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Career Head-Start Series

Google

Search Engine Marketing

Ready Reckoner

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WHAT IS PAID SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING?

Paid Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a form of online advertising where businesses pay advertising platforms when users click on their ads. Paid advertising is typically associated with search engines like Google and Bing.

Digital marketers use ad-text to promote a product, service, or an offer. The advertising copy is generally linked to the content of the web-pages the user lands on.

Objectives of Paid Advertising

Paid Advertising is a great way to reach a global audience of internet users and can help a business achieve several objectives, including -

1. Increased sales.
2. Lead generation and conversion.
3. Enhanced brand awareness.

At its core, search engine marketing is all about relevance. Users searching for specific products or services are shown a highly specific, targeted ad that meets their need and significantly lowers the time required to find the right solution.

MAJOR SEARCH ENGINE PLATFORMS

1. Google AdWords
2. Bing Ads
3. Microsoft adCenter

With over 75% of the market share and 2.3 million searches a second, Google AdWords is the de facto standard for search engine marketers.

GOOGLE ADWORDS

AdWords works by using a set of keywords and rules pre-defined by the advertiser to target users. Users of Google's search engine results pages and web-pages of Google's partners then display these ads. Advertisers pay when users respond to the call-to-action and visit the business page.

Google AdWords consists of two networks –

1. Google Search Network.
2. Google Partner Network.

LAUNCHING A PAID SEARCH CAMPAIGN

Determining Marketing Objectives

Before investing in paid advertising for your organization, it's important to clearly set out your goals and objectives for your campaigns.

What are you advertising? Who is the intended target audience? What are the actions you would like the user to take after viewing your ad?

Depending on the type of business and product/service on offer, any/all of the following user actions could generate value for you -

Buy on your website

Visit website

Take an action on your website (for example, fill out a form)

Call your business

See your ad

Visit your business

Source: Google AdWords Guide

Setting Up Your Account

Create an AdWords account with your email id.

Campaign Name

Choose a campaign name that reflects its objective, the product/service being advertised, or the date of launch.

Choosing Campaign Type

AdWords offers 5 campaign types for advertisers –

1. Search Network with Display Select

Your ads are shown on Google's search network pages and on a select set of Google's partner network (2+ million websites, videos, and apps).

Pick this campaign type to reach the widest audience of all types.

2. Search Network Only – Your text ad is displayed on Google's and non-Google partner search engine results pages when a user's search query matches keywords specified in your campaign.

a. **Dynamic Search Ads** – Dynamic search ads are a sub-type of Search Network Only ads. For Dynamic

Search Ads, Google automatically parses your landing page content to create ads relevant to the content of your web-page.

3. Display Network – Your ads are automatically displayed on web-pages, apps, videos, and allied placements with related content.

4. Shopping – Your product listings are directly displayed on Google's Display or Search networks. Unlike text-only Search network and Display ads, these include a photo preview of the product, its price, the store name, and more.

Shopping ads use product data from Google's Merchant Center instead of keywords.

Pick this type if you're an experienced AdWords user and are looking for more qualified leads (i.e., click-through users who are more likely to make a purchase).

5. Video – Create video ads to display on the search or partner networks.

Choosing Campaign Sub-Type

The campaign subtype determines which ad design options are available to you. Use these options to refine your ad and tailor it for different target audiences.

Campaign subtypes include:
• Standard
• All features
• Marketing objectives

Location Targeting

Use location targeting to display ads to a specific geographic region or location. This feature can also be used to restrict display in regions of your choice.

You can refine location targeting at four levels –

1. Radius targeting – ads displayed to users within specified radius from point-of-origin.

2. Cities/regions within country.

3. States/provinces within country.

4. Country-level or group of multiple countries.

SETTING YOUR BIDDING STRATEGY

Paid Search Engine Marketing uses a bidding system for purchase of ad inventory. Advertisers compete with each another for a given ad slot, and the final bid price for an ad that goes live affects its cost-per-click rate.

Your bid strategy determines how you pay the platform to display your ad.

The final bid price that wins is the cost-per-click rate. It's what every registered click on the ad will cost the company.

The following factors affect the bid price for a text-ad –

1. Keyword popularity.

2. Competition. Rivals who are willing to up the bid and pay more for a coveted slot will push the price up.

3. Quality Score. Google AdWords and other search ad platforms rank highly relevant ads at a lower bid above poorly optimized ads at a higher bid.

4. Seasonality – ranking for keywords that are trending costs a lot more than non-seasonal keywords.

AdWords offers advertisers the option to choose between any of the following bidding strategies -

1. CPC – If your primary aim is to get users to visit your website/page and generate traffic, Cost-Per-Click biding may be ideal for you.

a. Maximized Clicks – this is an automated CPC bidding strategy where you set a maximum budget and AdWords automatically maximizes the number of clicks within your budget.

b. Manual CPC bidding - With Manual CPC bidding, you can set different maximum bid sizes for different campaigns, ad groups, and ads.

2. Cost-Per-Impression – If your objective is to increase visibility, enhance brand awareness, and spread the word about your offering, then a Cost-Per-Impression bidding strategy is the way to go.

With CPI, you pay for the number of times your ad is displayed, not user visits or clicks.

In practice, advertisers pay for every thousand clicks, a model that's termed Cost-Per-Mille (CPM).

3. Cost-Per-Acquisition - If you are landing users directly on a product page with the objective of getting them to complete a purchase, you may wish to consider CPA bidding.

In CPA, you pay Google only for users who convert – i.e., users who don't just land on your page but also take the desired action. CPA bidding requires the use of AdWords' conversion tracking tool to track the number of visits who are making a purchase.

4. vCPM – A variant of CPI, Viewable Cost-Per-Mille bidding is used when your aim is to maximize the number of viewable impressions. This becomes particularly important for display network campaigns where you are looking for finer control over placement of your banner ads.

Setting Your Daily Budget

AdWords gives you the option to set a maximum daily budget to spend. The advertising platform will stop displaying your ad for queries once the daily budget is exhausted.

In practice, AdWords can allow up to 20% more traffic/clicks per day than your budget allows. This is because the traffic for a given keyword can vary from one day to another.

ORGANIZING YOUR ACCOUNT

A great way to organize your account would be to launch separate campaigns (at least 1) for each product category, with an ad group for each product on offer.

For example, if you were an e-learning company offering training courses in categories like big data and digital marketing, here is one way to structure your account -
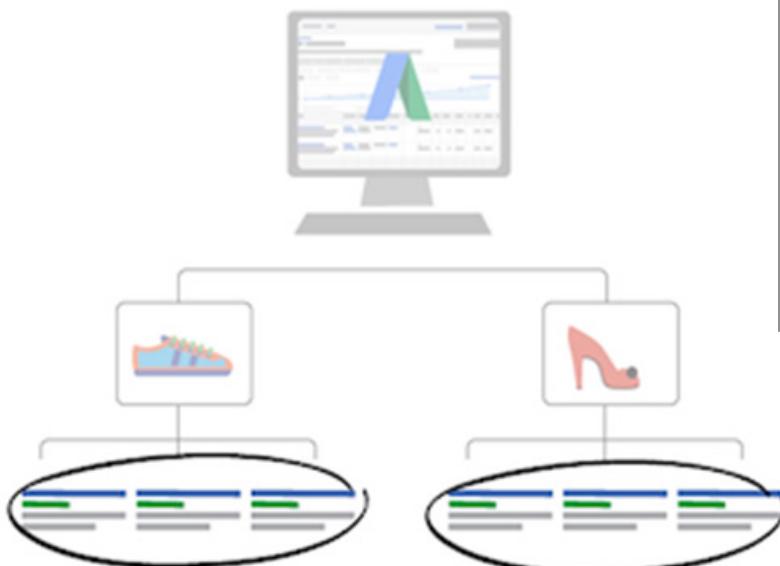
ACCOUNT NAME- www.elearning.com			
Campaign 1 **Big data courses**		Campaign 2 **Digital marketing courses**	
Ad Group 1	Ad Group 2	Ad Group 1	Ad Group 2
Big data course A	Big data course B	Digital marketing course A	Digital marketing course B
Keywords	Keywords	Keywords	Keywords
2-3 Ads	2-3 Ads	2-3 Ads	2-3 Ads

Creating Ad Groups

An ad group consists of one or more ads grouped together by theme. These are mapped to the advertising business' range of products and services on offer.

While campaigns represent a high-level of organization, ad groups offer more control to tailor targeting and ad copy.

For example, a retail store selling footwear and apparel might have two campaigns for both, with an ad group within footwear for sports shoes and another for ladies footwear.

Source: Google AdWords guide

Ad groups can also help you test different versions of copy for the same product.

Every campaign needs at least one ad group, and every ad group needs at least one ad.

Creating an Ad

Each ad group created in the preceding step can contain multiple ads. Once your campaign is up and running, AdWords automatically accords greater importance to the best-performing ad variant.

Since the ad is the heart and soul of PPC advertising, it's important to take the time to craft messaging that will resonate with the target audience and result in qualified traffic to your website. Crisp, compelling copy that directly addresses the user's immediate need always works best.

Step 1 - Write an attention-grabbing headline that conveys the value proposition up front. Wherever possible, include your campaign keywords so the reader knows exactly what is on offer.

Step 2 - Choose a landing page that matches the ad. Users landing on a webpage that is not relevant to the communication will likely leave before making a purchase or taking the desired action.

Step 3 - Make the most of your description.

• Use this field to communicate more info about the product, advertise your unique selling propositions or any special offers that will convince the user to click-through.

• Use title casing to make your copy stand out.

• Include a clear and unambiguous call-to-action.

Step 4 - Consider using ad extensions. Ad extensions allow you to include more information in the ad, including contact numbers, address, and pricing details.

Use these if you're looking to pack more information in less, or want users to take an action on the search results page.

Ad Title:	Just enter
Text line 1:	your ad text here
Text line 2:	
URL:	http://www.yourwebsite.com

Just enter
your ad text here
http://www.yourwebsite.com

Text Ad Guidelines

Google AdWords restricts the number of characters you can include in your text ad -

	Example ad	Limits for most languages	Limits for double-width characters
Headline	Example website	25 characters	12 characters
Description line 1	Summer sale	35 characters	17 characters
Description line 2	Save 15%	35 characters	17 characters
Display URL	www.example.com	255 characters (35 characters)	255 characters (17 characters)

Source: Google AdWords guide

KEYWORD STRATEGY

Step 1 - Prepare a set of user pain points that your product or service offers a possible solution for.

Step 2 – Collate user search queries around these pain points. What would the user search for to find your product and recognize that it is the ideal solution? Prepare a keyword list based on these search queries.

Step 3 – Use information from steps 1 and 2 to assign the right keywords to each ad group.

For best results, use between 5 and 20 keywords per ad group.

Example –

If you are advertising your line of running shoes for athletes, your keyword list might look something like this:

Athlete running shoes
Running shoes male/female athletes
Athletic running shoes
Sports shoes

If you're struggling to get started, Google's Keyword Planner can come in handy.

Keyword Match Types
AdWords offers 3 match types to refine how closely your keywords match user search queries –

1. Exact match – this is a precise matching option. Use this when you want your ads to be displayed when the search query exactly matches your keyword or phrase.

Syntax – for exact matching, surround your keyword with square brackets.

Example: *[yellow athlete running shoes]*

Your ad will show when users search for *yellow athlete running shoes*, in that order.

Misspelled phrases or close variations will also match. E.g. *yllow athelet running shoes, yellow athlete running shoe*

Your ad will NOT show when users search for *male athlete running shoes, athlete running shoes, yellow running shoes*, etc.

2. Phrase match – with the match type set to phrase, your ads will display when a user search query includes the keyword, even if it has words before or after it. Use this option to reach a larger potential audience than with exact match.

Syntax – for phrase matching, wrap the keyword in quotes. E.g. *"yellow athlete running shoes"*

Example: *"yellow athlete running shoes"*

Your ad will show when users search for *cheap yellow athlete running shoes, male running shoes, athlete running shoes for men*, etc.

Your ad will NOT show when users search for *shoes for athletes, athletic shoes for running*, etc.

3. Broad match – this is the default AdWords matching type. With broad match, your ad is displayed when a user search query is contains one or more of your keywords in any order, and possibly with several other terms.

Broad match allows you to reach the widest audience of all match types.

Syntax – no special syntax.

Example: *yellow athlete running shoes*

Your ad will display when users search for *shoes for runners, athlete shoes, running shoes, yellow shoes,* etc.

Bear in mind that while the volume of traffic you attract will be highest with broad match, not all of it will be qualified. For instance, a user looking for yellow shoes may not be interested in purchasing a pair of specialist running shoes for athletes.

Negative Keywords
AdWords allows you to define keywords that will not trigger your ad.

For instance, if your business sells shoes but does not offer water-resistant boots, adding water-proof boots as a negative keyword will ensure your ad is not displayed to searches with this query string.

MANAGING CAMPAIGN PAYMENTS

AdWords offers a convenient automated billing system, used by most advertisers. With this feature turned on, Google automatically charges your payment method every 30 days or when a pre-set cost threshold is reached. The cost threshold can be changed by the advertiser.

TRACKING CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE

Metrics

Clicks

Clicks are a measure of the number of times your ad was clicked by users to visit your web-page. Highly-relevant, interesting ads get the highest clicks.

Impressions

An impression is a single instance of your ad displayed on the search engine results page. This is a measure of the number of times your ad is shown and is helpful when determining the size of your audience. Not all impressions result in clicks.

Clickthrough Rate (CTR)

Click-through-rate is the proportion of people seeing your ad who click on it. In other words, CTR = Number of clicks/number of impressions.

CTR tells you whether your ad is actually working. Ads with keywords that carry broad appeal are likely to receive more clicks than ads for niche products, so the number of clicks per impression registered is a more accurate measure of ad performance.

Average Cost-Per-Click (CPC)

Not to be confused with the maximum CPC bid you set when formulating a bidding strategy, the average CPC is what you as advertiser end up paying for each registered click.

Average CPC = total cost for campaign/total number of clicks for the campaign

Quality Score

An ad's Quality Score is a measure of the quality of your ads, keywords, and landing pages. Higher quality ads can lead to lower prices and better ad placement.

Your ad's quality score is affected by the following factors -

• Expected clickthrough rate: The likelihood that your ads will get clicked for that keyword.
• Ad relevance.
• Landing page experience.

Average Cost-Per-Acquisition (CPA)

This is the cost you pay Google for every user who lands on your page and takes the desired action.

Conversion Tracking and ROI

A campaign's cost-effectiveness is measured in terms of its return on investment. ROI can help you determine –

1. If your campaign has achieved its intended objectives and goals.

2. The amount of sales/revenue you have been able to drive with paid advertising.

3. The relative performance of two or more campaigns. This can help you fine-tune your paid advertising strategy.

AdWords' conversion tracking tool can keep track of all valuable user actions on your website, including sales and lead capture.

To set up conversion tracking for your campaigns, you will need to assign –

• A value to each conversion, in monetary terms. This may be set to be the same for all instances, vary from one instance to another, or not set at all.

• A count for the total number of conversions. This may be set to every if you want every user visit to count as a conversion (e.g., if every visit improves brand awareness and adds value to your business) or to one when only one conversion per ad-click adds value.