

PAY PER CLICK TIPS

The two most successful techniques for enhancing your online image are: search engine optimization, and pay per click advertising campaigns. Pay per click or PPC advertising is possibly the easiest and most effective way to market your business online. PPC (PPC) advertising is simply advertising your website through the use of the search engines' "sponsored listings". Basically it's all about helping customers find your website and business. Getting your website listed in some way in the search engines is vital due to the fact that the majority of website traffic (statistics say over 80%) comes from the search engines.

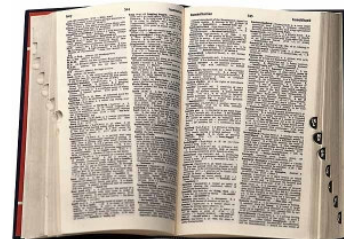


A pay per click advertising campaign is easy to start. You open an account and deposit some money as a starting balance with the search engine company that you are advertising with. When using PPC you bid on keywords or keyword phrases that your targeted prospects may use to find whatever your website offers. You enter your site's URL, title and description and bid on relevant keywords. A site selling wine might bid on keywords such as "wine", "red wine", "wine club" etc. When someone searches for "wine club" the details of your site appear, in the form of a search result with the URL, title and description you entered. If they

then click on your listing, your account is debited the amount you have bid on that keyword.

Pay per click offers a high level of assurance that your campaign is reaching the proper target. What makes them so effective is that someone who has searched for your product is already qualified when they come to your site, which is selling the product or service they are looking for. Pay per click campaigns, however, are not perfect. Without constant monitoring, you sometimes risk incurring advertising costs that can spiral out of control, focusing on terms that don't convert well for your product or services or lose out during a bidding war.

Effective PPC management begins with devising a strategy to drive qualified traffic to your website. To develop your PPC strategy and plan, you must conduct market research. This should consist of identifying your target market (preferably a niche market), identifying keywords that your target market uses to search for what you are offering, and analyzing the keywords and alternative keywords that will appeal to your target market. During your keyword analysis, you will want to find out how popular keywords are and what the average bids are for certain keywords you are considering for budgeting purposes since defining a budget is a necessary part of PPC management.



Bidding on some common keywords can be expensive. An alternative strategy is to bid on related keyword phrases which no-one else is bidding on. You may then be #1 in the rankings, monopolizing the traffic for those searches and only have to pay the minimum amount per click through. Related keywords and phrases can

include synonyms, incorrect spellings, alternative words and phrases, closely related words/phrases, and so on.

It is important that your keywords are relevant and link to the page that contains information relating to that keyword. So, perhaps most importantly of all, you need a 'landing page': (a) specific page(s) created for visitors referred from marketing campaigns to maximize conversion. Landing pages can be a series of related pages within an existing site structure or they can be a micro site, which is specifically setup for a campaign, typically with its own campaign URL - an example is Norwich Union's (faintly annoying?) www.quotemehappy.com



There are different types of landing pages that work best depending on the campaign objectives – a landing page integrated into the sites structure or a landing page specifically created for the campaign.

Integrated pages may not work so well in terms of conversion. Bespoke landing pages tend to produce higher conversion rates but it requires more effort and maintenance. So you need to work out whether the cost of producing this type of page is offset by the potentially higher conversion rates and better campaign results.

Some simple guidelines for effective PPC are keep ads and landing pages relevant; provide enough detail for a decision; capture the audience's imagination and their data as quickly as possible; forget the guru's page length, graphics and menu options type arguments and FIND OUT WHAT WORKS, as in all direct marketing test, test, test.

Budgeting for PPC advertising involves not only determining how much money you can spend on your campaign, but basing that on the monetary value of a click to your website since you are paying per click. Yahoo! Search Marketing (formerly known as Overture) for instance, only considers the bid amount in ranking a site. The most popular PPC Google AdWords uses bid value and your success (click through) rate amongst others.

Your conversion rate, the number of unique visitors divided by the number of sales, plays an important role in determining the value of a click to your site for PPC advertising budgeting purposes as does the average net profit per sale. By dividing your net profit per sale by your conversion rate, you can accurately determine the value per click to your website. The price per click that you pay for your PPC advertising should not, of course (!!!) exceed this value. So if your selling a product that gives you a £10 profit, and a particular keyword takes 50 visitors to create a sale you would bid no more than £0.20 per click to break even.



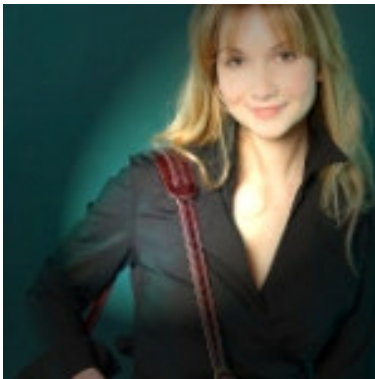
A few tips about PPC if you DIY.

1. Don't put more money than you have to into your account – sounds obvious but....!
2. Test, test, test have at least two separate ads for the same product at the same time. Drop the lower performing adverts and add a new one until you are satisfied with the results.

3. Make sure to keep up with your results daily at the very least and adjust your strategy according to results.

4. Continue to look for new keywords and as you find new ones lose the poorer performers.

If you approach PPC advertising logically, follow the direct marketing mantra of test, test, test, monitor results regularly and make adjustments only according to results PPC advertising is a powerful tool for driving profitable traffic to your site.



So, in summary the following approach is essential to optimise results:

- Audience – who are they? What would they use to search on? What keywords / phrases would they use?
 - Offer – what can we do to distinguish our offer from the competition? We have a maximum of about 30 words in which to make the offer, so it has to be good and state what's in it for the searcher?
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- Product – what is better about our product? See the constraints in offer above.
 - Creative – there aren't really any pictures in non banner PPC so how else can we be creative?
 - All of this however is wasted unless an EBusiness optimised site backs it up. This means:
 - Thinking of the customer – and thinking how they think
 - Making finding product and price easy
 - Making terms clear and payment simple
 - Ensuring in stock and short delivery timescales
 - Making communications clear – mail, phone, email
 - Testing on an ongoing basis - test, track and try, test, track and try.”