

SEO or PPC?

Which is better, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) or Pay per Click (PPC)?

In our opinion, the best approach is to combine SEO and PPC. During the initial period of site promotion, PPC carries an advantage because good listings can be achieved in 3 - 6 working days. Organic listings take longer to achieve, as the site needs to first be automatically indexed by the search engines.

What are SEO and PPC and how exactly do they help your business?

SEO:



80 – 85% of surfers use a search engine to find what they are looking for. If your site ranks higher in a search engine for a specific search, you have a better chance of bringing traffic to your site. SEO means optimizing your web pages for particular key phrases. This can give you higher rankings at the search engines for your chosen search terms. Optimization means you need to get a number of factors right – technical infrastructure; key words and phrases; page titles and H tags; enough

relevant, well written copy; effective linking strategies; xml sitemaps and more. SEO is not about tricking the search engines but about understanding what elements search engines look for to help determine the relevance of the page to a search term by understanding what the search engines take into consideration.

PPC:

PPC is a form of search engine marketing that involves buying website traffic from the search engines. You bring traffic to your site by visitors clicking on an advert shown in the "Sponsored Listings". Every time the advert is clicked a charge is made to the advertiser. Behind the ad there are 'keywords' and you bid on certain keywords to bring relevant traffic to your site. You only pay for users that click through your listing and arrive at your site. A very important point to keep in mind with pay per click is you must test, test, and test some more. Don't start off with a major investment. Start with the minimum and see how the search engine performs in terms of the traffic it delivers and how well that traffic converts into paying customers. An essential part of your testing is having a method in place that allows you to track your return on money invested.

How can SEO and PPC help your business?

Research shows that 'consumers' rely on search engine results to a greater extent than advertisements in other media, during their decision making process.

Search Engine Results	41%
Print Ads	10%
TV Ads	9%

Between 68% -72% of searchers believe Organic (SEO) results produce the most relevant information. More than 93% of searchers won't look beyond the results of the first two pages.

72% of searchers who use a search engine to look for a specific product or service will purchase or request more information from that company, only if they easily find what they are looking for when they land on your website.

Website-based leads are 62% more profitable than other forms of media. Investments in SEO generate higher returns than investments in other media.

Source: Search Engine Guide



Consumer behaviour

Recent research [http://www.checkit.nl/press-reportenglish_eyetracking_research.html] from De Vos & Jansen Market Research and Search Engine Mediabureau Checkit has produced the following results with regard to 'consumer' behaviour:

98% viewed the organic results
95% the sponsored results at the top
31% the sponsored results on the right.

This shows the well-known importance of getting within the Organic listings or in top 1-3 slots of the sponsored listings.

On average 9.2 results were viewed before the first click was made.

The average number of viewed organic search results is 6.6.

2.6 of the sponsored results at the top and 0.6 on the right were viewed.

The average viewing duration per result was only 1.1 seconds! The average viewing duration for an organic result is 1.3 seconds, for a sponsored result at the top 0.8 seconds and for sponsored results on the right 0.2 seconds.

Why do searchers click?

Search

- Familiarity with the website or organization.
- A high position in the search results creates trust and suggests that the information is recent.
- The presence of the keyword in the search result.

- Consumers are also looking for the opportunity to read user experiences or to compare different products.
- Price information is important: especially keywords which refer to 'low costs'.
- The announcement that there is a large variety of products can also be a reason to click on the search result.
- Consumers avoid results with aggressive advertising. Too many capital letters and exclamation marks can be positively harmful.

Advantages and disadvantages of SEO and PPC

SEO advantages

- The rankings a web site achieves through SEO can continue for a long time after the work has been done
- Over the long term SEO can be more cost effective than PPC
- Visitors are more likely to trust a site they find in the rankings, they feel it has been 'approved' by the search engine
- Improvements to your website made from a search engine perspective usually result in a more user-friendly website
- A well optimised website can appear across multiple search engines and search markets, at no extra cost
- Once good search engine rankings are achieved, as long as optimisation is ongoing and monitored then the rankings acquire a "snow ball" effect, increasing over time
- High search engine rankings can have a positive effect on branding



SEO disadvantages

- The time it takes to achieve results. Results can be slow
- Changes in search engine algorithms can wipe out good SEO position

PPC advantages

- You only pay when your advert is clicked
- Good for seasonal activity - immediate start and stoppage
- You can pick which keywords on which to bid
- You can choose the page that users are sent to
- It is possible to target specific countries and regions
- You can rank highly for any keyword if your budget is large enough
- Testing new keywords/text copy/bid caps easy to implement and measure
- PPC enables advertising campaigns to be implemented very quickly

PPC disadvantages

- PPC costs are ongoing - once you stop spending your adverts stop showing
- Quality score rules for landing pages are making it more difficult or expensive to gain a good position on PPC
- Click fraud, while the PPC search engines constantly battle against this there can be no denying that it does happen