



Looking at Success

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Describe conversions from clickthroughs

Looking at Success

Understanding Key Metrics

At first, you'll be tempted to tweak your keywords all the time. Don't! Give your keyword groups a week and even up to a month (and schedule yourself a weekly check-in) and then you can narrow down that group by the number of impressions at the low and high end of the spectrum.

For numbers at the low end (the ones that get no impressions over a one or two week period), get rid of them so they aren't cluttering your account. For the ones at the top end, see if there are any interesting or unexpected factors there. Also consider whether the group still makes sense as it is set up, or whether a group of large keywords should be divided into several smaller groups, which you can target around a group, topic, or product feature that each gets its own, targeted ad.

Conversion Rates

Understand the results of your PPC ad, and you can easily calculate exactly how much money you are spending, and whether the work you are doing is paying off by giving you a return on your investment (ROI).

Google AdWords has a conversion tracking system, and you can supplement this with other systems if you want, but the only way to know when your \$1 in PPC gives you a \$2 return (or nothing at all!) is to read the reports. Google AdWords Conversion Tracking is free, and it is part of your Google AdWords account, which makes it easy to coordinate.

As of this writing, on the homepage of Google AdWords, you will see a link to set up the Google conversion tracker. This is a very simple tool that requires you to enter the URL for the page that confirms a purchase after the user has completed their transaction (which might simply be signing up for your newsletter, or it might be making a purchase). From that link, Google will generate a tracking code that you add to coding on that particular page (or have your webmaster do it).

Experienced advertisers know that one good ad in the right place can generate sales for months and even years. But they only know that because they can track what's working and what isn't. In a competitive market, in lean times, and in times when great profit is available, you've got to track your conversions.

When you are tracking conversions, you can also see which keywords are drawing them to your site, and which ones are strongest at conversions. This allows you to continue tweaking your ads, to focus on keywords that are getting your conversions, and to split your ad groups into smaller groups with more

ads and tighter focus. It facilitates making more conversions, bidding on better and more profitable keywords, and trimming spending on non-productive areas.

Higher Clickthrough Rates (CTR) Help

The position of your ad on the search results page is a result of multiplying your clickthrough rate (CTR) and bid price. The better your CTR gets, the higher on the page Google will put your ad, without charging you a higher rate per click.

Compelling, persuasive ad writing with strong landing pages will get you better results. As your CTR improves, you will get more traffic. However, if your ad is not directly at the top of the list, it may not be a bad thing. It depends on what you are selling. If you offer something that meets an immediate need (I need a mechanic for my broken car RIGHT NOW), or whether your customers are researchers (I want to see what kind of tires are best for the winter). Sometimes people click on the top ad without really reading it, so that ad actually gets a lower conversion rate than an ad that is second or even third.

Cost Per Action Bidding

If your ads get great results, and as your account matures, Google offers some additional benefits, including Cost Per Action (CPA) bidding. With CPA, you are paying for conversions (yes, actual conversions) instead of clicks or impressions. CPA requires some advanced knowledge and success with Google AdWords, but it is worth looking into as you gain success.

Setting Up Split Tests

Although some ads can work effectively for months and years, others seem to do nothing for our business despite all our attention to keywords, copy writing, and following up our results. Split tests are a very effective, easy way to test your ads.

AdWords has an easy method for split testing. When you have one ad running (or even if you just created it), you have an option to create a second one by clicking on the "+ New Ad" link next to the current ad. AdWords will rotate the second ad with the first on so that you can compare clickthrough rates. Once a suitable trial period has passed, you can delete the weaker ad.

Using Google's Display Network (GDN)

We have to mention the Google Display Network (GDN) for several reasons, the most important of which is related to money. When you set up your ads, you have the option to turn off GDN. (It is turned on by default.) As a new AdWords user, we recommend that you turn it off initially (at least until you get the hang of AdWord) in order to corral your costs and to accurately test your results. Split testing cannot be calculated on GDN, and it costs you in addition to your PPC ads that you are setting up in AdWords. We don't want you to break the bank!

As of this writing, you can turn the GDN on or off in the Settings tab for each ad:



Once you have gained some experience with AdWords, then by all means turn on GDN. You may very well find that it brings you more traffic, and depending on what you are offering at your landing page, more sign-ups or sales.

Why do you need to know about GDN?

Where Google Search is about who offers what where, and functions like an old-fashioned phone book, GDN is more like a collection of interesting places that people can hang out, complete with billboards that offer information in the form of articles, videos, forums, and blogs. All this information is accompanied by ads, which can also incorporate images and video. If your customers are using GDN (and most people who use Google are), you may want to consider GDN as a way to bring them to you.

People who are interacting within the GDN aren't necessarily shopping, and they may not be searching for a solution to anything particular. They are reading and watching, and if your ad is catchy, they may be ready for a distraction. If you are going to advertise on GDN, your ads have to be attention catching, and even more interesting than usual. Use words, language, and images that are going to invite or even provoke a click. Make sure that your landing page really delivers!

In order to run a successful GDN campaign, do NOT copy your other ads. Run your GDN campaigns (which can include images and deserve some special attention) as a separate campaign from your text-only AdWords ads. That way, if you decide to test your results with managed placements (you tell Google which websites and specific pages you want to target) and targeting specific topics (you tell Google which ones you want and they go find the right pages for you), you will be able to create the right kind of ads, and track your results effectively.

When to Ask for Help

At what point in your experience with Google AdWords do you stop with the do it yourself approach and hire professional help? That's a tough question! It all depends on what your challenges are, what your results have been to date, and what your objectives are. If you are getting decent results with your AdWords campaigns and all of a sudden your results get bad, (or you are not getting any results at all despite creating great ads, understanding the keyword issues, and having a great website), getting outside help may accelerate your results, or it may be more good money gone.

Make sure that any service provider that you hire has an excellent record with AdWords advertising, understands Google AdWords' current platform, and that you can check references (not just read their testimonials on a website).

If you don't feel comfortable managing your AdWords campaigns, there are plenty of resources available. (See the Recommended Reading List at the end of this course as a good place to start.)

Everything about business costs us money. If you are a small company with a very limited advertising budget, you have to weigh out the return on any investment that you make. If you are going to spend 20 hours a week on AdWords and that takes you away from running your business, how much is it really costing you?

To Be Continued

One of the joys of working in digital space is that it is continually evolving. Google is a big business and they have to constantly tweak and change their business in order to make money, just like you do. As a result, everything we've said in this course is 100% accurate at the time of writing, but much of it can change at any time.

To keep up to date on the evolution, we recommend that you subscribe to RSS feeds and technical blogs, as well as visit trusted resources like the ones in the Recommended Reading List (which will also be updated from time to time), and Google's own website. Although Google won't reveal everything about their algorithms or methodologies, we can certainly leverage what is there to make the most out of our experience with them, and to make the most of your investment in whichever PPC service you decide to use.

Case Study: AdWords Express

While writing this course, we discovered that Google AdWords has recently launched a different type of AdWords campaign, called AdWords Express. This is only available right now in a limited number of countries and is designed for businesses who do not have a website but who want to reach out to a local customer base. Instead of the URL of a typical AdWords ad, Express ads will provide searchers with the address and phone number for the business, although they can be linked to a simple Google Profile or Google+ page too.

AdWords Express has a limited capacity for tracking and reporting when compared to the regular AdWords campaign, but if you are trying to get a quick start on a localized market, it seems to be a reasonable option.

Further Reading:

