

Pay per click – the best advertising you will ever pay for?

If you're going to get to grips with sales and marketing in 2009 then put your online activities top of the list. If you get it right, online advertising and pay per click (PPC) can transform your lead generation and sales process. This is our rough and ready guide to making the most of it. If you've already discovered the joys of online marketing then read on to either be reassured you're getting it right or to discover new hints and tips.

Why should I use PPC?

The growth in online advertising is staggering. In 2008 Google generated around £1.25 billion of advertising revenue in the UK alone, overtaking the spend in advertising on ITV1 [source: The Times]. The reason Google and others have been so successful is that not only does it work, but it is easily measured. You can track your success and justify your spend. You set your daily budget, which can be as little as £10 per day. The beauty is that you are in control and you don't have to be a high street brand or have huge budgets to use it – unlike typical press, broadcast or outdoor media.

How does it work?

Any company can use PPC. You need to set up an account, develop some display advertisements (short and snappy words that tell people what you do), set a daily budget (as much or little as you can afford), decide on your keywords and how much you are willing to pay each time someone clicks on your ad and goes to your home page. After that it's away you go. Customers search using keywords and you appear on the right hand side of the page on Google everytime someone uses one of your keywords (sponsored links).

Get the right keywords

The most important thing to do well is to understand your customers and how they are going to search for you. Getting your keywords/phrases right is the most important aspect of the process. There is a little trial and error involved here but you will soon get a feel for the words or phrases that work best for you.

Tip

Don't just use the same keywords as all of your competitors. The most popular phrases and words will be more expensive, so when people click on them you will be paying more. So, sometimes a little lateral thinking or creativity can help save you money.

Get on the first page

The second most important thing is getting onto the first page of results. You do this by 'bidding' for your keywords. The higher the bid price (how much it will cost you every time someone clicks on your ad), the higher the ranking. All the available evidence suggests that the first page is where you need to be in order to maximize your click through rate.

Tip

There are a number of tools within Google advertising that allow you to fix the relative position of your ads. For example, you can get your ads to appear only in a certain position - say position three on the right hand side. Believe it or not, evidence proves that being listed first is not always the best place to be.

Get the right advertisements

You need to make the most of the wording in your advertisements. Say the right things and appeal to your target audience. You only have a few words to play with so getting this right is critical to getting click through.

Tip

The best way to do this is to set up multiple adverts and get Google to show them randomly to start with and then to show the best performing ads more often. This way you can make sure that the ads with the best performance in terms of click through are the ones that show the most. You should also make sure you change your ads on a regular basis to keep them fresh.

Get your ads showing at the right time

Another key priority should be to determine when you think your potential customers are going to be looking for you. This will vary with your audience and product/service offering. For example, if your customers are looking to purchase home furniture when are they going to be looking? Most people can only surf during lunchtime or after work and at weekends. So it may be better to only show your ads at these times to maximize your sales opportunity.

Tip

Use Google tools to show your ads on different days at different times and monitor the results before you decide on the best time and days to advertise on.



Get the right analysis done

The success of any advertising campaign is judged by the number of leads and, ultimately, the amount of new business won. With Google ads you can set clear goals for any of your campaigns and measure the rate of return on your investment. The tools are easy to use and the information will change the way you think about your online marketing.

Tip

Make sure you set up Google analytics using the web code provided by Google and add this to your website. Then make sure that you set up your conversion goals. This is the page in your website that you want to direct potential customers to. This could be an enquiry page, a payment page etc. If you do this well you will be able to see how many customers, purchases or leads you are generating from your campaigns and you can then work on increasing the conversion rate.

Get the right conversion rate

Google ads do not work in isolation from your website. It's no good spending lots of money on advertising, building expectations only for visitors to be disappointed when they get to your site. The key here is to focus on reducing your bounce rate. For example, if the number of people who click through and then leave straight away is over 60 per cent then your landing page is not working well enough for you.

Tip

One of the most important ways to reduce your bounce rate is to run some comparison testing on different home pages. In essence you simply develop three different home pages and each time you get a click through a different home page will be presented to the customer. You can then test which home page has the lowest bounce rate. This is essential live customer testing with immediate results - especially relevant to those selling online. It could potentially increase your sales conversion by 10-20 per cent.

What next?

If you are not using PPC, are not confident with it or want help with improving your campaigns then we would be happy to help. If you are using PPC but would like to discuss any other aspect of your online marketing, give us a call.

Happy Giraffe

On-Line Advertising Support

We are offering three levels of support to online advertisers:

Basic

Set up account, develop keywords, ensure you are on the first page, provide basic training. £750.00 + VAT one off payment.

Intermediate

Set up account, develop keywords, ensure you are on the first page, provide basic training, develop range of advertisements and up to three different campaigns, set daily budgets and analyse best time slots for your ads. Monitor and update on a monthly basis. £500.00 + VAT per month (six month minimum contract).

Advanced

Set up account, develop keywords, ensure you are on the first page, provide basic training, develop range of advertisements and up to three different campaigns, set daily budgets and analyse best time slots for your ads. Monitor and update on a monthly basis. Run detailed analytics reports and set up goal tracking, run home page comparison testing. Ongoing work to improve web conversion rates. Estimated £1000 + VAT per month (six month minimum contract. Cost may vary depending on client and level of support needed).

Note

Prices do not include your actual advertising budget. You will need to agree this and set your daily budget. Cost for advertising is billed directly by Google to you.

For more information or to make an enquiry contact David Cooper on 01562 886752.

