



Advertising Online

Learning Outcomes

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

- ✓ Understand using online advertising to boost your marketing results

Advertising Online

What is Advertising?

When your Twitter feed is peppered with interesting or helpful links, you are connecting to your community. When your Facebook page offers a contest, you are highlighting your brand. When you have a blog post that offers some kind of free download, you are providing content to your readers. When you send out an electronic newsletter to a list of people who have subscribed to your missives, you are waving in front of them.

Some of these methods will cost you money, and others are indirect without a particular cost. Whatever you call them, all of these methods of connecting to your consumers can be considered marketing and advertising, since both get defined as activities of promoting commercial products or services.

An extremely popular form of advertising today is called **pay per click (PPC)**. Using pay per click is straightforward and allows a business to tightly control their advertising costs. In essence, you pay to place an ad with a particular number of clicks. When that maximum is reached, the ad stops running until the beginning of the next cycle.

Pay per click ads appear on the top and sides of screens that display your search results. You can see an example along the right margin of the page below, where we searched for “pay per click:”



If you sign up for pay per click advertising, your job is as easy as signing on with a service, providing a credit card number, writing up your copy (the words for the ad), and then setting up your parameters. The **parameters** you set are important, because they control the cost of the ad. You can set geographic parameters so that only people in your physical region see the ads. You can also set up keyword parameters, so that if someone searches for “red shoes” (for example), your ad for “red leather pumps” appears as an ad on their landing page. You can also set a budget so that your ad stops running after a particular number of clicks. (See the next sub-session for more information)

You can see examples of pay per click ads on any search engine page when you do a search and on many social networking sites. These ads will always reflect the type of search terms you use and your history, unless you tailor your browser settings not to allow that, or you use an ad blocker.

Most pay per click advertising includes a comprehensive reporting element which is very important. You will be able to determine a range of information about people who are clicking on your ads, such as where they come from. (This includes which pages on your website they landed on and what country they are in.) If you have a shopping cart or ecommerce feature linked to your advertising campaign, you can also determine exactly how many of those visitors became a purchaser (called the **conversion rate**).

What Service Should I Use?

The three big search engine providers (Google, Bing, and Yahoo!) have the most popular pay per click advertising, but there are small niche sellers too. If you have a niche product, the smaller providers may make more sense, but you also need to be confident that they are there to serve you well.

If you are just getting started in pay per click advertising, check with the company that hosts your website and see if they have an introductory offer. Many of them do, and this will allow you to learn and experiment without as much expense.

For most services, the process is very simple.

- Set up an account
- Choose keywords
- Write your ad
- Set the limits

Set Up an Account

First, do your research and decide which service you want to use for your pay per click ads. Depending on your campaign objectives, the number of products or services you want to highlight, and your budget, you can set up accounts with different services. Just make sure that your ads are different so you catch people’s attention and don’t end up putting three identical ads up at one time.

Choose Keywords

Keywords are essential. Put some effort into creating compelling keywords and making sure they describe you well.

Write Your Ad

Your copywriting is what is going to catch people's attention. Even though these ads are tiny, you need to make sure they get the same attention as anything else your company publishes. Write well, edit, rewrite, and re-edit, and then launch your ad.

Set the Limits

One of the best elements about pay per click is the ability to set limits. Your credit card will be charged according to the number of clicks on your ad. If you are paying five cents per click and have a budget of \$5,000 per month, your ad will stop appearing on pages once there have been 100,000 clicks on your ad. The timer resets until the beginning of the next cycle (usually a month). You can adjust the maximum number of clicks, the time of day (or night) that your ads appear, and geographic location to help aim your ads at your target market.

Test Your Knowledge

Use the space below to add notes for your marketing plan, or make your notes right on the plan itself.
