

Google AdWords Puzzle: Find the key to business success with Google

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This case study describes how Google wanted to strengthen their connection with Japanese business owners by assuring potential customers of Google's commitment to their business.

- It achieved this by sending potential business leads a padlocked box, along with an invitation to search for a phrase on Google in order to obtain the combination.
- By doing this, they engaged with AdWords, Google's advertising platform.
- Once opened, the box contained a traditional Japanese fan and a scroll that further explained AdWords.
- In all, 95% of the recipients searched for the combination and experienced AdWords at first-hand.

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Campaign details

Brand owner: Google Japan

Lead agency: MRM//McCann

Brand: Google AdWords

Country: Japan

Industry: Business-to-business

Channels used: Direct marketing

Media budget: Up to 500k

Executive summary

This case study describes how Google wanted to strengthen their connection with the Japanese market by assuring potential customers of Google's commitment to their business. The goal was to increase the response

rate and change perceptions of Google's relevance to Japanese businesses.

Google decided to reach out to new customers by sending potential business leads a padlocked box, along with an invitation to search for a phrase on Google in order to obtain the combination and simultaneously experience AdWords.

The box contained a traditional Japanese fan and a scroll that further explained AdWords.

The locked box not only piqued interest, but also got respondents to actively engage with Google and experience the product.

Market background and cultural context

Google Japan provides effective online advertising solutions for small and mid-size companies across Japan, helping them to reach new customers and expand their business. Whilst Google is not the largest player in the market, they are a major one.

Objectives

The mission was to successfully reach out to potential new customers, raise brand awareness, increase the understanding of AdWords and let target customers know about its relevance to their business.

Being a larger international company has occasionally led potential customers to feel that Google Japan is not so personal and accessible, and might not understand the needs of some of the smaller Japanese businesses.

Google needed to strengthen their connection to the Japanese market and assure potential customers of Google's commitment to their business. All of this had the goal in mind of increasing the response rate and changing perceptions.

Insight and strategic thinking

Most direct marketing (DM) isn't read, is boring and has low response rates. Google's challenge was to cut through the clutter in a very low-interest category, in order to tell what is actually a very interesting story – that Google AdWords offers tailored online advertising solutions to help businesses of any size make their presence known.

Once business people had experienced AdWords for themselves, they almost invariably became converts. So Google had to create a totally unique DM that would cut through the clutter, intriguing and motivating the target to find out more and engage with AdWords.

A new algorithm was developed for this campaign, helping to whittle down over 80,000 leads to just 1,000 high-potential prospects. The DM was then sent to this select 1,000 and drew an astonishing response rate: 95% experienced AdWords, visited the key code microsite and unlocked the box, and 51% also filled-out a targeted online survey.

Implementation, including creative and media development

Our solution was ingenious and daring – we sent prospects a padlocked box. A beautiful box was created, one that we had worked and then reworked until it was warm and inviting in a modern-Japanesque style.

Recipients were then invited to search for a phrase on Google AdWords to receive the combination to the padlock. The search results pointed the recipients to a microsite, where they found the combination, case studies of businesses enjoying success with AdWords and an online questionnaire.

And inside the box, recipients found a traditional Japanese scroll and fan – symbols of success and prosperity that further explained AdWords in a warm, friendly manner.



Lessons learned

Searching for the combination to the locked box on Google automatically led to the target actively engaging with Google, and experiencing at first-hand how AdWords works.

Since the actual experience of AdWords is the key factor in turning prospects into customers, the entire campaign hinged on whether recipients were intrigued enough by a stylish, locked box to invest a few minutes of their time and obtain the combination.

And did it work? Well, 95% of the recipients searched for the combination and experienced AdWords at first-hand – which is a pretty impressive result from one little box.

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