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Google AdWords for Small Businesses: Mistakes to Avoid

Not getting much luck from your AdWords campaign and ready to admit defeat? Don't feel bad. Many small business owners are going through the exact same thing.

Google AdWords is one of the most powerful paid advertising platforms you can invest in. When used correctly, it can help to deliver a massive amount of traffic to your site and really improve your bottom line.

So if that's true, why isn't it working for you?

Well, as effective as it can be, there are a LOT of mistakes you can make. These mistakes can significantly affect your ads success - quickly draining your budget without delivering any real results.

The good news is; you can quickly turn it around.

By learning more about the most common mistakes and making changes right now, your ads could soon start to drive in huge amounts of traffic and quickly boost your profits.

Below you'll discover 10 of the most common mistakes to avoid and why you should avoid them...

1. Sending traffic to your homepage

So many businesses use their homepage as their URL destination link. While it seems logical because you're obviously promoting your brand, it's actually one of the least converting pages you can link to. Why? Because while your homepage is a great introduction to your brand, it's not really selling anything...

All good ads have an objective in mind. Whether that's to sell more of a specific product, boost brand recognition, or to inform potential customers about a time limited offer. Therefore, it's important that the landing page users are sent to relates specifically to the objective of the ad.

Example – Say your ad is promoting a time-limited promotion on specific products. A user clicking on it would expect to be taken to a page where the promoted, discounted products are. If instead, they're taken to your homepage, the majority aren't going to take the time to click through and find the products included in the promotion.

Remember, consumers want the buying process to be as simple and as convenient as possible. If the landing page doesn't help them achieve this, they'll click off your site and head elsewhere.

So, unless your ad is specifically promoting your brand in general, it's never a good idea to link directly to your homepage.

2. Targeting broad keywords

One of the biggest mistakes that's easy to make when you're just starting out is trying to target broad keywords. These include keywords that may significantly increase the chances of your ad being shown, but they aren't going to do much in terms of conversions.

Example – If your business specializes in cheap furniture, it's logical to set your target keywords as things such as "Cheap furniture" or simply "furniture". However, users searching for furniture aren't necessarily going to want to buy it. Instead they may be just browsing, looking for images or wanting to learn more about the types of furniture available. So, your ad may attract their attention, but it's unlikely to make many conversions.

Not only are broad keywords less effective, but they also cost more. So really you'll just be draining your budget without seeing much results. It's important to keep your keywords as specific as possible if you want your ad to really work for you.

3. Thinking the campaign will run itself

When was the last time you tweaked and monitored your ad?

There's a tendency for businesses to think once they've created and published their ad, there's nothing left for them to do. However, like any form of marketing and advertising, it's going to need constant supervision.

You can't just sit back and expect your ad to do all the hard work for you. Keyword relevance for example, changes constantly so you need to ensure the ones you used for your ad are still relevant.

The great thing about Google AdWords is the ability to instantly change and improve your ads. So, don't just sit back thinking it should be working – make the effort to ensure it does!

4. Not taking advantage of negative keywords

A clever feature of AdWords that many businesses don't even know about is "negative keywords". Just as you can set the keywords you want to target, you can also specify keywords you DON'T want to include. Why would you want to do that? Well, it helps to ensure you're reaching the right audience.

Example – If you run a men's shoe store, but you don't sell athletic style shoes, you aren't going to want your ads to show up in "men's running shoes" searches, but you will want it to show up in a search for "men shoes". Using the negative keyword feature, you can tell AdWords to never display your ad if the word "running" is included.

This ensures much better targeting and will help to avoid a lot of negative click-throughs; thus saving you a lot of money in the process!

5. Failing to measure ROI

If you're not measuring how your ads are working for you, it's almost guaranteed you're wasting a lot of your budget on poor quality traffic. You need to ensure you're getting a good return on investment and you can't do that without tracking your ads.

Seeing what's working and what isn't will enable you to effectively decide where to spend your money in the future. You can cut back on the ads that aren't delivering much success and spend more on the keywords and ads that are.

Google offers a fantastic tracking tool known as "Google Analytics". It takes a little more time and effort to use, but it's the best way to determine whether your campaigns are working and giving you a good ROI.

6. Focusing on too many keywords

Think using as many keywords as possible in your campaign will deliver the best results? Sadly, this is one of the most common mistakes people make with AdWords because the truth is, it's logical to think that way.

However, what actually happens when you use too many keywords is none of them really make a strong impression. Instead, your ad will appear in far

too many irrelevant results, leading to a budget-draining high, ineffective click-through rate. That is, click-throughs that don't turn into conversions.

It's much more effective to target a few keywords that make an excellent impression. You'll also find them much easier to track. As mentioned earlier, it's important to know which keywords are working for you and when you're including too many within the same ad, it's impossible to do that.

7. Not bidding for your brand

When you're searching for keywords to bid on, it's easy to forget your own brand name. After all, surely you're already going to rank pretty high for your own brand so why would you need to further advertise it?

What you don't realize is that if you don't bid on your brand, your competitors will happily do it for you. Why? So they can steal your customers! All's fair in love and war but not unfortunately not in business! Your competitors won't think twice about stealing your customers.

You'll still rank high up organically, but if your competitor bids on your brand they could end up appearing above you!

The good news is, bidding on your own brand is pretty cheap. It's not going to be a competitive keyword so the cost of the ad will remain quite low.

8. Not checking out the competition

Ok, so you would probably prefer to bury your head in the sand and pretend your competition doesn't even exist. However, you absolutely do have competition and it can actually pay to check them out!

When it comes to AdWords, it takes a lot of time and money to figure out the best keywords you should be targeting. More than likely, your competitors will have already done a lot of their own research to determine which keywords they should and shouldn't be using. So wouldn't it make sense to cut out a lot of the hard work and learn from your competitor's mistakes?

Checking out your competitor's campaigns is a clever way to see exactly which keywords you yourself should be focusing on. Don't just look at the keywords either – look at the wording they use and the way they've presented the ad. Check out the landing page and see how they are attracting and converting visitors.

9. Opting for display ads

Are your ads set to "Search Network with Display Select"? It's a default recommended setting Google AdWords has in place, so it's easy to click it when setting up your ads. However, this mode is actually quite damaging to your campaign!

So why is it harmful? Well it's not if you know exactly how to use display ads and you use them alone. However, this setting combines both search and display ads, limiting their effectiveness.

Both types of ads have their own advantages and disadvantages when used alone. However, they are completely different types of advertising. So they should be used for two different purposes in order to be most effective.

So, if your budget has been running out pretty quickly and you haven't been seeing results, this could be the reason!

10. Not preparing for mobile traffic

You'll automatically receive many click-throughs from mobile devices. After all, more consumers than ever before use their mobiles to browse and shop online. However, if your ad isn't tailored to mobile viewers, it could be detrimental to your campaign.

You need to make sure your website, in particular the landing page, is mobile compatible. This means ensuring it loads quickly and displays well on numerous browsers.

Now, this is doable, but it's worth keeping in mind that while people do prefer to browse on their mobile devices, very few actually go ahead and make a purchase. There are a lot of reasons behind this including the fact it's harder to input text than it is on a computer, the screen's a lot smaller so it's not as easy to complete the shopping process and they are easily distracted.

So does this mean you shouldn't bother optimizing your site for mobile traffic? Absolutely not! But, it does mean in terms of ad marketing, it would be better to focus on Google's Call-Only campaigns.

This is a new feature the search giant has added to its Google AdWords capabilities. The Call-Only campaigns allow users to actually call you direct, rather than sending them to a website. So, they're much more likely to convert once they've called you. It also means you won't end up spending a lot of money on click-throughs to your site!

11. Using AdWords Express

One of the worst things you can possibly do when setting up an AdWords account is make use of AdWords Express! It's designed by Google to make it really easy for businesses to set up and run campaigns. Also referred to as "set and forget", the system automatically chooses keywords and does all of the hard work for you. This understandably attracts many businesses to sign up. However...

As you have no control over which keywords are chosen, you cannot guarantee they are going to be effective. In fact, they're unlikely going to be very effective due to the fact they are set to a "broad match" setting! This means your ads aren't necessarily going to be relevant to a user, hence you'll receive quite a few click-throughs that don't convert.

It's not just the broad keywords you need to be concerned about either. AdWords Express also doesn't give you any tracking options and it doesn't

allow you to use negative keywords. Both of these, as explained earlier, are very important factors when it comes to making your ad a success.

So in short, AdWords Express should be avoided at all costs!

12. Missing out on local advertising opportunities

We mentioned earlier the perils of targeting broad keywords. Well, this one ties in to that! If you are a local business, it would make sense to try to attract local customers. However, in order to do that, you need to be making use of location specific features.

Location keywords

If you're currently using broad location keywords, you're going to be missing out on a HUGE number of customers.

For example, say you're set up in Maine, New York. Rather than use keywords for the entire county and state, it would really pay off to focus more on your exact location. That way, the users presented with your ad are going to be much more likely to be interested in your business. Someone who is located 20+ miles away on the other hand is going to be less inclined to come and visit your store!

So, always use keywords in your immediate, or at least close surrounding areas.

Local extensions

Another way to ensure you are getting the most out of Google AdWords is to use a location extension. These allow users to view your business on a map and they provide useful details such as your phone number, address and even ratings if you have any.

AdWords extensions are definitely worth using when it comes to advertising local businesses. So, if you're not using one, that's a big mistake you're making right there!

13. Not paying attention to the customer's LTV

When you're trying to set a budget, it's vital you take into account the LTV (Lifetime Value) of the customer. Without knowing how much each customer is worth, it's impossible to know if you're paying too much or too little for your ad.

So, if you want to get the most out of your budget and stop spending where you don't need to, understanding the LTV is essential.

So what does LTV actually mean? Well, it's the amount you estimate to make from the customer the whole time they stick with you. Say this is \$50, if you're spending \$30 to acquire the customer then you're doing well! However, if you're spending \$60, you're obviously losing out.

There are a few tools online that can help you determine what your company's LTV is. It's definitely worth using them if you can't work it out yourself!

14. Not paying attention to quality score

Do you know what your quality score is? Or more importantly, do you know how it affects your ad? Many businesses don't realize that even if they bid the most on certain keywords, if their quality score is low, their ad might not even get shown!

Google has always focused on quality content. Therefore, it makes sense that it focuses on the quality of the ads it displays. If your landing page is considered "spammy", or the keywords you use make the ad text harder to read, your quality score is going to go down.

So, boosting your quality score ensures your ad gets the recognition it deserves. However, the biggest benefit comes with the cost of the ad. Did you know that a higher score means you end up paying less for each ad, even on competitive keywords? If you want to pay less for better results, quality is key!

15. Expecting too much

The last mistake is also one of the simplest – expecting too much from your AdWords account. Yes, AdWords can be incredibly powerful at bringing you results. However, it can only do so much if you have a limited budget!

As the campaigns let you set your own budget and they are based on a “per click” basis, it’s easy to think you can start off at a ridiculously low price. Did you know for example, if you only have a budget of \$100-\$200 per month, it’s unlikely going to be enough to get you good results?? If your company is spending even less than that then now you know where you’ve been going wrong!

Another problem that occurs when you have a small budget is you use it up pretty quickly! This means you then need to wait ages before you can launch another or continue on with your campaign.

So there you have it, the top mistakes you could be making right now! There are a lot of mistakes that can be made and the above are just some of the most common.

Want to learn more or find out where you’re going wrong? Contact us today and we’ll help get you on the right track to AdWords suc

There are a lot of mistakes you can make along the way, but Google AdWords can be a really powerful marketing tool. Besides, you don’t have to do it alone. We are experts in AdWords and can manage your campaigns for you.

We’re committed to providing our customers with top-quality services, meaning we always answer your questions, reply to phone calls/emails, and proactively reach out to you when we need to discuss any urgent issues.

If you're ready to have a team of professionals handle AdWords for you, contact us today at (262) 290-4556 for your free, no-obligation consultation.

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