



Introduction To Google Adwords And Pay Per Click Advertising

It's no big secret but using Google Adwords is quite simply the most effective way to drive highly targeted visitors to your website – fast! And, highly targeted visitors are what every website needs. Attracting such visitors massively increases the chance of making a sale which, of course, means more opportunity to make profits.

With Adwords every webmaster can attract targeted visitors within minutes of launching an advertising campaign. Adwords, or pay per click advertising, is a great way of promoting any website. But, there is a cost associated with using Adwords and controlling the budget is essential if a campaign is to be successful.

However it is a very old, and very true, maxim in business that if you want to make money, you have to spend money. One good way of spending money on the Internet for business gain is through Adwords advertising.

By using Adwords you will quickly see a surge of traffic, or visitors, to your site. Once a potential customer arrives at your site whether or not he makes a purchase depends on the quality of your product and your 'landing page'. The landing page is the page on which your visitor lands after clicking your Adwords ad and should be focused to either closing the sale or selling the service.

Thanks to the advent of the Google Adwords programme successful online marketing is within the reach of every business no matter how large or small they may be or, to a large degree, the size of their advertising budget. Online marketing is one area in which the small businessman really can compete with the giants of the commercial world. However, to do so, knowledge needs to be accumulated. Let's begin with the basics.

For those who don't know, Google Adwords is a system of online classified advertising which enables your business and your products to be placed in front of millions of Internet users. The cost of the adverts themselves can literally be pennies and, the best part is, you only pay for those people who actually take action when seeing your advert.

In a nutshell, you only pay for your advertisement when an Internet user sees your ad and clicks on it to visit your site. Google Adwords has got to be the most cost effective and sales boosting form of advertising both on and off line.

Adwords are so effective because they are keyword driven and specifically targeted to the person reading your advertisement. Using Adwords you can be reassured that every Internet user who clicks on your ad is a potential customer who is actually looking for, or is interested in, the products or services you have to offer. Assuming of course that you are targeting the right keywords!

How To Set Up An Adwords Campaign

Anyone can set up an Adwords campaign. Though not everyone can set up a successful Adwords campaign. But, the actual mechanics of setting up a campaign is similar for everyone – it is the detail which determines the success or failure of a campaign. But let's start at the beginning.

It may seem obvious but there are a few things which your business must have before it can launch an Adwords campaign:

- A Website
- A product or service
- A shopping cart (not essential if selling a service but obviously highly desirable if you are selling products)
- An Adwords Account

We'll assume that the website, products and shopping cart are already, or will shortly be, in place, which just leaves the Adwords account. For those without an account already creating one is very simple and requires only a £5 deposit for Google to open the account. When the account is opened a campaign will need to be created 'on the fly' though this can be immediately paused or deleted so that no money is actually spent. When opening an account a campaign needs to be created so that Google can check your website. An alternative is to ask a Google professional to open the account on your behalf, but only do this if you intend to use the professional to monitor and administer your account for you.

Setting up an Adwords campaign, and for the moment we are specifically talking about a 'keyword targeted campaign' and not 'site targeted' campaigns which we will discuss later, consists of six main steps.

1. Creating a landing page if one does not already exist
2. Deciding the geographical reach of your campaign
3. Writing a classified advertisement
4. Choosing a list of keywords
5. Setting a bid price for each keyword
6. Setting a daily budget for the campaign

Assessing The Market And The Competition

The Internet makes it very easy to see how your competitors are approaching their advertising and to measure the degree of competition your business faces in any particular niche. It is also possible to use the tools that Google provides to estimate the cost of your proposed campaign.

The easiest way to see the amount of competition you face in the market is to type your main keyword or phrase into Google's search engine and look at the number of paid ads which are listed on the right of the page. The more advertisers obviously the more the competition but don't be worried by a high number of competitors. Creative copywriting and judicious use of keywords can help to conquer any market.

If there are less than a dozen advertisers bidding on your main keyword than it should be relatively easy to achieve a top six ranking.

At this point it should be pointed out that a top six ranking is what you should be looking to achieve for your ads. Preferably the top four but don't get hung up on trying to obtain the number one spot. Research has shown that the most effective position for your ad, in terms of cost and return on investment, is between positions two and four. The top ad often attracts the curious or 'tyre kickers' who will click on the ad without any intention of purchasing the product or service that the ad is trailing. On the other hand, an ad further down the rankings will only attract the interest of those Internet users who are searching for something specific and are willing to read more than one ad to find what they are looking for. This type of user, or searcher, is exactly the kind of person which your ad should be looking to target.

As well as counting the number of competing ads make sure you study how they are written. Look at the ads from the perspective of a potential customer. What attracts you to a certain ad? What puts you off? How effective are the headlines? Do the ads pique your interest, if so how? The bottom line here is that if you see an ad which you would click on without hesitation, make a note of it and look to see how you can improve and adapt it to form part of your own advertising campaign. Or even copy the ad word for word.

As well as looking to see what your competitors are doing it is just as important, in fact more so, to see how your potential customers are behaving. Again the way to discover this information is relatively straight-forward. By discovering which keywords potential customers are typing into the search engines you can not only see the amount of people searching but will also discover more keywords which you can use in your advertising campaigns.

Go to 'opportunities' from within your Adwords account and then select 'keyword tool'. Enter your keyword and Google will return results which can be analysed in a number of ways. The data we are interested in at the moment is the 'search volume', this tells us how popular the keyword has been in the last month along with hugely valuable search trends. The higher the volume the better. Along with the volume Google also returns data outlining the competition for that keyword. The ideal scenario is to find keywords which have a HIGH volume of searches but a LOW number of competitors.

There is software available that will help you build an optimised keywords list. But, be warned, most of the programmes available, especially the free offerings, are hopelessly inadequate. The only software which we could recommend is Wordtracker though this can prove expensive. Another avenue is to use the services of a professional keywords researcher. This will involve a small cost but is well worth the expense.

Keyword Options

When choosing your keywords there are four options that you can choose for each word. Keywords are written as either:

- wine making - broad match
- [wine making] - exact match
- "wine making" - phrase match
- -wine making - negative match

Broad match is the most commonly used and is the Google default option.

Definitions

Broad Match

These results are less targeted but are also the most far-reaching. By including the broad match option your ads may appear when Internet users search for your keywords in any order, e.g., making wine, and in conjunction with other phrases such as wine techniques. Your ads may also appear on other relevant (to Google!) searches.

Exact Match

Using this option ensures that your ads are only displayed when an Internet user searches for that specific keyword or phrase without any other words in their search criteria. For example, wine making, will return results whereas your ad will not be displayed if the searcher types “I want to learn about wine making” into Google. Using exact matches produces a much higher click through rate though the number of ad impressions will be considerably less than when using broad match.

Phrase Match

Your ad will appear when a user types in the keyword either in isolation or as part of a search. Unlike using exact match a searcher typing “I want to learn about wine making” will result in your ad being displayed.

Negative Match

Using negative keywords can help eradicate irrelevant searches and similar, but unwanted, results. In our wine making example a negative keyword we could use would be –red red wine. Although we may want to attract people searching for red wine we do not want searchers who are looking for red red wine as this is a title of a song and could result in our ad being displayed to Internet users who have no interest in our product but who may still click the ad. The most commonly used negative keyword is ‘free’. After all there is no point targeting searches who are looking for a freebie!

Personally, I would recommend using every variety of keyword, especially when launching a new adwords campaign. But, in the long run, you should find the exact match words are returning better results and you should consider taking the best performing words and turning them into a separate campaign.

Writing Effective Ad Copy

You can have the best keywords in the world but without an attention grabbing ad you will not have a successful Adwords campaign. Before looking at how to write a great ad lets go back to basics and look at the actual make up an Adwords ad.

An ad consists of the following fields:

- Headline (maximum of 25 characters)
- Description Field 1 (maximum of 35 characters)
- Description Field 2 (maximum of 35 characters)
- Display URL (maximum of 35 characters)
- Destination URL (maximum of 1024 characters)

The headline and description lines are self-explanatory but at this stage the difference between the display and destination URL's should be explained.

The display URL, as the name suggests, is the URL which the Internet user will see. It is important therefore that the display URL should include a keyword and be highly relevant to the search. This is the reason why domain names specific to your product or service should be used rather than generic names.

The destination URL is the actual page that the search will be directed to if he clicks on the ad. This URL is not visible on the actual ad. The destination page should NEVER be the home page of your website. The destination, or landing page, should ALWAYS be the actual page containing the specific information on your product or service.

Writing Your Ad

In the the example below I have written an ad to promote an ebook I wrote. The main keywords here are 'Loft Conversion' and 'Ebook'.

Headline	<input type="text" value="Plan Your Loft Conversion"/>	Ad preview Plan Your Loft Conversion Brand New Ebook Tells You How To Plan And Design A Loft Conversion www.loft-conversion-uk.com
Description line 1	<input type="text" value="Brand New Ebook Tells You How To"/>	
Description line 2	<input type="text" value="Plan And Design A Loft Conversion"/>	
Display URL	<input type="text" value="www.loft-conversion-uk.com"/>	
Destination URL 	<input type="text" value="http://"/> <input type="text" value="www.loft-conversion-uk.com/loft-c"/>	

Headline

With only 25 characters available the headline is always a challenge to write. It must be punchy, to the point and MUST include your primary keyword. There is a much higher chance of your ad attracting a click if the keyword the searcher is looking for is included in the headline.

Description Lines

Again, it is important to include keywords but your message must obviously be concise. A classic technique is to include a feature on one line with a benefit on the other. In the above example the 'feature' is a brand new ebook whilst the 'benefit' is that the book will help the reader plan and design their loft conversion.

When your first ad is written you should immediately write another. A golden rule of Adwords advertising is to ALWAYS have two ads running against each other. With two ads you are able to compare and contrast and continually test your advertising. This is called split testing and is a technique that should always be used to gain the optimum performance from your Adwords campaign.

Targeting And Organising Your Campaign

For an ad to succeed on the Internet it must be correctly targeted to a specific audience. There is nothing new in this of course. Targeted advertising has always been essential whether on or off line. But, the advantage that modern marketers have over their predecessors, is that Adwords allows us to create the type of focused campaign which simply wasn't possible before the Internet.

To create a targeted campaign it is essential that your keywords, ad and landing page all work in harmony. If an Internet user types in a keyword which exactly matches your ad they are highly likely to click on it. If your landing page then continues the theme and exactly shows what he requires than he is more likely to buy. The bottom line of effective advertising is to attract interest from those who are most likely to buy. Google Adwords makes this process a simple one to achieve.

Top Five Adwords Tips

Split Testing

By split testing your ads you can quickly improve the click through rate by continually tweaking the copy in your ads. The easiest means of split testing is to have two different adverts for each Adgroup and every few days, or after a certain number of clicks, delete the poorest performing ad and write a new one. By performing this process on an on-going basis you will soon have your ad performance constantly improving. Another form of split testing is to have two different landing pages and see which one performs the best in terms of selling products or services.

Keyword Research

Hugely important. Take time to learn how to use the Google Keyword Tool or consider hiring a professional to perform the keyword research for you.

Cut And Paste Keywords

If you find a keyword is getting plenty of clicks or conversions then cut and paste the keyword into its own Adgroup. By doing this you will create a laser targeted Adgroup, complete with its own ad and you will see your Clickthrough Rate rising and your cost per click lowering.

Use Conversion Tracking

Absolutely essential. If you don't set this up then how will you know which ads or keywords are performing best? But don't forget to also monitor telephone enquires so that you can build up a complete picture of where your sales are coming from.

Test, Test And Re-Test!

Constantly test your keywords, landing pages and ad copy. An Adwords campaign can never be allowed to just run, it needs constant monitoring and tweaking. Only by testing will your campaign be a success.