

Google AdWords

Google AdWords are by far the most popular form of online advertising. These ads appear in the search pages and affiliate networks in google so have the potential to reach millions of people. The beauty of AdWords is that you already know what the viewer is interested in before they get shown your ad. So if someone searches for 'mountain bikes' you know that they have an interest in bikes so having your bike shop advert would be more interesting to them.

When you create an AdWords account, it will look quite complicated at first. Essentially all adverts are created as part of a 'campaign' and in each campaign you have one or more 'ad groups'. Each ad group targets a number of keywords and has one or more ads to display. You need to create more than one ad as the wording and text of the ad will make a difference to the number and quality of leads you get from it. AdWords automatically rotate your ads, and tweak the ratio so that the most successful ads are shown more often than lower performing ads.

Each campaign is allocated a daily budget. Google will then display your ads in rotation with all the other relevant ads in the search results until your budget has been spent. Generally the higher your budget, the higher your ad will appear in the search results, and therefore more likely to be clicked on. From experience, we know that ads at the higher positions have higher conversion rates. Lower ads are more likely to be visited by people who are not immediately interested in making a purchasing decision or enquiry, but are shopping around for information.

One of the dangers of AdWords is that if you do not optimise your campaigns you could be throwing a lot of money at advertising with very little benefit. You could hire an SEO company that is practiced at getting higher ROI for AdWords, and if you are planning on spending a lot of AdWords money this could be the better option. But if you want to do it yourself, you will need to spend time researching how to make the most of your ads and what keywords to target. Here are a few tips to improve your AdWords:

1. Use Capital Case In Your Ad – Capitalise The First Letter Of Each Word To Make It Stand Out More
2. If you sell a product, put the price in your ad eg. "All bike helmets only £20". Online shoppers are quite impatient and having the price right there in front of them without having to do any extra effort or clicks is a time saver. Another benefit is if people are looking for bargains or have already found a price for the product elsewhere cheaper, then they will not use up your clicks. This is especially true if you are selling high value and luxury items. People looking for £10 imitation Rolex watches won't click on an ad that has a \$1000 price tag.
3. Use negative keywords to filter out timewasters. Negative keywords are keywords that you can add to an advert to exclude your ad from searches including this keyword. Keywords such as 'sale', 'imitation', 'fake', 'ex display' and 'knock off' are good to exclude if you are selling genuine designer products for example
4. Use the correct currency for the country – if you sell internationally, create a separate ad for each currency region with the correct currency in it.
5. Google ads have a very limited character length. The headline is limited to 25 characters maximum, the URL is limited to 35 characters (although that's only the url shown on the

page, the actual url can be much longer). The description beneath can only be 35 characters for each line. And you only get 2 lines. So you need to squeeze as many call to action and keywords in there as you can.

6. Check out your competitors ads. Chances are they have spent years fine tuning their ads to make the most out of them. Why not take a short cut and copy what they have done.
7. Include a call to action in the headline – try to be creative with CTAs – ‘buy online’ or ‘download now’ won’t improve your click rate, but something like ‘Try A Refreshing Smoothie Today’ will be more successful
8. Include a special offer – everyone likes offers. “£25 off New Bikes” works better than “10% Off New Bikes”. Free shipping is a particularly effective offer as studies have shown it to increase conversions by more than 50%.
9. Instead of saying how great you are, tell customers how you can help them. So in place of “Our bike helmets are amazing” use “You’ll look amazing in our helmets”.
10. Add a sense of urgency. If you add phrases like ‘limited stock’, ‘Sale ends boxing day’ or ‘Only 4 left in stock’ then this motivates people to click on your ad now. This does mean you might have to update your ads more often, but will also give you higher click rates.
11. Reduce risk – add phrases like ‘14 day return’, ‘secure payment processing’ and ‘price guarantee’ to increase people’s confidence in buying from you – this is more important if you are not a well-known company.
12. Make the headline and first description a full sentence. If the ad appears at the top of the search results, it will display your headline and first line of description as a single sentence. This can only happen if you put a punctuation mark at the end of your first description line, for example:

£25 Off All Mountain Bikes
When You Order Before March 20th!
Free Online Delivery In The UK

Will turn into:

£25 Off All Mountain Bikes - When You Order Before March 20th!
Free Online Delivery In The UK

13. Include the main keywords – when the ad is shown in response to a search containing this keyword, the keyword will appear in bold and thus make it stand out a little bit more. You can include the keyword in headline, description and display URL.
14. Avoid trademarked names – these can get your ad rejected. Google has an automatic trademark filter so if you put ‘coke cola’ in your ad, chances are it will get rejected straight away.
15. Customise your display URL – the URL text can work as a call to action. If you click on the display URL, you do not necessarily go to that URL, as the real URL is defined separately. Try out urls like ‘mysite.com/bikevouchers’, or ‘mysite.com/freetrial’ or even ‘mysite.com/secretsale’ which works well as people think they are getting to a part of the website that they would not normally be able to visit.

16. Use Ad extensions. These are ways of adding extra information to ads. One example is the location extension which will display your businesses address, phone number and a map link. This makes your ads more prominent and takes up more page space. Most ad extensions are free to set up, but some aren't such as the call button for the 'call extension', or the download button of an 'app extension'.
17. Get stars on your ads. Encourage people to leave reviews for you on sites like trustpilot.com and then you will see ratings stars appearing on your ads. Do not add your own fake reviews as this can get your site blacklisted from the reviews sites.
18. Keep testing and retesting your ads. If you create similar ads with small changes in the wording, you can compare the click rates to see which method gets more clicks and which method gets higher conversions per click. Keep tweaking your ads to build up your conversion rates.