



Google AdWords Best Practices

Campaign settings:

- Use descriptive names for campaigns. AdWords accounts grow with time, and instant recognition makes management simpler. The same applies to ad group names.
- Never mix search and content campaigns. Keep them separate. And don't be tempted to use separate content bids in a combined campaign.
- Ad serving should be set to "Rotate: Show ads more evenly". Monitor ad performance; don't let Google do this. Your interests and Google's are not the same.
- Delivery method should be set to "Choose Standard: Show ads evenly over time". The "accelerated" option may exhaust your budget when many of your potential customers are sleeping. Don't lose control.
- Budget: Make Google work hard for your money. Don't just give it to them. And don't just increase your budget because Google think you should.

Keywords:

- Spend time finding keywords through keyword research. Google's keyword tool is useful, a WordTracker account is better still.
- Massive keyword lists are not the best approach. Smaller and more focused is better.
- Negative keywords are very important. If you're not offering free software, -free, -freeware and related terms are a good idea. As are -hack, -crack, -serial etc.
- Matching options:
 - Be extremely careful with broad match because of expanded matching. But don't be put off; broad match can be useful.
 - Don't use only one matching option. Using all of them shouldn't work, but it does!
- Misspellings can be effective. Regional variations too eg: British / American English.
- Purge keywords that don't work and expand those that do.

Ad text:

- Be pushy! Calls to action work: Download Now, Try Now, Buy Now etc.
- Use popular keywords within your ad texts.
- Shorter can sometimes be better.
- Punctuation is important.
- The display URL now needs to match the destination URL. An old policy, but with a new drive to enforce it.
- Dynamic keyword insertion. Dynamically inserting a search into the ad is simple, but use with caution - unexpected results may occur!
 - {KeyWord:Alternate Text}: Fast Red Cars
 - {Keyword:Alternate Text}: Fast red cars
 - {keyword:Alternate Text}: fast red cars

Best practices for new ad groups:

- Start small. Once you have data, purge low performers and expand on what works.
- Start with "safer" keywords - using a reasonable number. Less is better.
- Always work in time intervals of seven days.
- Never write just one ad. Use a minimum of four per ad group.
- Allow sufficient time to generate sufficient data. Haste leads to poor ROI.
- Once there is sufficient data, split ad groups into more focused themes based on keywords. Then set up targeted ads for each of the new ad groups.
- Purge whatever doesn't work and expand on what does.

Best practices for improving an existing ad group:

- Keywords:
 - Identify and delete low performers:
 - low CTR (high impressions low clicks)
 - off-target keywords (common sense)
 - zero-impressions over 28 days
- Ads:
 - Is individual tracking in place for each ad?
 - Identify and delete low performers:
 - Through CTR
 - Through log analysis
 - Pause ads for at least seven days before deleting them

Tracking:

- Track everything, but don't drown in data. Too much tracking leads to paralysis by analysis.
- Use unique tracking URLs for each of your ads. Don't track by keyword.
- Google's conversion tracking: easy to implement but can be problematic and inaccurate.
 - Conversions will not be tracked in the following scenarios:
 - No purchase within 30 days of clicking on your ads
 - The person clicking on the ad is not the person who makes the purchase
 - Cookies are cleared from the system
 - Visitor clicks the ad on one computer but purchases through a different system

Reports and log analysis:

- Make use of the report center within your AdWords account.
- Use your raw web logs. Data inside the AdWords account is one-sided. What happens once someone arrives on your site is vital to the success of your AdWords campaigns.
- Ad Performance report - use with AdWordsReporter (www.adwordsreporter.com) for seeing patterns and trends. Can be useful when viewed with raw web logs to see how ads perform once the visitor arrives on the site.
- Search Query Performance report - essential for finding new keywords and negative keywords.
- Placement Performance report – vital for seeing how well your ads are performing on the content network.

AdWords Editor:

- Clunky but useful software - great for copying and pasting keywords, ads, ad groups or even campaigns.
- Always work in units of seven days to make sure that all trends are accurately identified.
- Twenty-eight days is a good time period to work with
 - Click on the "show stats for" button, then add two days to the dates displayed for "last 30 days" (to make 28 days)

Golden rules:

- Never allow an AdWords account to run itself.
- Never make too many changes at a time.
- Never let Google control your budget.
- Always allow time for changes to take effect.
- Always work in time intervals of seven days.
- A neglected AdWords account is a dangerous AdWords account.