



PPC STRATEGIST

10 ADVANCED PAID SEARCH TIPS

FROM A FORMER GOOGLER

Who am I?

I'm Phil Taylor.

I've been in PPC advertising since 2004, when I started working at Google, to join their team of 'Creative Maximisers'.

(They did eventually realise how silly a job title that is, at which point we became 'Account Strategists')

That was an interesting three years!



It was a cool company to work for - especially in the early days, before the creeping corporatization really took hold...

My team were optimising accounts for (only) the biggest advertisers in the UK, spending eye-watering sums. It was quite a responsibility... especially when I consider how little I knew about what I was doing compared to now!

But good times... I met my now-wife there too 🇪🇸

I left the mothership in 2007 to work on various online projects: a news satire site, affiliate marketing, app startups, building a marketing agency... and through it all I've been honing, and benefitting from, my Google Ads know-how.

I now train fellow PPC professionals to get the most out of their paid search campaigns. PPC is a valuable skill to have... and it's nice to be able to offer a leg up.

Let's Get Started

- ✓ If you're an intermediate-level PPCer, looking to level up to advanced, the tips in this guide are for you.
- ✓ ('Intermediate-level' is a vague category, I know... but if in doubt, you're probably a) in that category 👍 b) not arrogant 👍👍)
- ✓ I also have a lot more (training, videos, online community...) designed to help PPCers take exactly that step up. I'll flag it all up at the end.

Ads

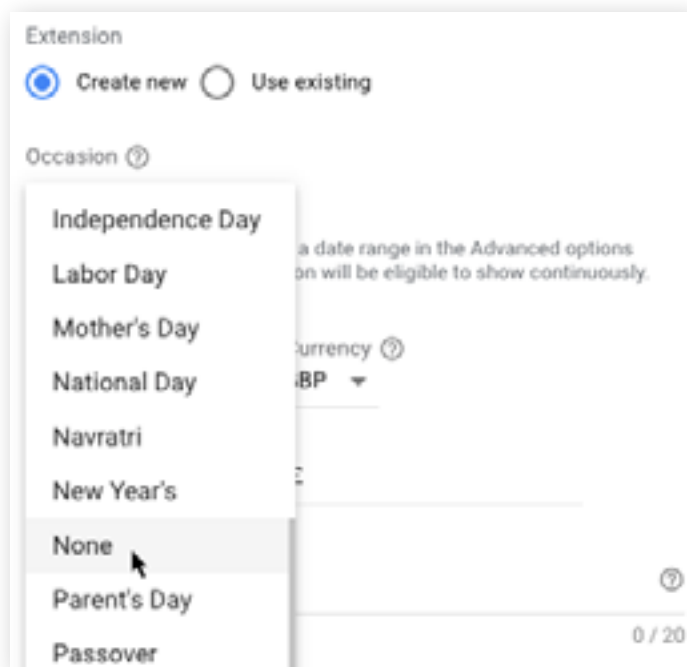
1 Extending The Promotion (Extension)

Promotion extensions are great additions to your ads when you're running a time-limited offer.

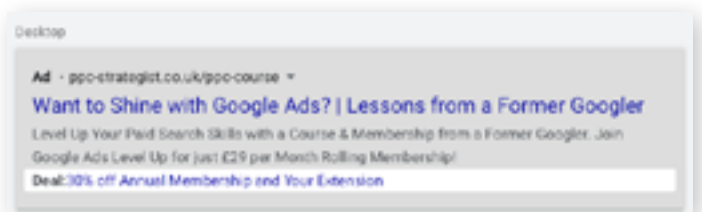
Like most extensions - if you open up the detailed extension options you can specify a start and end time for them... (though take care not to mistake the 'date display' date picker for the extension scheduler, which sits under 'advanced options'. (I've done it myself more than once...))

But the advanced tip here is not to be constrained by your 'actual 'promotions''...

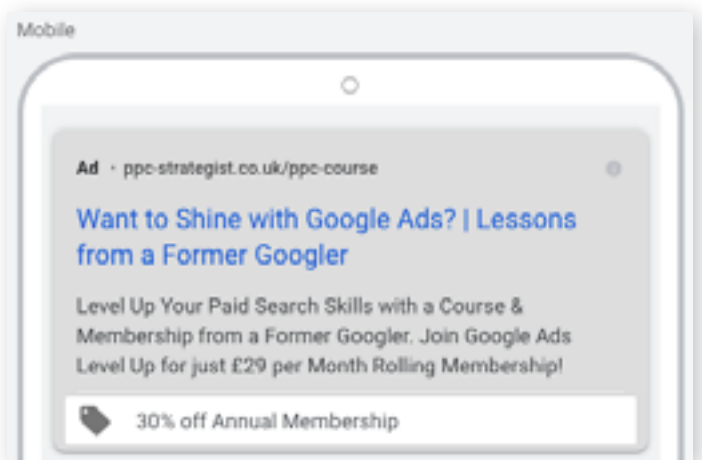
Promo extensions are also valuable when you don't have a specific sale or event on the go... Even if you just have a single product that's reduced in price (or any other excuse) - create a promotion extension, select 'none' for the occasion



and your extension will appear with the word 'deal'



(or this little tag icon when it appears on mobile.)

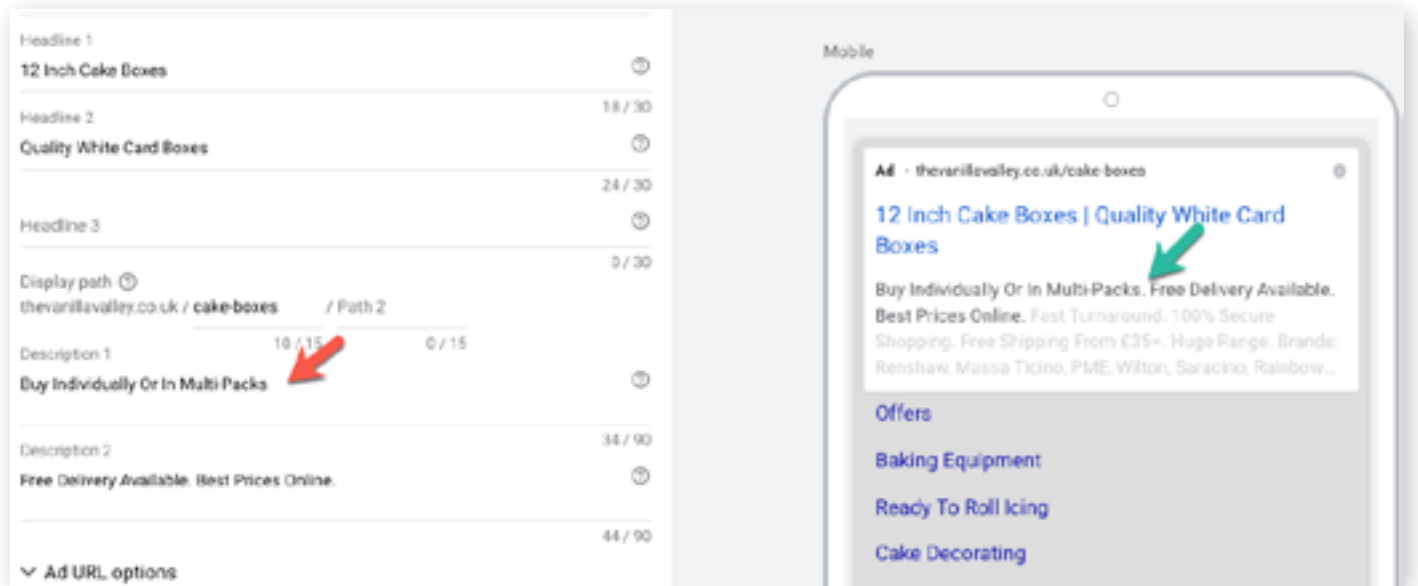


Quite a compelling addition to your ad!

2 An Extra Character In Your Text Ads

You've probably noticed the character counter that appears when you're writing your text ad in the interface... or in Google Ads Editor. There's a little wrinkle in the way it works, that you can use to your advantage once you know it.

If you end your first description line with a full stop, that punctuation will count towards your character limit. Remove it though, and the preview window will confirm that the ad will appear with a full stop regardless...



The screenshot displays the Google Ads Editor interface for creating a text ad. On the left, the 'Text' tab is active, showing the following details:

- Headline 1:** 12 Inch Cake Boxes (18 / 30 characters)
- Headline 2:** Quality White Card Boxes (24 / 30 characters)
- Headline 3:** (0 / 30 characters)
- Display path:** thevanillavalley.co.uk / cake-boxes / Path 2 (0 / 30 characters)
- Description 1:** Buy Individually Or In Multi Packs (10 / 15 characters, with a red arrow pointing to the end of the text)
- Description 2:** Free Delivery Available. Best Prices Online. (34 / 90 characters)
- Ad URL options:** (44 / 90 characters)

On the right, a 'Mobile' preview window shows how the ad will appear on a smartphone. The ad text is as follows:

- Ad URL:** thevanillavalley.co.uk/cake-boxes
- Headline:** 12 Inch Cake Boxes | Quality White Card Boxes (with a green arrow pointing to the end of the headline)
- Description:** Buy Individually Or In Multi Packs. Free Delivery Available. Best Prices Online. Fast Turnaround. 100% Secure Shopping. Free Shipping From £35+. Huge Range. Brands: Renshaw, Massa Ticino, PME, Wilton, Saracino, Rainbow...
- Offers:** Baking Equipment, Ready To Roll Icing, Cake Decorating

In other words, you don't need to enter that full stop explicitly. Leaving it out won't take prevent the full stop from appearing in your ad... but it will give you an extra character to play with.

3 Try ending an ad with 'because'

Now this really isn't common sense...

One of the interesting lessons from Robert Chialdini's highly recommend book 'Influence' is that people are far more likely to comply with a request, if that request is accompanied by a reason, however vague.

Quite taken with this idea, I thought I'd try it by writing an ad (in a very high-traffic brand ad group) that ended with the phrase 'Shop at BRANDNAME because'. Strange, I accept, but I did this:

expecting my callout extensions - which were a list of benefits such as 'free shipping', '10% off your first order' - to make (logical if not gramattical) sense of the trailing 'because'

knowing that odd and even 'wrong' phrasing isn't necessarily a bad thing when it comes to attracting attention.

How did it do?

This is the 'because' ad's results vs it's near identical rival, in its first full month after going live.

Ad	Status	Clicks	Imps	CTR	Avg. CPC	Label	Cost	Conversion	Cost / conv.	Conv. rate	Impression/Conv. Rate	ROAS	ROAS %
Total All but removed ads		73,287	148,298	50.72%	42.19		42,260.65	2,816.89	42.79	2.88%	1.82%	685.52	2,348.72%
	Campaign paused	34,228	42,498	81.09%	42.19	ADWORDS ON	42,419.12	840.99	42.85	2.93%	1.73%	685.70	2,328.94%
	Campaign paused	34,294	42,805	81.96%	42.19	ADWORDS ON	42,417.11	850.84	42.82	2.94%	1.83%	686.97	2,370.87%

Runaway winner? No (though those incremental gains matter when volume is high) but it's an interesting test... and maybe you can find some other ways to put this idea - one of Chialdini's 'six principles of persuasion' - to use.

(for some other applications of Chialdini's principles in PPC, see my [YouTube video](#) on the topic)

Audiences

4 Add Audiences on Observation...

Adding audiences on observation is a generally useful thing to do. There's nothing to lose from sticking them all on observation and seeing what patterns emerge, that you might then want to act on. (Nothing that is apart from the muddying effects of 'too much data'... avoid this by adding a selection of 10-20 selected audiences that you expect to have some correlation with performance)

But there's a more tangible benefit to observation audiences which is easily overlooked.

While Smart bidding algorithms can make use of the 'built-in' audiences ('in-market' / 'affinity'...) They can only tap into your own audiences - (remarketing / customer-match...) once you create and add them to the ad group or campaign in question.

Adding these audiences on observation isn't then just an act of observation... it genuinely increases the range of signals available to the algorithms, giving them more to work with, and a better chance of navigating to a profitable state.

5 ...Including Poor Ones

Audiences that turn out to represent an underperforming segment are (almost) as useful to identify as those that outdo the average.

Once they have been isolated, you - or the smart bidding algorithms - can reduce bids for them or exclude them altogether to improve overall cost-efficiency.

In search of these profit-drainers, you could try adding / observing 'similar to' audiences based on users who bounced, or showed other unhelpful behaviours, to see if you can identify new unprofitable cohorts to spend less money on.

6 Universal Audiences

Just as there are sets of 'almost universal' negative keywords worth adding - the same is true for audiences.

Certain user segments are more - or less - likely to convert in general. The generalisations becomes increasingly reliable the further you drill down into an industry or sub-vertical.... but some of the highest-level winners and loser are:

In-Market:Travel

Travel audiences are more than averagely high on disposable income... (very often a pre-requisite for converting) and can often be seen heavily outperforming the average for campaigns in industries like high-end kitchens / whim purchases and anything where spare cash increases the prospect of buying (i.e. most things)"

In-Market Employment

Those in this audience are more than averagely likely to be seeking a job. This is not only likely to be associated with a lower propensity to spend on a whim - or to spend big - but also slightly increases the likelihood that the user is visiting to scope out an employment opportunity rather than a purchase opportunity. Just as 'jobs' is an almost universally-useful negative keyword... excluding in-market employment often increases the average click quality.

Bidding and Targeting

7 Avoid 100% Target Impression Share

You could argue whether each incremental percentage of impression share is equally valuable, but it's well worth noting that acquiring each incremental percentage is not equally cost-effective.

This becomes especially relevant when you're using the Target Impression share bid strategy, and aiming for a high % of Top or Absolute Top IS (a common method for brand campaigns).

The last few % of top impression share usually come at disproportionately expensive CPCs.

When your IS hovers around 80 or 90%, those remaining auctions that you don't enter tend to be the ones that are more hotly contested... (There is a low-hanging vs high-hanging fruit dynamic).

Trying then to eke out the remaining few % can be an expensive business, and may not be worth the cost.

When you want to 'max out' with Target Impression Share, consider a target of 97% or 98% instead of the full 100%.

8 Embrace The Moving Target (Target Cpa Tip)

Let's say your tCPA is £15, and - after a few weeks - your campaign has settled into a fairly consistent CPA of around £28, and is spending your full daily budget.

While you might intuitively think that the algorithm has found a CPA floor at £28, and respond by moving your target up to that level, the best move in that situation is to lower your target further.

By lowering your target - and increasing the gap between the actual CPA and the targeted level - you put more pressure on the algorithm to take seriously the fact that it is not being cost effective enough, and to start being more cautious, bidding lower, and being more selective about which auctions it contends aggressively.

When you find that CPA is below your target and yet the campaign is failing to make use of all available impression share, the move there is to raise the target (again increasing the gap between target and actual CPA).

This will nudge the algorithm into the expansive approach you're after, dragging the actual CPA up and - more importantly - pursuing more conversions, more freely.

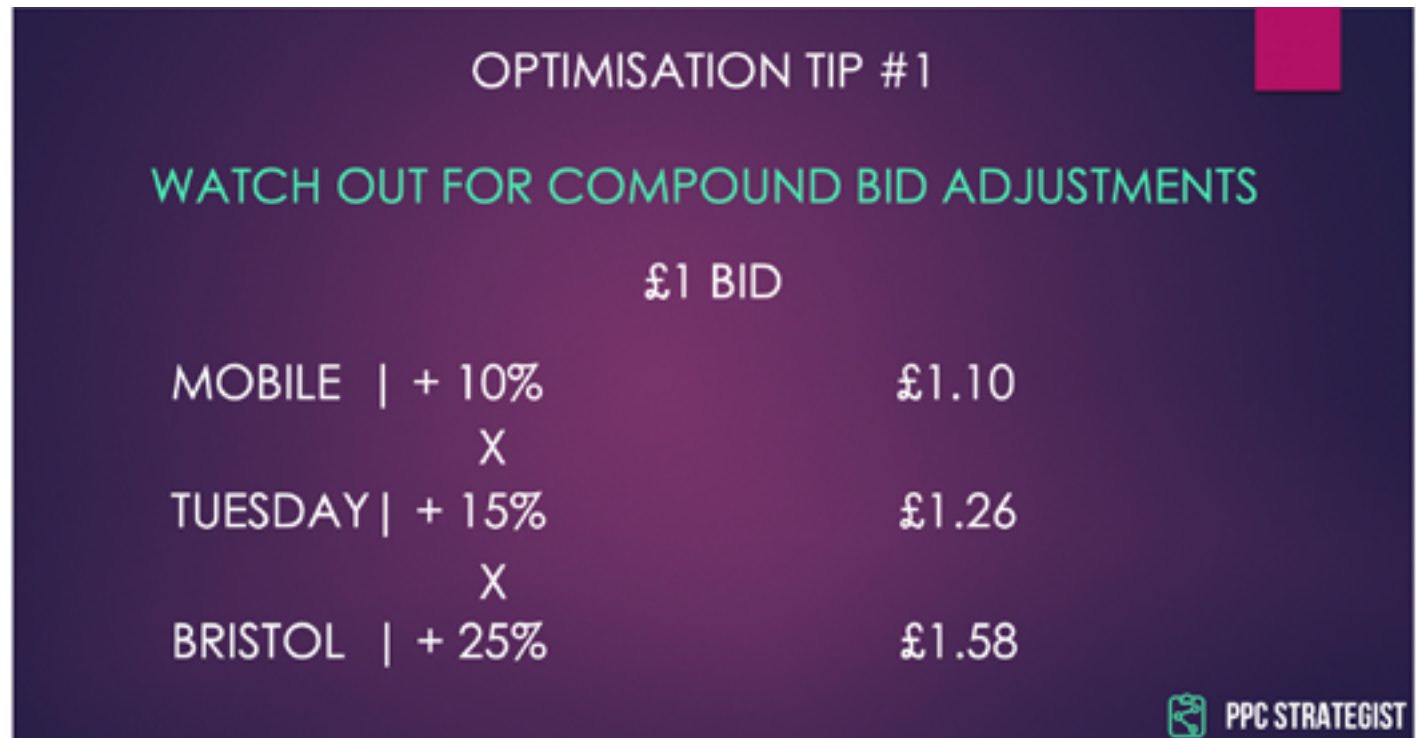
It's fairly unintuitive that when the strategy is already failing to meet your CPA targets, the best action is to set a more ambitious target, making it even harder for it to do so... But the wider the gap, the more urgently the algorithm tries to close it.

9 Bid Adjustments Multiply

Remember to watch out for 'compound bid adjustments'.

For example, if you bid up by 10% for mobile traffic; another +15% on Tuesdays, and another +25% in Bristol as the location... then when someone triggers your ad from a mobile, in Bristol on a Tuesday - you have a bid adjustment of 58%.

Add in gender, age, and audience adjustments, and as you can imagine, you'll quickly find yourself bidding way more than you want to!



OPTIMISATION TIP #1

WATCH OUT FOR COMPOUND BID ADJUSTMENTS

£1 BID

MOBILE + 10%	£1.10
X	
TUESDAY + 15%	£1.26
X	
BRISTOL + 25%	£1.58

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There is a limit to bid adjustment multiplication, but it's 900%. The lower limit is -90% of the base bid.

So when making a bid adjustment just keep in mind what existing adjustments are in place, and use smaller % changes if there are multiple adjustments affecting the same set of keywords.

10 Targeting Wealthy Users

While paid search thrives on hitting the right users based on the intent revealed by their search terms... Sometimes it really need to be a wealthy user to give you a shot at converting. What are your options when you need to hit those high net worth individuals with your ads? If you have Household Income targeting available...

(which you do if you're targeting Australia, Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand or the US) then you are in luck.

If not, one of your most powerful techniques is to target 'wealthier' locations.

The correlation between postcode and affluence is strong – so this list of the wealthiest location targets in the UK is a valuable tool for reaching affluent users: <http://bit.ly/wealthy-users>

They can be copy/pasted from this sheet straight into Google Ads Editor

NB The location targets listed are taken from a collection of sources (cited on the sheet) and rank among Britain's wealthiest areas, based on a variety of criteria including average income, % of households earning over £100K, house prices and others.



You Made It

Well done for getting through this guide. It's denser than most 'freebies', and if you can integrate three or four of these advanced tips, then you're in good shape to start taking your paid search campaigns to the next level...

"Finally, understand the value of your campaigns... but also understand yours."

As a PPC professional, you hold a vital piece of the business puzzle.

You offer organisations of all shapes and sizes, the chance to unlock the power of paid search, which remains the most efficient, most effective marketing channel around.

To the independent mechanic... the ambitious entrepreneur... the online the rapist looking to expand... the high-street brand scrambling for a foothold in a digital world...effective digital marketing can make the difference between failure, and glowing success. That's worth something.

If you want to become a paid search expert fast
These would be good next steps to take...

📄 **Take your paid search to the next level with the course and membership: [Google Ads Level Up](#)**

📄 **Join the free Facebook Group - [The PPC Lounge](#)**