

2009

Clickable

GURU'S

GUIDE

TO

BETTER

SEARCH

ENGINE

MARKETING

Simple, practical tips from the
world's leading experts to profit
with Search Engine advertising

2009 CLICKABLE GURU'S GUIDE TO BETTER SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

Clickable is an online solution that makes search advertising simple, instant and profitable. Clickable's immediate activation and intuitive user experience make it easy for marketers to manage performance across all major ad networks, including Google, Yahoo and Microsoft. Clickable's powerful recommendations and reporting make marketers more efficient, effective and confident – even at the very first login. Clickable's ActEngine™ actually learns marketers' preferences and enforces best practices to maximize return. Clickable always listens and constantly improves. That's why customers often say, "Clickable is like having a trusted advisor always by your side ensuring success."

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THE CLICKABLE GURUS

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INTRODUCTION

First, thank you for your interest in the *Clickable Guru's Guide to Better Search Engine Marketing*. To help you get more value out of the pages that follow, below is a brief introduction to Clickable and the goals behind our Guru program.

Why We Exist

Clickable exists to simplify online advertising. In fact, our promise to customers is to *make advertising simple, instant and profitable*. This tenet resonates through everything we do, from our products and messaging to our help materials and customer interactions.

Our Values

Importantly, everything we do is built on three core values:

- *The 7:1 Rule* – We believe in a new transparency. We have only good intentions, and we expect to contribute extraordinarily more good than bad. This 7:1 ratio acknowledges that we're not perfect, and neither is any person, product, or data. This powerful and transparent admission enables us to listen better, acknowledge and resolve shortcomings, learn from them, and quickly move on to achieving larger goals. This is the bedrock of trust, innovation and collaboration.
- *Simplicity* – Simplicity is one of the most difficult feats, but our complex world is desperate for it. Simplicity creates value, differentiation and opportunity. That's why we strive to make everything simple and beautiful.
- *"And"* – We are multidimensional, competitive and elastic. And we execute. And we experiment and innovate constantly to identify new opportunities, allowing us to build directly into the market frictions we intend to resolve. And we are always chasing and perfecting our product-to-market fit. We are an "and" culture.

On Being A Trusted Advisor

Developing products that make advertising simple requires connecting with customers – and building a reputation as a trusted advisor. That means engaging with the marketplace and incorporating insights into everything we do and build. Clickable's *Search Engine Marketing Guru* program is a core component of living up to that ideal.

Who Are The Clickable Gurus?

In spring 2008 we assembled some of the world's most talented online advertising experts to survey the Web and find opportunities to introduce clarity. The Clickable SEM Guru

team does this in three major ways:

- By participating in popular online communities and forums dedicated to search and online advertising, they help fellow citizens find solutions to their search marketing challenges.
- By keeping abreast of industry trends and best practices, they share their insights with customers in Clickable's own community forums and blog.
- By codifying and channeling their community learning directly into our own product development, we can continuously harness our customers' needs to create better products and experiences for them.

Clickable Guru Guidelines

As Clickable ambassadors, our SEM Gurus live by several core guidelines:

- Strive to be a trusted advisor.
- Engage authentically in online communities.
- Maintain a steady rhythm of good deeds.
- Help marketers at all skill levels.
- Offer simple solutions and objective advice.
- Use your own, real, personal profile.
- Disclose your affiliation with Clickable.
- Never shill, but do welcome newcomers to Clickable when appropriate.
- Keep a log of all good deeds to influence the Clickable product development cycle.

Codifying The Clickable Gurus' Wisdom

After a year of engaging with the search marketing community, we're delighted to present the first edition of our *Clickable Guru's Guide to Better Search Engine Marketing*. Based on hundreds of community interactions and blog posts, it captures the knowledge and wisdom of our talented Clickable community ambassadors.

The Internet advertising landscape changes constantly and we must adapt. That's why we are committed to continuing the Clickable Search Engine Marketing Guru program, and to periodically updating this book.

Closing The Loop

We hope you enjoy and benefit from the *Clickable Guru's Guide To Better Search Engine Marketing*.

And we hope we'll benefit too – please provide us with the gift of your feedback, so that we can constantly improve.

Warm regards,

The Clickable Team

info@clickable.com

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LEARN HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE AD COPY

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riting effective ad copy is one of the most difficult parts of search engine marketing (or marketing in general for that matter). Creativity always helps, but there are a number of tips you can use when you can't depend on inspiration. They're not magic, but these tips will increase clicks, improve your conversion rates, and help you to create more effective campaigns.

WRITING ATTENTION-GRABBING HEADLINES

A search marketing ad has to do three primary things:

- Grab the user's attention.
- Describe your offering.
- Tell the user what to do next.

The headline's function is to grab the user's attention.

When one of your ads appears on a search engine results page, it's going to have a lot of competition. Users tend to look at ads in the *sponsored links* section in clusters, rather than one at a time, so you're usually competing directly with the one or two ads before and after yours. You may have to compete with ads that receive premium placement above the organic results, and you've also got to compete with the organic results themselves. With all sorts of elements on the page vying for a user's attention, the primary tool for grabbing that attention away from everything else is your ad's headline.

Since the headline has so much potential for grabbing attention, you shouldn't try to make it do anything else. As Hunter Boyle wrote in the *Marketing Experiments* blog, "The objective of your headline is not to sell, but to connect with your reader. That split-second connection only has to compel readers to continue – not necessarily to buy right away." In other words, use your headline to grab a user's attention, and then let the description line and call-to-action do their jobs.

If you've already searched the Web for tips on writing headlines, you've probably found lots of information about specific words to use in your copy ("you," "how," "money," "want") or specific formats to write in (questions, how-to's, announcements). All of these are good tips, but they still don't make it clear exactly which words and formats you should use. You'll have a much easier time doing this for your ad and headline if you take a preliminary step: think of a user's search as a question.

Google may be the most comprehensive and successful search engine on the Web today, but Ask.com (formerly "Ask Jeeves") is the most literal – Ask understands that when users perform searches, they're asking questions. The first step in writing a search marketing ad is to identify the question a searcher is asking.

Here are three examples of potential user searches:

- “Chicago Mexican restaurant”
- “Banjo lessons”
- “Red roses”

What questions do these searches correspond to? Here are some educated guesses:

- *Chicago Mexican restaurant*: “Where can I go for great Mexican food in Chicago?”
- *Banjo lessons*: “How can I learn to play the banjo?”
- *Red roses*: “Who can I get to deliver roses to my fiancée’s office?”

Having translated these queries into questions, the task of writing a search marketing headline becomes much simpler.

In our first example, the user is trying to find a place to eat, and you want to direct them to your restaurant. Be direct and keep it simple, with something like “Chicago’s Top Mexican” (including keywords in your ad copy always helps. For tips on how to do so, see the section, “Learn How to Manage Keywords and Placements,” starting on page 19). Of course, users might not be looking for the *best* restaurant in a category, as those can be pricey. They may prefer “Great Cheap Mexican food” and the word “Top” may turn those users off. But that’s fine if you offer a premium product rather than a value product – you want to target users looking for the best, not the cheapest.

The goal isn’t to grab everybody’s attention. The goal is to grab your potential customers’ attention. Somebody looking for cheap tacos won’t be interested in dinner at Frontera Grill, so a marketer trying to drive reservations at that restaurant shouldn’t target those users. More clicks are great, but only if they’re high-quality ones.

The second example is a great place to use a “how to” headline. “Learn to Play The Banjo” is simple, clear, and directly speaks to what the user is trying to do.

The last example is more ambiguous. The search “red roses” could correspond to a variety of questions, and there may be only one you’re ready to answer. Ask that question. For example: “Want Roses Delivered Now?” If the user’s answer is “yes,” there’s a good chance they’ll read the rest of your ad. If it’s “no,” you won’t get their attention, but you wouldn’t have gotten their business anyway.

DESCRIBING THE RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF YOUR OFFER

Now that you've gotten your user's attention with the headline, you need to tell them what you have to offer. That's the task of the description line.

Once your headline compels a reader to continue, he or she will read your description line. *The purpose of the description line is to demonstrate the relevance and unique value of your offering.* The trick is to do so in 35 characters or less.

Demonstrating Relevance

If you followed the previous chapter's advice in writing your ad's headline, you've already done a lot of the work necessary to demonstrate your offer's relevance. Remember: the headline's goal isn't to grab *everybody's* attention; the goal is to grab your *potential customers'* attention. A headline written for your potential customers grabs their attention by, among other things, *suggesting* relevance. In your description line, you should clearly *demonstrate* relevance.

Let's stick with the examples used previously.

- Keywords: "Chicago Mexican restaurant" / Headline: "Chicago's Top Mexican"
- Keywords: "banjo lessons" / Headline: "Learn To Play The Banjo"
- Keywords: "red roses" / Headline: "Want Roses Delivered Now?"

The hypothetical advertiser in the first example was Rick Bayles' Chicago Mexican restaurant Frontera Grill. (Full disclosure: Rick Bayles isn't a Clickable customer...yet. We're just a fan of his cookbook and happy to help). What does Frontera Grill offer? Meals at a high-end Mexican restaurant in Chicago. The headline already covers "Chicago" and "Mexican" so your description line should provide details about the restaurant.

The next example is even more straightforward: the advertiser gives banjo lessons, exactly what the searcher is looking for. "Lessons" should be mentioned in the description line. The final ad would be written by a florist who delivers roses, among other varieties. This is already very clearly indicated by the headline, so the description line should focus on demonstrating value.

Demonstrating relevance turns out to be quite easy: just state what you have to offer, clearly and with as much detail as the 35-character limit permits. If particular searchers are actually looking for restaurant reviews, online music lessons or pictures of flowers, they won't click on your ad, because your offer isn't relevant to them.

But if a searcher is looking for what you have to give them – if what you offer is relevant to them – they’ll recognize that right away.

Of course, more than one ad on a page may be relevant to a searcher. The next thing you need to do is demonstrate the unique value of what you have to offer, and to set yourself apart.

Demonstrating Value

What makes your product or service better than the rest? This may seem like the first question any marketer should answer, so it may be surprising to find it popping up this late in the game. But now is the time to answer it – the time to state your (old school term) “value proposition.”

Part of your offer’s value is already disclosed in a straight description: a meal, a lesson, flower delivery. But, why have a meal at Frontera Grill? Why take a personal banjo lesson from you? Why have roses delivered from your flower shop? This is the place to answer that question.

No generic answers exist here. Every business has a different value proposition, and nobody understands your own value proposition better than you do. But we’ll continue with our examples to clarify how to demonstrate value.

When discussing “relevance” for the Frontera Grill, we decided that you’d need to include more information about the restaurant. You also want to set it apart: it’s “award-winning,” “authentic,” “gourmet.” You can try working those words in. (And, of course, you can write other ads for other keywords that highlight other details – specific dishes, the chef’s credentials, anything else that might be important). For now, let’s try “Authentic, Gourmet Mexican Cuisine.”

The second advertiser is competing with other offers for personal banjo lessons. What makes the offer unique? A **free** lesson, perhaps. We wrote above that the mention of “lessons” in the description would indicate relevance. Now, you also need to mention the free offer to indicate value. “Personal Lessons, First Lesson Free” is clear, relevant to searchers looking for personal lessons, and highlights the offer’s uniqueness.

Finally, what are some things that may be important to customers of a floral delivery service? Speed? Dependability? Cost? “Free, Dependable, Same-Day Delivery” covers all these bases. A straight description of the service – flower delivery, including roses – is already contained in the headline.

So far, you've written two thirds of our ads, giving us:

- **Chicago's Top Mexican**
- *Authentic, Gourmet **Mexican** Cuisine*

- *Learn To Play The **Banjo***
- *Personal **Lessons**. First **Lesson** Free*

- *Want **Roses** Delivered Now?*
- Free, Dependable, Same-Day Delivery

(Keywords included in ad copy appear here in **bold**, as they do on Google's search engine results pages.)

Users should now know what these three advertisers have to offer, how that offering meets their needs (relevance), and what makes that offering better than others on the page (value). The next question to answer is, "What do I need to do now?" This is the question you will answer in the final line of your ad – the "call-to-action."

MAKING THE CALL-TO-ACTION

If you've been following the steps laid out in the preceding chapters, you should be two-thirds of the way through your ad by now. With your headline, you've grabbed the attention of potential customers; in your description line, you've demonstrated the relevance and unique value of your offering. The final step of a search marketing ad is to tell users what they need to do next. This is the role of the final line of your ad: the call-to-action. As with your description, you've got 35 characters to make the call.

Let's recall where we are in our examples:

- Keywords: "Chicago Mexican restaurant"
 - **Chicago's Top Mexican**
 - *Authentic, Gourmet **Mexican** Cuisine*

- Keywords: "banjo lessons"
 - *Learn To Play The **Banjo***
 - *Personal **Lessons**. First **Lesson** Free*

- Keywords: "red roses"
 - *Want **Roses** Delivered Now?*
 - *Free, Dependable, Same-Day Delivery*

The purpose of the first line, the headline, is to *grab the attention of your potential customers*. The purpose of the second line, the description, is to demonstrate your relevance and unique value. Both lines are keyword-rich and firmly rooted in the user's search. The last line will be anchored somewhere else: your landing page and Web site.

Desired User Actions

The answer to the call-to-action question, "*What should I do now?*" has everything to do with your business. More specifically, *the answer depends on what you consider a "conversion."*

A conversion is "the desired action you want a visitor to take on your site." Google's AdWords has a variety of conversion types, including *leads*, *sign-ups* and *page views*, but don't get too caught up in the terminology; jargon has a way of making simple problems seem complicated. Let's go back to our examples and answer our question, "*What is the desired action you want a visitor to take on your site?*" as simply as we can in each case.

Let's recall the three businesses under discussion:

Frontera Grill, a gourmet Mexican restaurant in Chicago

- *An individual who gives personal banjo lessons*
- *A florist with same-day delivery*

What do these businesses want users to do on their sites? Here are some reasonable possibilities:

- *Frontera Grill*: find the reservation phone number, call the restaurant, and reserve a table.
- *Banjo instructor*: fill out an online form to sign up for an initial lesson.
- *Florist*: purchase flowers.

When you're dealing with "snippets" and "conversion types," it's easy to forget that an online "conversion" is very straightforward: it's a user's action that's valuable to you. (*Conversion tracking* is just a way of determining how often users take those actions and how much revenue you associate with them – for more, see "Implementing Clickable Conversion Tracking," page 74).

Conversions and Calls to Action

Now that you've determined what you want users to do when they get to your site, the next step is simply telling them to do it.

Frontera Grill wants users to make a reservation. One call-to-action worth trying would be: "Reserve Your Table For Dinner Today." (Clickable has consistently found that "urgent" terms like "today" and "now" tend to drive more traffic and conversions).

The banjo instructor wants users to fill out a form to schedule a lesson. The call-to-action could be: "Sign Up For Your Free Lesson Now."

Finally, the florist wants users to place an order and have it delivered. A financial incentive could help, so a call-to-action might be: "Save 15% When You Order Today."

With that, you now have the complete text of our ads:

- Keywords: “chicago mexican restaurant”
Conversion Goal: make reservation

*Chicago's Top Mexican
Authentic, Gourmet Mexican Cuisine
Reserve Your Table For Dinner Today*

- Keywords: “banjo lessons”
Conversion Goal: sign up for more information

*Learn To Play The Banjo
Personal Lessons. First Lesson Free
Sign Up For Your Free Lesson Now*

- Keywords: “red roses”
Conversion Goal: place an order

*Want Roses Delivered Now?
Free, Dependable, Same-Day Delivery
Save 15% When You Order Today*

Of course, these ads could be written in many other ways while still adhering to the guidelines you’ve received. We aren’t suggesting you should limit yourself to the types of examples given above. By all means, be as creative as you can. Just make sure that you grab attention, describe your offer, and make a call-to-action.

Better yet, try a number of different variations, and test them out (see “Testing Search Marketing Ads,” page 17, for details).

PUTTING KEYWORDS INTO SEARCH ADS

By Ehren Reilly, originally posted October 10, 2008

The fundamental task of marketing and sales is to convince people they want your product. Usually, this is a two-part process:

- *Figure out what exactly people want.*
- *Show them that your product or service meets those needs.*

The first part of this – figuring out precisely what people want – can be challenging in traditional marketing campaigns. However, in paid search marketing, marketers have the great advantage of knowing exactly and explicitly what their potential customers want: the customers tell them by searching for exactly that thing. You also have the technology to serve different ads to people based on what they search for – and thus the potential to show them an ad offering exactly what they search for. When you do this effectively, you get higher clickthrough rates and more customers visiting your site via paid search.

On a search results page, the best way to show users you have what they're looking for is to insert their keywords into your ads. If someone searches for “neck pain relief,” they want to see advertisers who offer neck pain relief. This seems obvious, but look at the search results for the following query:



385,000 for **neck pain relief**. (0.16 seconds)

Sponsored Links

Chronic Pain Treatment
Get Personalized Treatment
in a Private & Serene Environment.
BaysideMann.com

Cervical Dystonia Signs
Learn About the Signs & Symptoms
of CD & How BOTOX® can Help.
www.BotoxMedical.com

Chronic Pain Relief
Doctors who understand medication.
Treatment Center for Pain. Call now
www.CasaPalmera.com/PainTreatment

All three of these advertisers do in fact offer products that treat neck pain. However, none of the ads are very compelling, because none of them actually say “neck pain relief.”

In contrast, below are sponsored search results for “search marketing software” and “vintage air Jordans.” In each case, an advertiser has placed the keywords searched for into its ad, which makes the ads much more compelling.

In the second case, eBay has actually included the exact keywords in both its headline and the first line of the ad description. Its ad stands out as being the most relevant search result.

The screenshot shows a Google search for "search marketing software". The search bar contains the text "search marketing software" and a "Search" button. To the right of the search bar are links for "Advanced Search" and "Preferences". Below the search bar, the results are categorized under "Web" and show "Results 1 - 10 of about 21,600,000 for search marketing software". Three sponsored links are visible:

- Marketing Software** (Sponsored Links)
www.robohead.net Web tool designed exclusively for managing **marketing** projects & teams
- Search Marketing Software**
www.Clickable.com Easily Manage Pay Per Click Sign-up for Free Trial Account Now
- Marketing software**
www.Silverpop.com/vtrenz We Make Email **Marketing** Easy and Automated. Don't Wait - Learn More!

So how do you get keywords into your ads? One way is to write a different ad for each of your keywords. This would obviously be very tedious, especially if you have hundreds or thousands of keywords. Fortunately, a more elegant option is available: *dynamic keyword insertion* allows advertisers to insert keywords used in search queries directly into any ad. However, the technology is often misunderstood and under-utilized, especially by novice search marketers.

The screenshot shows a search result for "vintage air jordans" with 665,000 results in 0.19 seconds. The result is a sponsored link with the following text:

Sponsored Links

Buy Jordan Retros \$64.99
Brand New Jordans 1-22 In Stock
Huge Selections and Fast Shipping
miloshoes.com

Vintage Air Jordans
Bid on **Vintage Air Jordans** now!
Find Men's Shoes.
www.eBay.com

Air jordan1-23 Shoes \$35
Paypal payment. free shipping.
Buy now. Very Cheap!
www.sneaker-file.com

How to Do Dynamic Keyword Insertion

To insert a keyword into your ad, you can use the keyword variable {Keyword} anywhere within your ad text. For example, if you were advertising various types of candies, you might have any of the next keywords and the following ad:

- *Rock candy*
- *Chocolate candy*
- *Gummy bears*
- *Cherry cordials*
- *Chocolate covered gummy bears*

Headline: {Keyword}

Description Line 1: Delicious {Keyword}

Description Line 2: Made by hand since 1963.

Display URL: www.LittleSusiesCandies.com

This ad would appear differently depending on what people searched for. So, if someone searched for chocolate candy, the ad would look like this:

[Chocolate Candy](#)

Delicious Chocolate Candy

Made by hand since 1963.

www.LittleSusiesCandies.com

But if someone searched for cherry cordials, the same ad would look like this:

[Cherry Cordials](#)

Delicious Cherry Cordials

Made by hand since 1963.

www.LittleSusiesCandies.com

Thus, you would only need to write one single ad to serve extremely specific ads for each keyword.

Default Text

Unfortunately, it's not quite so simple in reality – the search engine may be unable to dynamically insert your requested keyword into the ad. This happens when a long keyword brings the ad over the character limit, or when your ad appears on the search engine's content network (in which case there is no keyword) rather on a search results page.

To handle such possibilities, you must specify default text that can appear instead of the keyword. The first situation would arise, for example, if you used the ad above and someone then searched for chocolate covered gummy bears. That phrase is 29 characters long, which means that it can't fit into the ad headline, and "delicious, chocolate covered gummy bears" is 39 characters long, which means it can't fit in the first description line.

So, the ad copy proposed above would be inadequate.

For your default text that shows up when your keyword is too long, it's usually good to use something general that is applicable to any of your keywords. In this case, "gourmet candy" might be a good option. The syntax for keyword defaults is to place a colon (:) after the word "keyword," and then the default text. So, now your ad would look like:

Headline: {KeyWord:Gourmet Candy}
Description Line 1: Delicious {KeyWord:Gourmet Candy}
Description Line 2: Made by hand since 1963.
Display URL: www.LittleSusiesCandies.com

This ad will still include any keyword when it is short enough, but will display the default text when the keyword is too long.

Common Mistakes With Keyword Insertion

The advantage of keyword insertion is obvious: your ad tells users exactly what they want to see – that you have exactly what they're looking for. However, you can prevent a couple of common mistakes by previewing all your keyword-inserted ads.

Capitalization is the first issue. Preview your ads to make sure they have the capitalization you want when they actually display. Search engines apply the capitalization of your default text to whatever text you put in there. This is most often a problem with acronyms or other words that have unusual capitalization.

The screenshot shows a search engine results page with the following elements:

- A link at the top: "View and manage your web history"
- The search query: "dangerous drugs. (0.13 seconds)"
- A "Sponsored Links" section containing two ads:
 - Drug Victims Lawyer**
1-800-624-8888 Free Case Review
No fee unless we get you money
www.DangerousMedication.com
 - Dangerous Drugs**
Looking for
dangerous drugs? Save!
www.shoppingpage.us

The second issue is much more serious. If you create a dynamic keyword insertion ad in an ad group with 100 keywords, you have effectively just written 100 different ads. Some of these may not turn out looking exactly as you intended. Suppose the candy advertiser discussed above also wants to include the keyword "shop for candy."

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It would not want that keyword to be in the same ad group as the other examples, at the risk serving up awkward ad copy such as “Delicious Shop for Candy.” Here is a funny example of an advertiser who used dynamic keyword insertion but didn’t consider all of the different keywords in its ad groups:

So, if you plan to use dynamic keyword insertion – and you probably should – be sure you consider how your ad will look for *every* keyword in your ad group!

With a little bit of care and knowledge, you can apply this very powerful tool to your campaigns and give searchers exactly what they’re looking for: *you*.

DYNAMIC KEYWORD INSERTION – BOLD IS BEAUTIFUL

By Andrew Bernero, originally posted April 9, 2009

Effective keyword insertion comes down to a balance between convenience, effectiveness and practicality. That's why Google's keyword Insertion feature can be your best friend. But, when it comes to your ad *clickthrough rates* and *quality score* (see the section, "Learn How to Manage Your Quality Score, Bids & Budget, starting on page 61), it can also be your worst enemy – if you're not careful.

One benefit of dynamic keyword insertion is that you can create fewer ad groups and less ad copy. Another is that you can assign as many keywords as you want, to be dynamically inserted into your ad copy, as long as you conform to character limit guidelines. Finally, the dynamically inserted keyword will be **bolded**, and **bolded ad copy** generally receives higher clickthrough rates than non-bolded ad copy.

The challenge, especially when working with large numbers of keywords within ad groups, is assuring that the message in your ad copy makes sense to the person viewing your ad. If it does not, the person will have a poor experience, which may reflect in lower clickthrough rates and damage to your brand.

Fortunately, even though considerably more work is required, creating tighter ad groups in parallel with careful use of keyword Insertion can yield positive results.

Here are five tips to remember when writing ad copy with keyword insertion:

- *Make sure your ad copy makes sense to the viewer* – for every keyword in your ad group.
- *Ensure the nomenclature is consistent with the rest of your ad copy.* Are you using mostly capital words in your writing style or are you using a standard sentence style with mostly lower-case words? You can control the style of the dynamically inserted ad copy in Google by using the syntax "Keyword" (to capitalize the first word of the phrase), "keyword" to lowercase all words in the phrase, and "KeyWord" (to capitalize all of the words in the phrase). For reference, take a look at the following examples:

{Keyword: Use default ad copy here}

New text ad	
Headline:	Electric guitar clearance 25 max
Description line 1:	Find (keyword:the latest guitar models) on sale! 35 max
Description line 2:	Free shipping while supplies last. 35 max
Display URL:	www.clickable.com/blogs 35 max
Destination URL:	http:// www.clickable.com/blogs 1024 max
Ad preview	
Electric guitar clearance Find (keyword:the latest guitar models) on sale! Free shipping while supplies last. www.clickable.com/blogs	

{Keyword: Use default ad copy here}

New text ad	
Headline:	Electric Guitar Clearance 25 max
Description line 1:	Find (KeyWord:The latest Guitar Models) on Sale! 35 max
Description line 2:	Free Shipping While Supplies Last. 35 max
Display URL:	www.clickable.com/blogs 35 max
Destination URL:	http:// www.clickable.com/blogs 1024 max
Ad preview	
Electric Guitar Clearance Find (KeyWord:The latest Guitar Models) on Sale! Free Shipping While Supplies Last. www.clickable.com/blogs	

{KeyWord: Use default ad copy here}

New text ad	
Headline:	Electric guitar clearance 25 max
Description line 1:	{Keyword:The latest guitar models) on sale! 35 max
Description line 2:	Free shipping while supplies last. 35 max
Display URL:	www.clickable.com/blogs 35 max
Destination URL:	http:// www.clickable.com/blogs 1024 max
Ad preview	
Electric guitar clearance {Keyword:The latest guitar models) on sale! Free shipping while supplies last. www.clickable.com/blogs	

The first example capitalizes the first word in the phrase. The second inserts all lower-case words in the phrase, which is optimal if inserted keywords occur mid-sentence. The third uses title-case ad copy.

- *Be mindful of character limits*, especially in the description lines. And not only should you be mindful of exceeding character limits, but also of falling significantly *short* of the limit. You do not want to accidentally use a character description of only 10 to 15 characters, as it will look incomplete in comparison with competing ads that are likely using 30 to 35 characters. Again, make sure your ad copy not only makes sense, but displays aesthetically.
- When creating new campaigns and ad groups, get into the habit of *using keyword insertion only within ad groups that you can manage comfortably*. Doing so may give your keywords an initial quality score edge due to Google’s ever-changing algorithm.
- Since **bolded** ad copy usually receives higher clickthrough rates than plain ad copy, try to create tighter ad groups and use the keyword – with or without the help of keyword insertion – at least twice in your ads. This will present your ads with a more bolded appearance.

TESTING SEARCH MARKETING ADS

By Hanny Hindi, originally posted August 14, 2008

Google AdWords offers many ways to test ad variations. Here's a great method for getting the best ad possible:

When creating text ads at the beginning of a campaign, you should try out two very different ads. (To make sure you have a fair comparison, select "rotate evenly" in your ad group settings so that both ads will be displayed about the same number of times a day. This replaces the default setting, "optimize," which displays ads more frequently based on higher clickthrough rates and quality scores). As you move along in the process, you'll test more precise variations, but for now, you want to get a very basic idea of what drives conversions.

Once you have a significant number of clicks on each ad, you will likely have two very different sets of statistics, on everything from clickthrough rates to clicks and conversions. If the difference in performance isn't all that significant, you may want to start the process over: delete the poorer performing of the two ads and replace it with a completely different ad.

On the other hand, if the performance difference between the two ads is significant, delete the poorer performing ad and create a new ad based off of the better performer. However, instead of a completely different ad this time, just change one thing you would like to test: the headline text, for instance, or a single word in one of the description fields. By limiting the number of changes in your ads, you can determine exactly what works and what doesn't.

Clickable's *Create Ad Variations* tool helps you do this by generating up to eight ads using different options that you provide for the headline and description fields. Simply enter one or two headlines, and up to two variations for each description field (as well as your display and destination URLs), and the tool will generate as many as eight variations on your ad, using the fields you entered. The best performing ad in your ad group is provided as reference for a starting point. (The Create Ad Variations tool is available in the *Manage Ad Group* section of the *Manage* tab when logged in to Clickable. You can also find more information about it in the *Product Guide* section of *Clickable University*).

The process of improving ads should be a science, not a guessing game. By making sure you systematically eliminate elements that decrease the performance of your ads, you can also know what causes your success.



LEARN HOW TO MANAGE KEYWORDS AND PLACEMENTS

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eyword management is one of the most complex aspects of search marketing. You have to select keywords, set match types, and also be sure not to neglect special cases like negative keywords and misspellings. All of this can be quite overwhelming, so we've developed this section of the Guru's Guide to walk you through the process as systematically – and painlessly – as possible.

UNDERSTANDING MATCH TYPES

Once you've chosen your keywords, setting your *match types* one-by-one can be extremely overwhelming. The trick is to think of matching options as they apply to your entire ad group, and to think of them as a tool for selecting keywords – and perhaps the most important tool –rather than as something to apply to your keywords after selecting them.

There are three matching options: *broad*, *phrase* and *exact*. (There's a fourth if you include *negative* – for more on that, see the articles on pages 35 and 38). Here's how each one works:

Exact Match

This is the easiest match type to understand, because it's the most limited. Simply put, your *exact match* keywords are triggered when users search for exactly that phrase.

For instance, if your exact match keyword is “backpacks,” your ads will only be triggered when people search for “backpacks,” not for “red backpacks” or even “backpack” in the singular. This also works for multi-word keyword phrases: if your exact match keyword phrase is “purple shoes,” your ads will only be triggered by that phrase, and not by “purple tennis shoes” or “red and purple shoes.”

To set a keyword as an exact match, put it into square brackets, as in [backpack] or [purple shoes].

Phrase Match

Slightly less limited than exact match, your *phrase match* ads are triggered by any queries that include your keyword or keyword phrase.

For instance, if your phrase match keyword is “black shoes,” your ads will be triggered by that phrase, as well as by “brand name black shoes” or “black shoes for sale.” However, your ads won't be triggered by queries that include words in your keyword phrase but in a different order – or by queries that insert terms in between your words, such as “black running shoes” or “shoes for sale black.”

To set a keyword or keyword phrase as a phrase match, put it into quotes, as in “black shoes” or “black running shoes.”

(For a more detailed discussion of phrase matching, see the next chapter.)

Broad Match

This is Google's default keyword setting. In addition to searches for your exact keyword or keyword phrase, with *broad match*, ads associated with your keywords are triggered by queries that: include other words (both before, after or in between words in your phrase); include words from your phrase in a different order; or include terms similar to words in your keyword phrase, such as plurals or synonyms.

For instance, if your broad match keyword is "flower," your ads could be triggered by searches for "flowers," "roses," "purple flowers" or "tulips."

To set keywords to broad match, simply type them in without brackets or quotation marks, as in flower. By default, all your keywords will be set to broad match.

Advantages And Disadvantages

The advantages and disadvantages of the various keyword match types are easy to understand:

Exact match allows you to target users very precisely and cheaply by limiting who will see your ads. Broad match, on the other hand, displays your ads to a wider audience, but results in more irrelevant clicks.

The goal, of course, is to present your ads to as wide an audience as possible, but without over-paying. No single match type will help you achieve this goal, but a combination can. To get the combined benefits of broad match (wide audience) and exact match (lower costs), *use both*. First, use a small number of broad match keywords to determine which queries drive clicks. Then, switch to a larger set of exact match keywords that you already know will perform. (In the next chapter, you'll learn exactly how to do this.)

FILTERING WITH CLICK DATA

By Hanny Hindi

Here's a method of combining *broad match* and *exact match* to achieve both wide audience – and lower costs:

Selecting Your Initial Broad Match Keywords

The first step is to create a campaign with a very limited number of broad match keywords. Try creating two or three ad groups for your campaign, each containing a single broad match keyword and each including that keyword in the ad group name. To avoid wasting money on clearly irrelevant searches, be sure to also include a set of carefully chosen negative keywords in each ad group. (For tips on doing so, see “Taking Advantage of Negative Keywords,” page 35).

Choosing your two or three broad match keywords shouldn't be very difficult. Simply select the most generic terms that describe your business. If you run a car service, use “car” and “driving.” If you deal in residential real estate, use “real estate,” “residential” and “house”; or, for commercial real estate, “real estate” “commercial” and “office.” Again, be sure to avoid spending money on wasteful clicks – by including negative keywords in each ad group. Just be sure not to be too conservative – you may be surprised to learn which queries are effective at driving conversions.

Patience: Spending Time and Money on Testing

The next step in this process may be the hardest one: *wait*. Learning exactly which keywords are driving conversions on your Web site requires a period of patient testing.

Despite adding negative keywords to each of your ad groups, your ads will still be triggered by quite a few queries unrelated to your business. As a result, your clickthrough rate and conversion rate will be lower than you'd like. Also, because you won't be certain which queries are triggering your ads, you won't be able to align your ad copy and landing page directly to your keywords. This will have a negative impact on your quality score.

None of this is welcome news, but it's the necessary cost of effective testing. You should run your campaigns during the test period at about 50 percent of the daily budget you would normally use, and, after about a week, implement *ad scheduling* to turn off your campaign at less profitable times. (Clickable's *Ad Scheduling Wizard* can be found in the *Campaign Settings* portion of its *Manage Campaign* section. For more tips, see “Using Ad Scheduling,” page 82). Nonetheless, you should allow your campaign to run for a few weeks in order to collect the data you'll need for the next step.

The Search Query Report

The data needed to filter variations of your broad match keywords down to the top performers is contained in Google's *Search Query Report*. Here's how to generate it:

- Log in to your Google AdWords account.
- Click on the *Reports* tab.
- Click *Create Report*.
- From the *Report Type* options, select *Search Query Performance*.
- In the Settings, set the *Level of Detail* to *Ad Group*; set the *View (Unit of Time)* to *Summary*, and use the *Default Date Range*. For *Campaigns and Ad Groups*, press the radio button to *Manually select from a list* and choose the relevant campaign from the list that appears.
- Finally, select a name for your report at the head of the *Templates, Scheduling and Email* section, and click *Create Report*.

This powerful report will provide you with quite a bit of data, but you should focus on a few specifics: the *Search Query* column will list actual queries that have triggered your ads, and the *Ad Preview* to the right of it will show you exactly which ad was triggered. (The report doesn't tell you which broad match keyword is related to a particular query, but if you've only included one keyword in each of your ad groups, you should already know this information from the ad group's name). Continue scrolling to the right, and you will see the *clickthrough rate*, *conversion rate* and *cost/conversion* for that particular search query.

What does this mean? Basically, you now have the equivalent of a month's data for a large series of exact match keywords. But you didn't need to create the keyword list yourself. Google's broad match algorithm did all the work for you.

This report won't give you one important piece of information, however. Throughout the *Search Query* column, you'll probably notice entries that read "7 other unique queries" or "4 other unique queries," etc. This is Google's way of representing queries that produced an extremely low number of impressions. To protect user privacy, Google won't provide information on exact queries only conducted by a small handful of searchers. In frustrating instances, this information could be useful (e.g., a query that only produced a half-dozen impressions, yet two conversions), but elaborate workarounds to find this data tend not to repay the effort. The data you have should be more than enough for the next step.

Building Your New, Highly Targeted Keyword List

Now that you've collected the data you need, the final step is easy. Depending on what your data shows, you should do one of two things:

- If most of the queries that triggered your ads produced good results, you should continue to use your broad match keywords. However, to avoid the costs of the underperforming outliers, add a new set of negative keywords to prevent them from triggering your ads. This provides the benefit of a wide range of possible queries without allowing a few ineffective variations to drag down your conversion rate.
- If you use this method, be sure to periodically check your *Search Query Report* for new underperforming queries. Be vigilant about adding these to your negative keyword list.
- If, on the other hand, just a small cluster of keywords is performing particularly well, suspend the broad match keywords you've been using for your testing and individually use the high-performing keywords with exact match or phrase match. (For more tips on using phrase match, see the next chapter).

In either case, now is the time to bring your budget back up to the proper level for your campaigns.

You've now got a world-class keyword list, and your conversion rates should begin to grow.

USING PHRASE MATCH

By Hanny Hindi, originally posted September 22, 2008

To better understand the advantages of phrase match, it's important to understand just how "broad" a broad match can be. Saying that your ads may be triggered by synonyms of your broad match keywords is true, but not the entire story. For instance, if you use the broad match keyword "shoe," your ads will be triggered by searches for "shoe" (the exact keyword), "shoes" (a grammatical variation) and "sneakers" (a synonym). However, Google also makes the (deliberately vague) claim that ads can be triggered by "other variants" of your keywords, and this is where broad match gets very broad.

Ads for the broad match keyword "flower" might be triggered by a search for "tulips" (not a synonym, but a specific type). Sometimes the variants can be way off: One user searched for the term "flights" and saw an ad for a new Apple laptop – the Macbook Air.

Examples like this make it clear just how careful you need to be when using broad match keywords – and being careful means maintaining a very complete list of negative keywords, which will be discussed in more details later on in this section of the *Guru's Guide*. (Anyone selling the Macbook Air, for instance, would need to add "-flights" as a negative keyword.) But what if you want basic grammatical variations – especially plurals – without having to add them one-by-one as exact match keywords, and without having to worry about negative keywords quite yet? This is where phrase match comes in.

Discussion of phrase match usually centers around questions of word order. If your phrase is "leather boots," for instance, your ads will be triggered by searches for "brown leather boots" or "leather boots sale," but not by searches for "boots of Spanish leather," because in that phrase the words "leather" and "boots" are in a different order and other words appear in between.

Less widely discussed, and often misrepresented, is that phrase match keywords can provide an easy way to include basic grammatical variants – especially plurals – in your ad groups. If you don't want to go through the hassle of adding every variant one-by-one as an exact match keyword, and you're not quite ready to deal with the possible dangers of broad match keywords, use phrase match.

While phrase match doesn't directly catch plurals, they can be included in most instances because the singular phrase is usually contained within the plural. For instance, because the phrase "used car" is included in the phrase "used cars," the phrase match keyword

“used cars” will give you both the singular and the plural. The one thing to watch out for is irregular plurals, such as “goose/geese,” “alumnus/alumni,” “criterion/criteria” and “woman/women.” You’ll still need to add those individually.

With phrase match, you’ll catch the basic variants, but won’t need to worry about really extended matches. Better yet, while broad match is the default setting in Google AdWords, Clickable uses phrase match as its default.

USING GOOGLE SUGGEST FOR KEYWORD RESEARCH

By Tony Soric, originally posted March 9, 2009

In 2008, Google introduced *Google Suggest* to enhance the search experience. Google Suggest allows users to fine-tune their search queries and explore related keyword phrases. The interface is so intuitive that in many cases it can also actually reduce the number of keystrokes required to produce a search result.

You may have noticed that when you search on Google.com, a dropdown of related topics appears below the search box. Here is an example of Google Suggest results for the keyword “Nintendo”:



If you were to type in “base” or “table,” you could expect the following suggestions:

- “baseball”
- “baseball hall of fame”
- “basecamp”
- “tablet pc”
- “table”
- “table tennis”
- “table of elements”

As a Search Engine Marketer, Why Should You Care?

Google Suggest's recommendations are often highly relevant and can help searchers find related variations of keyword phrases they may not have initially considered. As more users begin to act on Google Suggest recommendations, their search habits become more predictable.

This helps search engine marketers identify relevant keywords that are more likely to be searched by users. By spending time with Google Suggest, you'll probably find some interesting keywords that are not already in your campaigns.

A Negative Keyword Tool

From a search engine marketer's perspective, another obscure benefit to Google Suggest is its use as an effective negative keyword suggestion tool. Recall the "table" example from above: if you're an online retailer specializing in traditional dinner tables or conference tables, you probably don't want your ads to show based on keyword searches related to table tennis. Here's a more practical example on our own "Clickable" brand:



Search Term	Results
clickable	
clickable links	808,000 results
clickables	9,370,000 results
clickables for myspace	193,000,000 results
clickable link code	487,000 results
clickable image	1,320,000 results
clickable oil	211,000 results
clickable picture	3,280,000 results
clickable div	173,000 results
clickable world map	262,000 results
clickable fairy charms	259,000 results

Notice the irrelevant suggestions – “clickable for MySpace,” “clickable oil,” “clickable fairy charms.” These are prime examples of negative keywords that should be added to Clickable's branded AdWords campaigns.

Useful keyword data is everywhere – just keep your eyes open and consider sources beyond traditional keyword research tools. While the Google Suggest tool was originally developed to benefit consumers, for example, it also can help to optimize your ad campaigns.

BIDDING ON YOUR BRAND NAME

By Hanny Hindi, originally posted November 13, 2008

When you select keywords for your search marketing campaigns, your goal is to identify customers who want whatever it is you have to offer. This is easier to understand if you think about “searchers” rather than “keywords.” Keywords can be ambiguous, but searchers aren’t. (For example, you would manage the keyword “lipstick” differently depending on whether you’re targeting searchers looking to buy Revlon lipstick or searchers looking for information about the television show *Lipstick Jungle*.)

Let’s state this idea as a general rule:

Every search marketer is targeting searchers looking for them, (whether they know it or not).

Adding keywords and negative keywords, targeting by language and targeting by locations – all are ways of applying that general rule to your particular business. None of those is a perfect fit, but one targeting method almost is: *searchers looking for your brand name*. These searchers are looking for you, and they know it.

All search marketers should build campaigns around their brand names. If you have a well-designed and informative Web site, you’re probably doing well with organic search results already. Nonetheless, there’s no reason to neglect sponsored results.

Bidding on your own brand name is easy and profitable, and Clickable’s ActEngine™ will provide recommendations to guide you through the process. When you see these recommendations appear, you should keep two major benefits in mind:

- *It’s inexpensive.* The actual *cost-per-click* that you pay for your search marketing ads depends on two factors: your bid and your quality score. A quality score is “the measure of an ad’s relevance to a user’s search.” Few ads are more relevant to a user than one that points them to the Web site of the brand they’re searching for.

Therefore, a campaign built around your brand name will be rewarded with a very high quality score, driving down your costs significantly. (For more detailed discussions about quality score, see the section, “Learn How to Manage Your Quality Score, Bids & Budget,” starting on page 61.)

- *It's the easiest way to appear in "premium" positions.* One of the most coveted spots for a search marketing ad to appear is above the organic search results, rather than alongside them. Quality score has always been an important factor in determining which ads appear in those positions, and, with recent changes to Google's algorithm, it's become even more important. Because the quality score on your brand terms will be about as high as you're likely to get for any term, bidding on your brand name is the best way to land a "premium" position.

Of course, there's not much to prevent your competitors from bidding on your brand name, and you'll want to do what you can to protect your trademarked terms. For more on this subject, see the next chapter.

PROTECTING YOUR BRAND NAME AND TRADEMARKED TERMS

By Hanny Hindi, originally posted December 12, 2008

Because some of your highest quality traffic comes from your brand name and trademark terms, you must protect those terms from competitors who could bid on them or use them in ad copy. If a competitor uses your brand name, they drive high-quality traffic away from your site, and by directing that traffic to less relevant search pages, taint your brand's reputation.

If your brand name is a registered trademark, you should apply to Google right away for protection of that term. Simply fill out Google's online form, and be sure to select *All Advertisers* in the *Scope of Complaint-Advertisers Involved* section. If Google approves your submission, other advertisers in your industry will be prevented from using your trademark in their ad copy. They won't, however, be prevented from bidding on those terms, so you may still want to consider the three tips below – practices that have worked here at Clickable:

- *Follow the golden rule.* The first and simplest thing you can do is never use competitors' brand names yourself. If you bid on a brand term other than your own, it will suggest a lot about your business – none of it good. Rather than competing on merit, you'd be attempting to poach business by taking advantage of a competitor's reputation. This will do long-term damage to your reputation, at a cost much higher than whatever short-term revenues this type of campaign generates.

More importantly, it just isn't sporting. And if you don't do it, following the next tip will be especially easy

- *Ask them to stop.* If you search for one of your terms and find a competitor's ad taking advantage of your brand, click on it. When you get to the competitor's Web site, find a contact form or contact number, get in touch, and politely ask the company to stop using your brand name. There's no need to be aggressive: just introduce yourself, mention your relationship to the brand they're bidding on, and tell them that you'd appreciate it if they wouldn't bid on those terms any longer. Managing our own accounts at Clickable, we've found that this almost always works.

Of course, they still have to pay for your click, which probably won't convert. Besides whatever tiny bit of satisfaction you get from that, it also suggests another important point: *bidding on your own brand name is cheap, but bidding on another brand name is expensive.*

For example, if you manage Nike's search marketing account and bid on the term "Nike," you won't have to pay much for it. Your ads and landing pages will be filled with the term, so your quality score will be high and your average cost-per-click (CPC) low. If, on the other hand, you bid on the term "Adidas," your quality score will be extremely low, driving your CPC way up. This is another reason competitors will usually stop the practice when you ask them: all they need to do is stop paying for high-cost, low-quality clicks. That's not much of a sacrifice.

- *Submit a complaint to Google.* If a competitor is using your registered trademark in an ad and contacting them hasn't been effective, you can submit a complaint to Google. This should only be a last resort, as it is a somewhat lengthy and involved process. Again, this only works if your brand name is a registered trademark, and if your competitor is using that trademark term in an ad, not just bidding on the keyword. (Note, however, that Google *will* investigate marketers outside the U.S., U.K., Ireland or Canada who bid on your trademarks.) Then again, your trademark might show up in a competitor's ad because it's using dynamic keyword insertion and your trademark is one of the variations of its broad match term. With such types of angles to consider, these investigations take quite a bit of time.

Cases like this will be especially rare if you've submitted your trademark to Google at the start, as noted earlier.

TRACKING BOUNCE RATES

By Tony Soric, originally posted January 26, 2009

As a pay-per-click (PPC) advertiser, you pay for each and every click generated via your Google AdWords, Yahoo Search Marketing and Microsoft adCenter campaigns. If a user clicks on your ad, arrives at your landing page and immediately “bounces” away to another site – rather than delving deeper into your site and eventually converting –you’re paying for a click with little-to-no return.

Several factors facilitate a high bounce rate:

- The *keywords you’ve selected are not relevant* to the topics presented on your landing page.
- Your *landing page is not intuitive* or – worse yet – *poorly designed*.
- You may be the victim of *click fraud*.

What Is An Acceptable Bounce Rate?

It is impossible to assign a direct value for an acceptable bounce rate. Ultimately, it depends on your site’s goal and on the type of product or service you are promoting (your vertical). Nonetheless, analytics gurus suggest that a bounce rate topping 50 percent is worrisome and warrants immediate attention.

How Do You Determine and Reduce Your Bounce Rates?

To start, run a keyword report in any third party analytics tool (Google Analytics is a great free solution). Sort your keywords in descending order by the *Bounce Rate* or *Bounce %*. This will allow you to quickly identify the keywords driving visitors away from your site.

You don’t need to take action on keywords that have generated only a few clicks. Instead, focus on those that have generated substantial numbers of clicks but have consistently produced a bounce rate of more than 50 percent.

Are you noticing any patterns? Do most of your high bounce rate keywords revolve around the same topic? If this is the case, you may have an issue with connecting with your users.

Another great way to quickly eliminate high bounce rate keywords from your PPC campaign is to use negative keywords (see the next two chapters). If you have access to search query reporting or traffic logs, this will not be a challenging task. If you do not have advanced search query reporting, you can check out www.semvironment.com site for additional information.

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Lastly, revisit your landing pages and try to identify or create new and more engaging ones. If your ad group is focused on “green widgets,” for example, choose a landing page that clearly represents “green widgets.” But remember: adding complexity and additional content does not always result in a more effective landing page. Almost always, clarity and simplicity win out: *keep your landing pages clear and to the point.*

If after several weeks, you do not see a decrease in bounce rates, you may want to consider analyzing your account with a click fraud monitoring service like ClickForensics. If a click is generated with malicious intent, keyword and landing page relevancy will do little to prevent a “bounce” from occurring.

By reducing your bounce rates, you will effectively see a decrease in wasteful costs and an increase in relevant site traffic.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF NEGATIVE KEYWORDS

Search marketing experts will almost never miss an opportunity to highlight the importance of negative keywords to your campaign's success. As Perry Marshall puts it in his *Definitive Guide to Google AdWords*, "In some cases you can double your clickthrough rate just by adding in the right negative keywords." Clickable can't promise results quite that dramatic, but negative keywords are still a crucial, and often overlooked, tool for improving campaign performance.

Negative Keywords Basics

Basics first: what are negative keywords? When you add a negative keyword to your list, your ads will not be displayed when a user's query includes that term. All you need do is put a minus sign ("-") before a keyword, (as in -free, -foreign or -residential), and it will be treated as a negative keyword.

To take the simplest example possible, imagine an ad group with two keywords:

- *music* [broad match]
- *-free* [negative]

Because the keyword "music" is broad match, this group's ads will be triggered for any number of queries, including "music," "new music," "soul music" or "buy music online." However, because of the negative keyword, queries including the word "free" – such as "free music" or "free music online" – won't trigger this group's ads.

Choosing Your First Negative Keywords

So how do you select negative keywords? The first step is the same as that in selecting your other keywords: use a tool like Yahoo Search Marketing or Google's Keyword Tool. As always, though, the lists of keywords these tools generate can be overwhelming; it helps to keep a couple of tips in mind when looking through them for negative keywords:

- *Products and services you don't offer*
- *Phrases that suggest an irrelevant definition of your keywords*

Let's examine these tips in practice: we'll use Google's Keyword Tool to generate variations on the keyword "pickle" for ACME Pickles, a company that sells pickled cucumbers (also known, of course, as "pickles," but you'll see in a moment why precision here is important).

Here's the beginning of Google's list:

Keywords	Advertiser Competition	Search Volume: April	Avg Search Volume	Match Type: ?
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sorted by relevance ?				
pickle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
pickle recipe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
heinz pickle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
pickles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
petunia pickle bottom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
pickle recipes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
dill pickles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
spicy pickle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
petunia pickle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
fried pickles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
pickle juice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
mr pickles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
sweet pickles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
pickle barrel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
bread and butter pickles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
rusty pickle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
dill pickle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
dill pickle recipe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add
pickle ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add

To save the keywords you have added, click the 'Save to Ad Group' button in the green box on the right.

Products and Services You Don't Offer

Begin with the first tip: *look for products and services you don't offer.*

To keep things simple, pretend that ACME Pickles only sells “dill” pickles and not any other kind, like “bread and butter” or “sweet.” Therefore, the firm should add “-bread and butter” and “-sweet” to its list of negative keywords, because it doesn't want searches for those varieties to trigger its ads. Sticking with this relatively extreme example, the manager of this ad group should also block out any other varieties and preparations that ACME doesn't offer, including “-fried” or “-Heinz.”

However, be sure you don't overuse this approach. Just because ACME doesn't provide pickle recipes, for instance, it shouldn't necessarily add “-recipe” as a negative keyword. (After all, people searching for pickle recipes may be intimidated by what they find and decide to just buy a jar). Once your broad match keywords have run for a short period of time, you'll be able to review which queries triggered your ads, and whether or not they led to conversions. ACME may find that “pickle recipe” was actually a valuable query.

Remove products and services you don't have, but don't decide too far in advance which tangential searches will drive conversions and which won't. You could be surprised.

Irrelevant Definitions



After removing products and services you don't offer, it's time to look for irrelevant definitions of your keywords.

"Pickled cucumber" isn't the only way the word "pickle" is used. As you can see at the bottom of the above list, another fairly common search is for "pickle ball." Actually spelled "pickleball," it's a game played with wooden paddles on a 20x44-foot court. Clearly, pickleball has nothing to do with ACME's offering, so the company should remove the term by adding "-ball" and "-Pickleball" to its negative keyword lists.

Advanced Techniques

If you keep the two tips above in mind, you'll have a much easier time combing through keyword suggestions for words to weed out. More advanced approaches you can take include an analysis of search engine results pages (SERPs) for your keywords and looking at competitors' ads that may also be triggered by irrelevant keywords.

FINDING THE RIGHT NEGATIVE KEYWORDS

By Tony Soric, originally posted November 30, 2008

If your search marketing campaign contains broad phrase or match phrase terms, you may be wasting a significant portion of your budget on irrelevant clicks. Most pay-per-click advertisers focus a majority of their time building keyword lists but fail to recognize the importance of negative keywords.

In addition to mitigating financial risk, a comprehensive negative keyword list creates a situation where your ads show up for more relevant searches. As a result, you can expect to see an increase in clickthrough rate, an important factor in quality score calculation.

So How Do You Find Negative Keywords?

The preceding chapter provided a good primer on identifying negative keywords. Now we'll focus in depth on four methods: *keyword research tools*, *search query performance reports*, *third party analytics* and *competitive intelligence tools*. Each offers a unique perspective and you should consider all of them for possible use.

Keyword Research Tools

Google's *Keyword Tool*, *Word Tracker*, *Keyword Discovery* and the like are typically the first places advertisers look for negative keyword help.

These tools are a great resource for two main reasons:

- *They leverage vast keyword databases and return a high number of queries.*
- *They provide traffic levels for each keyword phrase.*

When identifying negative keywords, remember to start with a broad search term like "shoes" – you should then collect negatives and refine them according to your products and services.

Also pay attention to traffic levels – keywords with high search demand can have the highest impact on your campaigns. This works in both directions – if a keyword is irrelevant but has a high search demand, the associated risk is high and vice versa.

To mine keywords, simply enter them and then note results that seem irrelevant or counter-intuitive to your business goals. Add these keywords as negatives to your campaign.

Search Query Performance Report

Once your account has been active for several days, the *Search Query Performance Report* becomes the most relevant resource for identifying negative keywords. The purpose of this report is to identify actual search queries that have triggered clickthroughs based on your keyword set.

This report is not foolproof, and many search marketers have observed that some of the most useful data gets labeled “other unique queries.” Nonetheless, the report is valuable and should be analyzed every few weeks to determine new negative keywords.

Your Analytics Tool

If you are not using a third-party Web analytics tool to track your traffic sources, install one as soon as possible. Google Analytics, for one, is robust and, best of all, free. In addition to providing insight into organic, paid and direct traffic sources, third-party analytics tools provide visibility into keyword-level data. These reports can help you identify negative keywords for your AdWords campaigns.

In order to access deep keyword-level data, it is often necessary to initiate tracking through advanced profiles. (For more information on creating these in Google Analytics, visit www.semvironment.com.)

Competitive Intelligence Tools

Tools such as Key Compete, Compete, and Ispioage provide insight into your competitors' keyword lists. While their reports are typically used to generate new ideas and overlooked keywords, they can also be a useful source for bolstering your negative keyword list. Competitive intelligence tools typically run anywhere from a few dollars per report to several hundred dollars per year.

Keyword lists evolve as accounts mature. Negative keyword lists warrant the same level of attention but are often neglected. As your paid search account evolves, remember to keep an eye on your key performance indicators and to check your negative keyword lists at regular intervals. The four sources discussed above should give you a head start on effective negative keyword research.

MANAGING MISSPELLINGS

The hardest thing about bidding for keywords is reconciling two goals that sometimes work against each other:

- *You want your keywords to be as precisely targeted as possible.*
- *You want them to have good value.*

The problem is that the most precisely targeted keywords are often the most expensive. However, exceptions exist. One of the easiest to take advantage of is misspelling of your brand name and top keywords.

Start by choosing the best performing keywords in your campaign, and then follow these four steps:

- *Generate a list of misspellings.*
- *Filter for the misspellings most likely to generate clicks.*
- *Add the filtered list of keywords to a “misspellings” ad group.*
- *Make minor adjustments to your landing pages to keep your quality score high.*

Let's look at each step in detail:

Generating Misspellings

Many tools can generate keyword misspellings, but one of the easiest is from Imagio Technology. It generates misspellings by using a fairly simple set of rules such as leaving a character out of the search term or doubling it, reversing two characters, or replacing a letter with one nearby on the keyboard.

All you need to do is enter one of the keywords you want to use and click *Generate Misspelling*. As an example, entering the term “backpack” gets 155 potential misspellings.

Here's just the beginning of this list:

backpack - Misspelling Results

Keywords: Generate Misspellings...

Results for backpack

There are 157 misspellings of backpack

Miss One Letter (8)

The search phrase is misspelt by missing a single letter out

ackpack	bakpack	backack	backpak	backpac
bckpack	bacpack	backpck		

The next step is to choose the right misspellings to include in your new ad group.

Filtering The Results

The first thing you do is remove actual words generated by the tool. For instance, misspellings of the word “pill” include “ill” and “pull,” which you wouldn’t want to include among the misspellings.

Next, you want to filter for words that trigger alternative spelling tools on the search networks where your ads appear. Enter one of the misspellings above into Google’s search form, for instance, and you’ll likely see *Did you mean: backpack?* atop the results page. This is what happens, for instance, when you enter “babckpack” and “b\ckpack.” Because users are more likely to click on the *Did you mean?* link than on an ad to the right, these are probably not going to be valuable keywords. On the other hand, “abckpack” does not trigger that link, so you should add it to your list.

Creating A Misspellings Ad Group

Once you have your final list of misspellings, add them to their own ad group. (To keep things simple, just give this ad group the same name as the one containing the correctly spelled keywords, and add “(Misspellings)” at the end.)

Another advantage of this kind of ad group is that you can use a fairly simple formula for producing ad copy. Because users are already accustomed to see *Did you mean...?* when they misspell a search term, you can use that phrase for your headline. For the rest of the ad, use the same copy you would use for the correctly spelled term. Take a look:

[Did you mean: Backpack?](#)

Jansport®, North Face, Columbia &
More. Free Shipping. Save up to 60%
www.BackpackCompany.com

Also note the most important thing to keep in mind when writing ad copy for misspellings: **Don't use dynamic keyword insertion.**

If you do, your ads will have misspellings in them. Entering the following copy, for instance, could produce the result below it:

Quality {KeyWord:Backpacks}

Jansport®, North Face, Columbia &
More. Free Shipping. Save up to 60%
www.BackpackCompany.com

Quality abckpacks

Jansport®, North Face, Columbia &
More. Free Shipping. Save up to 60%
www.BackpackCompany.com

Adjusting Your Landing Pages

The last step in managing misspellings is to make a quick adjustment to your landing pages. As with any other ad group, you want to keep the quality score in your “misspellings” group high. You'll achieve this the same way you would throughout your accounts: by making sure your keywords align with your ad copy and landing pages. The trick is to include these terms on your landing pages without cluttering them with annoying misspellings. Therefore, the place to include them is in your *meta tags*.

Meta tags are included in the head area of your Web pages – the same place where you include the tag that displays your page title at the top of the user's browser. Unlike the *title tag*, however, terms in your meta tag don't appear to users; they are instead used by search engines to index pages and rate search marketing ads.

After you've created your ad group of misspellings, just add some of those terms to your “keywords” meta tag. (Make sure you include some eight to 10 keywords in the tag). You're all set!

THE GRAMMAR OF KEYWORDS IN DIFFERENT SEARCH ENGINES

By Ehren Reilly, originally posted April 23, 2009

Most search marketers assume that the collections of keywords in their Google, Microsoft and Yahoo accounts will match the same sets of queries by Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo users, respectively. This is not the case, because queries and keywords are not the same thing, and different search engines handle the mapping between them quite differently.

Although the sets of possible queries that users could submit to each of these search engines is theoretically the same, the ways in which the engines match user queries with advertiser keywords are significantly different. Most notably, Yahoo Search Marketing treats different grammatical and spelling variants of the same words or phrases as a single entity (so “chiropractor” = “chiropractors” = “chiropractic” = “a chiropractor” = “the chiropractors,” and “ugg” = “uggs” = “ugs” = “uggz”). Google AdWords and Microsoft adCenter, however, would treat these as separate keywords.

Mapping Queries To Keywords

Lots of different queries that users submit to search engines mean exactly the same thing, and the engines do you a favor by neutralizing superficial differences between them. For example, the queries “ally mcbeal dvd”, “Ally McBeal DVD” and “ally mcbeal DVD” are all distinct, but you know they all mean the same thing. The only difference is upper-case vs. lower-case characters, a factor that all major search engines will ignore. You’d be pretty irritated if search engines made you enter each of these as separate keywords for your account.

But what about “allie mcbeal DVD” (a misspelling) or “ally mcbeal DVDs” (a plural) or “an ally mcbeal DVD” (a grammatical variant)? Do these queries really mean the same thing and thus deserve to be neutralized into a single keyword? Or should advertisers have the opportunity and responsibility to independently choose whether or not to advertise for these queries, and how much they want to bid?

Yahoo Search Marketing has answered this question differently than Google and MSN. For Yahoo, “ally mcbeal dvd,” “allie mcbeal dvd,” “ally mcbeal DVDs” and “an ally mcbeal DVD” are all the “same” keyword. If you try to submit more than one of the superficial variants of this keyword, Yahoo will reject it as a “duplicate.”

Benefits And Drawbacks of Yahoo's Keyword Policy

Most advertisers see Yahoo's more aggressive keyword consolidation as an advantage. You get more query coverage out of fewer keywords, and you don't need to add singular and plural forms of every word, nor come up with likely spelling errors. Yahoo does all that for you.

The downside of this practice is that, occasionally, Yahoo neutralizes distinctions between queries that really do mean different things (although this is the exception, rather than the rule). Here are a few examples:

- *giant baseballs* vs. *Giants baseball*
- *Windows repair* vs. *window repair*
- *rings* vs. *The Ring*

Another downside of Yahoo's approach is possible confusion when converting a Google AdWords campaign to a Yahoo Search Marketing campaign. Most search marketers have multiple grammatical variants of keywords in their Google AdWords accounts. However, when you convert these to Yahoo, you have no easy way to choose which superficial variants will exist in your account, while all others are rejected as duplicates.

Instead, Yahoo uploads and accepts the first keywords it finds in your imported AdWords file. If your list is ordered from A to Z, for example, Yahoo will choose the first variant alphabetically instead of choosing the most obvious one semantically. In each of the three lists below, the first keyword is the one Yahoo would select, instead of the most frequently searched-for term, which is starred:

- a management seminar
- *management seminar*
- *management seminars**

- tennis shoe
- *tennis shoes**

- NY chiropracter
- *NY chiropractor**

Keep this in mind if you use dynamic keyword insertion: *check and make sure that that Yahoo has the best variants of your most important keywords.*

Considerations for Google and adCenter Accounts

On Google and adCenter, you must select all the grammatical and spelling variants of your keywords yourself. To do this effectively, you should adjust your keywords for each of the following factors, if applicable:

- *Singular and plural*: “lawyer” vs. “lawyers”
- *Grammatical phrasing*: “symphony tickets” vs. “tickets to symphony” vs. “tickets to the symphony” vs. “a symphony ticket”
- *Verb and noun inflections*: “incorporate a business” vs. “incorporating a business” vs. “business incorporation”
- *Words derived with suffixes*: “marriage counseling” vs. “marital counseling” vs. “marriage counselor” vs. “marital counselor”
- *Common misspellings*: “pediatrician” vs. “pediatritian” vs. “pediatrican”

To some extent, Google and Microsoft allow users to match a broader set of queries with a single keyword through broad match (if you’re interested in trying broader match types, you can also check out Clickable’s awesome *Keyword Match Type* recommendation). But in your account’s high-traffic, high-value areas, you should really make sure you’ve explicitly covered all obvious query variants of your keywords.

In the end, mapping queries to keywords is a complex computational problem that different search engines handle differently. When counting by Google’s standards, your typical product or service does not have one name, but dozens of grammatically related names that mean roughly the same thing. And just as the search engines consider this issue in designing their algorithms, you should consider the full grammatical diversity of how your customers express their wants and needs to the search engine.

SITE PLACEMENT BASICS

Until recently, AdWords advertisers had little control over their content network ads. This led to untargeted ads with low conversions and high costs, especially in relation to search network ads. As a result, most advertisers began turning off content network ads, and focusing instead on improving their efforts in search network ads.

The introduction of *site placement* targeting has ushered in a plethora of new features giving advertisers control over nearly every last detail of their content placements. The new system enables advertisers to control bid pricing, specify demographic targeting and handpick the sites their ads appear on.

Selecting the Best Placements for Your Business

Selecting your placements may seem like an overwhelming task, considering that Google's network includes thousands of sites from around the world. Luckily, Google provides a number of sorting options to make the process a little less challenging:

- **Browse Categories:** Google has developed an intuitive hierarchal directory of availabilities in its site placement network. Here you can browse by categories such as *Entertainment > Comics & Animation*, providing a great way to explore and discover new sites within the network.
- **Describe Topics:** a great option if you have an existing keyword list and are interested in searching for sites specifically geared towards your keywords.
- **List URLs:** this option allows you to simply enter a list of sites where you want to place your ads. Keep in mind, however, that only publishers currently participating in the Google Content Network are available through Google's site placement. To avoid confusion, this method is not currently supported within Clickable, since it's best to find sites you're interested in through the category browsing method (#1 above) – there's no question those publishers are on the Content Network.
- **Select Demographics:** a good option if you're less concerned with specific sites or topics than with reaching a specified audience. The demographic-targeting tool allows you to set gender, age and household Income, among other advanced variables. This method is not currently available within Clickable, but will be in the future.

Vetting For Quality And Relevance

Google provides you with important details about each site you select – in addition to the site name (URL), these include average impression share and a rundown of the ad formats accepted.

Factors to consider before adding a site to your targeted list include:

- As advertisers, you're motivated by traffic – the more the better, right? This may be true in brand-awareness campaigns, but it's not always the most efficient way to spend your budget. For example, Myspace is often the top listed site placement domain, but its traffic may be irrelevant to your business. *Don't always select the site promising the most traffic.* Focus instead on building a list of specific niche sites closely related to your offerings. Highly targeted audiences are more likely to connect with your business.
- *Visit the sites you're considering before committing your ad dollars.* When you decide to syndicate ads on a publisher's site, you are effectively "partnering" with that site. Are you comfortable with the content and audience the site attracts?
- *Be sure your ad format is accepted.* By and large, this is not an issue when you're focusing on text ads – virtually all publishers in Google's network accept them. However, if you plan to use banner or video ads, verify that your dimensions and formats are accepted. This information can be found in the *Ad Formats* column located within the results list.

Managing Site Placement Campaigns

Once you've made your site selections, it's time to choose a daily budget and set a maximum cost-per-click. Setting an initial budget can be tricky; a good yardstick is 25 to 50 percent of your total search campaign budget. Next, set a maximum cost-per-click; again, somewhere in the range of 25 to 50 percent of your average search maximum cost-per-click is appropriate. This approach will minimize your risk until you have some reliable data, at which time you can always increase your daily budget and maximum cost-per-click.

Depending on traffic levels, it may take a week to several months before you accumulate a critical mass of data on which to base those business decisions. *Be patient!*

What Kind Of Results Can You Expect?

Based on experience, site placement campaigns can be great sources of traffic if your cost-per-click is properly managed. Site placement campaigns tend to drive a lot of impressions, but clickthrough rates can be significantly lower than with search network ads. Think of site placement campaigns as a compliment to existing search marketing efforts that will deliver additional traffic from previously untapped sources at relatively low cost.



LEARN HOW TO GEO-TARGET

One of the biggest advantages of search engine marketing is the ability to target customers with incredible accuracy. You accomplish this primarily by selecting keywords that make your ads appear to people who would be interested in the products or services you offer. But there are also ways to target your customers before they conduct a single search. Of those, perhaps the most effective is targeting your customers by their location. This collection of tutorials provides best practices for using this powerful new marketing tool.

HOW DO SEARCH ENGINES DETERMINE AUDIENCE LOCATIONS?

Search engine marketing tools use three criteria to determine audience location:

- *IP address*
- *Domain*
- *Query terms*

To understand which of these criteria take precedence over the others, let's use the example of a user in Berlin searching for a hotel.

IP Address

More often than not, users looking for a service like a hotel will indicate a particular region either in their query terms or by the site where they conduct their search. If they take neither of those actions, search engine marketing (SEM) tools will use their *IP address* to determine the location they are searching from.

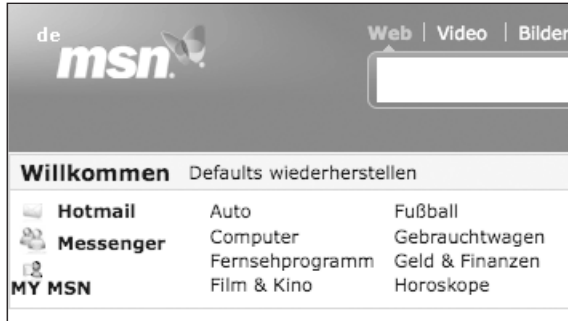
An IP (or "Internet Protocol") address is a numeric code that identifies computers on the Internet. It is "globally unique," meaning that every computer in the world connected to the Internet has a different IP address. Most importantly, IP addresses are not randomly assigned: different latitude/longitude points have unique IP addresses, and these can be used to infer each user's city, region and country with quite a high degree of precision.

So, if the user in Berlin gives no other indication of the location he or she is interested in, an SEM tool will use that user's IP address to find the originating location on the map – and thus the user's country code (*DE* for Germany), region code (*DEBE*), and city code (*DEBEBERL*).

Domain

Let's say this hypothetical user – a German looking for a hotel – still doesn't query anything more than the word "hotel," but does indicate location by the domain where the search originates.

Many search engines – including Google, Yahoo and Microsoft – have country-specific sites: www.google.co.uk, for example, is Google's search engine for the United Kingdom, fr.yahoo.com is Yahoo's French site, and de.msn.com is Microsoft's MSN German site.



Domains take precedence over IP addresses. As noted above, an SEM tool will know that the hypothetical user is connecting from Berlin. However, if that user searches for “hotels” on Google.fr (Google’s French site), he or she will see ads targeting people looking for hotels in France rather than those looking for hotels in Germany.

Query Terms

Most of the time, users will give some indication of the location they’re interested in by the query terms they use. Searches of this type might include:

- *hotels in Chicago*
- *spas in Phoenix*
- *restaurants in St. Louis*
- *bookstores in Miami*

When users perform searches like these, they take precedence over any other criteria in determining location.

Taking a last look at our user in Berlin: if he or she conducts a search on Google.fr for “hotels in New York,” ads will appear targeting people looking for hotels in New York, rather than hotels in France (the user’s domain location) or hotels in Germany (the IP address location).

WHY IS THERE A CITY NAME AT THE BOTTOM OF MY SEM ADS?

By Trace Johnson, originally posted, August 4, 2008

Targeting your ads by city or region may sound straightforward, and usually is. However, things get a little trickier if you select a metropolitan area rather than a single city. When you select the former, your ad will have an additional line after the destination URL indicating your target city and a default town name indicating how far out Google considers this metropolitan area to extend. If you select the DC metro area, for example, your ad will display the following:

Title

Line 1

Line 2

Destination URL

Washington, DC (Hagerstown, MD)

Hagerstown is about 70 miles northwest of Washington, DC, and Google is indicating about how far it believes the “DC Metropolitan Area” extends by adding Hagerstown to the ad text. Why did Google select Hagerstown, MD, as the default indicator of metro DC? We don’t know.

Advertisers may find it confusing to see this line which they didn’t include in their ads, but geotargeting is still an important and effective tool, and targeting by metropolitan area can still be a powerful way to reach your audience. If you need to target your ads more precisely, however, you can use radius targeting (i.e., targeting ads a certain number of miles around an address you specify) or you can create a custom location using the AdWords Polygon tool.

TWO METHODS OF LOCATION TARGETING

You can target customers by location in two ways:

- *Geo-targeting at the campaign level*
- *Choosing location-specific keywords at the ad group level*

You can take advantage of all three audience location criteria discussed in the previous chapter – IP address, domain and query terms – with campaign-level geo-targeting, but you're limited to a pre-selected set of locations. On the other hand, you can target any location in the world with ad group level keyword selection, but this method will only be relevant to users who include the location name in their queries.

Campaign-Level Geo-targeting

In Clickable, you set campaign-level geo-targeting when creating a new campaign or modifying an existing one. You can do this either by country or by region/city, as shown here:

The screenshot shows a web interface for adding a new campaign. At the top, it says "Add New Campaign (Keyword) (Test-Campaign)". Below this is a progress bar with five steps: 1. Budget & Language, 2. Locations, 3. Ad Group & Ad, 4. Keywords, and 5. Review & Save. Step 2, "Locations", is currently active.

The main question is "How would you like to target your customers geographically?". There are two radio button options:

- Countries and Territories: Your ads will appear in searches made in the countries and territories you select.
- Regions and Cities: Your ads will appear in searches made in the regions and cities you select.

Below the options are two lists:

- Available Countries and Territories:** A scrollable list containing United States, Canada, Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, American Samoa, Andorra, Angola, Anguilla, and Antarctica.
- Selected Countries and Territories:** A list containing United States and Canada.

 Between the lists are buttons: "Add All", "Add", "Remove", and "Remove All".

At the bottom of the interface are three buttons: "CANCEL", "BACK", and "NEXT".

You can target your ads to nearly every country in the world – either by selecting the countries you want to target one by one, or by adding every country with the *Add All* feature (if you want your ads to show to everybody in the world, simply target them to all countries).

Besides language targeting, country targeting is the only way to target users of country-specific domains. If you target your ads to Germany, for example, you will reach users of the Google.de domain, as well as users with IP addresses in Germany and users who indicate “Germany” in their query terms.

Regional/City Targeting

The screenshot shows the 'Add New Campaign (Keyword) (Test-Campaign)' interface. It has a progress bar with five steps: 1. Budget & Language, 2. Locations, 3. Ad Group & Ad, 4. Keywords, and 5. Review & Save. The 'Locations' step is active.

Under the heading 'How would you like to target your customers geographically?', there are two radio button options:

- Countries and Territories
- Regions and Cities

Below this, it says 'Your ads will appear in searches made in the regions and cities you select.' A dropdown menu shows 'Available for the following countries' with 'United States' selected.

There are two columns: 'Available Regions and Cities' and 'Selected Regions and Cities'. The 'Available' column lists:

- Alabama AL: Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville - Decatur (FL), Montgomery (Selma)
- Alaska AK: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau
- Arizona AZ: Phoenix

 The 'Selected' column currently contains 'Alabama AL'. Between the columns are buttons: 'Add All', 'Add', 'Remove', and 'Remove All'. At the bottom are 'CANCEL', 'BACK', and 'NEXT' buttons.

The other campaign-level option for geo-targeting is at the regional/city level. Here, your options are somewhat more limited. Each country will have a specific set of regions and cities that you can target. Some, like the U.S., will have a variety of options: states, cities, metropolitan regions, counties. Others, like Australia, will have fewer: usually only states or provinces.

Here's an example from the U.S.:

When you use regional targeting, you reach users with IP addresses in the regions you've selected, and users whose query terms include the regions you've selected. Search engine domain is irrelevant at this level.

Ad Group Level Keyword Selection

To target a specific region that's not included in the campaign-level options, you should include the name (or names) of that region in the relevant ad group's keywords. For instance, you can target ads to New York City at the campaign level, but not to New York's Westchester County suburb, because "Westchester, NY" isn't a regional option. So, if you want to advertise a bookstore to users in Westchester, you would include "Westchester" in the keywords for your ad group, along with words like "books," "bookstore" and "bookshop."

While this allows you to be extremely specific, only users who include the region name in their query will be targeted. And including the keyword "Westchester" will not result in an SEM tool automatically targeting ads to users with IP addresses in that county. In future versions of Clickable, however, you will be able to draw custom maps and target ads to users in such areas.

RUNNING A LOCAL AD CAMPAIGN

By Trace Johnson, originally posted March 12, 2009

Running a local ad campaign can be an inexpensive way to gain targeted traffic. The following tips can help you get the most out of your local ad budget.

Geo-targeting

As discussed in the previous chapter, you can target a campaign on the local level by the user's location. Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft call this *geo-targeting* or *location targeting*, and it is based on IP addresses.

You can launch a local campaign quickly without having to combine location-specific keywords.

How do you get started? Under *Campaign Settings* in AdWords, or under the *Manage* tab and *Campaign Settings* in Clickable, you can choose the location where you would like your ads to run. You can select broad match keywords for your campaign, and they will only be triggered within the geographic region you select. You should know, however, that basing a campaign on IP addresses is not 100 percent accurate because many Internet Service Providers route their customers' IP addresses through hubs, and hubs are often located in another city. So, if you are targeting a campaign to a small town, it might be best to broaden the campaign's range to include several neighboring towns as well.

Geo-Modification

The second way to target a local campaign is via geo-modified terms. By selecting location-specific terms, you can make sure your ads get served only to those people searching for what you are offering in a specific location. Often this means creating two keyword lists and combining them to get the broadest set of keywords possible. The first list of terms should be your products or services. The second should be variations of location-specific terms. For example:

- *List 1: "candy," "candy canes," "candy corn," "maple syrup"*
- *List 2: "San Diego," "San Diego, CA," "San Diego, California"*

Then combine each of the terms with the location variants, i.e., "candy San Diego," "candy San Diego CA," "Candy San Diego California."

This will lead to a long list of location-specific terms that can be run on a national level, yet still only trigger your ad when someone in a specific location searches for the product or service you offer. Several programs are built specifically to create campaigns based on keyword lists, such as Speed PPC and Efficient PPC. They combine multiple lists and then allow you to create ad variations, set bids and easily upload your new, highly targeted campaigns to the three major search marketing platforms.

Speed PPC, for example, has a great feature set, a simple interface and a short learning curve. If you plan to deploy multiple ad campaigns, both Speed PPC and Efficient PPC can dramatically reduce your build time. Often, running a local ad campaign means you will have limited competition and a much lower cost-per-click (CPC) to maintain first page results. Start with a maximum CPC of 5 cents and adjust upwards, based on average position.



LEARN HOW TO MANAGE YOUR QUALITY SCORE, BIDS & BUDGET

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anaging your search marketing budget involves much more than raising and lowering bids. In order to monitor performance, you need to implement conversion tracking. Daily budgets should be set low enough to minimize risk, but high enough to avoid arbitrary ceilings to growth. And there are even very different approaches to bid management, depending on your particular goal, which may range from improving your quality score to deliberately dropping a position. This section of Clickable Guru's Guide to Better Search Engine Marketing will help you with all of these issues, and many others.

UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITY SCORE

One of the most important factors to consider when managing your search marketing budget is your *quality score*. Unfortunately, because search engines don't reveal exactly how that score is calculated, it's also one of the more mysterious things about search marketing. However, while the precise algorithm used to calculate a quality score might be hidden from view, the basic ideas that go into that calculation are not. By acquainting yourself with them, you'll take the first step toward improving your own quality scores and, in turn, the profitability of your campaigns.

The Disadvantages of Top Bidder Systems

The best way to understand the importance of quality scores is to imagine how search marketing would work if they didn't exist.

Actually, search marketing without quality scores would be very straightforward: the top bidder on a keyword would get the top spot in the *Sponsored Links* section. Given just how straightforward a top bidder system is, why don't search engines adopt this model? Because the following negative scenario could become the norm: *in order to drive traffic to their sites, advertisers with significant budgets could bid on as many high-traffic keywords as they could afford, regardless of the relevance to their business.*

To seasoned search marketers, accustomed to the hard work of driving high-quality clicks to their sites, this may sound counterintuitive. Why would marketers want to generate so many expensive clicks, when so few of them would lead to conversions? Good question, but it ignores an important basic fact: high "impressions" with low "conversions" are the standard model in all traditional advertising, from billboards to television commercials to telemarketers (to say nothing of online pop-up windows asking fake survey questions).

Search networks quickly realized that this model wasn't going to work for them: since they were only going to be paid when users clicked on the ads they displayed, users would very quickly stop clicking on those ads if they didn't trust them. If, for example, keywords from "travel agent" to "movie tickets" had triggered misleading ads that all landed on the same adult video and discount pharmaceutical sites, searchers would have very quickly stopped clicking on those ads altogether. This would have meant a huge lost opportunity for the search networks, as well as for honest advertisers.

Google realized this and implemented a brilliant solution to the problem. Keywords closely related to the ads they triggered and the pages those ads led to would have their bids weighted more favorably; otherwise, bids would be penalized.

The value that all bids are multiplied by became the quality score. This created a sponsored link system that searchers could trust, and a multi-billion-dollar windfall for the search networks.

Where the Quality Score Comes In

The quality score is applied whenever one of your keywords might trigger an ad. Your score is calculated and used in different ways depending on whether your ads appear on Google's *search engine results pages* (SERPs), or on its *content network*. The easiest to understand, and most important for search marketers, are ads appearing on the Google SERPs, so let's focus on those.

When a query might trigger one of your ads, the first thing Google does is calculate each competing ad's rank. Google does this by multiplying each advertiser's maximum bid for the relevant keyword by its quality score for that keyword. The advertiser with the highest resulting value has its ad appear in the top position, and so on down the line.

Google next calculates your actual cost-per-click (CPC) by multiplying the maximum bid for the advertiser below you with your quality score, adding a penny to the result, and charging you the sum as your actual CPC.

Sound confusing? It is, but don't worry. The only point you need to take away is that your quality score is extremely important: along with your bid, it determines where your ads show up and how much you pay every time somebody clicks on them.

Quality Score is a Measure of Relevance

As noted above, your quality score is primarily a way of determining how well your ads, keywords and landing pages relate to one another. To put it even more simply, a quality score is the measure of an ad's relevance to a user's search.

If you always keep this in mind, the more technical details start making far more sense. For instance, an important variable Google uses in determining your quality score is your *clickthrough rate* (CTR).

What is a CTR? It represents the number of users who click on your ad, turn up on your landing page, and then click through to another page on your site. Why is it relevant? Because if a user "clicks through," chances are they then land on a site that gave them what they were looking for. If they get to your landing page but immediately leave your site, they probably haven't found what they were looking for. In other words, CTR is just another value that Google uses to determine the relevance of your ads.

Can you do other things to improve your quality score? Of course, and not all of them are directly related to the issues already discussed. One factor Google recently added to its calculation of quality scores, for instance, is *landing page load time*: in an effort to improve user experience, Google began penalizing sites with landing pages that took too long to load.

In general, though, *make your ads relevant to the searchers who see them, and you're on the right track.*

FACTORS THAT AFFECT YOUR QUALITY SCORE

By Trace Johnson, originally posted August 21, 2008

In an effort to increase the quality of keywords, ads, and landing pages, Google recently modified its click-through rate maximum cost-per-click formula.

What does this mean for you? Now, more than ever, you must ensure that your account structure is well thought-out and that your keywords, ad copy and landing pages all fit together thematically.

Here are three tips to consider:

1. *Whenever possible, include your keywords in your ad copy.*
2. *Create a number of concise ad groups.* This will help you achieve the first tip as well. If you sell several different types of products, think about campaign structure and ad group structure, and create a clean hierarchy.
3. *Carefully select landing pages* and think about which one best represents the keywords and ad group you are working in. Your landing page should include as many keywords as possible from your ad group, and should directly address the product or service the user is searching for.

Let's look at an example:

Campaign = Cakes

Ad group 1 = Blueberry Cakes

Ad group 2 = Cherry Cakes

Ad group 3 = Strawberry Cakes

As you can see, there isn't one ad group named "Cakes." Instead, each specific type of cake has been assigned it to its own ad group. This allows you to write descriptive ad copy for each individual ad group – which in turn allows you to connect with the user at a much deeper level. (See "How Many Ad Groups Do You Need?" on page 98.)

CHANGES IN GOOGLE'S QUALITY SCORE

By Ehren Reilly, originally posted November 5, 2008

Google AdWords recently made two major modifications to its rules that determine where ads appear on a page:

1. *Click-through rates (CTRs) are now normalized by position for calculating quality score.*
2. *Quality is now a more important factor in determining which ads appear above search results.*

Both changes are intended to increase the click-through rates for ads (vs. organic search results on the same pages). Let's look at each change in depth:

Normalizing CTR by Position

Regardless of an ad's actual quality (or "inherent clickability"), ads that appear higher on the page get higher click-through rates because they are in a more salient location. Previously, advertisers could artificially boost their quality scores by bidding very high and getting their ads into position number one, resulting in higher CTRs. This situation unfairly biased quality scores to reflect the bid rather than the "quality." Statistically speaking, quality score and bid were not independent factors, even though Google's positioning algorithm was designed under that assumption.

Under the new rules, click-through rate is first normalized by position, taking into account that higher positions get higher CTRs. So, for the same CTR, ads in lower positions now get more credit and ads in higher positions less credit. For example, getting a 3 percent CTR in position one (pretty typical) is now not worth as much in terms of quality score as getting the same CTR in position seven (impressively high).

While more accurately determining optimal ad placements helps Google increase the *eCPM* ("effective cost-per-thousand," or the money Google makes every time someone performs a search), the change also certainly helps the little guy – by more appropriately giving low-bid advertisers credit for creating high-quality ads.

Quality Rises Above Search Results.

On search results pages with especially high-value ads (high bids and/or high CTRs), ads appear in a yellow area above the organic search results. Previously, ads were assigned to this prominent spot by the same formula that determined rank within the page (quality

score multiplied by the bid). If the top-ranking ad for a page did not qualify to appear above the search results, Google would not show any ads in that space.

Now, if the top-ranking ad doesn't have high enough quality, but a lower-ranking ad does, that lower-ranking ad is still considered for the yellow area. As Google put it in its announcement of the update, "We'll allow an ad that meets the quality threshold to appear above the search results even if it has to jump over other ads to do so".

This modification goes a step beyond the first change discussed above, since it actually gives a bias to quality score over bid. And like the first change, it favors the little guy, by making it easier for ads with lower bids to get into those coveted high-profile spots.

Who's Affected?

Clear winners and losers emerge here. These changes favor:

- *Low-bid advertisers over high-bid advertisers* (since it's now easier for low bids to get you into top spots)
- *Carefully written, specific ad copy over vague, haphazard, generic ad copy* (since better ads get higher click-through rates)
- *Paid search advertising over organic* (since these changes will likely mean more searches culminating in clicks on paid ads, and correspondingly fewer searches culminating in clicks on organic results)

How You Can Take Advantage Of These Changes

That's easy: *Write good, relevant, high quality ads.*

The mathematics behind these changes is complicated, but the significance to your business and to Google's business is simple: the changes will bring higher-quality ads that are more appealing to users and more likely to get clicked on. If you're a small-budget advertiser, you can take advantage of the changes by applying your effort, creativity, and skill to creating ads that Google users will want to click on.

With the changes, Google now values high clickability more than the promise of high cost-per-click payouts. Whether you're a small individual advertiser or a large corporate agency, if you scratch Google's back by producing ads that get clicks and generate revenue, Google will scratch your back by giving you a boost over your competition.

OPTIMIZING LANDING PAGES TO IMPROVE YOUR QUALITY SCORE

By Trace Johnson, originally posted December 18, 2008

Improving quality score means improving relevance: if your ad directly addresses a searcher's need, that will most likely be reflected in a high quality score. Just as this applies to writing effective ad copy, it applies to building effective landing pages.

The primary component of Google's quality score calculation for landing pages is the click-through rate. If users click on your ad, look through your landing page and click through to something else on your site, chances are they've found something relevant. Google increases your quality score accordingly.

That's another way of saying that the best thing you can do is *build compelling, relevant landing pages*. Of course, a few tips and insights that you may not have considered – many of them included in Google's guidelines for improving landing pages – can help you along. Here are some of them:

Use Existing Pages Whenever Possible

You might think that creating a landing page from scratch will automatically result in a better quality score than using an existing page on your site. This isn't always the case. Pages that already focus on the product or service you are advertising, and that you have spent time optimizing, can often be further improved to serve both as a landing page and as a content piece on your site. If Google is already indexing the page, you are probably better off optimizing it instead of creating a whole new one to test and optimize. *Work smart, not hard.*

When optimizing your landing pages, remember that Google reads a Web site the way a good journalist writes a newspaper story – in an inverted pyramid. That means the most important information should be at the top of the page – your *title tag*, *meta description*, and *first paragraph of content* are all highly prioritized by Google.

Use Keyword-Rich, Readable Title Tags

The title tag is the most valuable line on your page: it's what Google displays in the first line of its organic search results. The tag should be concise (70-75 characters long), match the keywords you're bidding on, and be highly readable.

If you are selling planes, for instance, your title tag should read something like "Planes for Sale," not "the best aeronautical solutions for your company or business."

Write Useful and Unique Meta Descriptions

Your meta description should follow the same guidelines as your title tag (although it can be up to 150 characters long). Your meta description should reinforce your title tag, but not duplicate it. (Duplicate title tags and meta descriptions are frowned upon by Google. You can sign up for Google Webmaster Tools to see how many duplicate descriptions you have on your site.) The meta description is displayed in the second and third lines of Google's organic results. See the top result for "Planes for Sale" below:



Don't Use Images for Text

While Google is working toward universal search, it still doesn't understand images or videos. Keep that in mind when optimizing your landing page. If you have a beautiful, shiny graphical banner at the top of your page advertising "Airplanes For Sale!," Google doesn't know about it, and doesn't consider it when calculating your quality score. If it isn't text, Google doesn't know it's there. You can use some tricks to overlay images on text, but if you're not that familiar with cascading style sheets (CSS), you should stick with text whenever possible.

Put Readable Information Into Your URL

If you can edit the URL of your landing page to include keywords, do it. Google places a lot of emphasis on URLs. If they are readable (for example, "/buying-planes" instead of "/page133.html"), they can help improve your quality score.

Reduce Your Page's Load Time

People don't wait for pages to load, and Google penalizes you for slowly loading ones. (See the next chapter for info on how to fix this problem.)

If you have a poor quality score, the above recommendations can dramatically turn it around. Try them all, or try a combination of them. You can lower your cost-per-click, and improve your conversion rates. It's a win/win situation.

IMPROVING QUALITY SCORE BY REDUCING LANDING PAGE LOAD TIME

By Hanny Hindi, originally posted February 5, 2009

In 2008, Google added *landing page load time* as a factor in determining a keyword's quality score. As Heather Lane wrote on the *Inside AdWords* blog at the time, "*Fast is better than slow.*" This rule is especially applicable to the landing pages of AdWords ads. When a user clicks an ad, a landing page that loads quickly provides a better user experience than a landing page that loads slowly.

A number of things could make a landing page load more slowly, some of which (like replacing large images) would require major redesigns to fix. However, you can do some things without much effort to significantly reduce your page's load time. Here are three:

1. *Avoid using redirect pages as destination URLs.* If users are redirected when they click on one of your ads, it will take them a few seconds longer to reach the actual landing page. While you may not have intended for any of your destination URLs to be redirect pages, a site update or redesign may have resulted in an old destination URL redirecting to a new page. If this is the case for any of your ads, be sure to update their destination URLs to point directly to the new page. (You can do this all at once using Clickable's *Keyword Filter and Bulk Edit* tool.)
2. *Avoid Using iFrames in landing pages.* As Web sites start to include more and more elements on a single page, developers often resort to iFrames to reduce code complexity. However, reducing complexity comes at the expense of quick load time (because each iFrame represents an additional HTTP request). Wherever possible, replace landing pages that use iFrames with pages that include all their code in one place. The pages will load much faster, and the boost should be reflected in your quality scores.
3. *Avoid interstitial pages.* Interstitials are most often used to display ads before loading a desired page. (If you've browsed a newspaper or online magazine site, you're probably familiar with this type of ad.) You're not likely to have any of these on your landing pages, but you may have a page with some sort of alert or login requirement before the user gets to the actual landing page. To get them where they want to go more quickly, put the information from your interstitial pages directly on your landing pages. The fewer steps between your ad and your offer, the better for the user, and the better for you.

SETTING DAILY BUDGETS FOR SEARCH CAMPAIGNS

By Ehren Reilly, originally posted September 12, 2008

For business people with limited search marketing experience, the daily budget would seem to be the most familiar and obvious attribute of a search marketing campaign. Advertisers typically have a certain, fixed set of funds available for search marketing efforts – probably a monthly or quarterly budget – and when you divide that up by the number of days, you get a daily budget.

While determining how much you want to spend during your budget interval – and regulating your spending accordingly – is important to any ad campaign, the daily budget setting in a search marketing campaign is not really the place where you want to do this. Instead, you should do this by optimizing your cost-per-click (CPC) bids.

Budget Management Through Optimal Bidding

Imagine for a moment, a world in which daily campaign budgets did not exist, in which no fixed cap could be placed on your spending. In this world, a search marketing system like Google AdWords would be a complex ecosystem. Advertisers would all be competing in parallel for positions, impressions and clicks. Advertisers who bid more would get more impressions and more clicks, and they would spend more. As the advertiser, you would exert control on your cost and click volume by making subtle adjustments to your CPC bids, a process usually known as *optimization*.

Optimization is the process of getting you the most, highest-quality clicks for your money, given the constraints of the rest of the system. If you want to spend an average of \$100 per day on Google AdWords during a given month, you would do this by bidding just enough so that you get an average of \$100 worth of clicks, but low enough so that you do not exceed \$100. In this “optimal” scenario, you would pay as little as possible for your clicks, while still reaching your exact desired budget.

Of course, one downside to this type of budget management is that it’s difficult and labor-intensive, especially early on when you’re still working out kinks and optimizing things. But the amount of your effort would decrease as your campaign becomes better optimized. Another disadvantage with this type of budget management is that you would spend more on high-traffic days, and less on low-traffic ones. So, rather than spending the same amount of dollars each day, you would spend slightly more or slightly less depending on natural market factors, and these numbers would have to average out to your desired spend level.

Returning to the real world in which we do have daily budgets, this scenario would require setting the daily budget slightly higher than what you actually hope to spend.

If You're Hitting Your Daily Budget, You're Paying Too Much for Your Clicks

Now let's consider an alternative scenario, one that may be more familiar, in which you set your daily budget at exactly the amount you want to spend each day. This scenario is more convenient, because you don't really have to worry about whether you've optimized your bids. You can grossly over-bid, and pay too much for your clicks, but you don't end up out-spending your budget.

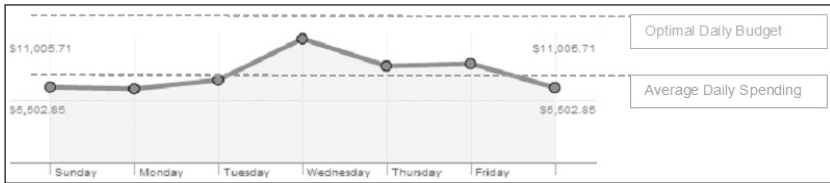
Let's start with the same hypothetical campaign described above, with bids perfectly optimized to exactly hit that \$100 a day average. You would set your daily budget at \$100. Now, on high-traffic Tuesdays, you would use up your entire daily budget, but would stop receiving clicks sometime before the end of the day. But on low-traffic Sundays, you would not be able to spend the whole budget. So you would come to the natural conclusion that you need to bid more in order to get more traffic and thus spend more. And you would go and increase all your bids. This would "fix" the problem you have on Sundays, but it would exacerbate the problems you have on Tuesdays, when you were paying too much for clicks and running out of budget too early.

Budget Management Through Bids vs. Daily Budget

At the end of the month, comparing the first scenario (budget management through bid optimization) to the second (budget management through daily budgets), you would find the following:

- *Both campaigns have spent the same amount of money.*
- *The first campaign has received more clicks than the second for that money.*
- *The first campaign has had fuller always-on coverage than the second.*

The second situation above is very typical in search engine marketing (SEM) campaigns managed by novice search engine marketers, or by large ad agencies who are held accountable for spending their whole budget but not necessarily for producing optimal results. Doing SEM budget management indirectly through cost-per-click bids requires more time and care. However, it's the only way to get the most out of your SEM spend.



Daily Budget is a Backup Budget Management Method

All of this is not to say that the daily budget parameter is meaningless, or should be ignored and set arbitrarily high. The daily budget is important as a security measure, to keep you from spending way too much on any given day. In cases such as sudden fraudulent activity, or unexpected shifts in the market, the daily budget will prevent any serious damage by capping your spending at a reasonable amount.

What is a reasonable amount, though? To keep your daily budget from getting in the way of your optimizations – but to still reap its protective benefits – *it should be set just higher than the amount that you typically spend on your best, busiest, highest-traffic days.*

For new campaigns, in the short term, you may want to use the daily budget to keep spending under control, but in the long term, you should optimize the bids and not let a fixed budget cap interfere.

IMPLEMENTING CLICKABLE CONVERSION TRACKING

Clickable conversion tracking (CCT) includes two separate scripts: one for every page in your Web site (which will be easier to implement than it sounds) and another for your conversion page. Here's Clickable's process for CCT:

1. *Insert the landing page script.* After you receive your landing page script from Clickable, paste it before the tag of the HTML code for every page on your Web site. The easiest way to do this is to paste it into a common footer that appears throughout your site. This way, it will automatically populate every page on your Web site, as well as any future pages that include your footer code.

The bottom of your footer code should look something like this:

```
<script type="text/javascript">
document.write(unescape("%3Cscript src=" + (location.protocol=="https:"?https://:
http://)
+ "cn.clickable.net/js/cct.js?type='text/javascript%3C53C/script%3C");
</script>
<script type="text/javascript">
document.cookie=cct.CookieCheck(document.cookie);
cct.cct_log("");
</script>
...
</body>
```

2. *Insert the conversion tracking script.* To determine which of your pages is a conversion page, you need to define your success criteria: what do searchers need to do for your campaigns to be successful? Do you want them to read the menu on your restaurant's Web site? Sign up for your newsletter on real estate in Tallahassee? Are you trying to direct them to a car rental agency that will pay you for the lead? Or do you want them to buy a t-shirt from your Web site? The page you want a user to see (or the confirmation page a user sees after performing a task that you've defined) is your *conversion page*.

In addition to the landing page script, you should include a separate script only on your conversion page. After you've pasted the landing page script on every page of your site (or your footer file), simply paste the conversion page script before

the tag of your conversion page or pages.

If you don't conduct sales on your Web site, the script on your conversion page will look something like this:

```
<script type="text/javascript">
document.write(unescape("%3Cscript src=" + (location.protocol=="https:"?https:
//:http://)
+"cn.clickable.net/js/cct.js?type='text/javascript%3C53C/script%3C"));
</script>
<script type="text/javascript">
document.cookie=cct.CookieCheck(document.cookie);
cct.cct_log('YOUR SITE ID HERE');
</script>
...
</body>
```

(Please note that if you place the non-conversion script in a footer file, your conversion page will include both the conversion page script and the landing page script. No need to worry: this will not cause a conflict, and Clickable will still track your conversions correctly. However, do not place the conversion tracking script in your footer file; it should only appear on your conversion page.)

If you do conduct sales on your Web site, the script on your conversion page will look something like this:

```
<script type="text/javascript">
document.write(unescape("%3Cscript src=" + (location.protocol=="https:"?https:
//:http://)
+"cn.clickable.net/js/cct.js?type='text/javascript%3C53C/script%3C"));
</script>
<script type="text/javascript">
Document.cookie=cct.CookieCheck(document.cookie);
Cct.conversion_value = 'ReplaceWithServerVariable';
Cct.cct_log(' ');
</script>
```

3. *Apply server variables for sites with shopping cart sales.* A conversion script for Web sites with sales should probably be pasted to your purchase confirmation page. The only difference between the conversion scripts for sites with sales and those without is the “cct.conversion_value” field.

If you don't have dynamic values on your purchase confirmation page (i.e., if your conversion value does not depend on what users purchase from your site), you're already done. If you do have dynamic values, you will need to enter the variable for the subtotal of the user's purchase. The subtotal of what the user purchased (you probably don't want to include shipping costs and taxes in the conversion value) will be displayed somewhere on your purchase confirmation page. That subtotal appears on your page because a variable is passed that displays it in that spot.

To track the value of that conversion, simply pass the same variable to the Clickable conversion tracking code on your page by putting the variable name – such as “Subtotal” or “ShoppingCartTotal” – into the *revenue for your action* field, and the exact value of your conversion will be logged to your campaign.

For instance, if your subtotal is represented by a variable called “CartTotal” and you run an ASP, JSP or .NET site, the resulting code snippet (discussed in more detail below) will look like this:

```
<script type="text/javascript">
document.write(unescape("%3Cscript src=" + (location.protocol=="https:"?https://:http://)
+"cn.clickable.net/js/cct.js?type='text/javascript%3E3C/script%3E"));
</script>
<script type="text/javascript">
Document.cookie=cct.CookieCheck(document.cookie);
Cct.conversion_value = <%=CartTotal%>;
Cct.cct_log(' ');
</script>
```

You can see the variable “CartTotal” in **bold**, and formatted for the server-side technology.

If, on the other hand, your variable is called “CartTotal” but your site runs on PHP, your code will look like this:

```

<script type="text/javascript">
document.write(unescape("%3Cscript src=" + (location.protocol=="https:"?https://:http://)
+"cn.clickable.net/js/cct.js'type='text/javascript%3E3C/script%3E"));
</script>
<script type="text/javascript">
Document.cookie=cct.CookieCheck(document.cookie);
Cct.conversion_value = <? Echo $CartTotal ?>;
Cct.cct_log(' ');
</script>

```

(Please also note that the precise way to enter the server variable on your site depends on your server technology. If you aren't sure what server-side technology your site uses or how to configure variables for your server, you should contact Clickable's support team for help.)

Start Tracking Conversions

Once you have placed the appropriate code snippets on your pages, Clickable can begin tracking conversions on the search networks you've chosen. Behind the scenes, Clickable will modify the destination URLs of your ads to include CCT attributes, allowing us to differentiate between paid search and organic traffic coming into your site. This is similar to the "?__s=display&__c=google ..." that AdWords appends to URLs in order to track conversions within its tool, and doesn't require any additional work on your part. (These changes will only appear in the search network interfaces; you won't see them within Clickable).

(Another note: Modifying an ad's destination URL will cause historical data for that ad to be lost, but will not affect data for your keywords, ad groups or campaigns in general.)

Once you've installed CCT, Clickable will begin tracking your conversions across multiple search networks, and our ActEngine™ will use this data to help you meet your revenue goals. As an added bonus, adding new search networks to a CCT setup can be done directly within Clickable, and will not require any modification of the tracking code on your page.

ACHIEVING OPTIMAL POSITION ON A SEARCH RESULTS PAGE

By Ehren Reilly, originally posted December 4, 2008

Which position is the best placement on a search results page? The optimal ad placement (a.k.a. rank or position) is an aspect of search marketing that gets lots of attention – probably too much – from novice search advertisers. You may have clear intuitions and anecdotes about what is a “good” place for your ad, but some real empirical data should help answer this question.

A common misconception is that “higher position is better.” Everybody likes to be number one. Nobody likes finishing second. This is especially true when advertisers are jockeying for the top few positions on a search results page with their key competitors.

However, if your ad is consistently running in the top position, you are likely to win the battle but lose the war. You pay a premium to appear in the higher position, which means you deplete your budget more rapidly and end up getting fewer clicks.

Suppose you and a competitor both sell widgets, you both have the same, limited, \$1,000 budget, and for the keyword “widgets,” your ad appears first and theirs second. You may get a slightly higher click-through-rate in the top spot. However, you are definitely paying a much higher cost-per-click. Your competitor pays less per click, which means its budget lasts longer. At the end of the day, you have both spent \$1,000, but your competitor got more clicks – and sold more widgets. If you are consistently running in position one, you are probably paying too much per click.

This is like the recent trend of professional basketball teams shunning the top pick in the NBA draft. Number one draft pick players typically command lots of media attention and glamour. They also demand very high salaries in their initial contracts – perhaps rightfully so, because, as their agents will remind you, they are the “best” available. But they may be only negligibly better than the number two and number three players, if that. Cost-conscious NBA franchises these days don’t want to pay big bucks for number one, when they can get an equally good player at number three for half the cost.

The allure of position number one in Google is a lot like the allure of position number one in the NBA draft. You pay a premium for a glamorous ad placement, but your money would be better spent elsewhere. Specifically, you ought to spend that money on additional keywords or getting more clicks from that same keyword.

The name of the game in search marketing is performance – getting more people to visit your Web site and take desired actions there – not appearing in a more prominent spot than your competitors. The same logic that has advertisers lusting for the top spot in Google would also suggest that they should get out of search marketing entirely and run a TV campaign, buy a billboard in Times Square – or get a sponsorship deal with the number one pick in the NBA draft!

You may still be wondering, “Is performance really just as good in positions two and three as it is in position one?” Based on some published experimental data and on some unpublished data aggregated from Clickable client accounts, the answer is “yes.” Two and three are just as good as – if not better – than one.

An eye-tracking study by *Marketing Sherpa*, meanwhile, has found that the top two or three ads on a Google search results page are typically scanned and compared almost simultaneously. *Marketing Sherpa* found that among the top three spots, relevance to the user’s query, and not position, determines click-through rate. Clickable’s aggregated customer data confirms this: only a very small, insignificant, decrease in click-through rate occurs from position one to position three. Users don’t care as much about the rank of ads as they do about their quality, so they typically view multiple ads and compare.

Let’s look at a local car dealership with the slogan “shop here last.” It’s banking on the fact that in the case of a “tie” between its offering and nearby competitors, the shoppers’ preference will go to the dealership they are already visiting – the last one. This “shop here last” strategy is especially advantageous for search marketers, who receive a discount on cost-per-click when they are the *last* ad a user reads, rather than the first. *Don’t pay a premium for the top position*, when you can get the same performance from position two or three, while saving some money to spend on more clicks elsewhere.

POSITION PREFERENCE IN ADWORDS

By Tony Soric, originally posted April 30, 2009

Position preference in AdWords allows you to request that your ads be shown in a specified position for any given keyword. However, it's important to note that, although position preference may be turned on, Google cannot guarantee that your ad will be shown in the preferred position 100 percent of the time.

Optimizing Keyword Ranks with Position Preference

Conversion rates can vary drastically across keyword rankings. By using the position preference option, advertisers who have identified a preferred rank (higher converting or more efficient) can set a preferential Google ranking.

For example, if your product or service does not tend to generate immediate conversion response, you may find that the top two positions generate a high number of click-throughs but relatively low number of conversions. This will undoubtedly lead to an increase in your cost-per-acquisition. In this instance you should consider setting a position preference of numbers three to five. These settings would send a request for those positions assuming that the ad meets auction requirements.

The key to effectively utilizing position preference lies in your ability to cross-reference conversion data. This can be achieved by either setting up AdWords Conversion Tracker, Google Analytics or a third-party analytics solution. In the early stages of testing, you should monitor performance pertaining to original ad rankings. This will act as a benchmark, and should be followed by testing ads at different ranking ranges.

How to Enable Position Preference

Here are six steps for enabling this option:

- Login to your AdWords account.
- On the *Campaign Summary* page, select the box to the left of any campaigns you want to enable for position preference.
- Click *Edit Settings*.
- Find the *Networks and Bidding* section.
- Under *Options*, select the box next to *Position Preferences*.
- Click *Save Changes*.

What Are The Position Preference Options?

AdWords includes a wide range of position preference options, such as:

- *Higher than a given position* (such as above 7)
- *Lower than a given position* (such as below 4)
- *Within a range of positions* (such as from 2-8)
- *In a single exact position* (such as position 2)

Does Position Preference Always Work?

The short answer is “no,” because the top limit cannot be guaranteed. As pointed out **by** Brad Geddes, founder of the PPC consulting firm bg Theory, “...if there are 10 people with position preference turned on, and their top position is all 4, then if Google followed that ad serving plan, there would be 0 ads as no one wanted the top 3 spots. The bottom limit of position preference is a hard limit – the upper limit might not be.”

While this example is extreme, it highlights the point that *position preference allows advertisers to set a preferred position but that said position cannot be guaranteed.*

USING AD SCHEDULING

By Tony Soric, originally posted August 28, 2008

If you're a Clickable user, you may have noticed a feature in the *Manage* section called *ad scheduling*. So what is it?

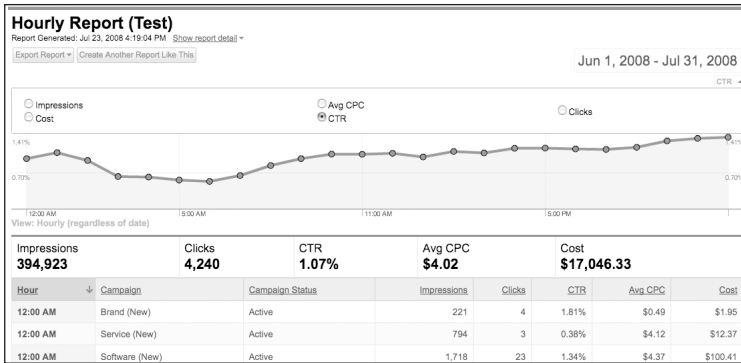
Ad scheduling is a powerful tool that allows you to pause your campaigns on certain days of the week (known as "week-parting") or times of the day (known as "day-parting"). The most common use is to pause campaigns on weekends. (Many businesses do considerably more business on weekdays and find it very hard to convert on weekends, so pausing their campaigns on Saturdays and Sundays is a great way to save money).

However, ad scheduling allows you much more precision than that: you can choose, for instance, to turn off ads for half-hour intervals throughout the week. To do so effectively, you need solid data about when your campaigns are performing and when they aren't. You can find this information using the AdWords Hourly Report View.

Building an hourly report in AdWords is fairly simple. After running your campaign for a few weeks to generate usage data, follow these six steps:

- Log into your Google AdWords account.
- Click on the *Reports* tab.
- Click *Create Report*.
- From the *Report Type* options, select *Campaign Performance*.
- In the *Settings*, set the *View (Unit of Time)* to *Hourly (Regardless of Date)*, set the *Date Range* to *All Time*, and, for *Campaigns*, press the radio button for *Manually Select From a List* and choose the relevant campaign from the list that appears.
- Finally, select a name for your report at the head of the *Templates, Scheduling and Email* section, and click *Create Report*.

The new hourly report will now appear in your AdWords Report Center. Click on the report to view it, and you will see your campaign's average performance at various hours of the day for a number of metrics, including impressions, clicks, click-through rate, average cost-per-click and cost. Here's an example:



AdWords Hourly Report

Using this information, you can determine when your campaign is underperforming and pause it at those times by using the graphical ad scheduling tool in Clickable’s *Manage* section. Just go to the campaign you want to manage, click on *Campaign Settings*, and then click on *Ad Scheduling and Serving*.

AD GROUPS | **CAMPAIGN SETTINGS**

Network Settings | Languages & Locations | Ad Scheduling & Serving

Ad Scheduling

AD SCHEDULING IS ON Displays running time on rollover

Set days and times that your ads will run. Click on any block of time and those blocks will turn white, displaying when the ads are paused. The green blocks remaining will display when the ads run. Clicking and dragging the cursor left or right will set a range. Click "Save Changes" to activate.

Ads Running Ads Paused

1 Hr 1/2 Hr

12 Hour Clock | 24 Hour Clock

	12:00 am	2:00 am	4:00 am	6:00 am	8:00 am	10:00 am	12:00 noon	2:00 pm	4:00 pm	6:00 pm	8:00 pm	10:00 pm	12:00 am
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BULK EDIT

All Days Weekdays Weekends

Activate bulk edits by choosing All Days, Weekdays or Weekends buttons to the left of the scale. In the scale below, click on the hours you want paused and the ads will run on the hours that remain.

Using the ad scheduling tool, you can now activate or deactivate your campaigns at half-hour intervals to maximize returns.

LEARN HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR ACCOUNT

N

umerous settings are determined at the campaign level, including daily budget, default language and target location. Managing all of these settings while creating and maintaining your campaigns can be confusing. To help you with this process, this section of Clickable Guru's Guide to Better Search Engine Marketing provides best practices for creating campaigns within your search marketing accounts.

LOWERING COST-PER-CLICK BY CLEANING UP ACCOUNTS

By Trace Johnson, Originally Posted October 23, 2008

Clean up your dirty campaigns! No we're not talking about politics here, but about your search marketing accounts. Unless you have unlimited funds, unlimited time, and more patience than sense, a regular cleaning of your accounts can help profitability, improve quality scores and save time.

Many search marketers do not realize that Google gives a quality score to their entire account as well as at an individual bid term level. This quality score is an aggregate that determines minimum bids on new terms. When you have lots of under-performing terms, it increases your costs. So it makes a lot of sense to go in and clean things up once in a while.

Along with following the recommendations generated by Clickable's ActEngine™, here are three simple steps to clean up your accounts:

1. *Pause terms that have had no impressions over the last four months.* While some may advocate long-tail terms as a possible win, terms that have had no impressions over a four-month period are often useless – because other terms in your campaign are more targeted and actually triggering your ads. If you have tried raising bids on a term multiple times, and after four months still see no impressions from that term, it's probably time to move on. *Pause those terms and you will have far fewer terms to manage.*
2. *Pause terms with poor quality scores if they don't convert.* Terms with low quality scores bring down your entire campaign. If the terms are profitable, you might try and raise your quality score through ad changes or landing page optimization, but fixing a poor quality score can be lots of work. *If a term isn't converting and is bringing down your campaign, pause it.*
3. *If you inherited a campaign that was poorly organized from the beginning, delete it and start over.* Poor organization, targeting and ad copy are difficult to overcome. Nine times out of ten, you will see quality scores improve much faster by starting out fresh.

Everyone who does pay-per-click advertising will tell you testing is key. They are right, but after you run a test, get some insight and make changes – *clean up after yourself!* Pause those underperforming ads, keywords, ad groups and even campaigns. The three tips above can save you time and money.

BENEFITS OF SEPARATING SEARCH & CONTENT NETWORK CAMPAIGNS

By Trace Johnson, originally posted November 20, 2008

If you're new to online advertising, you might not know that your ad network probably offers two different types of ad placement: search engine placement, and content (or "contextual") placement. Search network ads appear beside search engine results on sites like Google, Yahoo and MSN. Content ads appear on Web sites whose content matches what you are advertising. Google, for instance, places content ads on sites like NewYorkTimes.com, About.com, Business.com and FoodNetwork.com, just to name a few.

Paid search advertising and content network advertising are two very different ballgames, with very different costs and performance rates. Content bids are usually much cheaper than search bids. This is true for a couple of reasons: more competition usually exists for search terms than for content, and there is a lot more content on the Web than search engine results pages.

With more available inventory and less competition, you can expect to pay much less for a content click than a search click. But you also get what you pay for: users who click on a search ad are usually at a very different step in the buying process than someone who clicks on a content ad. Someone actively searching for a term is probably much further along in the purchasing process than someone browsing the web. This doesn't mean you can't get great results from a content campaign; you just need to manage it differently than your search campaign.

Many ad networks like Google lump both search and content targeting into a single campaign by default. The problem with this approach is that it doesn't allow you to set separate budgets for search and content. This often leads to content taking up too much of your budget and can also cause search to under-perform. Most ad networks allow you to use separate term bids for search and content, but this is often much more difficult to manage than having separate search and content campaigns.

An easy way fix a lumped campaign is to run identical campaigns, but break them out into search and content networks. Here are five simple steps to do that:

- *Make a copy of your campaign and name it “(original campaign name) – Content Only”*
- *Rename your original campaign “(original campaign name) – Search Only”*
- *Disable the content network on the original campaign.*
- *Disable the search network on the new campaign.*
- *Set ad budgets based on your current spend levels.* For instance, if your daily budget for a combined campaign is \$100, and you spend 75 percent on search and 25 percent on content, set the budget of your search campaign to \$75 and the budget for your content campaign to \$25

BENEFITS OF ADVERTISING ON YAHOO AND MICROSOFT

By Ehren Reilly, originally posted March 26, 2009

The marketplace in which you bid on keywords to drive site traffic is a bustling, high-speed micro-economy. In this metaphor, expanding your existing Google campaign out to Yahoo and Microsoft may feel like expanding your company internationally for the first time. Other search engines seem to have whole new sets of rules and whole new sets of management headaches. For many novice search advertisers, the costs appear to outweigh the benefits. After all, with Google's market share in the U.S. at upwards of 70 percent (*editor's note: at the time of writing*), it may seem like most of your customers use Google, and you can reach them well enough that way.

But the truth is, Yahoo and Microsoft are not radically different foreign lands – they understand well the position they're in and try hard to make it easy for advertisers who take the leap over from Google. They do this by providing user interfaces, rules and tools similar to Google AdWords, and simple methods for account setup based on your AdWords data.

Setting up your account on the second and third most popular search engines has the obvious advantage of helping you reach the other 30 percent of the market. But each of these products also has many unique benefits. Even though they strive to make their offerings familiar to AdWords users, they also bring their own unique audiences and functionality, while often providing better value through lower cost-per-click rates and less competition from other advertisers.

Significant differences separate the three search engines. Clickable makes it easy for you to manage your campaigns across all three, and when you do so, you may find the Yahoo and Microsoft differences to be very beneficial. Here are four differences to think about:

1. **Different demographics.** Yahoo's and Microsoft's search audiences are rather different from Google's. This is apparent when you type "yahoo.com" or Microsoft's "msn.com" into your browser, as both are destination sites, rich with content: news, games, celebrity gossip, fitness tips, Yahoo Mail and MSN Hotmail services. Yahoo and MSN are just as much about entertainment and communication as about information. Compare this to Google's simple, utilitarian search interface, and it's no surprise that Yahoo and MSN have tended to skew slightly to a female demographic, according to Hitwise – which also reported that a majority of Google users are male, while a majority of MSN and Yahoo users are female. This means that if you offer wedding planning services, greeting

cards, spa treatments, horoscopes or other products that appeal to a primarily female customer base, then Google's market share advantage for your vertical is probably less than the 70 percent average.

2. **Different traffic sources.** On Google, most searches result from users going to www.google.com and submitting their queries. In contrast, MSN and Yahoo are portal sites with search boxes. They get relatively fewer searches from people who go directly to <http://search.yahoo.com> or to www.live.com, and more from people who use the search box floating above their email, game, or article. This means the typical MSN or Yahoo searcher comes to the search results page with a different mindset than the typical Google searcher. Depending on what you offer, this may work to your advantage. Speculatively, people who search for consumer products out of their email interface are more likely to have just received some word-of-mouth advice.
3. **Less competition.** If you've been hesitant or slow to use Yahoo and Microsoft, chances are many of your competitors aren't there yet either. For what you offer, the competition may be much less than on Google, which means favorable cost-per-click rates for you.
4. **Different account options.** Yahoo and Microsoft each offer some options that don't exist in either of the other two major engines. For example, Yahoo defines keywords somewhat differently than Google and MSN by lumping together plurals, singulars, and other suffixed and derived forms of keywords. If you specify the term "caterer" in your campaign, you get "caterers," "catering," and "cater" along with it. That's a big help if you're not a linguist and don't enjoy trying to think of every possible variant of every word. (See "the grammar of keywords in different search engines," page 43, for more on this subject.)

None of the points above necessarily mean that Microsoft or Yahoo are better for you than Google AdWords. These are not so much benefits as differences. The benefit of advertising on the number two and number three search engines is that you can reach a new group of people and find out if they are the right audience – or the more cost-effective one – for you.

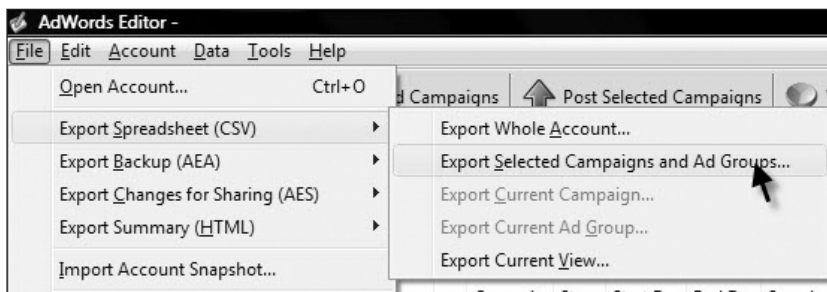
Advertisers typically find that the same ads for the same Web site generate different click-through rates and conversion rates from search engine to search engine – often quite dramatically. The Yahoo or Microsoft audience might be perfect for you – or terrible for you – or about the same as Google. But you won't really know until you try.

CONVERTING ADWORDS CAMPAIGNS INTO YAHOO SEARCH MARKETING

By Trace Johnson, originally posted February 12, 2009

If you're one of the many online advertisers who started with a Google AdWords account and are looking to broaden your reach, converting your AdWords campaign into a Yahoo Search Marketing campaign is a great way to do so quickly. Below is a four-step process and some recommendations to optimize your AdWords campaign for Yahoo.

1. *Begin by exporting your campaign from AdWords.* Download your campaign to the AdWords Editor, shown below, and export it to a CSV file.



2. *Convert your campaign.* If you have a Gold Level* Yahoo Search Marketing account, you can use the campaign converter tool, shown below. (To get a Gold Level Yahoo Search-marketing account you need to spend \$500 per month for three months.) If you don't have a Gold Level account, Yahoo offers a one-time bulk upload. You can contact customer support and send them your CSV file and they will convert and upload it for you.
3. *Import your campaign.* Select the newly converted file and import it, as shown here:

Import Campaigns	Convert Third Party Campaigns
You can convert a third party campaign into a Yahoo! Search Marketing	
<p>1. Download your third party campaign to a file.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Navigate to the appropriate third party marketing site. Log in to your account. Follow the instructions for downloading a third party campaign to 	
<p>2. Locate your third party campaign file on your computer.</p> <p>Click Browse to locate the downloaded third party campaign file on yo</p> <p>File: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/></p>	
<p>3. Convert your third party campaign file</p>	

4. *Edit your uploaded campaign.* Yahoo Search Marketing and AdWords are different in a few ways. Here's a checklist for what you will need to adjust after uploading your campaign:
- Set your geo-targeting under campaign settings.
 - Make sure you have set your campaign start date.
 - Add negative keywords. (Yahoo cannot convert negative keywords from an AdWords campaign)
 - Set your content match preferences.
 - Optimize your ads for Yahoo's formatting:
 - Title: 40 Characters (15 more than AdWords)
 - Description: 70 Characters (one line instead of two)

Please also note that Clickable customers can clone AdWords campaigns to Yahoo Search Marketing campaigns by using Clickable's *Campaign Cloning* tool.

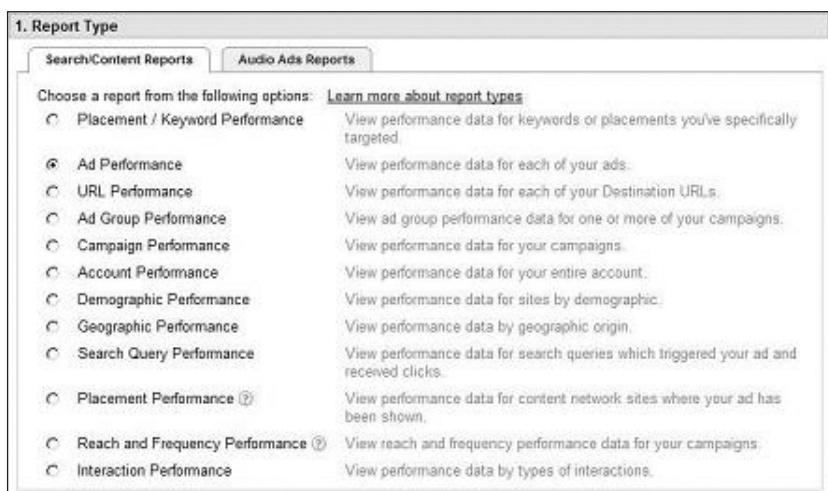
CONVERTING ADWORDS CAMPAIGNS INTO MICROSOFT ADCENTER CAMPAIGNS

By Ehren Reilly, originally posted February 19, 2009

While Google AdWords and Yahoo Search Marketing remain the two most popular search marketing networks, Microsoft adCenter offers a great opportunity to broaden your reach, often into an area where your competitors have not yet gone. Microsoft knows that many of its new customers are already running AdWords campaigns, and since the format of an adCenter campaign is almost identical to that of an AdWords campaign, Microsoft is able to offer a streamlined importing process.

Microsoft adCenter asks you to import your campaign from Google AdWords in a different manner than Yahoo does. Instead of exporting your account from the AdWords Editor, adCenter has you run an Ad Report from the AdWords interface. Here's how you do that:

1. Sign in to your AdWords account.
2. Click on the *Reports* tab.
3. Click *Create a New Report »*
4. Under *Report Type*, select *Ad Performance*.



Now that you've done that, select the following under Settings, as shown below:

1. Under *Ad Variations*, check only *Text Ad*.
2. Under *View (Unit of Time)*, select *Summary* from the drop-down menu.
3. Under *Date Range*, select a long enough date range so that all of your keywords and ads will have received at least one impression during it. *Last thirty days* is typical enough.
4. Under *Campaigns and Ad Groups*, select *All Campaigns and All Their Ad Groups* (unless you have certain campaigns and ad groups you don't wish to import to adCenter).

2. Settings	
Ad Variations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Image Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Local Business Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Display Ad
View (Unit of Time)	Summary
Date Range	Last thirty days 2/2/09 - 2/15/09
Campaigns and Ad Groups	<input checked="" type="radio"/> All campaigns and all their ad groups <input type="radio"/> Manually select from a list

Next, go to *Advanced Settings*, shown in the next graphic, click *Add or Remove Columns*, and then select the following options (each under its own section heading):

- a. *Level of Detail*
 - i. Campaign
 - ii. Ad Group
 - iii. Keyword / Placement (or Keyword)
 - iv. Ad Id
- b. *Level of Detail*
 - i. Match Type
 - ii. Headline
 - iii. Description Line 1
 - iv. Description Line 2
 - v. Display URL
 - vi. Current Maximum CPC
 - vii. Keyword Destination URL
 - viii. Destination URL
- c. *Level of Detail*
 - i. Select impressions (this value is irrelevant, but required to run the report)

Once you've done that, click *Create Report*.

3. Advanced Settings (Optional)

▼ Add or Remove Columns

Your report will display these columns:

Campaign Group	Ad Group	Placement / Keyword	Match Type	Headline	Description Line 1	Description Line 2	Display URL	Ad ID	Daily Budget	Current Maximum CPC	Keyword Destination URL	Ad Group Status	Destination URL	Impressions
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Level of Detail: These columns reflect this report's coverage and level of detail

- Campaign
- Destination URL
- Ad Group
- Ad ID
- Placement / Keyword

Attributes: These columns report on your current ad settings and status

- Match Type
- Quality Score
- Description Line 1
- Ad Variation
- Ad Distribution: with search partners
- Content Bid
- Lowest Position Preference
- Destination URL
- Keyword Status
- Ad Preview (Only viewable in HTML format)
- Description Line 2
- Ad Status
- Daily Budget
- Max CPA
- Keyword Destination URL
- Campaign Status
- Est. First Page Bid
- Headline
- Display URL
- Ad Distribution
- Current Maximum CPC
- Highest Position Preference
- Ad Group Status

Performance Statistics: These columns feature data about how your ads are performing

- Impressions
- Avg CPC
- Clicks
- Cost
- CTR
- Avg Position

Conversion Type Columns: These columns enable you to view conversion statistics broken down by type

- Action Name
- Action Description
- Action Category

Conversion Columns: These columns provide statistics on ad conversions and conversion rates

- Conversions
- Transactions
- Avg Value
- Sales Count
- Leads Value
- Page View Count
- Other Value
- Conversion Rate
- Cost/transaction
- Value/cost
- Sales Value
- Sign-up Count
- Page View Value
- Cost/conversion
- Total Value
- Value/click
- Leads Count
- Sign-up Value
- Other Count

► Filter Your Results

Now, save the report as a CSV (for Excel) file:

1. Click on the report you just created in the *Report Center*.
2. When the report loads, click on *Export Report* and select *.csv (for Excel)*.

Next, you'll need to reformat the report:

1. Remove the first few rows that contain generic information about the report.
2. There is probably a Total row at the bottom of the spreadsheet. Remove it
3. Remove the following columns:
 - *Ad ID*
 - *Impressions* (or whatever other performance statistic you arbitrarily chose)
4. Move the *Current Maximum CPC* and *Keyword Destination URL* columns to the position immediately after *Match Type*. The columns should now be in this order:
 - a. *Campaign*
 - b. *Ad Group*

- c. *Keyword / Placement (in step 5, this will change to keyword.)*
 - d. *Match Type (in step 5, this will change to Keyword Matching.)*
 - e. *Current Maximum CPC*
 - f. *Keyword Destination URL (Note: if this column contains any instances of "default URL," delete the text and leave the cell blank.)*
 - g. *Headline*
 - h. *Description Line 1*
 - i. *Description Line 2*
 - j. *Display URL*
 - k. *Destination URL*
5. Download the adCenter template file from Microsoft adCenter, or rename your columns to match this template. Your header row should now read in this order:
- a. *Campaign*
 - b. *Ad Group*
 - c. *Keyword*
 - d. *Keyword Matching*
 - e. *Current Maximum CPC*
 - f. *Keyword Destination URL*
 - g. *Headline*
 - h. *Description Line 1*
 - i. *Description Line 2*
 - j. *Display URL*
 - k. *Destination URL*
6. Save your CSV file as an Excel XLS file. (Note: as of this writing, Microsoft adCenter was not yet compatible with Excel 2007 XLSX files.)

Finally, you can import your file into adCenter:

1. Open your adCenter account to the *Campaigns* tab.
2. Click on *Import Campaigns*.
3. Select your language and time zone settings.
4. Upload your XLS file.
5. Manually review each ad group, changing each one's status from *Draft* to *Active*. This process can be lengthy if you have many ad groups, but no shortcut is currently available. You must click *Continue* through each step of a five-step process to review and activate each group.
6. As you confirm your first ad group, you will need to set a campaign budget. Note that budgets are monthly in adCenter, instead of daily as in Google AdWords.

HOW MANY AD GROUPS DO YOU NEED?

By Ehren Reilly, originally posted August 7, 2008

One of the hardest things to figure out as a new pay-per-click advertiser is how to organize your accounts. Implementing the right account structure will improve the quality of your campaigns, but just as importantly, will make it easier for you to manage your campaigns. Organizing accounts can be somewhat confusing: ads are associated with keywords and grouped into ad groups, and ad groups in turn are grouped into campaigns. But what should motivate your grouping choices?

First, you only need multiple campaigns if you want to run different sets of ads on different budgets, or with different language settings. Otherwise, all your divisions should be at the ad group level.

The ad group is the central unit of a pay-per-click account. When you plan an account, you should begin by determining which ad groups you want to have. In general, a few large ad groups are easier to set up than many small ones. The disadvantage is that, with a diverse set of keywords in a single ad group, you won't be able to write ad text that is uniquely relevant to each user's search. In contrast, having a greater number of small ad groups allows you to group keywords into tight semantic clusters of very similar words and write ads very specific to that topic. The downside, of course, is that this takes more effort and involves writing more ads.

So, you have to find a balance between specificity and time saving. A good rule of thumb is that for every distinct landing page, you should have a separate ad group containing keywords and ads specific to that page. However, many pay-per-click advertisers do not have very content-rich sites. If you're limited to just a few viable landing pages, you may want to make even more fine-grained distinctions among your keywords. In this case, divide your keywords up into small semantic groups around specific topics, and then write ads specifically relevant to each topic.

CREATING HOTTER AD GROUPS IN LESS TIME

By Andrew Bernero, originally posted May 6, 2009

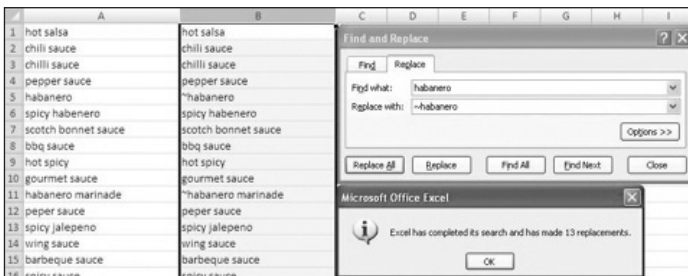
Let's say you've just compiled a large list of keywords by using a suggestion tool such as Wordtracker, Google or Trellian. And now you need to decide which ad groups these keywords will belong in – and whether to keep some of the keywords at all.

Your list of keywords is probably too large for you to decide on an individual basis, but several strategies can help you identify and group your keywords with ease.

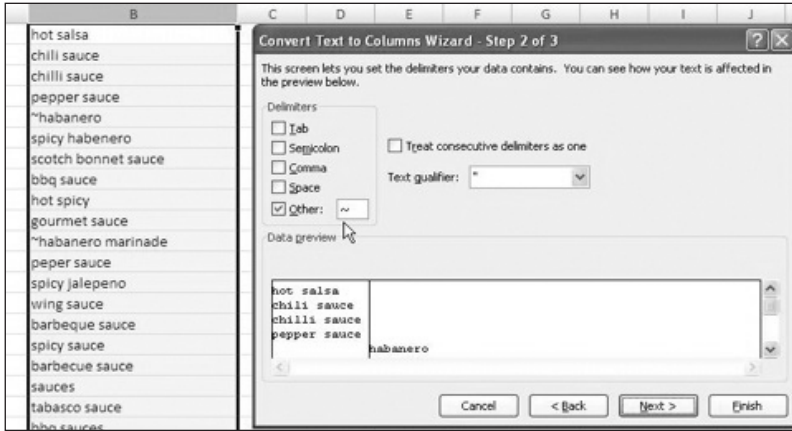
Identifying Negative Keywords

Open an Excel spreadsheet and consolidate your keywords into *Column A*, then copy the column and paste it into *Column B*. You should now have two identical columns of keywords side by side. Scan your list for terms that you do not want to include in your campaign. These will be your negative keywords. Once you have a solid idea of the types of phrases or words you do not wish to include, highlight the entire *Column B* and click on *Find/Replace* to identify these terms and replace them with a delimiter.

Let's say your company sells hot sauce and you wish to use descriptive terms that exactly match the products you carry. You are building a keyword campaign for hot sauce, but you do not sell hot sauce made with habanero pepper. To root out these keywords, highlight your list of keywords and select *CTRL + F* to find all instances of "habanero." Now replace them with something to help you identify them. A safe bet might be using a character that wouldn't naturally show up in a search phrase for your product, such as the tilde (~) sign. Replace all instances of "habanero" with "~habanero," as shown here:



Next, select *Column B*, click on *Data > Delimit > Text to Columns* and enter the delimiter “~” in the *Other* field:



Click on *Finish*, and all your terms that include “habanero” will now be identified in *Column C* with a value in those rows. To remove them, select the entire worksheet and sort it by *Column C*. All of your “habanero”-related terms will now be grouped together and can be easily deleted from your list:

	A	B	C	D
1	habanero		habanero	
2	spicy habanero	spicy	habanero	
3	creamy habanero	creamy	habanero	
4	peppers habanero	peppers	habanero	
5	habanero dipping		habanero dipping	
6	habanero jalepeno		habanero jalepeno	
7	habanero marinade		habanero marinade	
8	habanero pasta		habanero pasta	
9	habanero pepper sauce		hero pepper sa	
10	habanero pesto		hero pesto	
11	habanero relish		hero relish	
12	habanero sauces		hero sauces	
13	habaneros sauce		heros sauce	
14	hot salsa			
15	chilli sauce			
16	chilli sauce			
17	pepper sauce			
18	scotch bonnet sauce			
19	bbq sauce			

But before you delete them, make note of these unwanted keywords by creating a separate list of them to be applied as negative keywords.

Repeat this exercise several times until you think you have isolated, identified and removed all unwanted re-occurring keywords.

Creating the Ad Groups

After you've isolated a list of negative terms, it's time to create your ad groups. Scan your list of keywords and identify the ones you wish to include. For example, let's say you sell jalapeno hot sauce and you want to create an ad group for that product. Using the same *Find/Replace* methodology, find all instances of "jalapeno" in *Column B* and replace them with a delimiter such as "~jalapeno," isolate the terms by delimiting, and sort the columns. Now add a column to label these rows as your jalapeno ad group.

Continue identifying and grouping similar keywords using this method to create tighter, more focused ad groups. An added benefit of this strategy is being able to write more relevant and specific ad copy by including the common words from your keyword lists.

Now that you've built out your campaigns and ad groups, consider creating duplicate campaigns strictly for the purpose of content syndication. (See "Benefits of Separating Search and Content Network Campaigns," page 88, for more on this subject.)

THE VARIETY OF SEARCH MARKETING AD FORMATS

By Hanny Hindi, originally posted February 18, 2009

For most advertisers, search marketing means text ads appearing on search engine results pages and maybe a few ads appearing in a search engine's content network. But while text ads account for the vast majority of ad spend and ad revenue, the variety of formats available to advertisers is much wider.

Following text, the most common search marketing ads are image ads: everything from the *banners* and *leaderboards* across the top of an online magazine's homepage to the *skyscrapers* running down the side of a blog. These ads are familiar to most Internet users, but others may not be, such as video ads (Flash or "click-to-play") included on Web sites or incorporated into YouTube and other free video players. (Of course, not all formats work: after trying to automate radio advertising for more than two years, Google recently pulled out of that business.)

In order to help you take advantage of non-text formats and expand the reach of your campaigns, Clickable has introduced tools to help you create and manage three emerging Google ad formats: *image*, *local business* and *mobile*.

Image Ads

Image ads are graphical advertisements that appear on Web sites in the Google Network. Unlike older "display" models, Google Image Ads are pay-per-click, making them a cheap way to promote your brand and drive potential traffic, rather than an expensive way to pay for "impressions."

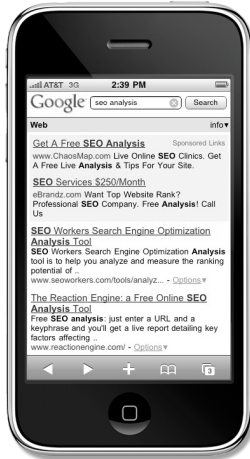
Local Business Ads

Local business ads, which appear on Google Maps pages, are a great way to make your listing more prominent when users search for something you have to offer in a specific location. Here's an example:



Mobile Ads

Mobile ads appear on a user's cell phone, smartphone or PDA. Those of you who have been in the search marketing business for a number of years probably can't remember a year that wasn't called "*The Year Mobile Advertising Breaks Through.*" Well, that may have finally come true. What's changed? The popularity of a certain Apple product...



Of course, these formats for search marketing purposes are fairly new for everybody – from advertisers to AdWords to those of us at Clickable – so we need your feedback more than ever. Have you used these formats? What has worked? What hasn't? What else can Clickable do to help?



LEARN SEARCH MARKETING STRATEGY

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lickable's guru articles on search marketing strategy in this section provide tips and best practices that you can apply globally throughout your search marketing campaigns. These 'big-picture' articles answer questions like: "How do you target potential customers?" "What are common search marketing pitfalls to avoid?" In short: "How do you get the most out of your online advertising dollars?"

DROPPING YOUR 10 WORST SEARCH MARKETING HABITS

By Ehren Reilly, originally posted January 14, 2009

I've assembled a list of my, and my clients', 10 worst search-marketing habits. Do you suffer from any of these? I do – at least sometimes.

These days, there's less room than ever for the same old flawed practices we've used in the past. So I resolve to give up these 10 habits and be shrewder and more successful, but also less stressed out:

1. *Broad match.* It's easy – and quite tempting – to dump keywords into ad groups without considering the appropriate match type for them. While broad match is the default in Google, it usually isn't the right match type. If you're not using phrase match or exact match, you're probably getting clicks from all kinds of keywords you wouldn't expect. Try making phrase match your default match type, and only use broad match when you want all the distant synonyms and far-off grammatical permutations it offers.
2. *Position one lust.* It's oh-so-tempting to want your ad to appear in position one on the search results page, above all of your competitors. But, if your ad is in position one, you're probably paying too much. Let go of your desire to appear on top. Be the smartest rather than the highest-up by bidding for position two or three.
3. *Trying to get more clicks and higher click-through rates.* More clicks and higher click-through rates are not direct indications that your campaign is thriving. The clicks statistic is easy to digest, easy to find, and seems very tangible. But remember: you're paying for those clicks, and if the people who click on your ad aren't converting when they get to your site, the additional clicks do more harm than good. Writing ads that make your product offering perfectly clear should increase click-throughs from your target audience, but will also *decrease* click-throughs from people who don't want what you're offering (*which is a good thing*). Pay less attention to your click statistics and more attention to the higher-level statistic of conversions, whatever your conversion metric might be. If you get more clicks, and they're the right kinds of clicks, your conversion numbers will go up too.
4. *Paying too much.* Many search marketers set bids higher than they need to be, and as a result use up daily budgets before the day is out (see "Setting Daily Budgets for Search Campaigns," page 71). If you're consistently using up the full daily budget you set in a search engine, you're almost certainly paying too much per click.

If you start hitting your budget cap every day, you can reduce your bids, pay less per click, and get more clicks for your money.

5. *Exasperation.* Search engines offer complex, multi-featured products – which is good. However, all the features and settings can be daunting. You're left feeling guilty or exasperated that you have not taken advantage of all the different things you can do with this immense tool. However, you should remember that not every tool or setting is for everyone. For each business and each campaign manager, there's a correct amount of attention and complexity – and such a thing as too much. You have other responsibilities too. So don't stress yourself out with SEM complexity. Do what's right for you, and no more. (*Shameless plug:* if you haven't signed up for a free trial with Clickable, that's always a great way to reduce complexity too).
6. *Desire to "set it and forget it."* A result of exasperation is trying to get your accounts into a state where you can just leave them and not do anything more. But SEM is an ongoing process. Market conditions change, your business changes, and the opportunities on search engines change. Just as you shouldn't try to do everything all at once (see #5), you shouldn't try to get to the "end" of your SEM process, the point where you don't have to do anything anymore. Instead, try to find an equilibrium, where you give your campaign regular attention, taking the actions that most benefit you.
7. *Homogeneity.* Different kinds of people are looking for the products or services you offer. Some respond to one kind of messaging, others to a different kind. Some prefer a more general, high-level landing page that tells them who you are, while others respond better to an interior page that's highly specific to the keyword they searched for. You never know which kind of people – and which type of strategy – will be your sweet spot until you try them all. So don't use just one search engine, just one ad (and copy) and one landing page. Resolve to mix it up and diversify.
8. *Self-centeredness.* In other words, you shouldn't think about things from your perspective, but from your customers' perspective. Unlike other marketing channels, search is a medium in which your customers reach out to you and control the terms of engagement, rather than vice-versa. Too often, you might try to describe why your product or service is great in terms meaningful to you, without considering that your customers use very diverse language to describe what they're looking for, and they can vary in how receptive they'll be to different kinds of messages. From now on, put yourself in your customers' shoes and imagine searching for a product or service like the one you offer.

9. *Googlophobia (fear of the non-Google).* Most search engine queries occur on Google, but it is by no means the only engine out there. Too many search marketers neglect the other 30 percent or so of the marketplace because they don't want to take on the extra management load or learn a new technology platform. Especially if you use an account management system like Clickable, it actually takes very little additional work to run a concurrent campaign on Yahoo and Microsoft. Those engines can use the same ads, ad groups and keywords as your Google campaign. So, if you don't have an account with Yahoo and Microsoft, start one.

10. *Neglecting the "long-tail."* Just as you might neglect the smaller search engines, you might also neglect the "smaller" (less-frequently-searched) keywords that represent niche markets and terminology. The many small-time keywords and audiences that together add up to a majority of the whole – the so-called "long tail" – are easy to leave out, because they require a little more effort than the big fish. If one or two keywords or ads account for the majority of your traffic, you need to add more keywords and ads. Try to triple the size of you campaign by adding many new pieces of specific, refined, long-tail inventory.

REFINING YOUR SEARCH STRATEGY TO DRIVE CUSTOMERS, NOT VISITORS

By Trace Johnson, originally posted September 25, 2008

What if you only paid search engines for keyword ads when the visitors they lured actually converted into customers? That's the goal behind the *cost-per-acquisition* (CPA) model. Instead of just paying to get people in the door, you only pay for people who make a purchase. CPA models help allocate funds where they'll have the biggest impact on your bottom line.

The default option in most search networks is *cost-per-click* (CPC). You pay every time someone clicks on your ad. If you were a candy store owner managing paid search through CPC, you might bid 50 cents on the keyword "candy" and the same on "chocolate." Many search marketers stop at this point and say, "I got 200 visitors to my Web site. 100 came from 'candy' and 100 came from 'chocolate.' We can spend more money and get more visitors."

Get people to your Web site and they'll buy something. Right?

But lets do the math:

100 "candy" clicks x \$.50 = \$50.00

100 "chocolate" clicks x \$.50 = \$50.00

Total = \$100.00

So you've spent \$100 on advertising and people came to your site. Now let's figure out what it actually cost you to get a customer with those two keywords.

Let's assume one of the people who found your site through the keyword "candy" made a purchase and five of the people who found you through "chocolate" made a purchase. Now let's figure out how much each of those keywords cost you per customer:

\$50.00/1 "candy" customer = \$50.00/customer

\$50.00/5 "chocolate" customers = \$10.00/customer

You can do a lot with this information to get more from your ad dollars. You could decide to only spend money on the keyword "chocolate." You could lower your bid on the term "candy." You could also split your ad budget so that more is spent on "chocolate" and less on "candy." In any case, you now know what it costs to get a customer not a visitor.

To start managing your paid search marketing with a CPA model, the first thing you need is a value for conversions. If you have an e-commerce site, you can pull the data directly from the transaction into your search marketing account. If you do not have an e-commerce site, you can estimate a value.

You can then start managing your campaigns based on profit instead of traffic. It's a whole new way of looking at search engine marketing. In fact, this is a best practice that Clickable guides customers through upon signup and via simple wizards, especially our *Set Goal Values* wizard. Clickable's ActEngine™ then uses this data and other inputs to make recommendations to maximize your profit.

A SEARCH MARKETING CHECKLIST FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER

By Hanny Hindi, originally posted October 16, 2008

For most retailers, the fourth quarter (a.k.a “The Holiday Season”) is far and away the most important and lucrative time of the year. Even during an economic downturn, retailers expect an uptick in sales for the final quarter.

This is especially true for online advertisers: with consumer budgets tighter, more and more turn to the Internet for cost-saving deals.

Every online retailer should follow the following four rules to ensure that their campaigns are ready to take full advantage of fourth quarter opportunities:

1. *Differentiate yourself with cost-saving offers.* Let’s begin by clearly stating what your goal should be: aggressively (but efficiently) advertising your inventory, and differentiating your offerings to cost-conscious shoppers.

The economic downturn does present a unique opportunity to online retailers, but only if they give consumers what they’re looking for – savings. Consumers will still buy gifts for family and friends but, because of smaller budgets, they’ll search online for cost-saving deals. Therefore, presenting consumers with cost-saving offers and other value propositions is critical.

If you’re planning special deals, now’s the time to offer them: anything from “Free Shipping” to “20% Off” to “Buy One, Get One Free.” It’s always important for your ad copy to differentiate your offering in some way from the other ads on the page; during the holiday season, the differentiation needs to be in terms of cost. And, as always, the offers you make in your ads should be a very prominent part of your landing pages.

2. *Tailor negative keywords to your inventory.* The majority of your holiday season SEM budget should be directed toward keywords that reflect your inventory. More generic keywords like “Christmas presents” and “gift ideas” may also convert, but won’t be as efficient as keywords that directly reflect what you’re selling.

However, as important as it is to direct traffic to your site that relates to your keywords, it’s equally important to not direct traffic to your site that your inventory can’t support. Let’s say you sell fountain pens that come in silver and gold. When users click on

an ad for “silver fountain pens,” they want to buy silver fountain pens. If they land on your site and see that you’re out of stock on that item, they’re likely to form a negative impression of your business, rather than choose a different item.

To avoid this pitfall, be sure to add negative keywords to exclude queries for items as they go out of stock. (You can always remove these negative keywords as you replenish your warehouse).

3. *Set clear revenue and cost goals.* If the purpose of your search marketing effort is to drive sales on your Web site, you should have a very clear idea of your revenue and cost goals:

- Retailers with a single product (or a small variety of products that sell for the same price) need to ensure that their cost-per-acquisition (CPA) is less than their marginal cost-per-item. For example, if you sell t-shirts for \$10, and each one costs you \$6 to produce and distribute, your CPA should be less than \$4. (For those who prefer concrete formulas: $[\text{Marginal Revenue} - \text{Marginal Cost}] * \text{Percentage Profit Margin} = \text{CPA Goal}$.)
- Retailers with a basket of goods for sale will want to set an achievable Return on Ad Spend (ROAS). If you want \$3 in revenue for every ad dollar you spend, for example, your ROAS would be 3.

4. *Achieve visibility with precision.* Now that you’ve set your CPA or ROAS goals, it’s time to achieve maximum visibility with maximum precision. Because you will want to increase your daily budgets to assure maximum visibility, you need to make sure you’re not wasting money on clicks that don’t convert. One of the best ways to do this is to implement *ad scheduling* so that your ads will only run at the times of day and days of the week where they’ve been proven to convert. (For tips on Ad Scheduling, see page 82.)

Once you’ve implemented ad scheduling, it’s time to increase your daily budget. Your goal should be for your ads to appear with every impression of your keywords. This will allow you to take full advantage of each keyword’s conversion potential.

A concrete example will help clarify: returning to the fountain pen retailer used above, let’s say Google’s Traffic Estimator thinks you’ll get from 84 to 106 clicks a day, at a total daily cost of about \$120. Now, let’s say the conversion rate for this keyword is 33 percent. (This isn’t reasonable, but makes the math easier).

If you budget \$120, you'll get the full potential of that keyword. But, if you only budget \$80, you may get the non-converting 66 percent, or some significant portion of it. You can't assume you'll have the same conversion rate for only a portion of a keyword's clicks; you need to aggressively bid for 100 percent visibility on your inventory keywords.

INCREASING YOUR CLICK-THROUGH RATES

By Tony Soric, originally posted April 2, 2009

Ranking well in AdWords and maintaining a high *quality score* has become increasingly difficult for many pay-per-click advertisers. One major component in factoring quality score is your ad's *click-through rate* (CTR), or a metric that judges the ad's ability to generate a high number of click-throughs relative to the number of impressions incurred.

A number of simple action items can significantly increase your click-through rate over time. Here are the top five factors to consider for increasing your ad's CTR:

1. *Use campaign keywords in ad copy.* Including keywords in your headline and description lines can significantly increase your CTR. When keywords are present in ad copy, Google will **bold** them. This in turn increases the perception of the ad's relevance to the keyword searched and helps attract the user's attention. Clickable's ActEngine™ offers users recommendations to include campaign keywords in their ad copy when there is opportunity to do so.
2. *Use a price and call-to-action in your ad copy.* Including a price will help filter "window shoppers" vs. those searchers more likely to make a purchase. Also, a call-to-action such as "buy now" or "call today" can help draw a searcher's attention.
3. *Use keywords in your display URL.* For some advertisers, this is not an issue. If, for example, you sell "blue widgets" and your domain is www.bluewidgets.com, the URL is already keyword rich. But if your domain is more generic or you are bidding on a wide variety of keyword phrases, consider adding a "/keyword" at the end of your domain (example: "acme.com/blue_widgets").
4. *Use attention-grabbing keywords in your ad copy.* Have you ever stood in the grocery store checkout line and quickly glanced over the magazine display? Searchers scan over ads in a similar fashion and your use of attention-grabbing keywords like "free," "outstanding," "outrageous" and "limited time offer" can help draw in users.
5. *Increase your ranking by increasing your bids.* Many searchers only pay attention to ads in the top half of the first page. Studies have also shown a precipitous decline in CTR for each incremental position. That said, one of the fastest ways to increase CTR is to increase your bid price. Target a position in the top five, but keep in mind that ultimately you should judge a keyword's performance on conversion metrics *cost-per-action* (CPA) and on *return-on-investment* (ROI) – not solely on CTR.

While this chapter has outlined a list of five powerful tips that will help any pay-per-click (PPC) advertiser increase click-through rates, one point cannot be stressed enough: ideally, *CTR should not be used as an account performance metric on its own*. CTR is one piece of the complex PPC puzzle and marketers need to be aware that while driving a high CTR can be beneficial, it is more important for long-term success to understand that you must also focus on traffic relevancy and monitoring CPA/ROI metrics.

ADAPTING YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY TO A BAD ECONOMY

By Trace Johnson, originally posted April 16, 2009

When the economy is down, effective marketing becomes even more important to your bottom line. Online advertisers have many ways in which they can adapt search advertising to save money and lower *cost-per-acquisition*. The key is to avoid running campaigns on auto-pilot. Instead, you should actively apply proven best practices to improve your return on ad spend, especially now.

Don't Overbid on Keywords

With marketing budgets shrinking and many businesses closing their doors, some keywords have less competition. Therefore, it is wise to analyze keyword positioning and *cost-per-click* (CPC). If you use Clickable, simply click on the *Act* tab and review the recommendations. Clickable's ActEngine™ automatically analyzes keyword position cost-per-click and recommends the optimal bid to keep your positioning and conversions up. You can also perform some analysis in the *Keyword Filter and Bulk Edit* tool. Start by sorting your keywords by average position from highest to lowest. If you have keywords that are averaging first or second position, consider lowering your bid. The competition and CPC levels have probably come down for this keyword, and you can apply your budget to important terms that don't rank as high.

Adjust High-Conversion Keywords With Care

Lower your CPC with caution for terms with high conversion rates. Lower these bids in smaller 5 to 10 percent increments and monitor their positioning and conversion rates closely over a couple of weeks. Clickable's ActEngine™ recommendations will automatically adjust, allocating more of your marketing budget to high converting keywords, without overpaying for clicks.

Optimize Your Campaigns By Day And Time

If your business is not open 24/7, it might make sense to optimize your bids by day and time. In AdWords, this feature is called *ad scheduling*. In Microsoft adCenter, it is part of the ad network's incremental bidding.

Conversion rates are the best way to determine if optimizing by day and time is a good idea. Begin by reviewing your conversion rates by hour and by day. If you see a dramatic decrease in conversions over the weekend, you can try scheduling your ads to run Monday through Friday. Or perhaps you run a service company and are only open from 9 to 5. Then you might run your ads from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day. Stop spending money on days and times that don't produce returns.

Improve Your Quality Score

Finally, try lowering your CPC by improving your Google quality score. Many advertisers don't realize Google charges less for relevant advertising. If you have a low quality score, you might pay two to three times as much for top positioning. Also check out the next – and final – chapter of the *Guru's Guide*, "Boosting Your Landing Pages," since they're one of the key influences on quality score.

Running a campaign on autopilot can cost you in the long run. So save money and improve the performance of your campaigns by actively applying best practices: *lower your CPC*, *schedule your advertising*, and *optimize your landing pages*.

BOOSTING YOUR LANDING PAGES

By Hanny Hindi, originally posted March 20, 2009

A significant amount of overlap exists between *search engine marketing* (SEM) and *search engine optimization* (SEO) best practices.

SEM is a form of Internet marketing that seeks to promote Web sites by increasing their visibility in *search engine result pages*. According to the *Search Engine Marketing Professionals Organization*, one of the most important components of an SEM campaign is SEO, “the process of editing a Web site’s content and code in order to improve visibility within one or more search engines.”

SEO is especially important when it comes to your landing pages. The same factors that make your pages appear at the top of Google’s organic results lead to a higher AdWords quality score (even for “orphaned” landing pages not linked to from your site).

The most important factor in your quality score is the alignment between your keywords, ads and landing pages. You know what your keywords are, and that your ads can’t be any longer than 95 characters each. But what exactly is meant by “landing page content?” It doesn’t mean every word on your page. Some content is more important than other content.

Here are three SEO best practices you should always apply to your SEM landing pages:

1. *Don’t put text in images.* In order for the content on your landing pages to be factored into your quality score, it needs to be readable by a search network’s crawlers. Text is crawl-able, but images are not. The content in your headlines is probably the most important and keyword-rich content on your landing pages. If it’s rendered in an image, search engines can’t read it.

Because image ALT tags have been abused in the past (for instance, by users cramming keywords into clear 1x1-pixel images), search engines either ignore them completely or assign them an extremely low value when determining relevance. If you want search engines to know what’s in your banners, the content has to be text.

2. *Put your most important content into an <h1> tag.* There’s some controversy over how important <h1> tags really are, but they’re important nevertheless. Therefore,

you should include your headline text in your <h1> tag. Search networks will find this information, and it will be an important factor in determining the relevance of your landing pages.

3. *Include keywords in your meta tags.* You should include three types of meta tags on your landing page: title tag, description tag and keyword tag:
 - The *title tag* is the content that appears at the top of a user's browser window. You'll want to include keywords, but be sure to write something readable and informative for your users. (In a particularly helpful blog post, Pandia's Jono Craig suggests a limit of 90 characters with spaces).
 - The *description tag* is similar to the title tag. Both should include summaries of the content on your pages, but the description tag can be about twice as long. (Craig suggests a limit of 170 characters with spaces). Here as elsewhere, be sure not to repeat terms.
 - The *keyword tag* – you don't want to include all your keywords in this field; stick to a total of about 10 terms. If you're having a hard time deciding which to include, use those that drive the most traffic to that particular landing page. (The suggested character limit here is 900 characters with spaces).

ABOUT CLICKABLE

Clickable is an online solution that makes search advertising *simple, instant and profitable*. Clickable's immediate activation and intuitive user experience make it easy for marketers to manage performance across all major ad networks, including Google, Yahoo and Microsoft. Clickable's powerful recommendations and reporting make marketers more efficient, effective and confident – even at the very first login. Clickable's ActEngine™ actually learns marketers' preferences and enforces best practices to maximize return. Clickable always listens and constantly improves. That's why customers often say, "Clickable is like having a trusted advisor always by your side ensuring success."

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