

## Seventh Generation increased conversions 102% with the Google Display Network



### About Seventh Generation

- [www.seventhgeneration.com](http://www.seventhgeneration.com)
- 110 employees
- Burlington, Vermont
- Manufacturer of environmentally friendly cleaning and personal care products

### Goals

- Increase conversions measured by number of coupons downloaded and loyalty program registrations
- Lower cost-per-acquisition
- Maximize website effectiveness

### Approach

- Created contextual targeting campaigns on the Google Display Network to broaden the company's advertising reach
- Used placement targeting to find consumers on websites centered around discounts and coupons
- Used Google's transparent reporting to pick and exclude placements based on each site's conversions

### Results

- Expanded reach to new customers
- Increased conversions by 102 percent
- Decreased cost-per-conversion by 28 percent

### Meaning Green

For 20 years, Seventh Generation has been developing safe, environmentally-responsible products for the home—everything from diapers and laundry soap to paper towels and spray cleaners. Based in Burlington, Vermont, the company's name and corporate stance are guided by the Great Law of the Iroquois, which states that "in our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations." As Seventh Generation's web editor, Chris Middings, says, "Everything we do is based on sustainability. We take commodity products that use up valuable resources, like paper towels, and replace them with something that's sustainable. We want to give consumers choices, because small choices can make a big difference."

When Chris joined Seventh Generation about two years ago, the company had done very little advertising. His first order of business was to help update the company's website and establish a presence in social networking. No longer static and brochure-like, the new site is highly interactive, with blogs, forums, an email newsletter, and coupons, as well as store- and product-finders. "People come to us for education; we're a trusted advisor on green products," Chris says. "When a couple is having a baby, for example, they'll look under the kitchen sink and begin reevaluating all the toxic substances in their home—there's a lot to learn."

### Advertising efficiency

Seventh Generation's environmentalism extended to its philosophy about advertising. The company didn't want to contribute to advertising pollution, cluttering the environment with irrelevant ads. Seventh Generation instead decided to increase its search engine marketing spend, allocating 80 percent of their search budget to Google AdWords™ campaigns. "We liked the environmental aspect of search-based advertising," says Chris. "The ad doesn't appear until someone searches for it. It's not like you're polluting people's mental environment with something they have no interest in."

Seventh Generation started to supplement its search campaigns with campaigns on the Google Display Network, which is comprised of hundreds of thousands of high-quality websites, news pages, and blogs that partner with Google to display targeted AdWords ads. Seventh Generation soon saw that the Display Network was bringing in a lower cost-per-action (CPA) than search, and began to allocate its budgets accordingly, and build out its campaigns on the Display Network.

### Putting it in context

At first, Seventh Generation used keywords associated with its products for both its search and Display Network campaigns. "On the search side, we were doing it by product category," Chris recalls. "We began with cleaners, and then it was all the different kinds of cleaners—kitchen cleaners, bath cleaners, shower cleaners—we tried to segment it out that way." But Seventh Generation wasn't getting the conversions it was looking for, so Chris was eager to find ways to expand the campaigns.

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## About Google AdWords

Google AdWords™ is a performance-based advertising program that enables businesses large and small to advertise on Google and its network of partner websites. Hundreds of thousands of businesses worldwide use AdWords for text, image, and video ads priced on a cost-click (CPC) and cost-per-impression (CPM) basis. Built on an auction-based system, AdWords is a highly quantifiable and cost-effective way to reach potential customers.

For more information visit:  
[www.google.com/adwords](http://www.google.com/adwords)

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## About the Google Display Network

The Google Display Network offers text, image, rich media, and video advertising on Google properties, YouTube, and millions of web, domain, video, gaming, and mobile partner sites. From mass media to niche sites, advertisers can find the most engaged audiences, place ads on the most relevant pages, and achieve performance at scale through our innovative targeting technology. Using our tools, advertisers can build ads, measure results, optimize campaigns, and expand their advertising reach to specific audiences all over the web.

For more information visit:  
[www.google.com/displaynetwork](http://www.google.com/displaynetwork)



*Chris Middings, web editor, Seventh Generation*

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Following the advice of his Google account representative, Chris began to expand the company's contextual targeting campaigns by using broader keywords than he'd used with search. "You have to get into the Display Network mentality which is very different from the search mentality," he says. By using keywords related to environmentally responsible lifestyles, Chris was able to show Seventh Generation ads on green living sites, such as a blog about organic baby clothes. "Some things that wouldn't necessarily fit best on search make tremendous sense on the Display Network. If people are buying organic cotton baby clothes, they're likely to be receptive to an ad for an all-natural laundry detergent. On the Display Network you can get to these sites that are selling related products."

To further broaden the company's impact, the Google team also suggested that Seventh Generation use placement targeting, which allows you to select the sites and ad placements on specific web pages where you'd like your ads to appear. Chris targeted price-conscious consumers visiting websites focused on discounts and coupons. "Our conversion metrics are based on downloading coupons and site registration, so the team put together a coupon category-targeted campaign for us." Together, these two strategic shifts in targeting potential consumers yielded very green results—a 102 percent increase in conversions from the first to second quarters of 2009.

## Sustainable growth

In addition to Seventh Generation's rapid increase in conversions, the company decreased its cost-per-conversion over the same time period by 28 percent. Chris attributes this savings to Google's transparent reporting which allows him to pick and exclude placements, based on each site's conversions. "The ability to turn sites off and fine tune is key. You don't have to get traffic from any searcher or any site that you don't want to."

Google AdWords, and particularly the Display Network, is now a main part of Seventh Generation's marketing strategy. "I put as much money into Google AdWords as I can, because there's ROI there," Chris says.

