

A Beginner's Guide to Becoming a PPC Expert

As the CEO or marketing director of a small or medium-sized business, you likely know your way around on-page search engine optimization SEO, but are you also investing in search engine marketing (SEM)?

The [majority of businesses](#) in the US plan to devote more resources to their PPC campaigns moving forward based largely on the fact that targeted campaigns can be just as effective as elaborate marketing strategies for a fraction of the cost.

If you're familiar with both SEO and paid social advertising such as Facebook Ads, then you can easily become a PPC expert and dramatically increase your business' conversion rates.

What is PPC Marketing?

Since this is a beginner's guide, let's start by defining PPC Marketing.

PPC is the abbreviation for "pay-per-click" meaning that a company pays for each click on a link in a search engine.

Basically, SEO is a way to increase your organic reach whereas SEM increases your paid reach.

While there are different pay-per-click options such as display marketing and social media paid marketing, search engine advertising is the most popular type of PPC.

With a search engine PPC campaign, marketers bid on links based on keywords that are relevant to their business. The company pays a fee to the search engine every time someone clicks on their link.

Why do you need to spend money on getting visitors to your website when you already have organic traffic? According to the Content Marketing Institute, 55% of B2B marketers and 65% of B2C marketers report that [search engine marketing](#) is the most effective way of promoting content.

Sign up for Google Adwords

While it isn't the only platform to manage PPC advertising, it is the most popular and the one you'll want to familiarize yourself with on the road to becoming a PPC expert.

Google Adwords allows you to create ads for your business that Google will display based on a user's search query. Essentially, Google chooses ads to display on the first page of every search based on keywords, a company's CPC bids and their Quality Score. Don't worry, we'll go into more detail on all of these terms further down in the article!

Before you get started on your PPC campaign, you need to assess the quality of your Landing Pages. Make sure that the links that your ads will point to will be relevant for users, have persuasive copy and make it easy to convert visitors to customers.

How to Start a PPC Marketing Campaign

Similar to SEO, PPC marketing starts with [keyword research](#). Considering you build your entire campaign around your keywords, this is an incredibly important step. Unlike SEO where you can target many keywords by adding more content to your website, your PPC keyword list needs to adapt based on the results of your campaign.

Brainstorming PPC Keywords

Start with brainstorming a list of PPC keywords by looking at your company's website landing pages. This should give you an idea of the kind of searches that bring people to your website.

Brainstorm your keywords based on three main categories; brand terms, generic terms and related terms. Brand terms include your company's name and the service or product that you offer. Generic terms omit the brand name in favor of emphasizing a product or service. Finally, related terms are keywords that are a sort of catch-all for customers based on what searches may lead customers to your product.

For example, if we are planning a PPC campaign for the fictitious "London Travel Company":

- **Brand terms** - London Travel Company tours, London Travel Company Big Ben
- **Generic terms** - tours of London, Buckingham Palace tours
- **Related terms** - London hotels, London public transportation, London tourist sites

Now there is a fourth category for PPC keywords which is competitor terms, however, bidding on competitor terms is considerably more expensive so consider carefully if it's worthwhile having that as the focus of your campaign.

After you've brainstormed your initial list of keywords, add variations based on synonyms. For example with the related term "London tourist sites" above, you could also add "London attractions", "popular places in London", etc.

Use a PPC Keyword Concatenation Tool

A trick that PPC experts use are tools like [Found's Ultimate PPC Keyword Concatenation Tool](#).

This is basically a fancy term for a chain of things. With this tool, categorize and separate the terms your customers search for and insert them into each column. The tool will then generate a list of all the combinations of those words.

First, include keywords that your customers will be interested in. For example, customers of the London Tour Company will also search for hipster bars, fancy restaurants, family attractions etc. If you put the adjectives in one column, the places in a second and London in the third column, you get this list of nine terms that are all potential PPC campaign keywords.

- hipster bars London
- hipster restaurants London
- hipster attractions London
- family bars London
- family restaurants London
- family attractions London
- fancy bars London
- fancy restaurants London
- fancy attractions London

Don't Forget About Voice Search

The number of Google [voice search queries](#) increased 35 times from 2008 to 2016.

Furthermore, according to [Alpine AI](#)'s estimates from early 2018, there are over one billion voice searches per month.

Why is this important for to you as a burgeoning PPC expert? Think about how we “talk” to Google versus how we talk to Siri, Alexa or one of the other digital assistants.

When we type a phrase into Google, we boil it down to the essentials “hipster bars London”. On the other hand, voice searches are more similar to how we actually speak, “Hey Siri, what are the best hipster bars in London?”. You need to include these queries in your list of PPC keywords.

Refine Your Keyword List

Use a keyword research tool to choose the best keywords from your list. A popular tool is the Google Keyword Planner which is accessible from your Google Adwords account.

The reason you need to use a keyword tool to analyze your list is that you need to determine the monthly search volume for each of your potential keywords. PPC experts also look at each keyword's competition rank as determined by the Adwords Keyword Planner.

A keyword's competition rank influences the cost of using these terms. A keyword which a high competition rank means it will be more expensive to have a highly ranked ad. To make the most of your PPC campaign budget, look for keywords that have a high search volume and low competition rank.

Negative Keywords

Negative keywords play an important role in helping you control the cost of your PPC campaign. By giving Google a list of negative keywords, you are telling the search engine terms that you do not want your ad to appear in the results for.

The purpose of this is to avoid showing your ads to irrelevant customers and worse, having them click on your ads. Additionally, include keywords that are similar sounding but unrelated to your services or products.

The best way to find negative keywords is by looking at your search query reports. These reports tell you what people are searching for when they find your site. Use the terms from those reports that don't match your product to create your negative keyword list.

How to Create Your PPC Marketing Campaign

We just want to take a moment here and remind you that Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither were PPC experts. The key to success as a PPC campaign manager is that you continually analyzing the performance of your keywords and readjusting your ads and campaigns in order to increase traffic and improve conversion rates.

Keyword Matching

Now it's time to put those keywords to use. The first thing you need to do, even before you write your ads, is tell Google how you want to bid on search queries.

We just want to take a minute here to explain the difference between search queries and keywords. Very simply, keywords are the terms that you are optimizing your content for whereas search queries are what people type into a search engine.

You can choose between four match types when building your PPC campaign on AdWords.

A **broad match** will result in your ad being matched against any queries, no matter how remotely related - even if the search query does not contain your keyword.

Slightly more restrictive is the **modified broad match** where Google only displays your ad for search queries that include the keyword you've bid on.

The narrowest options are the **phrase match** and **exact match**. If you select either of these options, Google will display your ads exclusively to search queries that include your full phrase in the correct order. The difference between the two is that the phrase match accepts search queries that have other words before or after the keyword.

Writing Your Text Ads

Now, for the fun part. It's time to put your writing skills to the test and write your text ads. Remember that this is your one chance to capture this potential customer and they are looking for ads that are relevant to the product or service they want.

A basic PPC text ad shows a headline, a URL and a description. Previously, there was a two-line limit, however, Google has recently announced changes to the [PPC text ad format](#).

Google displays the ads with the user's search query in bold text so it's important that these terms are also in your ad. Besides including the relevant keyword, you also need your ad to demonstrate the benefit of choosing your website as well as a call to action to entice the customer to click on your link.

Additionally, Google has ad extensions so that you can add your company's location, contact info, and images to your ad.

Having relevant ad text isn't just important for increasing traffic and conversions, it also influences the cost of your ads.

How to Manage Your PPC Campaign

Being able to manage and adjust a PPC campaign is what sets the novices apart from the PPC experts. Having a strong understanding of the following metrics will help you monitor and improve your campaigns over time.

Quality Score

Your Quality Score is assigned by Google based on your keywords and ads. It has a significant impact on how highly your ad is ranked what Google charges you each time your ad is clicked on.

The Quality Score is determined by your click-through-rate (CTR), ad text, landing pages and the history of your AdWords account.

Click-Through-Rate (CTR)

CTR is a measurement of the number of clicks an ad receives versus the number of times it has been seen. Each time an ad is seen is referred to as an impression.

The CTR is a percentage that calculated by dividing the total clicks on your ad by the total number of impressions.

The question you're probably asking now is what counts as a good CTR. The answer is that it depends entirely on your [industry](#).

Cost-Per-Click (CPC) Versus Cost-Per-Acquisition (CPA)

As a PPC expert, it is crucial to understand the difference between CPC and CPA. The CPC is the price you pay for each click on your PPC campaign.

Google calculates your CPC as your Competitor AdRank divided by your Quality Score and then adds 0.01.

The CPA, on the other hand, will always be higher than the CPC because this is the cost of a successful conversion and not everyone who visits your website will become a lead. You define what constitutes a conversion when you set up your PPC campaign.

Just like the CPC is affected by your Quality Score, the CPA is as well. As a PPC expert, when monitoring and adjusting your keywords and PPC campaign, you need to work towards having a high Quality Score and a low CPA.

Ready to Declare Yourself a PPC Expert?

Wow, even for a beginner's guide, we know that was a lot of information to process. Not to mention that Google is undertaking extensive changes to their [search engine algorithm](#) in response to mobile's rise in popularity over desktop searches.

There's a reason many small and medium-sized businesses outsource their content and search engine marketing to SEO and PPC experts.

Contact [client name], where we're committed to helping you design and implement a search engine marketing strategy that works for your business.