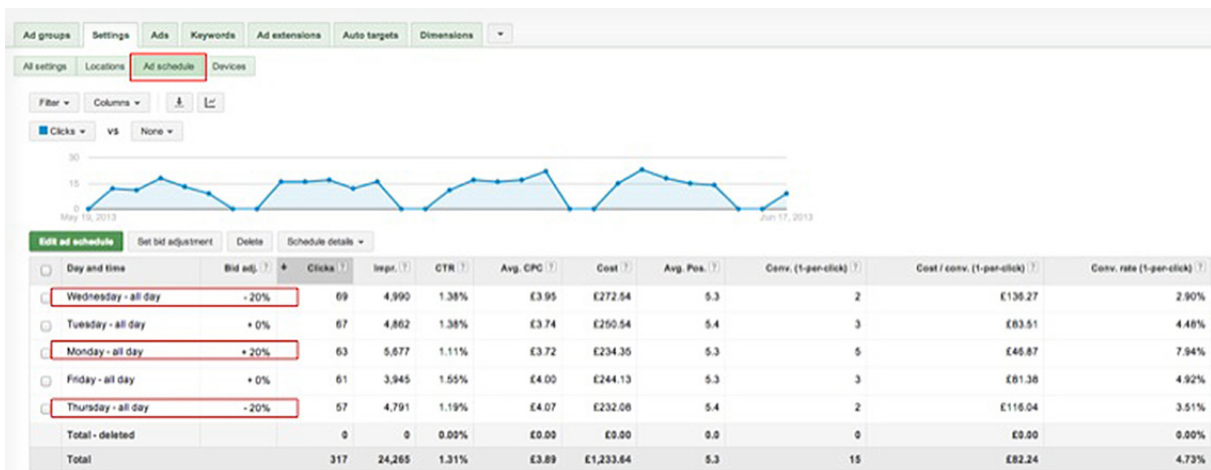


Bidding by Ad Schedule

By observing your performance over a long enough date range you can see variances by day of week and also you can set this up to be viewed by time of the day.

Bid adjustments can go both ways so in this example Monday has the best cost per conversion so we have increased our bids by 20%. On Wednesday and Thursday performance tends to be worse so we have reduced bids by 20%.

*Please note that it is important to use significant enough data to truly analyse performance before making these bid adjustments; the screenshot below is simply an example and really we would need more data in order to be able to rely on this as a strategy.

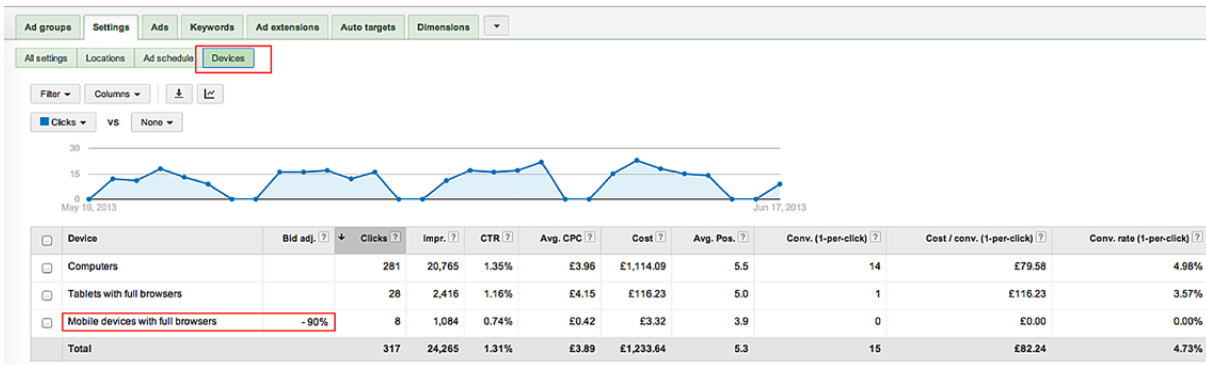


Bidding by device

If your business takes orders or enquiries over the phone then you should be advertising to people on mobile devices.

Depending on the performance you get from mobile devices these bid adjustments can be increases or decreases.

You will notice that tablet performance is visible but currently it is not possible to adjust bids for these devices.



Creating separate ads for mobile devices

As we discussed earlier in this section, there is often a different context and intent when a user searches from a mobile device so it often makes sense to give them different ads when they are on mobile phones.

In addition, it is often the case that on a mobile device, Google will choose to only show the first of your ad's two description lines. So it can be a good idea to have different ads for mobiles and make sure they're written in a way that means it doesn't matter too much if description line 2 is not shown.

On the ads tab in the AdWords interface if you click on "+ New ad" then select "text ad" you will see that there is a small tick box for the device preference. This allows you to write ads focused for the user based on their context being on a mobile device. This should be used alongside the call ad extension.

Select an ad group

Choose...

New text ad

Write your text ad below. Remember to be clear and specific. [Learn how to write a great text ad](#)

Headline: PPC Guide Now Updated

Description line 1: Understand enhanced campaigns

Description line 2: Gain better results for your budget

Display URL: smartinsights.co.uk/payperclick

Destination URL: http://www.smartinsights.co.uk/payper

Device preference: Mobile

Ad preview: The following ad previews may be formatted slightly differently from what is shown to users. [Learn more](#)

Mobile ad

PPC Guide Now Updated
smartinsights.co.uk/payperclick
Understand enhanced campaigns Gain better results for your budget

Ad extensions expand your ad with additional information like a business address or product images. [Take a tour](#)

Step 4

Improving where your ads appear

Q. Have our AdWords targeting options been optimised?

There are three key methods of targeting within Google AdWords which you can use to improve the relevance you deliver to customers and your ROI. The first we have discussed in the previous Step, and the next we cover in the following sections.

The targeting methods in AdWords are:

- ✓ 1. Campaign structure and the relevance of ad groups.
- ✓ 2. The use of keyword match types that affect which ads are triggered as people search.
- ✓ 3. The use of the Display Network which enables you to target visitors on other sites.

Remember that it's also important to review the targeting of your landing pages, as you refine where your ads appear. You can find out more about this in another of our guides.¹⁴

Use the right keyword match types within Google AdWords

Q. Have we reviewed AdWords match types?

Match types are the method used within Google AdWords to allow you to better target your customers depending on the queries they type into Google and the words you are targeting your advert at. This essentially means that, through the different types of keyword matching, you are able to ensure your advert only shows when you want it to.

What is it? Match types

The match types of **broad match**, **modified broad match**, **phrase match**, **exact match**, **close variant match** and **negative match** are used to determine how the ads displayed are triggered by the keywords searched upon by the user.

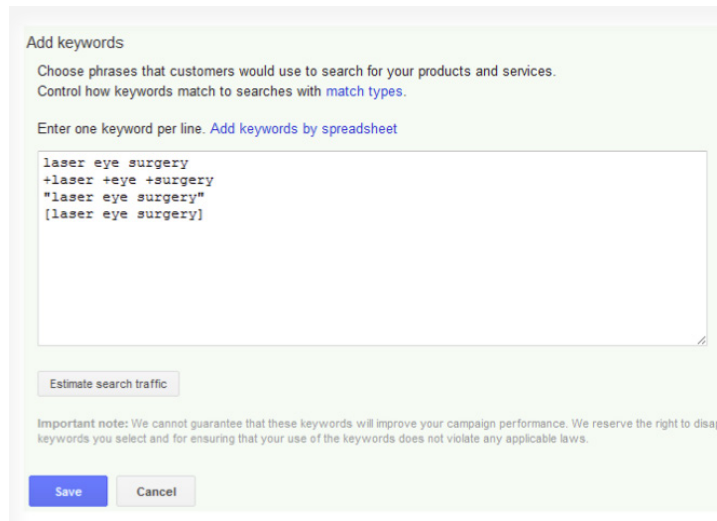
The main match types are:

- ✓ **Broad match** – no modifiers necessary – ads are displayed when the searcher types the phrase plus synonyms and other terms that Google believes are related. This is the default. For example: laser eye surgery with no quotes.
- ✓ **Modified broad match** – + modifier – similar function to the broad match, but the + modifier means that the word in the keyword following the + must be present in the user's search term in order for the keyword to trigger your ad to show. For example: +laser +eye + surgery.
- ✓ **Phrase match** – quotes – ads are only displayed when this complete phrase is contained within the user search query. For example: "laser eye surgery".
- ✓ **Exact match** – square brackets – ads are only displayed only when this exact phrase on its own is typed. For example: [laser eye surgery]
- ✓ **Close variant match** - Introduced in 2012, close variant matching means that phrase and exact match keywords can also be triggered for close variations such as misspellings, singular and plural forms, acronyms, stemmings (such as floor and flooring), abbreviations, and accents. This increases the number of clicks for phrase and exact match keywords by an average of 7%. Until 2014 it was possible for advertisers to opt out of close variant matching, but that option no longer exists.

¹⁴ [Smart Insights: Landing Page Improvement Guide.](#)

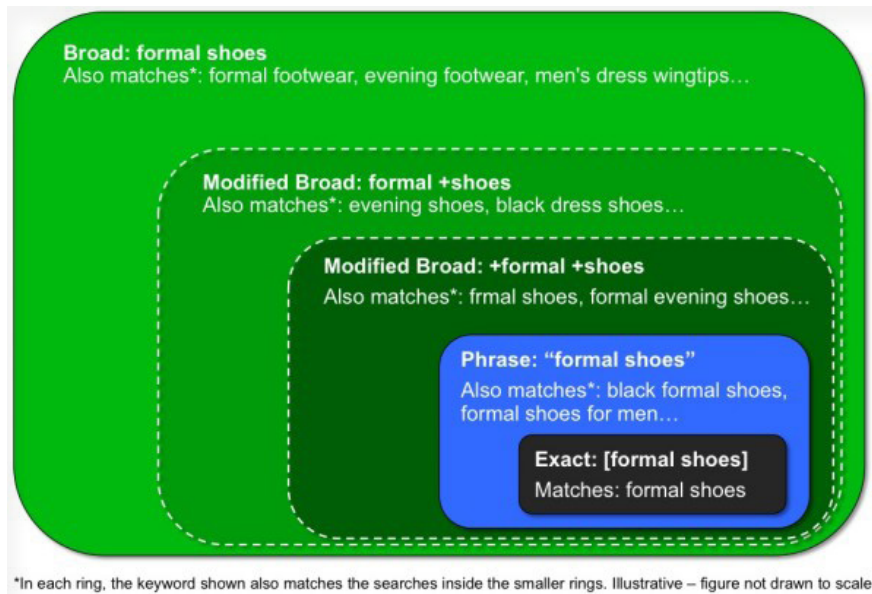
- Negative match** – minus sign – ads won't show if the user's search contains one of your negative keywords. For example: -nhs

Here's an example of how match types for different keywords can be added:



As well as being added as shown above, negative keywords can also be entered (without the need for a minus sign) in the negative keywords section of the Keywords screen.

As another example, the match types are illustrated in this diagram from Google showing what keywords can trigger an ad for the query 'formal shoes'.



Traditionally we see that broad match terms are used too much since this is the default and makes the account quicker to set up. Companies or agencies who are new to AdWords tend to under-use the phrase or exact match types, leading to too many irrelevant clicks, or restrict the volume and limit the expansion of the account by only using exact and phrase match.

It's also common for new accounts not to contain negatives, but as we'll see, these are essential to improving CTR and QS, and hence helping you achieve a good ROI.

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- 7 Optimising AdWords campaign

Strategy Recommendation 11 Ensure the use of match types is optimal to balance click volume against quality

Set your match types so that you maximise qualified traffic and to only display your ad for relevant search terms.

Let's now look at each of the match types in more detail.

Q. Is AdWords broad match used appropriately?

You will see this particular match type appear for a lot of terms. As one example, if you had *laser eye treatment* in your ad group set to the broad match type, then you would be eligible to appear for any keyword with laser, or eye, or treatment, and any combinations of these. This will obviously mean you appear for thousands of irrelevant keywords. It is generally best to avoid using broad match altogether

Best Practice Tip 21 Don't only use broad match, the default

To maximise ad relevance and so CTRs and Quality Score when using broad match, ensure that you are using a comprehensive negative keyword list.

Q. Is AdWords modified broad match being used appropriately?

The modified broad match gives a balance between phrase and broad match and we recommend its use on initial account setup.

Only the parts of the keyword you modify with '+' take on the 'modified' attributes, other words will remain broad, so think about which parts of the keyword are most important. For example, +formal +shoes is more limited than formal shoes.

Best Practice Tip 22 Use modified broad match

Use modified broad match in preference to broad match, particularly during account set up to increase ad relevance.

Google says these are the merits of this match type:

'The broad match modifier is an AdWords targeting feature that lets you create keywords which have greater reach than phrase match, and more control than broad match. Adding modified broad match keywords to your campaign can help you get more clicks and conversions at an attractive ROI, especially if you mainly use exact and phrase match keywords today.'

You implement the modifier by putting a plus symbol (+) directly in front of one or more words in a broad match keyword. Each word preceded by a + must appear in the user's search exactly or as a close variant. Depending on the language, close variants will include misspellings, singular/plural forms, abbreviations and acronyms, and stemmings (like "floor" and "flooring"). Synonyms (like "quick" and "fast") and related searches (like "flowers" and "tulips") are not considered close variants.

The broad match modifier gives you more reach than phrase match because the broad match modifier allows for additional word(s) to be before, between, or after the keyword that's been modified with the (+) sign.'

Q. Is AdWords phrase match being used appropriately?

A little more targeted than broad match, phrase matches are enclosed in double quotes as keywords are entered into the account.

Phrase matching will take the keyword you have entered and display your advert if the searcher has put anything before or after your keyword.

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4

It will only appear if your keyword is part of the query and in the right order. Using our example *laser eye treatment* again but it is set to phrase match this time. So, if I were to search for *cheap laser eye treatment* the advert would appear; however if I were to search for *laser eye NHS treatment* the advert would not appear.

Best Practice Tip 23 If you use phrase or exact match extensively, ensure different keyword orders are used to maximise volume

Maximise your coverage of user search behaviour by using different orders of keywords. For example 'formal shoes' and 'shoes formal'.

Q. *Is AdWords exact match being used appropriately?*

Exact match is the most accurate and targeted of the match types. Exact match means that the advert will only appear if the keyword you have entered into your ad group is searched for in the right order without any other keywords, before, after or in the middle.

Back to our *laser eye treatment* example, using the same keyword but with exact match would mean that if I were to search for *cheap laser eye treatment* the advert would not appear. It wouldn't even appear if I search for *eye laser treatment*. Only if people enter the exact keyword in the right order will the advert appear.

This can lead to a problem with exact and phrase match where the account is set up with the keywords in the most obvious order, but some searchers will use a less common reverse order. One way round this is to ensure that modified broad match keywords are also used.

Negative match

Q. *Are AdWords negative keywords being used appropriately?*

Negative matching is an essential tool if your account is built up using lots of broad or phrase match key terms. It allows you to ensure that if particular keywords are used in a search query that you don't offer products or services for then your advert doesn't appear.

Best Practice Tip 24 Always use negative match within your campaigns

Use of negative match is the best way to ensure you get a better ROI since it will exclude your ad from being displayed for irrelevant terms for which users won't generate clicks and/or convert. This will almost always lead to a higher CTR and so higher Quality Score and lower CPC.

Our example here, is an example provided by Google that shows how a retailer saved money by using the search query report. This is a report (also known as the search terms report) which shows you the actual search terms that people entered into Google to make your ads appear. By running this report, the advertiser was able to spot that he was appearing for searches for ski wear, even though he didn't sell any ski wear products.

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1 Identify and select

To continue with our earlier example, if people were to search for 'NHS eye laser treatment', it is likely they are looking for the NHS website (a public service), so our private clinic's advert does not need to appear as it is irrelevant traffic.

2 Set goals

So if we were to add NHS as a negative keyword it would mean that if the word NHS is used in any search query with or without totherother combinations of the keywords the advert would not appear.

3 Improve your campaign

Negative keywords can be applied at campaign level, as well as ad group. So in this instance we would want to apply a campaign negative keyword, as there is nowhere in our campaign where we would want to attract 'NHS' traffic.

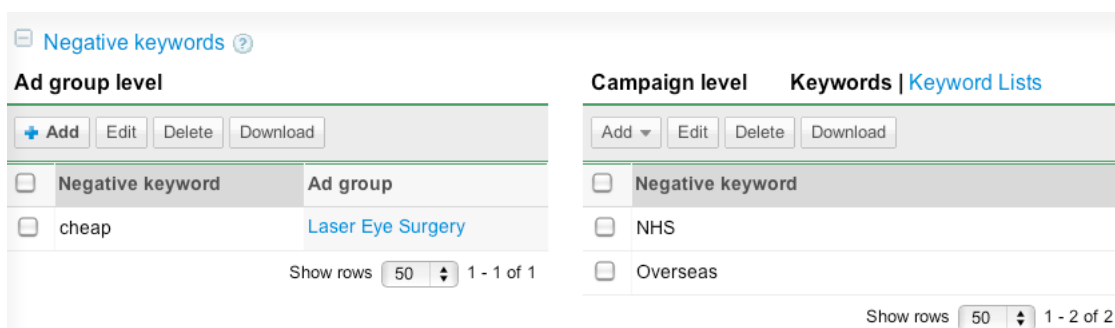
4 Improving where your ads appear

Best Practice Tip 25 Apply negative matches at campaign level

Negative match keywords can be applied across an entire campaign to save time. You can also set up a central list of negative keywords in the Shared Library area of the AdWords interface, and then apply it to multiple campaigns with just a couple of mouse clicks. You then only have one list to keep up to date rather than several - and this can be a great time saver when you need to add the same negative keywords to multiple campaigns.

To view or add negative keywords Negative match is found within your account at the bottom of thego to the keyword management tab and then click the Negative Keywords button near the top of the page. You'll then see your ad group and campaign level negative keywords, beneath your keyword list as shown below:

5 Improving your offer



6 Get your bidding and budgeting right

When you enter negative keywords via in this waythis negative keywords section of your account, you do not need to prefix each keyword with a minus sign.

7 Optimising AdWords campaign

Remember that negative keywords can also have match types. So for example a negative keyword [nhs laser eye surgery] will exclude people searching for that precise term, but will

still allow your ad to show if someone searches for: nhs laser eye treatment. Therefore, in this example, you should simply add “nhs” as a negative keyword and then any search that includes the word ‘nhs’ will be blocked.

Cross matching

❑ Q. Are AdWords negative keywords being used appropriately?

When we use broader match types we need to be careful to refine which search queries they are allowed to match to, not just to remove irrelevant traffic but also to prevent Google cross matching keywords within our account and showing a less relevant ad. This is also sometimes referred to as “leakage” between ad groups.

This happens because, as discussed in the Introduction, if your account contains multiple eligible keywords for an auction, then it will choose to display the one with the highest Ad Rank.

As an example, let’s imagine we’ve used the keywords ‘eye surgery’ (*phrase match*) and [laser eye surgery] (*exact match*). When someone searches for *laser eye surgery* both of these keywords are eligible to serve an ad. In this instance we almost certainly want the exact match keyword to display, showing the most relevant ad and giving us the highest chance of winning the click at the lowest possible cost. Certainly if both keywords had the same bid, ad copy, landing page and CTR history then this is what would happen.

However in the situation where we’re bidding less for [laser eye surgery], it’s perfectly possible for ‘eye surgery’ to achieve a higher Ad Rank for this search. Let’s imagine we’ve reduced the bids on this keyword because of poor conversion – we absolutely don’t want the ‘eye surgery’ keyword receiving this impression as it will show an ad in a higher position, at a higher cost than we have decided the traffic is worth. In addition, in doing so it will dilute the effectiveness of our ‘eye surgery’ keyword, perhaps damaging the historic CTR or the conversion data we are using to optimise our bids.

The *solution* to this situation is to ensure both keywords are in separate ad groups and *negatively exact match the keyword* – [laser eye surgery] from the ad group containing ‘eye surgery’.

Multiple keyword variations

It’s important to remember you are not limited to selecting only one match type for each keyword. You can add the same keyword to an account multiple times on different match types and in doing so gain more control over where your ads are shown.

For example we would want our account to contain both +laser +eye +surgery (broad match modified) and [laser eye surgery] (exact match) as keywords. This means that people who are searching for exactly laser eye surgery match to our exact match keyword whilst people who are searching for something close to laser eye surgery match to our broad keyword. This is important because these two groups of visitors might be of very different value to the business. The exact-matchers know what they want, whilst the broad-matchers could contain an irrelevant qualifier or competitor brand. As a result we may want to bid more for the people searching exactly, which is only possible with two different keywords within the account.

Also, remember the exact-matchers will probably come at a reduced CPC because the ad copy will be highly tailored to their actual search query, whilst that won’t be the case for the broad-matchers. In order to get the best price for our high volume term we need to make sure we’re bidding separately.

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Best Practice Tip 26 Deploy Keywords on multiple match types

This will ensure you can accurately bid according to the keyword typed by the user but remember to use negative keywords to prevent cross matching.

When would I use each match type?

There is no right or wrong answer here, it depends on your business objectives, budget and the time you have to manage your campaigns. In the perfect world you would simply have every possible keyword combination in your account on exact match, so you could accurately control where you appear for every person typing a relevant query. However that's not possible – for one thing Google would classify most of them as 'Low Search Volume' and they'd be ineligible to generate impressions. Perhaps more importantly it's also worth remembering that something like one in five searches made each day is unique¹⁵ so broader match types need to be included, or you could lose out on 20 percent of your available search volume! Your AdWords account will continually evolve over time and you should be using your broad and phrase match keywords to continually discover new keywords and add them on exact match. You do this via Search Query Optimisation, which is discussed in Step 7.

Plug the gaps with Dynamic Search Ads

If you have a website with a lot of products or services it can be a time-consuming job building a keyword list that covers everything. And even if you put the hours in, there's a chance you might miss one or more important keywords. Dynamic Search Ads (DSA) aims to overcome this by automatically displaying ads for your website when someone performs a search that is relevant to the content of your site.

With DSA you create ads that only have a description without any headline. DSA then uses Google's organic search index of your website to determine what searches might be relevant to the products or services you offer. And when one of these searches happens it displays your DSA ad and automatically inserts a headline that matches what the user searched for. This auto-generated headline can be longer than the 25 characters of a standard AdWords ad, which means your DSA ads can sometimes stand out more and get more clicks than a regular ad.

You still get to control the maximum cost per click and you can run a search terms report to see what searches have caused your DSA ads to appear.

You can run DSA campaigns alongside normal keyword-based campaigns and Google will show either your keyword campaign ad if the search matches one of those keywords, or will show your DSA ad if the search matches your website content but not your keywords.

Instructions for creating a DSA campaign can be found [here](#).

Use Google AdWords display advertising capabilities

Q. Are we using the Display Network effectively?

We saw in the first section, that the Display Network is a collection of third-party sites like online publishers and bloggers who have agreed to display Google 'AdSense' ads. How can we use this in practice to increase our reach?

Use the right placement types for you

There are a series of questions to review here.

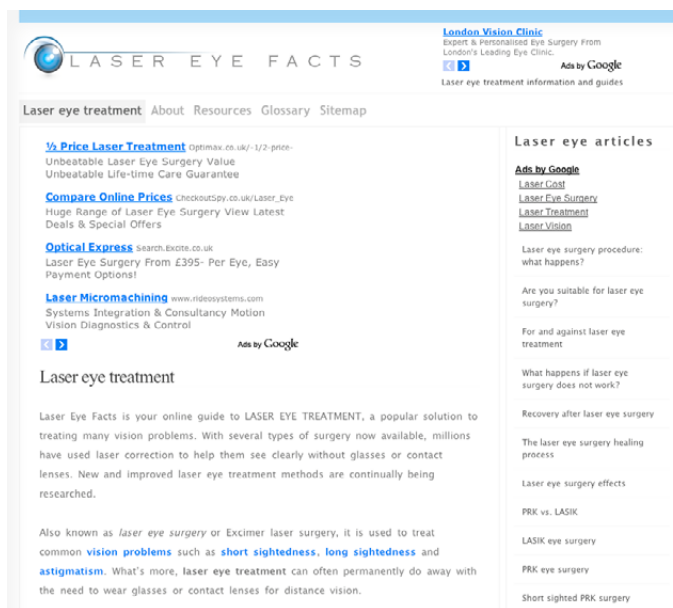
Q. Are we using automatic placements based on keywords, topics or interests?

Q. Are we using managed placements to target individual sites more closely?

¹⁵ [Google: Under The Hood](#).

- ❑ Q. Are we using demographic filtering to aim for our target customer?
- ❑ Q. Are we excluding less relevant sites?
- ❑ Q. Are we using the correct ad formats like text, image or video?
- ❑ Q. Are we making use of retargeting remarketing and “similar” lists?

The Display Network should be used with caution, but it is still a real opportunity for advertisers, and Google has done a great deal to improve its performance over the last few years. One reason to be cautious is that the websites your ads may appear on are not always be of the highest quality. For example, this is an old example of a poorly designed ‘Made for AdSense’ (MFA) site that has several prominent ‘Ads from Google’ containers. However, these sites may rank within the natural search listings despite spam filters, so it can still be worth advertising on them to drive visits.



You may think that you wouldn't want to be on this site, but by a freak of Google's algorithm this site was top for one of the main searches 'laser eye treatment' in this industry at one point, and therefore ads appearing on it would have been able to drive good, relevant traffic. There are high quality sites on the Google Display Network – you'll see Google text ads appearing on most mainstream press websites for example, but the sheer variety of inventory available makes managing your placements very important.

Ad placements

The Display Network, in its simplest form, works by identifying keywords on a page and displaying ads from advertisers that bid on those keywords however since the advent of remarketing there has been a constant shift towards targeting specific people base donbased on behaviorbehaviour rather than simply placements on sites that are deemed to be related to your business. The websites that display the ads are known as placements, and you can target them in an automatic (opt-in) or managed (opt-out) manner.

What is it? Ad placement

The site and page or section type where an ad is displayed to site visitors on third-party publisher sites.

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You bid for keywords and placements on a CPC or CPM (cost per thousand impression) basis, depending on your campaign goals. Most advertisers looking to get a real ROI from the Display Network will want to use CPC bidding, so they pay only when their ad is clicked, in exactly the same way as search campaigns.

There are effectively 6 different ways to target users on the display network:

✔ **Automatic placements** – although this term has been retired from use by Google the first 3 targeting options available mean your ads run across the whole of the Network so are effectively “automatic placements”. These 3 options are:

1. Keywords
2. Topics
3. Interests

✔ Any page relevant to your keywords, topics or interests will be eligible to display your ad. You can report on the sites where your ads are seen using a placement report and exclude any placements that you think are irrelevant (in a similar way to adding negative keywords). This approach is wide and unfocused, maximising traffic but with the limitation that your ads have to be shown somewhere you don't want them in order for you to identify and remove this placement.

You are able to refine your automatic placements by site topic, which helps reduce this wasted exposure. You can also refine your campaigns still further by targeting user interest profile, and age and gender demographics, based on information Google gathers from user cookies and browsing behaviour. We strongly advise those using automatic placements to make use of these options to ensure their ads are reaching as relevant an audience as possible. More information on refining your display network performance can be found here¹⁶.

✔ **Managed placements** are much more targeted, enabling you to decide which sites, or parts of sites, you wish your ads to appear on. You can also raise and lower your bids on a placement level in accordance with site performance, or relevancy. However the whole Network is not available as ‘managed placements’ and, for obvious reasons, those placements available tend to have a higher demand and cost associated with them.

✔ **Demographic Targeting** – You can also run ads based on the age and gender of the person viewing the website. Google will know the age and gender of anyone who is logged in with a Google account; and in other cases they will make an educated guess based on the person's browsing history. Of course, you can target campaigns geographically too. Demographic targeting should be used as a filter to combine with the other targeting methods.

✔ **Remarketing** – this has become incredibly popular over the past six5 years with increasing options for segmentation. We discuss this a little further on in this section of the guide.

Best Practice Tip 27 Use the Google AdWords Display Planner Tool to target the sites you advertise on more closely

You can target some sites preferentially using the Display Planner Tool by selecting sites by their category or keyword. You can also decide to exclude less relevant sites.

This example shows the AdWords Display Planner Tool (<https://AdWords.google.com/da/DisplayPlanner/Home> – you need to be logged in to access this). You can use this to find placements to target according to your audience requirements. Note the ability to filter by placement type; mobile app, website, video, etc.

¹⁶ [AdWords Help: Tailoring Display Ad preferences](#)

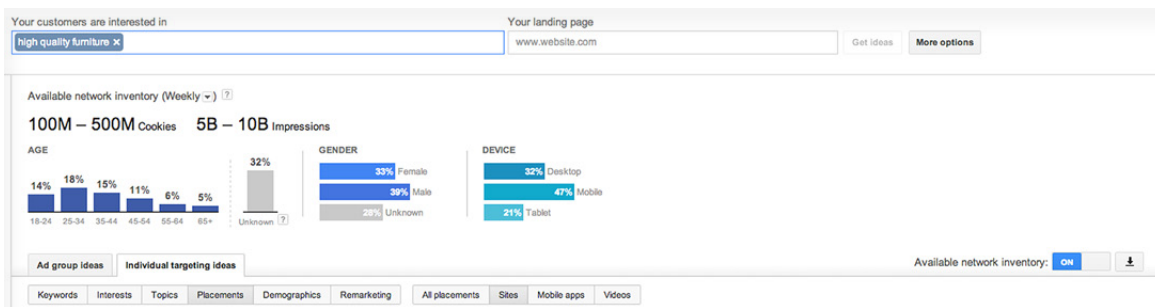


Image Ref: Image A - Google AdWords Display Planner - Placements

Don't forget to use the Display Planner to find sites to exclude, in the same way as you would use the Keyword Planner tool for negative keywords.

Display ad formats

The standard text ad can be deployed on the Display Network, and to maximise reach you should make sure your display ad groups contain at least one of these. Of course the ad type most associated with the Display Network is the image (or 'banner') ad. The Display Planner Tool can help you identify which ad formats will be shown on individual placements, but to maximise reach you should try to have image ads in as many different sizes as possible.¹⁷

Best Practice Tip 28 Use image formats for the Display Network

You will need a combination of standard text ads and display ads for placement.

Don't forget that other ad formats are also available. Video ads can be shown on the display network. Google also has a unique YouTube video ad product called TrueView that enables you to advertise on a cost per view (CPV) basis. This means that you only pay when an engaged user actually chooses to watch your promoted video. We have a post briefing this feature.¹⁸

Display ad formats for mobile devices

Google also enables you to create ads specifically for mobile devices. Text and image ads can be run on both WAP (wireless access protocol) mobile devices and high-end devices with full web browsers. You can target placements within mobile web browsers and/or within mobile apps via Google's AdMob network.

The sizes allowable are obviously different from your other display campaigns, but most importantly the messaging and content will need to be different. You'll also want to tailor the visitors' interaction to the mobile experience too – for example you may like to use click-to-download to send your visitor straight to your mobile app, rather than sending someone to your full site.

AdWords provides a tool called the Display Ad Builder to help advertisers create responsive image ads. This tool makes it very easy for advertisers to create effective ad copy versions suitable for the Display Network, in all sizes, with only the images from your website. The Display Ad builder can also be used to easily create CPC/CPM video ads (but not the CPV TrueView ads – these need to be created in AdWords for Video).

¹⁷ [Google: A list of supported ad sizes and formats.](#)

¹⁸ [Smart Insights: An example and briefing on TrueView.](#)



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Optimise your display ads

Q. Are Ad creative and messages tailored for the Display Network?

No matter what blend of ad copy methods you deploy, and no matter how you target them to your audience you'll want to be optimising your ad copy on the display network in a similar way to how you optimise ads for the search network (see Step 5).

Do this with the differences of your Display Network goals in mind though. For example, Display Network CTRs do not impact Quality Score, so you may like to focus less on click-throughs and more on the reach of your impressions. If you're bidding on a CPM basis clicks might not be important to you at all.

If you have Google AdWords conversion tracking enabled you will be able to see 'view through conversions' – people who saw your display ad and then converted, with or without clicking in it. You may like to factor this metric in to your Display Network bid and ad optimisation.

Use Remarketing

Q. Have we evaluated the relevance of Remarketing to us?

Remarketing (also called retargeting) is a powerful behavioural advertising technique which may give you a great opportunity since you can give simple reminders to visitors to your site to buy.

What is it? Google AdWords Remarketing
 Remarketing within Google is a specific use of the wider Google Display Network. When Remarketing is set up and configured it allows you to target people that visited your website with adverts on other websites that have opted into displaying adverts from the Display Network. Google also calls this 'interest-based advertising' rather than 'behavioural targeting' to make it more consumer friendly.

The evidence we've seen shows that these reminders do work, although you shouldn't over do it, so cap the frequency of how often each person sees your ad at four4 times. Evidence of repeated ads suggests many advertisers don't cap frequency.

Before you can use Remarketing, you need to add some extra code to your website. This can be done either via AdWords or through Google Analytics. For the purposes of this guide, we'll assume you are going to implement remarketing via AdWords.

Once the remarketing tag has been added to your website, Google Remarketing¹⁹ allows you to segment your website visitors customers into groups (or 'lists') based on what pages they have seen on your website. You then show them ads appropriate to their interaction. For example if a consumer looks at a specific product page you may want to show them an ad for that product or closely related products. Similarly, if a user enters the conversion funnel but drops out before completion (e.g. they add the product to the basket but never buy) you may want to incentivise this highly targeted person back to your site with a promo code or similar.

Strategy Recommendation 12 Consider Remarketing via AdWords

Remarketing can remind your audience about your brand offer and so increase conversion rates.

Remarketing takes place primarily on the Display Network, so you'll ideally want to create suitable image ads for each list in order to get best results. However, if you don't have the time or resources to do this, don't simply dismiss it – even simple text ad retargeting can be extremely effective.

The success of your Remarketing campaigns is tied with how well you define these lists. Bear in mind that in order to start generating ads a list must have a minimum of 100 members, so don't go too granular. Some things to think about when structuring your Remarketing lists are:

- Are audiences mutually exclusive?** Most users will fall into more than one list. Exclude one list from another as necessary to ensure you show the most relevant to each audience. For example if you have a generic list of everyone who viewed your homepage and more specific lists of those that go on to view individual products then exclude the product lists from the homepage list – you'll want to show them product-specific ads.
- Are we excluding people who have acted?** If your Remarketing is to get people to sign up or purchase then you'll want to make sure you establish a list for people who have viewed your 'thank you' or conversion confirmation page and ensure they are excluded from seeing your ads.
- How long is our ad relevant for?** You don't want to keep showing people an ad for a product they looked at indefinitely – if they want it, they will likely buy it at some point. How long this takes will depend on your industry, and for that reason you can vary the length of time the Remarketing cookie stays with a person, limiting the amount of time they stay in a list. The default length is 30 days, which is reset with each visit.
- How frequently is our ad shown?** Visitors can get extremely annoyed extremely quickly if your ad continually follows them all around the web. Cap the frequency with which your ads are shown on a daily, weekly or monthly level to ensure that you're adding value to your customers and business with Remarketing, not damaging it.²⁰

¹⁹ [AdWords Help: Google Remarketing.](#)

²⁰ You can set this within the 'ad delivery' section of the campaign settings.

Q. *Have we fully considered our Remarketing strategy?*

Although Remarketing is mainly used as a reminder to buy or to generate a lead, there are other options too:

- Recent purchases** – Ask for feedback or a review in return for voucher or freebie.
- Recent purchases** – Upsell/on-sell adverts.
- Viewed promotions** – Reminder of promo end dates.

Ensure you've fully considered how to appropriately apply Remarketing to your campaigns.

Best Practice Tip 29 Exclude audiences to prevent them overlapping

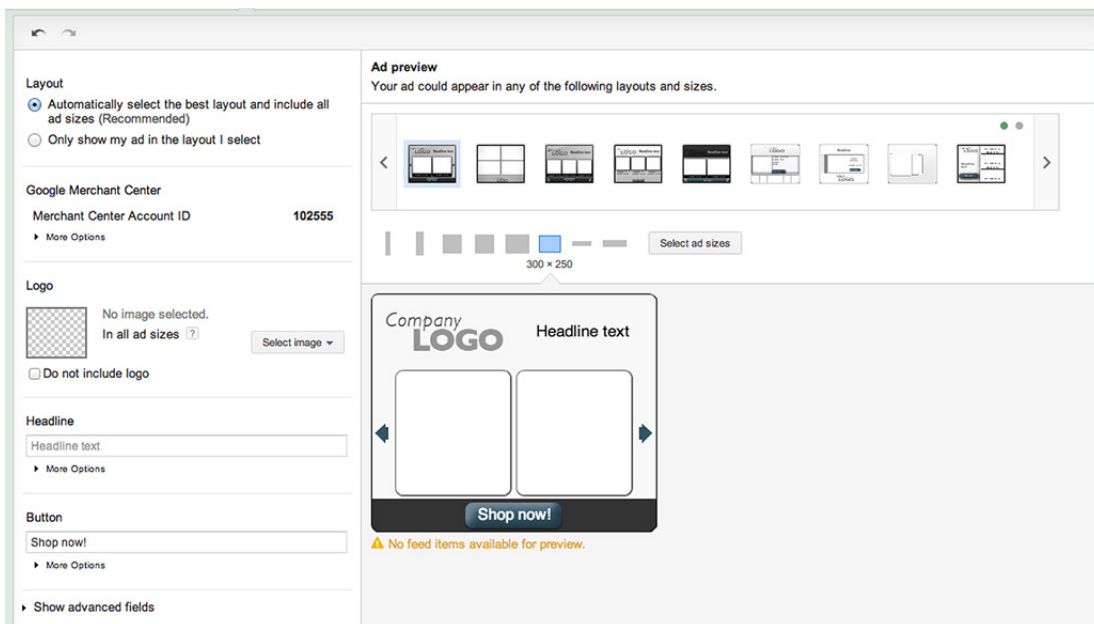
Depending on your business, you may like to exclude remarketing lists from your other display campaigns. This is a good way to make sure that, if your display campaigns are charged with generating new visitors, they don't get credit for people who have already visited your sites.

If you are a retailer use Dynamic remarketing ads

Dynamic remarketing ads allow advertisers with a product feed in Google Merchant Centre to create ads that dynamically insert the image of a product once a user visits that product page on your website.

Strategy Recommendation 13 Consider Dynamic Remarketing via AdWords

Dynamic Remarketing allows retailers to re-market using dynamic ad banners that show the products that the user viewed on your site.



To set up Dynamic Remarketing ads you will need to go through the following process:

- 1. Submit an XML product feed to Google Merchant Centre – Here is the specification: <https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/188494?hl=en-GB>.
- 2. Link your Google Merchant Centre Account with your Google AdWords account – instructions here: <https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/188479?hl=en-GB>.

- ✔ 3. Tag your website with the dynamic remarketing tag – Go to the ‘Shared Library’ in the left-hand column of your AdWords account and select ‘Remarketing’ and then ‘Dynamic Remarketing’. Then enter your email address to get the code and instructions emailed to you or your developer. There is some dynamic customisation of the tag necessary here so it takes a little longer than tagging the site with the standard remarketing tag.
- ✔ 4. Set up a new Remarketing Campaign and follow the steps to get to the ad builder – it will take you through the steps of tying up the campaign to your Merchant Centre feed.
- ✔ 5. Build your ads by simply uploading your logo and then customising as you like as shown above.

Using “Similar” audiences for remarketing.

Similar audiences are additional audience lists that you can target to reach new people that are “similar” to your site visitors. Google develop these lists through looking at the people on your remarketing list and analysing their browsing behaviour on the Google display network over a 30 day period. They then find people who have not previously been to your site but who have exhibited similar behaviour on the display network.

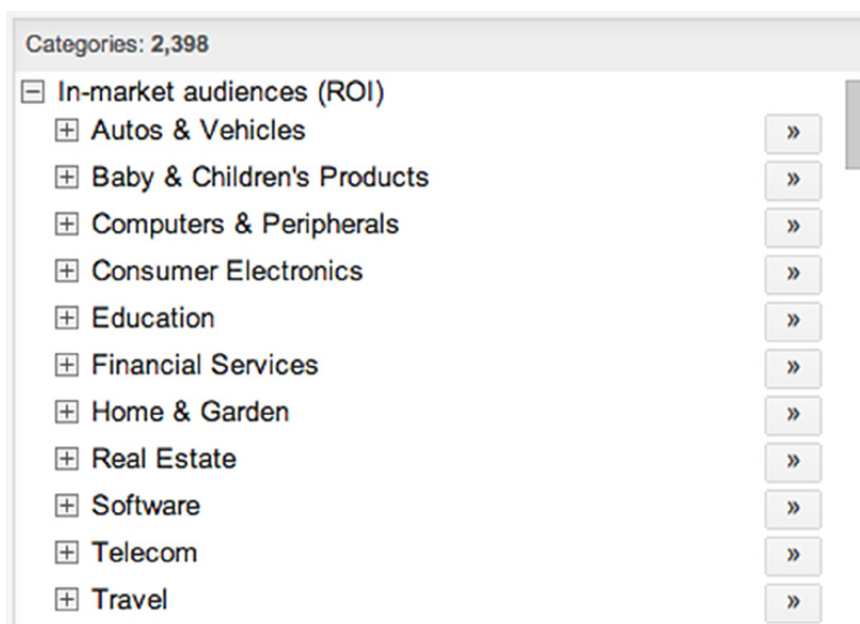
A similar audiences list is created from a remarketing list that has at least 500 cookies with enough similarity in characteristics and interests to create a corresponding similar audience. Similar audiences can’t be created based on the characteristics and interests of individual users.

Using “in-market” audiences for targeting display campaigns

In-market audiences allow you to target people in specific verticals who have displayed behaviorbehaviour that signals they are close to a purchase.

When you are selecting your targeting options for a display network campaign you need to select the “interests & remarketing” tab and then under “interests” you will see “in-market” audiences.

As the image below shows there are various industries that can be targeted using these lists. Most of them seem to be products that carry a relatively drawn out buying process where a lot of thought likely goes into it.



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It is recommended that you judge the performance of this type of campaign on a direct response basis – i.e. by comparing to search campaigns where you are trying to get a direct return on investment rather than a branding campaign on the display network.

You may want to use ads that contain offers or promotions that will attract those close to a decision.

Remarketing with Customer Match

This new feature of AdWords introduced in 2015 gives you the ability to show remarketing ads to people based on their email address. You create a customer email list in your AdWords account containing the email addresses of the customers you want to target. Then you can show ads to these people whenever they are signed into Google Search, Gmail, or YouTube.

Because this represents identity-based targeting, there are a number of rules you have to follow. For example, the email addresses you upload have to have been collected the right way - i.e. through website forms, apps, or in face-to-face settings. And you have to provide a way for people to opt-out of the list.

The email addresses don't have to be Gmail ones. For non-Gmail addresses Google will do its best to match the email address to a specific user.

Google provides [step by step instructions](#) for how to upload a customer email list and then create the associated remarketing campaign.

Targeting settings

There are 3 key settings in AdWords for ad targeting:

- 1) Location Targeting
- 2) Ad Scheduling
- 3) Device Targeting

1. Location Targeting

Many businesses will have locational restrictions (e.g. cannot ship overseas) or locational strengths (e.g. have a showroom in a specific area).

On every AdWords account it is always critical to make sure that your location settings have been taken care of.

It is very easy to do this.

Firstly you can go to the your Campaign Settings screen and click the red button shown in the screenshot below:

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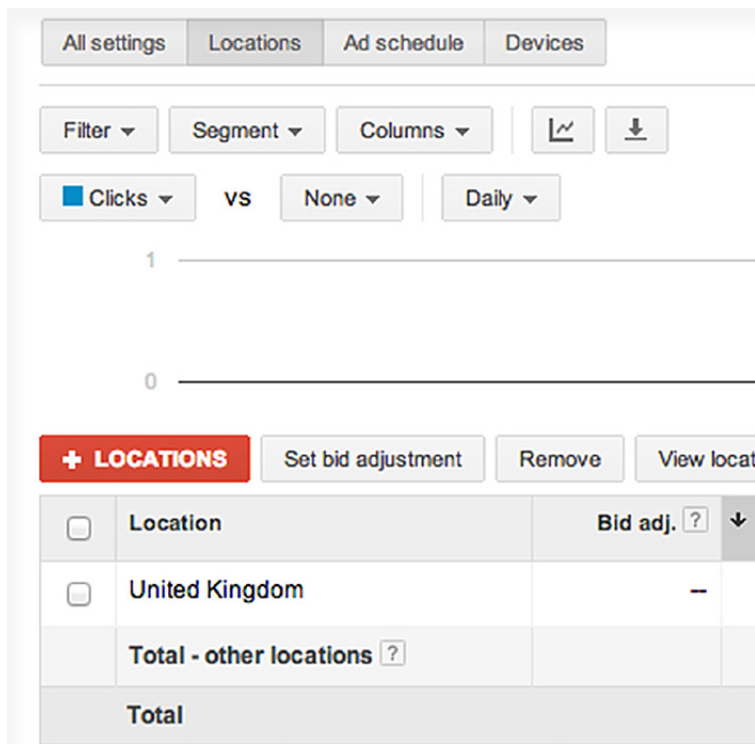


Image: AdWords location settings first step

You then get a pop up that allows you to enter a city, town, country or region to target. You get an estimated population for that area and simply need to click "Add" to target that location:

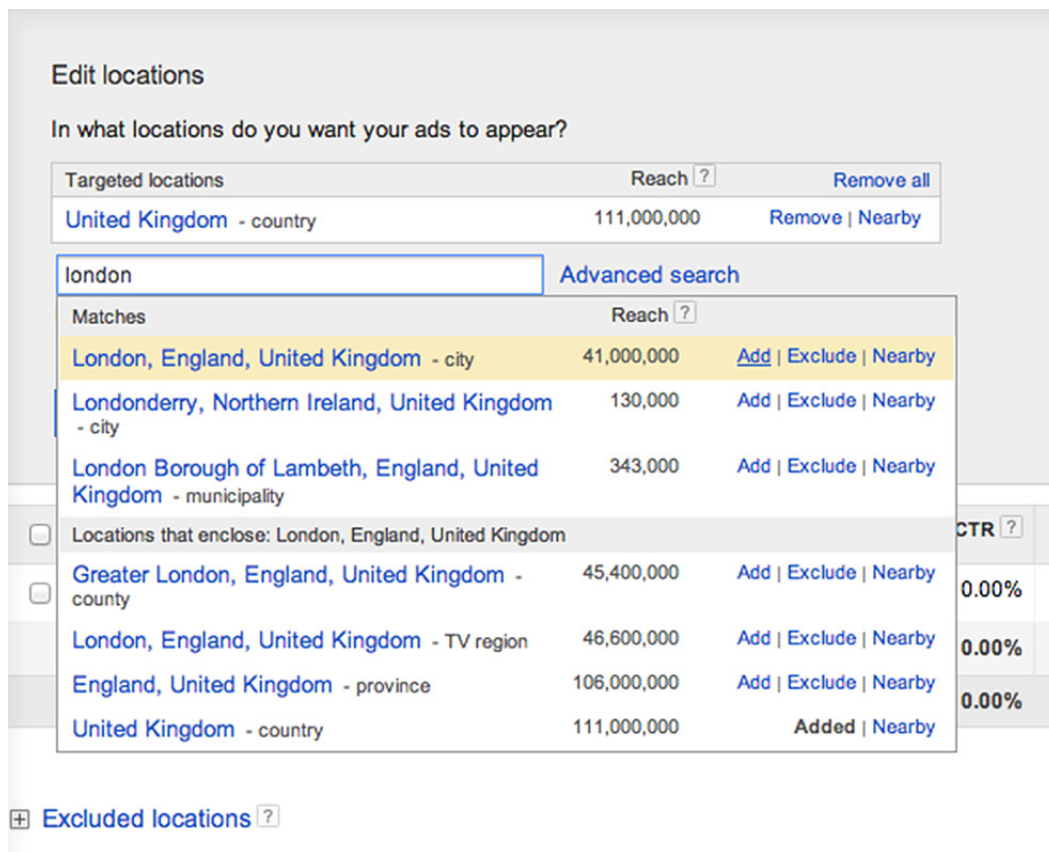


Image: AdWords location targeting basic set up

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If you want to be a little more sophisticated then you can also limit the targeting around the location by a radius in either Km or miles. This is fantastic for offline businesses that only want to target people who are likely to be willing to travel to you:

It is a little US centric so you may need to enter the country after the location name to find it.

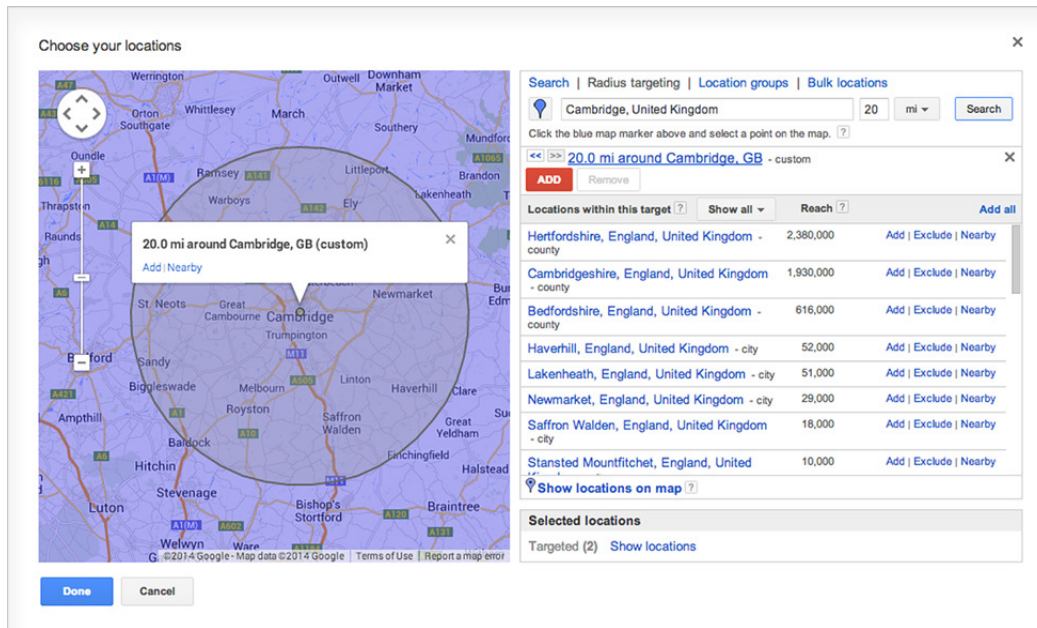


Image: AdWords location targeting by radius

Finally there are a few advanced location targeting options that you should be aware of. You can target these locations in 3 ways as shown below:

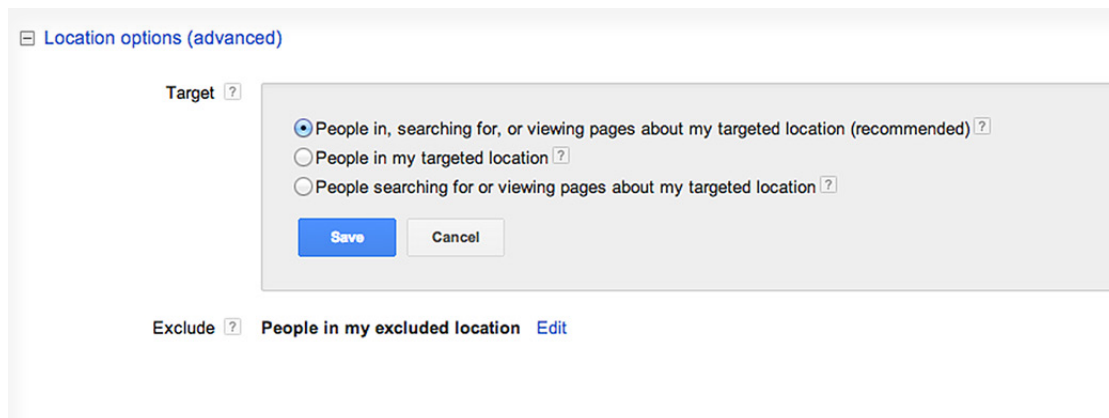


Image: Advanced Location Targeting Options

The first option will be fine in the majority of cases but there are times when you may want to restrict people in certain locations from viewing your ads at all, even if they are specifically searching for them in your targeting area. For example some legal restrictions may mean that your service cannot be provided in some locations,

2. Ad Scheduling

Depending on your type of business it is likely that you will have days of the week or times of the day that do not perform so well. For example many B2B companies have poor performance at weekends.

You can use ad scheduling to only allow your ads to show at certain times of the day and certain days of the week:

This shows you your scheduling summary – the schedule is set at a campaign level:

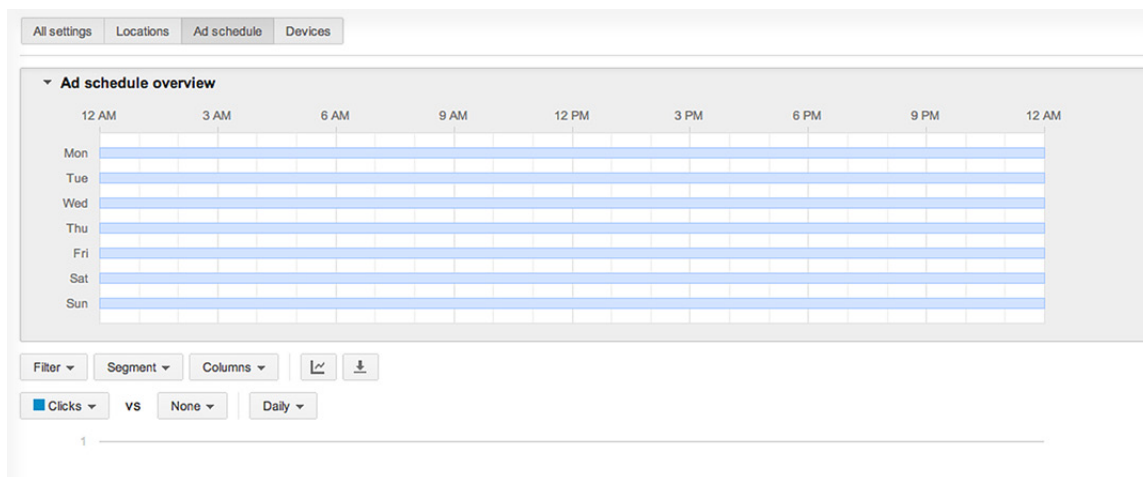


Image: AdWords ad schedule summary

To edit your ad schedule there are various options. You can vary your schedule on a day by day basis, a Monday to Friday basis or on a full weekly basis:

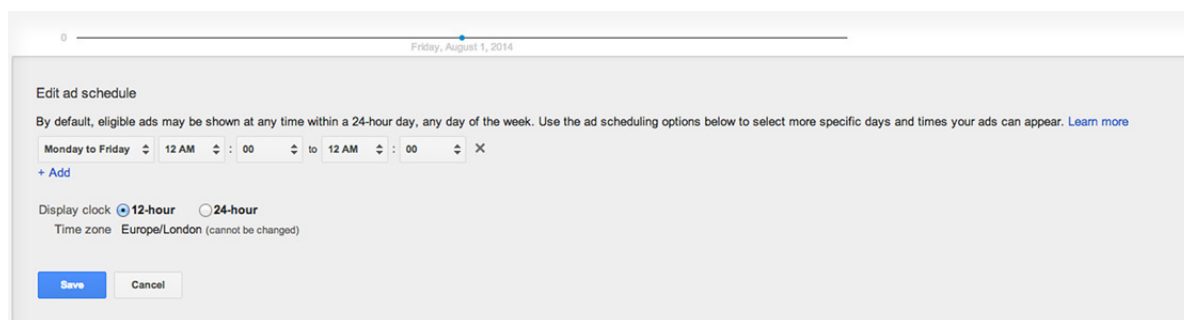


Image: Edit ad schedule

Initially you should probably run your ads at all hours unless there is a good reason not to – e.g. outside of business hours and you get most enquiries over the phone.

Once you have run your ads for a while then you can run a day parting report on the dimensions tab to see which times of the day and days of the week bring the most traffic and conversions and then optimise accordingly.

3. Device Targeting

As discussed earlier, this setting allows you to reduce or increase your bids by device for mobile phones. Therefore if you are not confident about how your website renders on mobile phones then you can bid down. Likewise if you know that you have a great responsive site

and people frequently search for you on their mobile phones then you can increase this bid level.

<input type="checkbox"/> *Device	Bid adj. [?]	Clicks [?]	Impr. [?]	CTR [?]	Avg. CPC [?]	Cost [?]	Avg. Pos. [?]	Converted clicks [?]	Cost / converted click [?]	Click conversion rate [?]	View-through conv. [?]
<input type="checkbox"/> Computers		1	13	7.69%	£0.49	£0.49	2.0	0	£0.00	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile devices with full browsers	-50% <input type="checkbox"/>	2	10	20.00%	£0.16	£0.33	1.2	0	£0.00	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Tablets with full browsers		1	7	14.29%	£0.29	£0.29	1.1	0	£0.00	0.00%	0
Total		4	30	13.33%	£0.28	£1.11	1.5	0	£0.00	0.00%	0

Show rows: 500 1 - 3 of 3

Image: AdWords Device Targeting



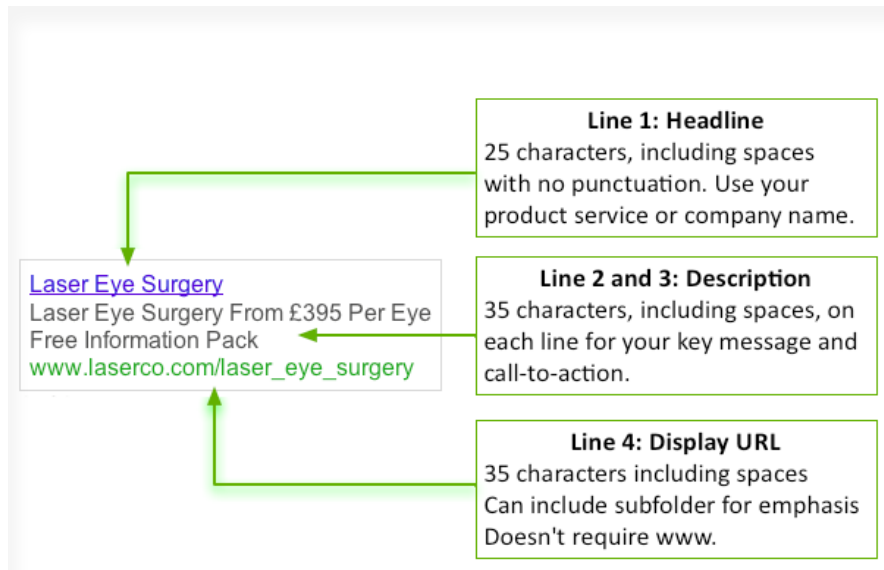
Step 5

Improving your offer and creative

Q. Are our ad copy and offers optimised?

As you've seen, for most search results, there are many ads and many competitors, so cutting through or 'standing out from the crowd' isn't easy. To work for you, your ads must attract attention, reach out to searchers by having the right answer to their needs and offer a great deal.

But in Google AdWords you have just 95 characters to deliver your message and get the click. So you have to use the 95 characters well! They're broken down as follows:



These are the questions to ask about your ads to get the best results. We will structure them within each of the areas you have available giving the tricks and tips to succeed in each. But we will start with the general approaches you should use with your ads.

Delivering relevant ads

Q. Have the ads been designed to increase Quality Score?

We saw in the first section of this report that Quality Score depends on relevant ads containing the same keywords as used by the searcher or very compelling messaging to encourage CTR. So relevance to help increase click-throughs is essential.

Best Practice Tip 30 Include relevant search terms in your creative

It should be obvious, but placing the search terms in the headline and description really helps!

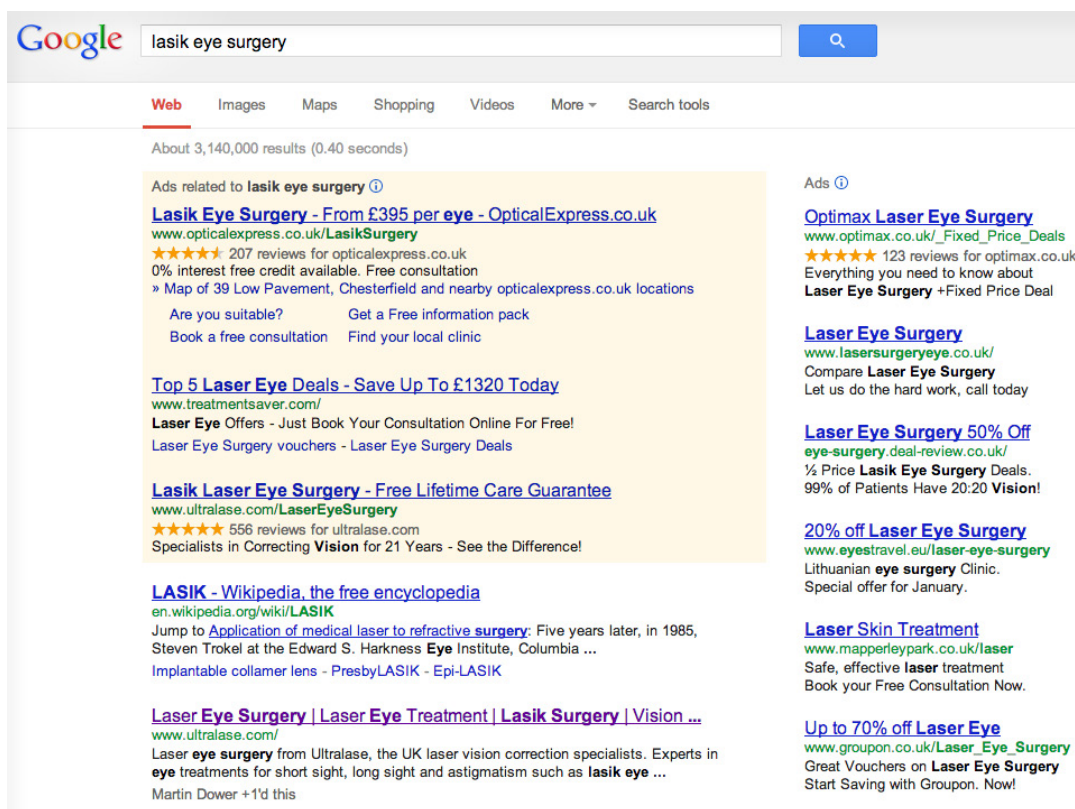
Designing your ads to maximise click-through

Q. Have the ads been designed to maximise CTR?

We know that CTR is an important factor affecting Quality Score, so increasing your CTR should be your main goal as you write and review ads.

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Let's take an example of some ads and then think about if and how they encourage click-through.



Here are some ideas which apply across the whole ad to spark your copywriting ideas and increase click-through:

- ✓ **Be distinctive.** There is a tendency to copy everyone else – don't! But do see what the others are doing as it will help you to understand how to differentiate. Quirky can help, but not at the risk of damaging your brand.
- ✓ **Offer value.** Don't just sell – offer free guides or info packs as with these examples here.
- ✓ **Include specific benefits.** Benefits could include, for example, free delivery, savings or guarantees.
- ✓ **Show trust in the brand.** You can do this through quoting some figures, e.g. 'over 3,000 patients treated this year' or talking about the history of your brand or alternatively using the Google+ social extension.
- ✓ **Use numbers and/or percentages.** Notice how ½ price, 21 years, 70% and £395 stand out.
- ✓ **Use superlatives.** 'Everything' and 'No 1' are the examples of superlatives here.
- ✓ **Use site links.** These are the links below the ads. More on these in a moment.
- ✓ **Include the search keywords in your ads.** These are automatically highlighted in bold and can help draw attention to your ads – it's the copywriting that really counts though!
- ✓ **Use Title case.** Capitalise first letters and use acronyms, but only where appropriate.
- ✓ **Ask questions.** Turning your headline into a question (e.g. "Need Help With AdWords?") will sometimes increase CTR.
- ✓ **Space can be good.** Sometimes relatively short text can have a higher impact.

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- ✔ **Use characters (sensibly):** !, ?, :, &.
- ✔ **Be quirky!** Use distinctive words.

Remember that you shouldn't sacrifice the quality of the visitors, just to increase CTR.

Best Practice Tip 31 Remember you may want to expel some searchers

Consider the balance of encouraging click-through against attracting prospects who are unlikely to convert.

Generally we are aiming to increase CTR to improve Quality Score and so position and volume of clicks. But on the other hand, we don't want to pay for clicks that are unlikely to convert. So another aim of the creative should be to exclude those who aren't qualified prospects of the product. For example, an ad for a premium product could use an indication of cost and quality to avoid price-sensitive searchers clicking on it.

Design ads that are sufficiently engaging and action-oriented

❑ Q. Do the ads follow the AIDA guidelines?

It's not just a question of click-through, your ad has different roles shown by the classic AIDA advertising mnemonic. Your ad should:

- ✔ **Capture Attention** – it should stand out using the techniques we will look at next. The headline is particularly important for this.
- ✔ **Achieve Interest** – this is achieved through making the ad relevant to the user.
- ✔ **Develop Desire** – the ad description text sets expectations about what will be available from the destination site. Your words should set these expectations and the landing page should not disappoint.
- ✔ **Achieve Action** – your ad should encourage people to click (although it can't actually say "click here") and where possible, take action on the destination site.

Follow the editorial guidelines correctly

❑ Q. Have Google's editorial guidelines been followed?

Well, you'll soon be warned if not, but before we look at the detailed tips, here is an easy-to-follow list in non-Google language if you're unfamiliar with them:

- ✔ No repeated punctuation. Single use of exclamation mark (not in headline) is permitted in Google, but ?? or !! aren't!
- ✔ Words cannot be in block capitals unless they are established acronyms, e.g. APR.
- ✔ Words cannot be repeated, e.g. Low, Low Prices.
- ✔ Misspellings will be rejected.
- ✔ Text must be in logical sentence or phrase form and with correct spacing.
- ✔ Words like best, lowest or cheapest are not generally permitted, but may be if they can be supported by independent verification which is indicated on the website.
- ✔ Details on price and promotion in the ad must also be clearly and consistently displayed on the website.
- ✔ Use of trademarks is only permitted by the trademark owner or under some circumstances a reseller or publisher.

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- ✔ Certain ad types, e.g. gambling, alcohol and drugs, firearms, are banned by each network.
- ✔ You cannot use a 'click here' call-to-action or link the description to the display URL using a colon ':'. You can use specific calls to action ("buy direct", "buy now" or "start your free trial", for example).
- ✔ The Display URL must show the actual domain and top level domain (TLD) (.com, .co.uk, etc.) of the landing page. Sub-domains are optional, and you can add any text as a sub-folder to emphasise a keyword or a deal (it doesn't need to be a physical sub-folder). Google will automatically add www. and make your domain all lower case, if you don't.
- ✔ The back button on your website must work. No pop-ups are allowed. The destination URL must be live. The site content must be directly related to the ad and provide sufficient detail.

Make your headings effective

- Q. *Have effective ad headlines been used?*

Let's now look at some specific approaches for the *headline*. Check whether your ad headline:

- Includes the main search terms to maintain a high degree of relevancy
- Conveys a clear benefit
- Uses capitals for each main word in your headline
- Restricts low-intent clickers
- Includes the brand name (optional)
- Uses dynamic headlines (optional)

One big issue to consider is the use of brand name. It's difficult to give a general rule here because it could increase or decrease CTR. Well-known brands in particular can benefit from the use of their brand-term in the headline or description and less well-known brands can develop awareness and encourage visitors to search by brand name.

Dynamic keyword insertion

- Q. *Has the relevance of dynamic headlines been reviewed?*

Dynamic keyword insertion (DKI) is an advanced technique that can be used to make headlines more relevant to the search term and so increase CTR. We describe below how to implement DKI, but generally recommend you avoid using it. If your ad groups are properly structured, you should be able to write highly relevant headlines for your ads without having to rely on DKI to do the job for you.

What is it? Dynamic headlines

Dynamic headlines are a powerful approach to help deliver more relevance to your creative with relatively little effort.

Best Practice Tip 32 Review the relevance of dynamic headlines

In Google, the syntax {Keyword:<Default phrase>} is used to activate this 'dynamic keyword insertion' feature when defining the ad headline or description. This typically results in greater relevance and higher CTRs since the phrase entered matches that typed.

Curly brackets are used in Google AdWords with following syntax:

{Keyword:Laser Eye Treatment}

For example if this headline was displaying for the keyword 'laser eye surgery', then that is what they would see in the headline.

The default phrase specified is used when the term entered is too long to fit in the ad headline.

Because we have capitalised the 'K' and 'W' of '{Keyword:}', the first letter of each word will be displayed in upper case. Similarly using '{keyword:}' would result in no capitalisation and '{Keyword:}' with the capitalisation of only the first letter.

Create effective descriptions

Q. Are we using relevant ad descriptions?

Techniques for the two lines of the ad description are similar to the headline, but you have a little more space to play with.

- Include the most common keywords in the ad group which most frequently trigger the ad.
- Emphasise your proposition including key benefits.
- Relate to the needs of your audience.
- Try to squeeze in a call to action.
- Use title casing
- Consider punctuating the end of line 1 with a full stop, exclamation mark, or question mark in order to enable extended headlines.

Best Practice Tip 33 Using extended headlines

Extended headlines can emphasise your offer or brand as the next example explains.

When you set up your ads you write them with a headline and then two lines of description text. This is a hangover from the days when ads appeared in the right hand sidebar and used that three line format. Now that all the ads appear on the left of the page, either above or below the organic results, When ads appear on the left hand side above the organic results, Google automatically adjusts the layout of the ads in order to make them wide enough for the available space.



There are two different ways the ads can be reformatted.

In the first of the above examples, what started out as Line 1 of the description (underlined in red) has been moved up to form part of the headline.

In the second example, the headline has been extended by adding the domain name onto the end of it, and the two lines of description have been run together to form one long line of description. Again, what was originally Line 1 has been underlined in red to illustrate what we mean.

The first version, with the extended headline, gives an opportunity to display some much stronger ad copy in the headline and so usually results in higher CTRs.

In order to get the longer ('extended') headline you simply need to include punctuation at the end of line 1. So if you have two short points to make, one of them can be incorporated into the bolder formatted headline link, which can be particularly valuable for long keyword strings.

Use effective display URLs

- Q. *Have relevant ad display URLs been used?*

The display URL is the least prominent part of the ad creative, but some searchers glance at it for reputation according to the eyetracking. Some techniques you can apply are:

- Include a sub-folder (does not have to correspond to a real directory label) that reflects the keyword, implying to the user that this page is especially relevant, and helping with Quality Score.
- Use capitalisation in the sub-folder (Google will automatically lower any attempt to do so within your domain).

Many of the examples above use these techniques.

Use ad extensions

- Q. *Have all relevant Ad extensions been reviewed?*

What is it? Ad extensions

Ad extensions are a way of enhancing the content of your ad copy to increase your share of the results page and CTR.

Ad extensions can be found in their own tab within the AdWords interface. Most can be added from here although some require interaction with another Google product (e.g. Location Extensions requires Google MyBusiness to be set up for your business location). The full details of the set up setup of each ad extension can be found within the AdWords Help Centre.²¹

- Q. *Are we deploying Ad Sitelinks and all other relevant ad extensions correctly?*

Sitelinks are additional links that may be eligible to appear beneath your main ad copy.

Sitelinks can be shown in two columns (with or without description text) or one line (always without description). How many links are shown and in what format usually depends on your ad's Quality Score and relevancy (hence you're only really likely to see the two column format with descriptions for branded searches).

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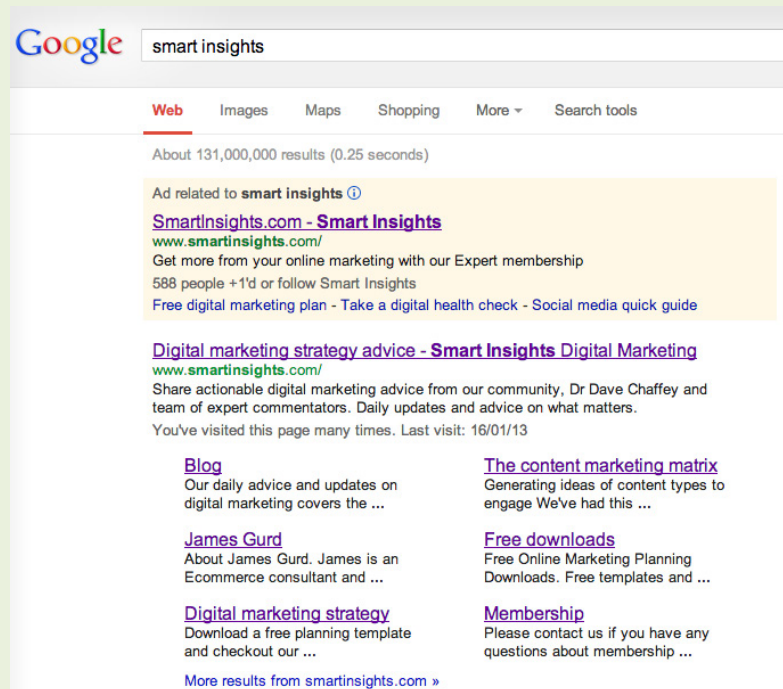
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²¹ [Google Ad Extension Setup](#).

What is it? Ad Sitelinks

Additional links available at the end of the creative when ads are displayed at the top or bottom of the natural listings. They are only available when Quality Score is sufficiently high and are most commonly seen/used for brand terms.



This brand term example shows how the AdWords sitelink add to the natural sitelinks through promoting the Expert membership. This is partly to reduce regular visitors clicking who are interested in standard content such as the blog.

This example also includes a 'Social Extension' showing Followers or +1s as social proof.

Your sitelinks are set up at campaign level or ad group level, along with other ad extensions. This means exactly how flexible you can be with them will depend on your campaign and ad group structure. We would recommend always setting up sitelinks if possible.

One interesting thing about sitelinks is that the proportion of people who click on them is not that high, but ads with sitelinks will see an increased CTR for the main headline, so try and think of them more like an additional space for compelling ad copy, rather than a navigation aid for your customers (for example try using benefits and USPs such as 'Up To 20% Off' and 'Free Delivery' pointing to your offers page and shipping details page, rather than simply listing out product categories).

Some examples of sitelinks of different lengths in different formats are shown by the red arrows in the screenshot below:

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Official Optical Express
 Ad www.opticalexpress.co.uk/OpticalExpress ▾
 Book Your Free Consultation At One Of Our Nationwide Clinics Today.
 Advanced Laser Technology · Affordable Options · Comprehensive Aftercare
 “The UK’s number one provider of laser eye surgery” – **Bowls Scotland**
 Optical Express has 220 followers on Google+

➔ **Check If You’re Suitable**
 Find Out If You’re Suitable Online
 Short Or Long Sighted. Astigmatism

➔ **Find Your Local Clinic**
 UK Eye Clinics Nationwide
 Laser Eye Surgery, IOL & iScan

Laser: Are You Suitable?
 1 Million Surgeries Carried
 Out Worldwide By UK’s No.1

Request an Infopack
 Get a Free Infopack: Online Or Post
 Free Laser Brochure, Find Out More

£395 Laser Eye Surgery - Optimax.co.uk
 Ad <http://www.optimax.co.uk/£395PriceMatch> ▾
 4.6 ★★★★★ rating for optimax.co.uk
 Laser Eye Surgery Price Match Newer Lasers, Longer Established
 Free Consultation · Free Info Pack and DVD

➔ **Special Offers - Find Your Local Clinic - Book a Free Consultation - Am I Suitable?**
 📍 **Portland House, Bressenden Place, London - 0844 576 5015**

Laser Eye Surgery | Optical Express - The UK’s No. 1 Provider
<https://www.opticalexpress.co.uk/laser-eye-surgery.html> ▾
 ★★★★★ Rating: 93% - 50,350 reviews
 Laser Eye Surgery with Optical Express, the UK’s No.1 laser eye treatment
 provider. Affordable iDesign iLASIK laser correction: 20/20 vision or better ...

➔ **Prices & Finance - Are You Suitable? - Treatments Available - Top 10 Questions**

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❑ Q. Do all your campaigns make use of Callout Extensions?

Callout Extensions are a relatively new feature of AdWords, which were introduced in 2014. Similarly to Sitelinks they enable you to display extra benefits and USPs underneath the main body of your ad. However, unlike Sitelinks, Callouts are not clickable.

Everyone should be using sitelinks and callouts, but Google has a range of other ad extensions, and which ones are relevant to you will mostly depend on your individual business requirements. We’ve provided some specific examples below based on industry, but all of these are available to any advertiser – so for example anyone with a specific physical outlet should use location extensions.

Retail: rating (yellow), phone (purple), social (green), offers (not shown), location (brown), seller reviews (pink), sitelinks (grey), callouts (red).

Buy Phase Eight Dresses - Discover New Season Arrivals
 Ad <http://www.johnlewis.com/dresses> ▾
 Free Click & Collect at John Lewis

Free Delivery over £50 · Free Click and Collect · New In SS15 · Explore More

Ratings: Selection 10/10 - Delivery 9.5/10 - Service 9.5/10 - Website 9/10

📍 **Brent Cross Shopping Centre, London** - 020 8202 6535

Occasion Dresses Cocktail Dresses
 Top Rated Black Dresses

T.M.Lewin™ Shirts - 4 Shirts from £100 - TMLewin.co.uk
 Ad <http://www.tml Lewin.co.uk/Shirts>
 4.6 ★★★★★ rating for tml Lewin.co.uk
 Free Click & Collect & 3 Month Guarantee!
 T.M.Lewin has 436 followers on Google+
 Casual Shirts - John Francomb Shirts - Evening Shirts - London Shirts - Exclusive
 Unit 18 Canada Square, London - 020 7519 6292

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2 Set goals



3 Improve your campaign



4 Improving where your ads appear



5 Improving your offer



6 Get your bidding and budgeting right



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Travel: Location (brown), rating (not shown), phone (if no location).

Map for hotels in cardiff

Cardiff Hotels £67
www.mercure.com/Winter_2012-13
 Enjoy up to 40% off when you book your Mercure Hotel stay this Winter
 24 Newport Road, Cardiff
 029 2043 5000 - [Directions](#)

B2B or lead generation: Phone (not shown), email submission (blue).

Jobs In Recruitment - HR recruitment professional?
jobs.personneltoday.com/Recruitment
 Find your next position today.

[Privacy](#)

Use Structured Snippets where appropriate

Structured snippets are a new form of ad extension introduced since the last edition of this guide was produced. Introduced in August 2015 and then enhanced in December 2015, they provide up to two additional lines of text underneath your main ad copy. This extra text can be used to highlight key aspects of your products or services.

For example, if you were a training company showing an ad about your social media courses, you could use structured snippets to show an extra line underneath the ad like this:

Courses: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

In this example, the word “courses” is what’s known as a header. There are lots of headers to choose from, such as brands, models, styles, types, destinations, etc. A full list can be found [here](#).

Clearly not all of these will be appropriate for every type of advertiser but, if they are, you can set them up in your AdWords account and Google will display up to structured snippets per advert.

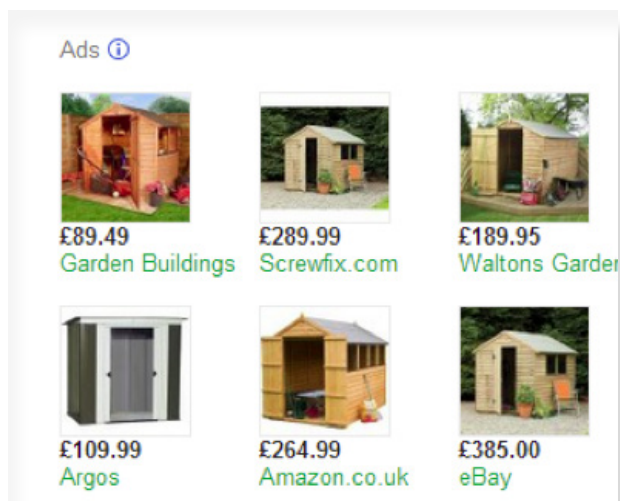
Structured snippets allow you to give people more information about your products or services than you can fit into the standard ad copy. And by increasing the relevance and prominence of your ads they are likely to increase CTR.

Product listing ads (PLAs)

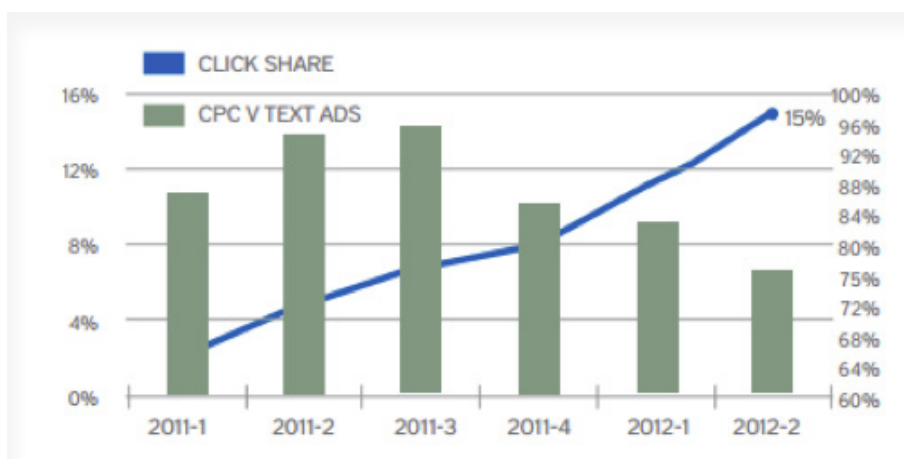
Product listing ads are the ads with images that you often see in the top right-hand corner of the results or between the organic and paid listings at the top of the page.

Best Practice Tip 34 Review relevance of product listing ads (PLAs)

PLAs should now be considered essential additions to any retailer's AdWords campaigns.



These ads have become increasingly important to retailers, and are slowly accounting for more and more non-brand retail clicks. At the same time the cost of clicks on PLAs is significantly cheaper than the cost of clicks on standard text ads. Share of non-branded clicks taken by PLAs and their comparative cost:²²

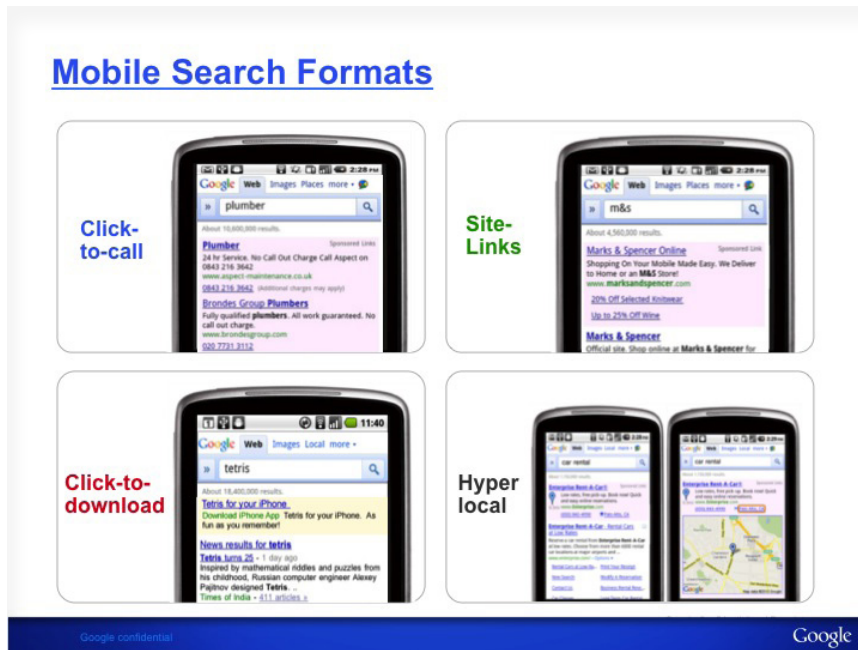


Ad extensions for mobile devices

Your mobile ad copy should also use ad extensions.

Mobile ads can also be given click-to-download functionality, enabling visitors to directly download your app from the relevant device marketplace. Here are some examples of ad extensions appearing on mobile devices.

²² [IAB: PLA trends.](#)



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1. Call Extension

Call Extensions are used to display your phone number next to your ad on desktop devices. This is a great way to include your phone number without eating into the 95 characters available for your main ad copy.

Call Extensions on mobile devices are enabled with click-to-call, which means the searcher can phone you simply by clicking on the “Call” button within your ad. This is a quick and easy way to drive calls and is one of the most effective ways to connect to your consumers. Using this feature can increase CTR by 30%.

For PPC campaigns, unless your call centre is manned 24/7, you should limit your phone ad extensions to call centre opening times by using the scheduling option in the advanced section of the Call Extension setup window.

If you use a Google forwarding number to track how many people call you direct from your ads, then calls can be counted as conversions within AdWords. And as of June 2014 you can even create rules about the values of different calls.

For many businesses, not all phone calls are valued the same. There are now flexible controls for mobile click-to-call ads to help drive the calls that are most valuable to your business.

It is possible to assign conversion values to different call conversion types to understand which keywords and ads are generating more valuable phone calls. For example, a local bank might assign more value to a 10-minute call about opening a new savings account than a 30-second call enquiring about branch hours.

By applying different values to different phone call conversions (and other conversions) you can then use Target ROAS along with automated keyword bidding rules to automatically push budget to the keywords that drive the more important phone calls.

2. Click-to-download mobile app

For retailers with apps to promote, Google’s click-to-download feature allows you to download links to iTunes or Google Play. Handset detection software plays a critical role here, filtering iOS/Android traffic to the right app store automatically. Users simply click the link for the correct app.

3. Sitelinks

As explained above Sitelinks (the links below the main call to action at the top of ad) are an effective way for retailers to provide shoppers with additional options or offers to direct their click into site. This option would take more real estate on the site results page, thereby increasing the chance of click through.

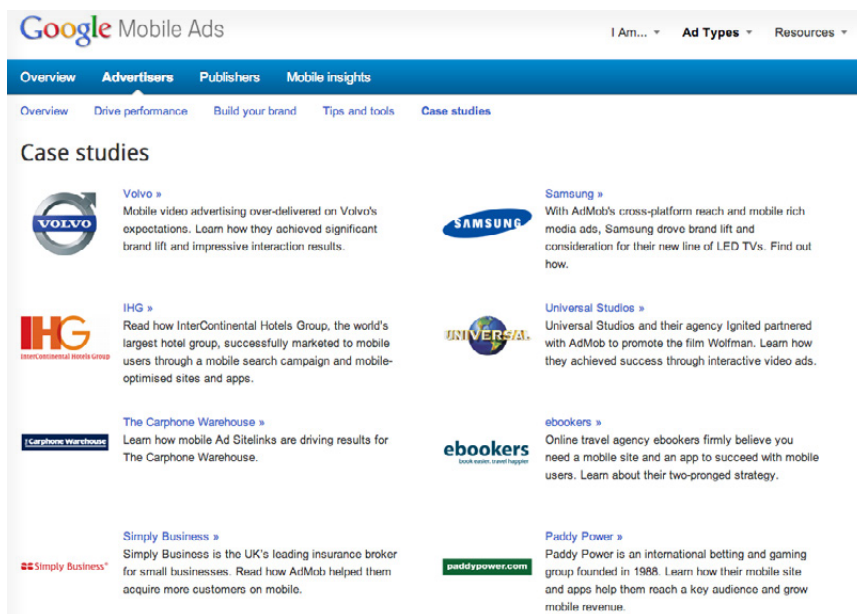
4. Callout extensions

Callouts (see above) can be used in mobile ads as well. If you have callouts which are more relevant to mobile users than desktop users then you can tick the “mobile” box when you create these callouts so as they will be given preference when someone sees your ad on a mobile device.

5. Location

We would argue that geo-location is the most significant difference between PC and mobile search, and should result in a reallocation of retailers’ mobile search budgets following testing. According to Jonathan Abraham, Google’s Industry Head, Mobile, 85 percent of UK mobile users seek local information, and 81 percent take action after looking. This presents a significant opportunity for retailers aiming to drive footfall who should use location extensions to promote local details within Google+ and Microsoft Bing.

If you’re making the case for mobile ads we recommend these case studies showing the benefits and ad formats used.²³



Use ad testing effectively

Remember that what works for one advertiser, or even one keyword, may not work for another. The best way to create good ad copy is to continually test and learn. We’ll cover this in Step 7.

Google Shopping (formerly Product Listing Ads, PLAs)

Product listing ads are the ads with images that you often see in the top right hand corner of the results or between the organic and paid listings at the top of the page. They are now managed through Google Shopping campaigns.

²³ [Google Mobile AdWords case studies.](#)

Best Practice Tip 35 Review relevance of Product Listing Ads (PLAs)

PLAs should now be considered essential additions to any retailer's AdWords campaigns.

These ads have become increasingly important to retailers, and are slowly accounting for more and more non-brand retail clicks.

It is important to take the time to structure your shopping campaigns properly so that you have full visibility of the performance of each of your products.

We recommend you have one ad group for each product. This is because when you run a search query report to understand the search terms that triggered your ads to show, unless you have an ad group for each product there is no way to see which product was triggered by the search query.

An alternative to setting up Google Shopping campaigns is to use the [Google AdWords API](#) to manage your shopping campaigns at bulk.

Think about the landing page experience

We will not cover landing page design and planning in detail here as it is a huge subject in it's own right that we cover in other guides on design and UX. However; any guide to PPC must make a mention of the importance of good quality and relevant landing pages.

Google openly state that landing page experience is a key part of the quality score formula so therefore plays an important part in how your ads rank and much you pay for each click.

Google look at the content of the page itself and the relevance of that page to the keywords and ad text but more importantly they look at the experience that actual users have on your pages.

For example if a user enters your site and then goes straight back to Google to carry out another search then this is known as a re-search and is a negative signal as it tells Google that your page did not answer the users question/concerns for the query that they ran.

Marketing Mobile Apps

Many businesses now produce mobile apps to help their customers interact with them better online.

Google AdWords allows advertisers to directly market their apps through the AdMob network in a few ways.

This is what Google stated they can do:

- 1. For businesses looking to promote app installs on the AdMob network**, we'll enable you to reach people who are your most likely customers, based on the apps they use, the frequency of use and the types of in-app purchases they make. For example, if you exercise regularly and use an app to measure how far you run, you might see an ad for an app that helps you measure the foods you eat and calories consumed. On YouTube, we're enabling app installs as an enhancement to the current TrueView offering.
- 2. Easier re-engagement:** Over 80% of downloaded apps are used only once and then deleted. Lots of businesses are able to get their apps onto a device, but might never see their customer again. Today we announced a new app re-engagement campaign type in AdWords for both search and display so that consumers can be taken directly into already-installed apps. For example, if someone has the HotelTonight app installed on their phone and searches for "hotels in San Francisco" on Google.com, they can go directly to the specific page in HotelTonight about SF hotels, instead of being taken to the app's main landing page.

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As you can see these developments allow for far more accurate targeting of mobile users, and if used properly will cut down on any wasted ad spend.

Google+ Page Ads

With the recent growth of native advertising – ads that are meant to seamlessly work within and complement pieces of content, we have seen more and more opportunities for paid content promotion. Google+ Page Ads are Google’s answer to Facebook newsfeed ads.

In order to be eligible to run +Page Ads you need to meet a threshold of at least 1000 followers on your Google+ page.

+Page Ads can be used to promote products and services that have a unique twist to them, but typically they are best for promoting content in order to give it a good start in the social sphere so typically this is a tool that will tie in with your content marketing/SEO strategy.

+Post Ads are created within Google+ on your post pages rather than in AdWords so you will need to go to your page there to get started. [Here are the instructions.](#)



Step 6

Get your bidding and budgeting right

- ❑ Q. *Has the budgeting strategy been reviewed?*

We now have our account set up to target searchers with the most relevant ads possible. Of course, we need to get the very most use from our budget and set our investment at the right level. This will be controlled by our **AdWords budgeting strategy** which we cover in this section.

What is it? Budgeting strategy

Budgeting strategy involves setting the right level of investment in paid search and allocation of this budget between the different paid search networks and the campaign components within the structure of the account.

Define your cost per acquisition

- ❑ Q. *Has the cost per acquisition been defined for different products and services in each campaign?*

More specifically, within AdWords, our budgeting strategy requires setting a realistic daily budget for each campaign. As with other marketing campaign investments, budgeting strategy should be controlled through setting an **allowable cost per acquisition**.

What is it? Allowable cost per acquisition

How much you can afford to spend to acquire a lead or customer.

To calculate the cost per acquisition depends on the conversion rate to sale and the profitability obtained from the activity.

The formula you should use relates the *cost per acquisition* (or cost per primary action, CPA; or cost per outcome, CPO) to the *conversion rate*:

$$\text{Cost per acquisition} = \frac{100 * \text{cost per click}}{\text{Site conversion rate \%}}$$

So if the conversion rate from click to sale is, say five percent, then the cost of acquisition will be 20 times the cost per click. For a cost per click of \$1, the allowable CPA is \$20.

If you're new to AdWords be careful not to base your anticipated conversion rate on all visits since this will include people who know your brand. Instead look at a similar type of traffic.

Best Practice Tip 36 Use non-brand organic search traffic to estimate your conversion rate

Non-brand search traffic from the natural listings is a good proxy for paid search conversion if you don't have anything to compare against.

For a retailer, a more realistic approach takes into account the gross margin and average order value to derive a *ROI*. The ROI formula for an individual keyword is:

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{Revenue} - \text{cost of goods sold}}{\text{Costs}}$$

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Expanding this formula gives:

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{[(\text{Conversion rate} * \text{Average order value}) - (\text{Conversion rate} * \text{Average order value} * (100 - \text{gross margin})) - \text{Cost per click}]}{\text{Cost per click}}$$

Since the number of clicks doesn't directly impact the return on investment (it simply affects the level of sales), the number of clicks is safely removed from the calculation.

Setting allowable CPA for non-transactional sites

Where sites are not selling products, but instead are used to generate brand awareness or leads, it is less straightforward to calculate a target CPC or allowable CPA. However, an effort should still be made to calculate an allowable CPA for a lead or other value events such as email registration.

To do this, a nominal value has to be attributed to each value event, e.g. £20 per qualified lead, £2 per email address, £0.50 for a whitepaper download. These can be combined in a scoring system which effectively creates an 'average order value' across all events and there will also be a conversion rate to each event so a target CPC can then be calculated.

Another way of looking at setting CPA, for a lead-based business is based on the value of leads and how much you are prepared to invest in generating future leads. If each new customer is worth £100 to your business and you're looking to grow the business aggressively, so you're willing to plough back say 70 percent of that value into driving new business, then a target lead CPA can be calculated by:

$$5\% * £100 * 70\% = £3.50/\text{lead}$$

Should I use converted clicks or conversions?

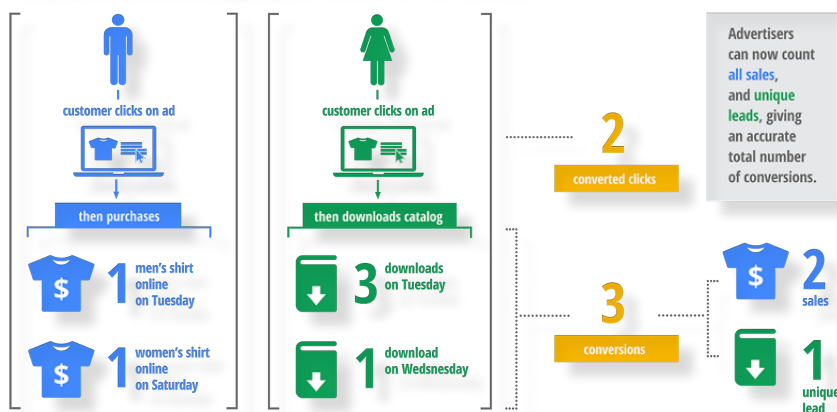
In AdWords there are 2 basic measurements of a conversion:

- 1) Converted clicks – maximum of 1 conversion per click.
- 2) Conversions – can include multiple conversions for one visit.

This graphic from form Google explains this clearly:

TAKE CONTROL OF HOW YOU COUNT CONVERSIONS

Berkeley T-shirts wants to count two different kinds of conversions in AdWords: sales and leads. They would like to count every sale driven by AdWords and unique leads like a download of one of their many catalogs.



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We have found that the variance in conversions and converted clicks differs a lot by business so it is a good idea to look into this variance as on the one hand you want to give value to the keywords that are bringing in leads as well as sales whereas on the other hand you do not want to overvalue certain keywords.

Generally speaking most AdWords accounts have a minority of keywords that convert so it is worth using conversions rather than converted clicks as that way all value is taken into consideration.

Define your maximum CPC

Q. Has a maximum CPC been defined for different products and services in each campaign?

Once you have defined allowable CPA you can make sure the maximum CPC is defined which is what you will use in AdWords.

Estimating target CPC

You can use the Goal Seeking facility in MS Excel to find the maximum CPC required for a target ROI.

Figures in bold are usually fixed for a given campaign, and we simply want to vary the CPC to reach a target ROI:

PPC what-if analysis	
Average order value	£50.00
Margin	40%
Site conversion rate	2%
Variable = cost per click	£0.60
Target ROI	-33%

To achieve a target ROI of 20 percent, the suggested answer is to use a maximum CPC of £0.33:

PPC what-if analysis	
Average order value	£50.00
Margin	40%
Site conversion rate	2%
Variable = cost per click	£0.33
Target ROI	20%

An alternative way to estimate allowable CPC

A simpler way to estimate the acceptable CPC is to calculate the value of an average visitor. This is dependent on average order value and how many people convert to sale (conversion rate for this product). This ignores the margin, but simplifies the calculation:

$$\text{Average visitor value} = \text{Average order value} * \text{Conversion rate} \%$$

For the preceding example, this gives a visitor value of £1.00 (£50 * 2%). Thus you can afford to pay up to £1.00 in CPC fees.

Note: This does not take margin into account, which means a lower CPC is required. As a rule of thumb, some say the *value delivered* should be at least twice the CPC, implying a maximum CPC of 50p in this example.

In actual fact, including the margin is straightforward. The equation becomes:

$$\text{Average visitor value} = \text{Average order value} * \text{Margin} * \text{Conversion rate} \%$$

So in this example, Average visitor value = 60p

Different products and services will convert at different rates and will have different margins; it is therefore important to manage bidding on as granular level as possible. There are automated rules that you can put in place to simplify this process.

Set daily budgets at the right level

Q. *Is the daily budget set at the right level?*

As you'll know, each campaign has a daily budget. The aim should be to achieve full delivery at the level you can afford, i.e. your ads are displayed all the time.

To set a realistic daily budget, you could use the search volume estimations from the Keyword Planner or use impression share data from live accounts to work out the potential number of impressions (and hence clicks you'll receive) per day.

A simple formula suggests a daily budget as follows:

Daily budget = Average CPC (campaign) * Estimated number of clicks from campaign

Best Practice Tip 37 Avoid under-budgeting

Avoid under-budgeting where your ads aren't displayed throughout the day because the daily bid for the campaign is too low. Google has tools on a recommended daily budget.

Define listing position strategy

Q. *Are we targeting the right positions for each ad?*

Through targeting specific positions in the sponsored listings such as top 2 or 3–4 for specific phrases you can balance your click volume against your costs to make best use of your budget.

Your listing position for a given keyword changes dynamically as you compete with other advertisers. It is usually expressed as an average like 2.6 to reflect how it varies through time and for the different searches that trigger a math. Across different day parts according to match types used, these give an average position.

A listing position strategy defines a target position you want to achieve based on a combination of your objectives and the cost of advertising on that keyword. The maximum CPC you set for different ad groups or keywords will determine your listing position.

Best Practice Tip 38 Set maximum CPC for individual keywords

If the performance of keywords within an ad group varies significantly, then you will be best varying your maximum CPC for poorer performing keywords (with lower conversion rates or higher costs per conversion).

Bidding recommendations

1. To meet volume targets, it will be necessary to target the top few positions since CTR declines dramatically with lower positions, as this chart from Compete shows²⁴. But, of course, you will need to check these are within your range for target CPC/CPA.

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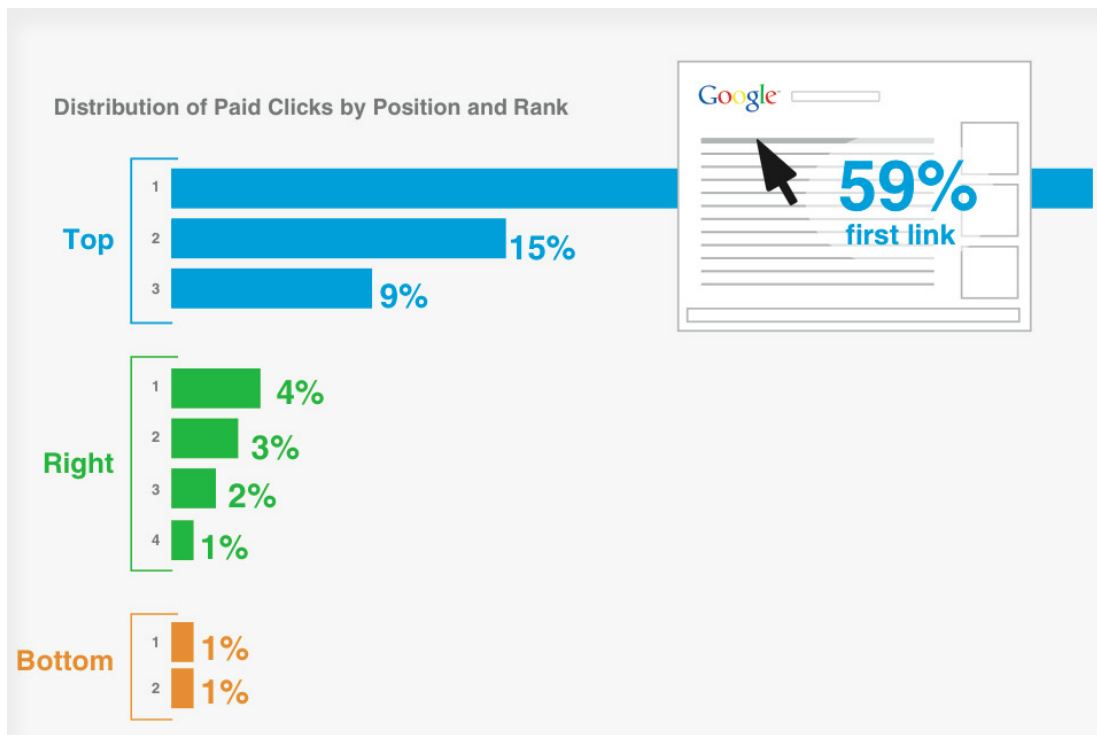
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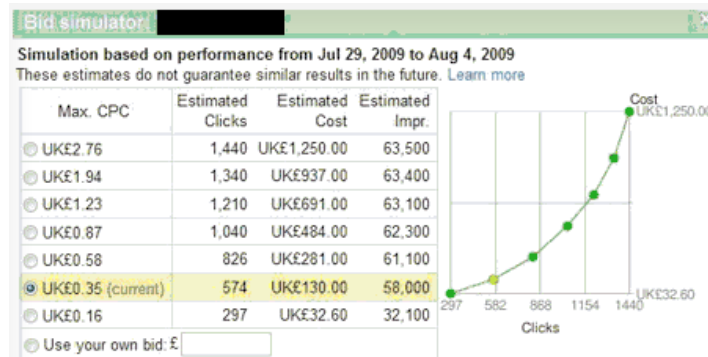
²⁴ [Compete Whitepaper based on 10s of millions of searches to a US consumer panel in 2011.](#)



Google has a tool within AdWords called the 'bid simulator' which can help you see what volumes you might achieve at different positions once your keywords are up and running.

Best Practice Tip 39 Use Google's tools to review which positions drive results for you

Tools include the Bid Simulator and the 'Top vs Other' segment.



- 2. There will always be debate about how much conversion rate varies by ad position. The most convincing and recent studies suggest that it's not significant, but it's very difficult to conclusively prove one way or the other (only Google would have the volume of data required to do so, and obviously it would not be in their interest to promote bidding for a lower position if this was the case). You should check the data in your account and see if you can see any benefits to bidding for a particular position, as opposed to bidding to achieve the most volume you can afford.
- 3. You could also use Campaign Experiments²⁵ to test whether adjusting your bids will have an impact on rankings and/or conversions. Campaign Experiments are a way of split testing and trying out changes before you commit to applying them to your entire campaign. As Google themselves say, Campaign Experiments are "like putting a bit of hot sauce on just part of your meal, [and they] give you a taste of the results so that you can figure out whether you want to pour on the heat".

²⁵ [Google Campaign Experiments](#)

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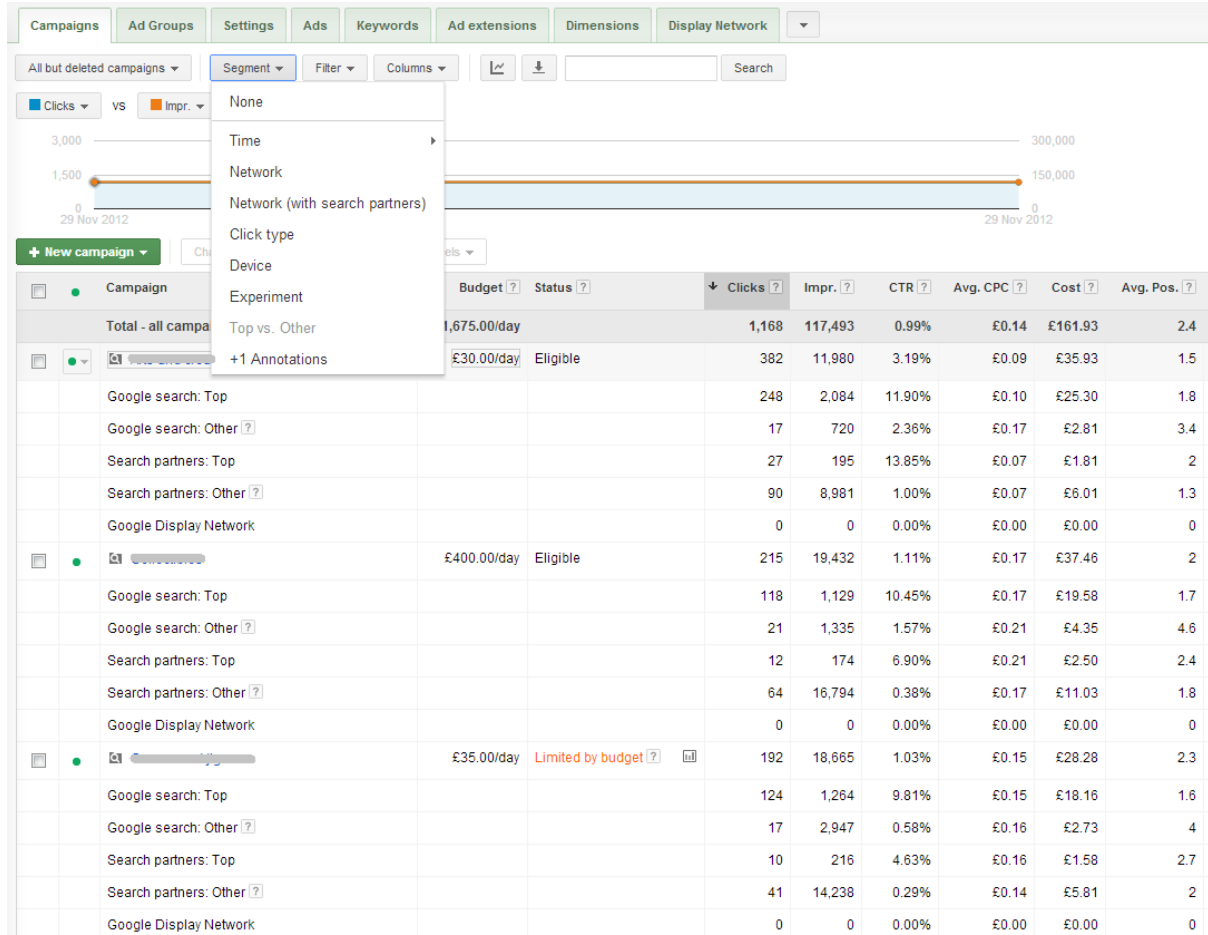
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- 4. For any search on Google, it may be that 0, 1, 2, or 3, or 4 ads are displayed above the natural listings, so the ad that will appear on the top right will vary. This is because, for ads to be above the natural listings they must meet a minimum Quality Score compared to other ads triggered by the keyword. You cannot simply 'Buy Your Way to the Top'. This will impact the CTR you achieve from the same position in different landscapes. Google helps you visualise this through the 'Top vs Other' segment in the AdWords account.



Best Practice Tip 40 Review how competitive your bids are

Use the Auction Insights tool to see your bid relative to competitors.

You may also want to look at the competitive landscape for a keyword using the Auction Insights report.

This report shows you which competitors are bidding on the same keywords as you and how your impression share compares to theirs.

It is not a tool to make bidding decisions on as it has no relation to ROI but it is interesting to see who you are competing against and how aggressive they are on various keywords.

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Display url domain ?	Impression share ?	Avg. position ?	Overlap rate ?	Position above rate ?	Top of page rate ?
sofabedworld.co.uk	90.29%	2.8	91.60%	80.15%	62.43%
dfs.co.uk	81.93%	2.6	84.34%	79.69%	55.48%
sofa.com	75.86%	3.4	81.71%	67.04%	43.38%
sofabed-collection.co.uk	75.08%	4.9	77.21%	51.04%	5.98%
You	72.66%	4.8	—	—	12.88%
debenhams.com	51.68%	3.8	59.71%	65.78%	42.33%
darlingsofchelsea.co.uk	50.79%	6.4	52.94%	26.25%	5.86%
nabru.co.uk	43.59%	7.7	48.22%	17.30%	2.78%
johnlewis.com	43.47%	6	49.84%	38.60%	13.97%
made.com	35.53%	5.4	32.63%	50.38%	21.01%
fashionforhome.co.uk	34.35%	8	38.59%	8.18%	0.34%
sofa-company.co.uk	32.87%	7.1	34.90%	24.07%	0.82%
sofaland.com	27.20%	8.5	28.91%	10.41%	0.11%
furniturevillage.co.uk	20.30%	8.8	22.70%	5.60%	0.42%
sofabedgallery.co.uk	18.04%	8.7	16.27%	11.83%	0.34%
sainsburys.co.uk	16.03%	5.6	19.63%	41.42%	2.03%
dreams.co.uk	11.23%	3.7	9.04%	68.83%	31.85%
marksandspencer.com	< 10%	8.2	8.04%	7.83%	0.25%

In order to see this data follow these steps:

1. Go to the keywords tab.
2. Select a date range of more than one week.
3. Click the 'Filter' button above your statistics table.
4. Click 'Create filter'.
5. Click the dropdown menu in the panel that appears to see a list of conditions for new filters. Select 'Auction Insights' and click the circle next to 'Available'. (Click 'Unavailable' to create a filter for keywords which haven't yet had enough activity for an Auction insights report.)
6. Save this new filter by checking the 'Save filter' box and clicking 'Apply'. The table automatically updates to show you your keywords with available Auction Insights reports.

Find the Auction insights reports for your keywords

1. Click the box next to the keyword you're interested in.
2. Click the 'Keyword details' box at the top of the statistics table.
3. In the dropdown menu, click 'Auction insights' (Selected). You will now see a table like the one shown above with the insights for that keyword.

* A word of warning – when you see this data always think about why Google has provided it; yes it is interesting data but the reason they provide the data is because it triggers a competitive spirit. They want you to bid more aggressively, and so that's one reason, they share this data with you. Ensure that you bid based on common sense, data driven rules rather than subjective, emotional reasons!

It may help to be more rational to use the Google Bid Simulator²⁶ which shows you estimates of the clicks, costs and impressions over the last seven days if you had set a different maximum CPC.

- 4. There are times when you may want to ignore CPAs and bid as aggressively as possible so you appear top. Branded terms are the most obvious example of this, but it also may be the case when you're using AdWords to support another campaign, perhaps offline exposure that drives people to search for your product/service. Don't forget to view search as part of the marketing mix and assign additional budget to your PPC campaigns when planning for advertising spend in this way (and don't expect this additional budget to perform as well as your standard, ROI-driven paid search). However, you should be cautious of chasing 'vanity keywords' simply because the CEO

²⁶ [Google Bid Simulator Help](#)

believes you should always be number 1 for your industry's top volume search term, as it won't help how the value of search is perceived in the long run.

- ✓ 5. Using a keyword portfolio strategy can help you afford to bid higher on some competitive keywords whilst staying within your ROI goals and managing the portfolio. This can be achieved through use of Bid Management Tools.

There are many third-party bid management tools on the market. A detailed analysis of each one is outside of the scope of this document, but Google does offer a number of solutions for automating bidding within AdWords itself, such as Conversion Optimiser or more hands on are automated rules.

Use the Conversion Optimiser to maximise response

- Q. *Have we reviewed the AdWords Conversion Optimiser or other bid management tools?*

The Conversion Optimiser is an AdWords feature that optimises position in the ad auction to avoid unprofitable clicks and gets you as many profitable clicks as possible.

With the Conversion Optimiser, you bid using a maximum CPA, which is the most you're willing to pay for each conversion (such as a purchase or a sign-up), or a target CPA, which is the average amount you'd like to pay for a conversion.

Be wary when using Conversion Optimiser or any of the other automated or enhanced bidding options in AdWords. When you use these you are effectively handing Google your wallet and letting it spend your money as it thinks best. Some people would liken this to leaving a fox in charge of the chicken coup!

Strategy Recommendation 14 Review the use of bid management tools to get more returns from your campaigns

There are also more sophisticated bid management tools that are available from third-party providers which you should consider if you are investing thousands a month within AdWords.

Attributing value to the whole customer journey

- Q. *How are we attributing success to our keywords?*

Within AdWords and Google Analytics the value of the conversion is given by default to the last click. That means that, if the customer visits the site three times using three different keywords only the final one will be credited for the sale. Does this mean that the keyword that first introduced the customer to the site, or the keyword that they used whilst refining their purchase decision weren't important parts of the sale process? Calculating your keyword bid by using last click data effectively makes that the case and you may see the conversion numbers actually drop as less people join the start of the conversion process.

Google helps you to go beyond the last click with a couple of tools. The search funnels reporting section within AdWords allows you to quickly analyse conversions by the first click as well as the last click. You can also see an individual campaign/ad group/keywords 'assisted conversions', or how many times it was used in the path to conversion.

The most interesting reports are the path reports, which give detail into exactly how a customer reached the conversion. These can help you get an idea of exactly how your customers research their investment in your proposition, so you can take steps to optimise both your copy and your landing pages accordingly, especially if you have a long lead time between first interaction and sale.

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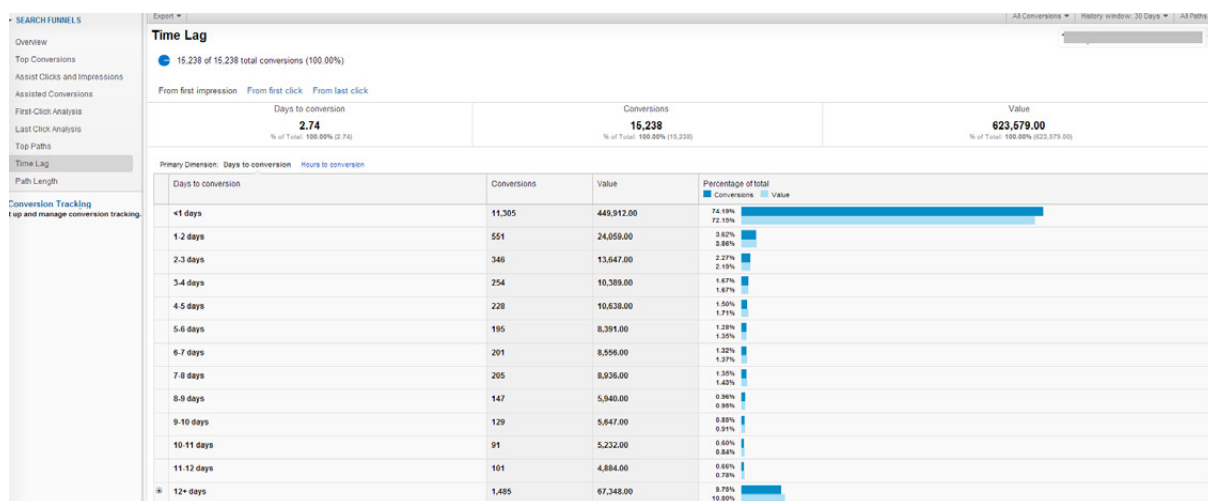
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Not sure how long your average lead time is? There's also a useful 'Time Lag' report to help you with this:



Within Google Analytics you can also see 'multi-channel funnels', which helps you to get the same information for your other marketing campaigns, and discover how PPC interacts with SEO, email, affiliate, or any other digital channel. We discuss this, and attributing success across these different touch points, in Step 7.

Bids and budgets for mobile devices

Allocating bids and budgets for different devices should, obviously, be handled separately. However don't forget that some people may interact with your website across multiple devices in a way that's very difficult to track. Combining this with the different intent people have when using different devices means that the 'value' picture you build up based on pure online ROI may not be as accurate as you think. Consider how your customers use mobile in the purchase chain and bid accordingly, rather than simply based on how many direct sales it drives.

Bid using automated rules

As we mentioned above it is possible to automatically adjust your bids based on certain performance factors in AdWords. This can be done based on a CPA, by ad positions, average CPCs, or many other individual factors or combinations of factors.

There are many uses for automated rules in AdWords but we will only be focusing on using automated rules to manage keyword level bidding.

If you have a clear target CPA set at either an account or a campaign level then you can set up rules based on this through combining with other factors – we will give an example in a minute.

How to set up an automated bidding rule

1. On the keywords tab, click on 'automate' and then select 'Change max. CPC bids when...'

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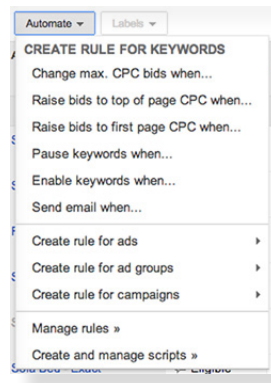
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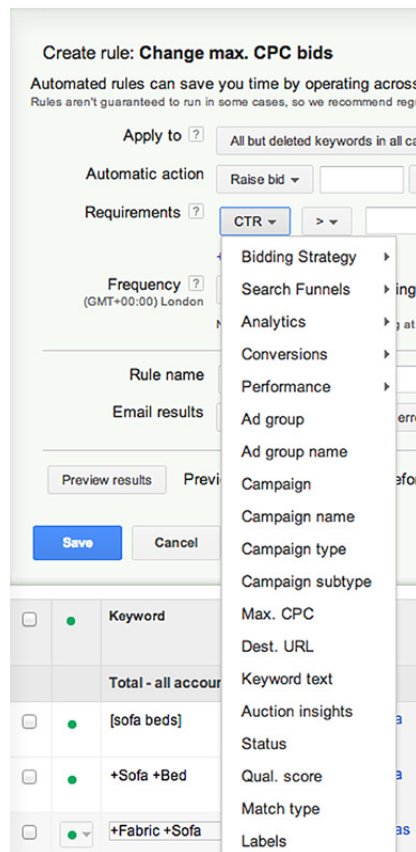
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2. Based on your performance targets create some rules that will help your keywords to move towards a point of optimum performance.

3. The basic premise is that you want to bid up the keywords that are performing well and that are profitable and at the same time bid down the keywords that are performing poorly and that are not profitable.



In the next screenshot you can see an example of a rule that has been set up. It is saying that you should bid up 10 percent to a maximum bid of £2.20 under the following conditions:

- There has been at least one conversion on the keyword.
- The cost per conversion is under £80.
- The average position is lower/worse than 1.9.

The last rule is because if the keyword is already in position 1–1.9 then we do not want to keep bidding and bidding as the incremental traffic does not balance well with the incremental CPC.

Also it is important to note the frequency that the rule runs and also the period of data that is used in order to base the rule upon.

Because we want to ensure that the data is as reliable as possible we use a long date range – either 90 days or all time. Because of this we usually set bid rules to run on a weekly basis as if they ran on a daily basis then the source data will look very similar to the previous day as it is a 90 day average so we would just end up bidding too aggressively either way.

One weakness to be aware of is that the average position is often the pivot around which we set rules. Ideally we would want to use the most recent average position data cross referenced against 90 days of conversion and traffic data so that we are making the most sensible changes.

It is not possible to separate the two so this is another reason why daily bid changes are not possible with this tool.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit rule' interface for a bid rule named 'Bid up 10% on under £80 CPA KW's'. The rule is applied to the campaign 'Willow & Hall Sofa Beds > All but deleted keywords'. The automatic action is set to 'Raise bid' by 10%, with a maximum bid of £2.2. The requirements are: Conversion rate (many-per-click) greater than or equal to 1, Cost per conversion (many-per-click) less than £80.00, and Average position worse than 1.9. The frequency is set to 'Weekly' on 'Monday' at '08 AM', using data from the 'Last 90 days'. The rule name is 'Bid up 10% on under £80 CPA KW's' and email results are set to 'Only if there are changes or errors'. There are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons at the bottom.

When you want to edit your saved rules or to check on the changes that they have caused you should visit the 'Manage Rules' section of the AdWords interface which is accessed through 'Bulk Operations' on the left-hand menu as shown on the next page.

1 Identify and select

2 Set goals

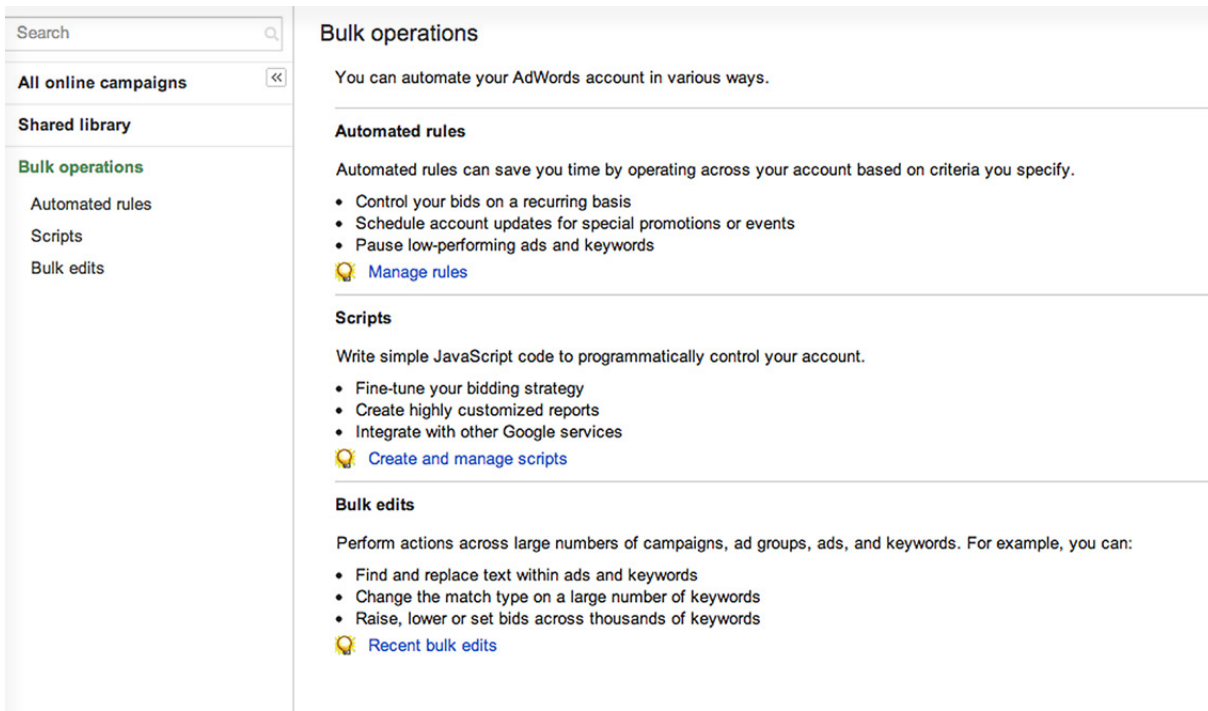
3 Improve your campaign

4 Improving where your ads appear

5 Improving your offer

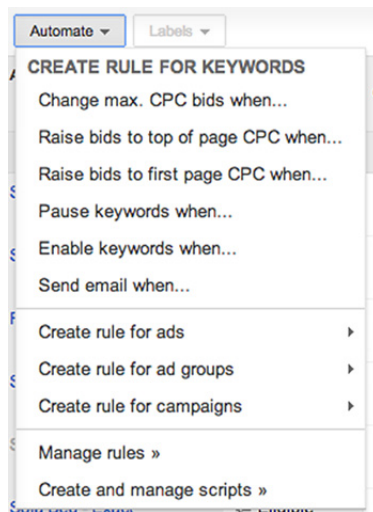
6 Get your bidding and budgeting right

7 Optimising AdWords campaign



As well as to control keyword bids there are automated rules to pause/enable keywords when certain criteria are met and also you can send yourself email alerts when certain things happen so that you can prioritise and investigate.

This image shows you the variety of rules available to you.



1 Identify and select
2 Set goals
3 Improve your campaign
4 Improving where your ads appear
5 Improving your offer
6 Get your bidding and budgeting right
7 Optimising AdWords campaign

Step 7

Optimising AdWords campaign performance

Improving paid search campaigns isn't easy. Although Google provides you with good guidance within AdWords and within Google Analytics you still have to know the right approaches to use.

No matter how well you set your AdWords account up initially, it's never going to be perfect. Also, until you start to gather real world data, it's impossible to know which ads and keywords are going to perform well and which ones will fail to produce a high enough ROI. Therefore, it's vitally important that you are continually monitoring your results and using these to optimise your AdWords campaigns.

Ad copy optimisation

Q. *Are we performing ongoing copy testing?*

We discussed the creation of good ad copy in Step 5, but no matter how good your initial copy is, it can always be improved. Within an AdWords account your ad copy, like your keyword list, will be constantly evolving over time to maximise your CTR and the effectiveness of your ads.

Testing will enable you to get a better ROI, but only if you devote the time to it. It's up to managers of paid search programmes and clients to check and ensure this happens.

Strategy Recommendation 15 Ensure sufficient time and rigour used to complete testing and experiment

Run tests on ad creative, messages, offers and landing pages.

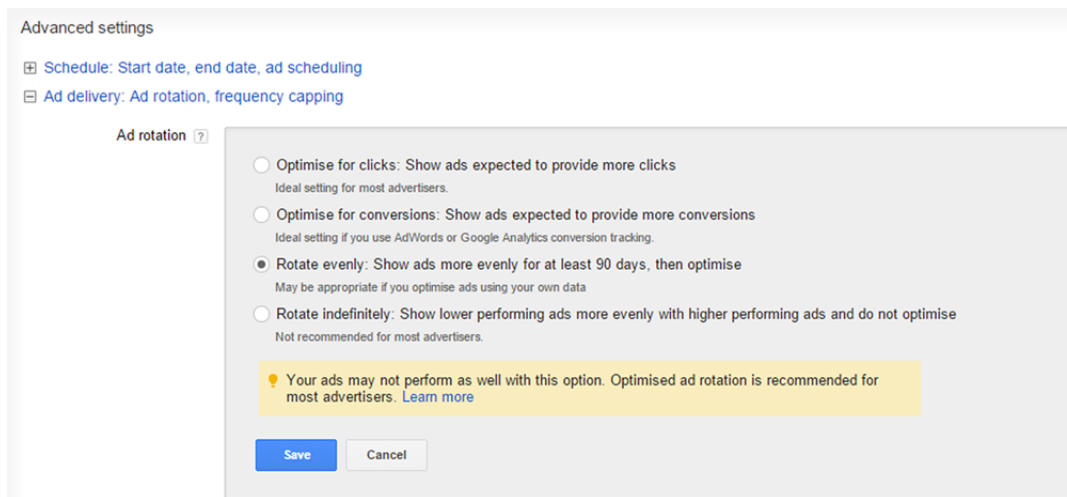
Use the best ad rotation option

Q. *Are we using the right ad optimisation type?*

Each ad group should contain multiple versions of your ad copy so that you can test which ad performs best. How these variations are displayed will depend on your campaign settings. By default, if Google detects that one of your ads is performing better than the others, then it will favour that ad and start to show it more often.

That's fine for people who are content to leave their AdWords campaign on autopilot, but if you are going to be optimising your account properly then you need to use one of the other ad rotation settings. One options is to let AdWords optimise for conversions rather than clicks (provided you have your conversion tracking integrated with the system). Alternatively you can use one of the "rotate evenly" settings so as Google gives each ad an equal chance of being displayed. This is the choice we usually recommend if you're going to be running your own tests on ad copy, or using a third-party ad testing tool.

- 1 Identify and select
- 2 Set goals
- 3 Improve your campaign
- 4 Improving where your ads appear
- 5 Improving your offer
- 6 Get your bidding and budgeting right
- 7 Optimising AdWords



Best Practice Tip 41 Test creative and use the correct optimisation approach

Ensure you test alternative creatives to improve CTRs. Google can optimise on conversion rates as well as click-through. Make sure you use the best ad rotation and optimisation approach.

You need to decide which metrics you are using to monitor ad success. Click-through rate is the most obvious one, as the message you show will directly impact whether the searcher will click on an ad. Improving CTR also improves the overall health of your account via Quality Score and will lead to lower costs and higher positions, as well as more visitors.

However, this must be balanced with relevance. If you have a high CTR on your ad but then users quickly leaving your site and running new searches (re-searches) in Google then you will negatively impact your Quality Score. So really you need to achieve a high CTR with only very relevant ads.

You may like to use a conversion metric, such as conversions per impression (number of conversions÷impressions) to optimise your traffic based on the likelihood that you'll achieve a conversion for each ad shown. However it's always worth remembering that the user's search query and a number of other factors will probably have more impact on the searcher's propensity to convert than the ad copy itself, so this kind of test should be done under tight controls if at all possible.

Once a winner has been discovered (by Google, your own analysis or a third-party tool) it's time to test it against some other ad copy. Discard the 'losers' and replace them with different variations of the winner.

Note: Don't ever delete all the ads in an ad group if it can be avoided. The relationship between keyword and ad is an important building block in your historical Quality Score. You'll need to keep the winner live and add new copy alongside it until some impressions and clicks have occurred so that the history can be maintained.

Ad copy testing should be an ongoing process. How frequently you change your ads will depend on the amount of impression/click/conversion volume your account generates – it's important not to make decisions based on small amounts of data. In most cases though, you should find yourself changing the copy in your higher volume ad groups at least monthly. You may think you'll find it difficult to keep coming up with new messaging, but remember the way a searcher interacts with a Google ad is not simply based on the words it contains. Changing the formatting or punctuation within an ad can dramatically alter the CTR. Over time you'll find general trends that you can roll out to all ad copy in the account. For example you may notice that ads with every word capitalised tend to have a better CTR – apply that knowledge throughout the account and move on to testing other things.



Q. What messaging is performing the best across the account?

You may find the same to be true with particular calls to action or copy phrases. If you discover a particular way of describing your offering has appeal don't forget to apply that knowledge outside of paid search. The most obvious place will be within your SEO descriptions – what works well for PPC also works elsewhere on the search engine results page. But think beyond search, other advertising channels, both online and offline, might benefit from this knowledge, so it can be an important part of the campaign to monitor.

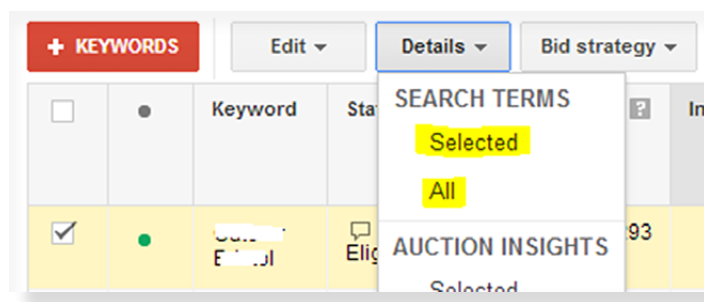
Search query optimisation

In Steps 1 and 4 we talked about identifying the search terms that your target audience use and how to use match types to control which ad to show them. Over time your account will build up historic performance data that will enable you to refine your keyword selection, negative keywords and matching. This is arguably the most important type of optimisation you can do – removing your irrelevant traffic and targeting relevant traffic more accurately.

Best Practice Tip 42 Continually check your visitors' actual search queries

Run the **Search Terms Report** on a regular basis to help keep your traffic relevant and identify new keyword trends.

Within the AdWords keyword tab you are able to use the 'Details' dropdown Search Terms button near the top of the page to view the actual search queries that generate impressions and clicks.



This data is sometimes also referred to commonly known as a 'Search Query Report' or SQR. The SQR data enables three important actions.

- ✓ **Adding negative keywords.** You'll notice some queries containing words that aren't relevant to your product or service. Add these as negative keywords to the appropriate ad group or campaigns to prevent wasting impressions and clicks on visitors using these words within their search query in future. Remember you can use match types on negative keywords.
- ✓ **Keyword discovery.** You should also see a number of search queries that don't exactly match your current keyword list, but are relevant to you. Depending on the scope of your initial keyword research you may find a handful of more specific queries or identify a completely new way in which people talk about your product. Add these as positive keywords – create new ad groups or campaigns if necessary to ensure these queries are shown the right ads and sent to the best possible landing pages.

Remember how Google treats 'Low Search Volume' keywords, however (discussed in Step 1). There's little point in adding very long tail keywords as they won't generate impressions if they're classed as 'Low Search Volume'.

- Matching refinement.** Are the correct search queries generating the correct ads? Within the search terms report you can see the ad group which matched to the search so you should be able to diagnose whether the ad displayed was the most relevant one eligible. If not you can negatively exact match this keyword from that ad group so it matches elsewhere – see the discussion about cross matching and ad group leakage in Step 4.

Landing page optimisation

- Q. Could our landing pages be improved?**

One obvious way to improve the effectiveness of your search campaigns is to improve the conversion rate of the pages you're sending traffic to.

From a best practice perspective you should be sending your traffic to the most relevant landing page available. However you may like to then test different versions of that page layout against each other (A-B Testing) or test different elements in different combinations (Multivariate Testing). You may be surprised how much impact small changes, such as the colour and position of your call to action button, can have on your conversion rate.

A full exploration of landing page testing and conversion rate optimisation is outside the scope of this document. We have a separate 'Seven Steps to Success' Landing Page Conversion Guide²⁷ where we discuss the following action points in detail:

- Defining landing page objectives.
- Engaging with your visitors.
- Optimising page layout and page content.
- Testing different page elements.

Optimising by user segment

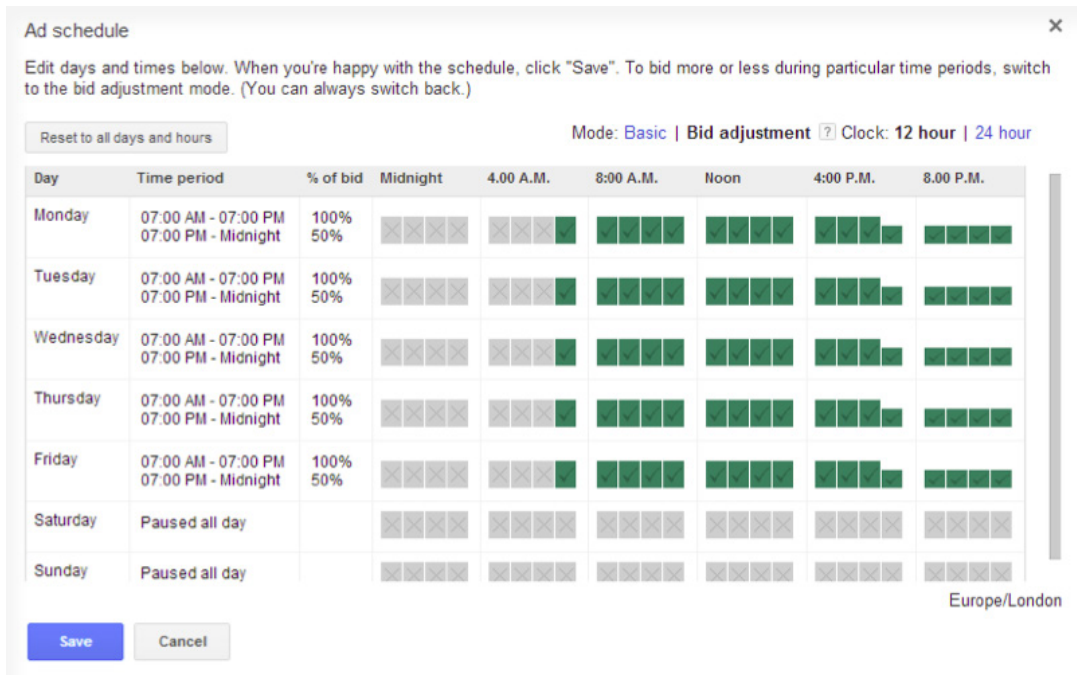
AdWords contains some useful reporting functionality within the 'dimensions' tab and the 'segments' dropdown. Here you can split up searchers and identify which ones it is most profitable to target. Some of the most useful reports to look at are:

- 1. Network (including search partners).** If you've decided to advertise on the search partner network, how is that spend performing alongside the Google search traffic? If your budget is uncapped then you can simply look and see if each network is providing an acceptable CPA. If you're limiting your spend however, it's important to identify whether the search network is taking budget away from Google or enhancing performance of the campaign. To evaluate this, and any other segment, you can make a very simple table showing the percentage of spend that goes to each network, against the percentage of conversions, for each campaign. So in the below example, we see that the search network is effective in Campaign1, but in Campaign2, whilst the search network traffic is cheaper, it's of much less value, so doesn't justify the removal of budget from the main Google ads.

Campaign	Network	Clicks	% of total clicks	Cost	% of total cost	Conversions	% of total conversions
Campaign1	Google Search	2215	62%	£ 1,129.65	61%	102	63%
Campaign1	Search Partners	1383	38%	£ 727.32	39%	59	37%
Campaign2	Google Search	5120	56%	£ 1,740.80	68%	229	76%
Campaign2	Search Partners	3965	44%	£ 832.65	32%	72	24%

²⁷ [Smart Insights: 7 Step Landing Page Guide.](#)

- ✔ **2. Time reports (day parting).** The time segment enables you to see how your campaigns perform on different hours of the day, days of the week and months of the year. As well as the obvious decision as to whether your ads should run 24-7, you can make a number of optimisation decisions using this data. Perhaps you see much improved performance at the end of the working day, but your budget doesn't always stretch that far. Or perhaps you notice your average position is lower first thing in the morning due to increased competition. You can use the ad scheduling settings to control when your ads appear and whether you want to bid more or less at any given time. Here is an example ad schedule for a B2B campaign where it was found that the most effective time to show ads for this campaign was during office hours.



- ✔ **3. Geography.** You can use both the User Location and Geographic dimensions to identify where the searchers who clicked your ads are located/searching for. These sorts of reports are especially important for advertisers with regional outlets, as they can help you understand how demand varies in different countries/regions/cities.

Even advertisers without local interests should investigate their geographic performance – you may discover interesting performance trends on a regional level and want to optimise your account in accordance with these. At the most basic level this may simply mean excluding specific areas that provide unacceptable ROI, or it might mean deciding to split your campaigns so you can bid for different regions/cities in accordance with their performance.

Optimising paid search campaigns based on mobile device performance

Within the 'segments' dropdown you can see the performance by different devices: desktop and laptop computers, tablet computers and mobile phones with full browsers.

As already discussed it is best practice to use bid adjustments and specific mobile ads to make sure you are targeting your campaigns to mobile users as effectively as possible. Segmenting and analysing data by device type can help you achieve this.

Segmenting for position and ad extensions

Other reports include top vs other, which enables you to see how your ads perform in different positions on the page, and additional details on how your extensions perform, including the Click Type and +1 Annotations segments and the Call Details dimension.

You can also create your own custom dimensions to report on through the use of AdWords Labels.²⁸

Optimising the Display Network

All of the previously discussed techniques also apply to the Display Network. You should continually test and rotate your ad copy, both text and image. Instead of search query optimisation you should optimise the placements your ads have been appearing on and look at the audience segments they're being shown to. We covered Display Network campaigns in Step 4.

Improving targeting with remarketing lists for search ads

With a standard search campaign in AdWords, your keywords, ads and bids are the same regardless of who is carrying out the search. And yet, in many cases, there's one group of searchers who are more likely to convert when they visit your site - and that's those people who have already visited your site in the past.

By using remarketing lists for search ads (RLSA) you can use different bids, keywords, or ads when a search is carried out by someone who has already been to your website.

So, for example, you increase bids for someone who has already been to your site. Or show a different kind of ad to someone who has put something in their shopping basket and then abandoned before purchasing. You could also bid on more generic keywords but only in cases where the person doing the search is someone who has been to your site already.

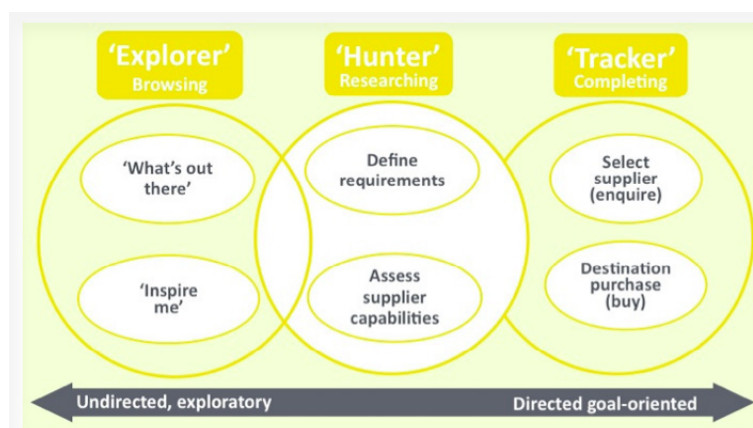
To use RLSA you need to create a remarketing list - and this is done in the same way as when you do remarketing with display ads (which was discussed in Step 4).

Once you have your lists in place, you create a new search network campaign and configure it to use remarketing via the Audiences tab. Full details can be found in Google's [step by step guide to RLSA](#).

Understanding the path to conversion and attributing conversion value

Q. Are we looking beyond the last click?

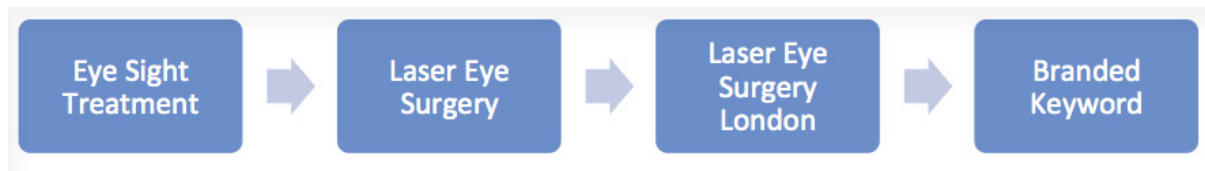
A large proportion of visitors to a site don't/won't convert on the first visit, they will follow a sequence of phrases along what is sometimes called the 'path to purchase'. We need to think about this when we track and attribute phrases to conversion. The diagram below shows how users tend to behave as they move closer towards the purchase.



²⁸ [AdWords Help: Labels for custom dimensions](#).

Within search this is obviously defined by a chain of keywords, becoming increasingly more specific.

When a visitor makes a purchase, by default success is generally attributed to the last marketing action that brought them to the website (a 'last click' conversion model). This means that in the below example of a path to purchase our 'Branded Keyword' gets the credit for the sale.



The first three interactions are obviously not completely unimportant to winning this conversion, so we need to optimise our account with this in mind. Optimising for the last click alone will reduce your overall sales, as you reduce the investment on the generic keywords that sit at the front of your path to purchase. Far less users will enter the path as the queries get more refined, and none at all by the time we reach brand unless you are doing some activity to drive your brand awareness. Essentially you're putting less people in the funnel, which means you get less out the other end.

Best Practice Tip 43 Review the sequence of search terms users make

Understand the sequence of keyphrases and aim to attribute conversion not only to the last click, but the 'assists' that contributed to it.

Google gives you some tools to help gather and act on this data. Within AdWords, if you have conversion data available, you can look at 'search funnels' within the 'conversions' section of the 'tools and analysis' tab (we discussed this in Step 6).

Google analytics also provides you with similar data, but will enable you to include the touch points from other marketing channels. The 'multi-channel funnels' report is available in the 'conversions' section. This shows top conversion paths by channel, as shown below (these channel groupings are fully customisable). This report can then be broken down further to show, for example, the keyword path used, including both paid and natural searches.²⁹

1 Identify and select
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²⁹ [Google Analytics Help: Multichannel funnels.](#)

Basic Channel Grouping Path	Conversions	↓	Conversion Value
Paid Search → Paid Search		487	£2,178.90
Organic Search → Organic Search		308	£653.83
Direct → Direct		220	£2,244.51
Organic Search → Direct		143	£790.79
Paid Search → Direct		128	£1,624.98
Organic Search → Paid Search		112	£112.59
Referral → Referral		111	£1,124.07
Paid Search → Organic Search		102	£394.23

You can use the Time to Purchase report within Google Analytics (under Conversions | Ecommerce on the menu) to understand the importance of attribution to you. If the majority of visitors convert after one session, attribution is relatively unimportant.

Q. How are we attributing success across our campaigns?

The simplest way to attribute success beyond the last click is to divide the value of the conversion equally among the keywords.

Take this specific example from Dave Chaffey's Digital Marketing book, which shows the repeated use of different types of search terms for a single customer (other digital channels such as affiliates are ignored here). The two columns on the right show the difference in value attribution with these two models.

User id	Search query	Sale?	Value attributed: last click method	Value attributed: weighted method
123	Mobile phone (generic search)	No	£0	£40
123	Best camera phone (Category generic search)	No	£0	£40
123	Nokia phone (Product search)	No	£0	£40
123	Nokia N91 Orange (Product + supplier search)	No	£0	£40
123	E-retailer brand name (Branded search)	Yes	£200	£40

You may like to consider other attribution models, such as 'u shaped', where, if you believe the first and last clicks to be the most important in the user journey, you attribute 40 percent of the value to the first click, 40 percent to the last and the remaining 20 percent between any keywords in the middle.

The attribution model itself will depend entirely on your business requirements and customer interaction, but the important thing is that you don't simply give all the credit to the final interaction that delivered the visitor.

Best Practice Tip 44 Assign value to the entire user journey
 Attribution of conversion value beyond the last click will enable you to more clearly see the value of each keyword in your account, and lead to more effective bid optimisation decisions.

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Further analysis tools can be applied for AdWords within Google Analytics for review of customer journeys on site. We will highlight some of these here, but for more detail we recommend you take a look at our in-depth guide to applying Google Analytics.

Recommended resource? 7 Steps Guide to Google Analytics

The [7 Steps Guide to Google Analytics](#) explains goal setup and advanced segments.

Comparing paid and natural search visits in Google Analytics

You can see the paid vs natural search marketing mix by going to Acquisition | All Traffic | Channels in the menu. Selecting Source/Medium will let you see it broken down by search engine as well.

Other techniques to compare AdWords and organic search:

- ✓ 1. **Apply ana Segment for paid and natural search from the Advanced Segments selector, Top Left.** This shows you a breakdown in each row of the report although annoyingly, it doesn't give you a percentage of each. For us, this is the best option since it allow you to see trends in the chart at the top and display Visits, Revenue or Transactions, so you can see the revenue.
- ✓ 2. **Apply the pivot table option for the keywords report (select the grid icon and then chose medium) to show a separate column for paid and natural).**

If you chose the ecommerce tab (if relevant) you can see visits, transactions or revenue, but again you can't see percentages. You also can't readily compare the segments on a graph.

Reviewing behaviour of AdWords visits

You can isolate AdWords traffic, either overall or for a specific campaign or term. The place to look is the **Advanced Segments** menu option in the top left of the reporting area. Our Google Analytics guide explains how to setup Advanced Segments for this

What is it? Advanced segments in Google Analytics

Different types of site visitors can be isolated to compare in their volume and quality to others. You can select from standard segments or define custom segments.

Best Practice Tip 45 Isolate AdWords traffic for analysis in Google Analytics

Through using Advanced segments you can review the customer journeys of AdWords visitors and how they engage through the site through bounce rates or convert.

We hope this guide will give you lots of ideas to get better results from Google AdWords. What's for sure is that Google will innovate further, so don't forget to take keep up to date on the AdWords blog and Innovations page – we'll keep you posted via our posts too.

Strategy Recommendation 16 Review the latest Google Ad innovations to get better results

Google constantly develops its AdWords programme to improve its profit and returns for advertisers. Google has a dedicated site [Google Ad Innovations](#) where you can see the latest new AdWords products for mobile, social and display.

Any questions on your AdWords challenges, do ask via or [Answers forum](#). Questions can be anonymous if you prefer and we hope the answers shared will help others too!

Thank you! Dave Chaffey, David Miles and Joel Chudleigh

1 Identify and select

2 Set goals

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5 Improving your offer

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