

Getting more for less

Understanding the basic principals of Google AdWords optimisation

By Kim McCotter



“Yes, Google Adwords is an auction, but it isn't a winner takes all competition. There is little gain in spending several hundred dollars to attract patients worth \$50 a year in profit...”

With great interest I watch the top three of dentistry's paid Search Engine Results Pages (SERPS) change and evolve. I am delighted to see big budget dental practices being usurped by new nibble specialised players, as more practices decide to give Google Adwords a go.

Once you start using Google Adwords, you will start seeing results. The last article showed how to calculate your cost per new appointment (CPA) and return on investment (ROI).

At this point, two thoughts will probably cross your mind. The first thing would be, this is working great, but how do I get more patients? The second thought should be, can I get the same or better results with less money?

If you have already had both these ideas, you are heading in the right direction.

Like most things in life, it takes days or weeks to get a handle on the basics and months or years of practice to master the craft. That said, you would be light years ahead of your peers if you nail these basics. After working out your performance measures (intended metrics), the basics of Google Adwords Optimisation include reviewing your bidding, keywords, advertisements and landing page relevance.

1. Become a driver not a passenger

Before 2005, bidding on Google Adwords keywords was more like a pure auction - all you needed was a huge marketing budget and you could achieve a good position with questionable advertisements.

Fortunately for small business, Google incorporated what is called a quality score. This acts like a relevancy multiplier. This score measures the relevance of your keyword to your advertisement text and users' search queries. This means that a dentist with limited marketing funds can still get value for money if their advertisements and website are well-written.

Periodically reviewing your expenditure will highlight the need to adjust your daily budget, keywords and advertisement copy.

Over time, your Google Adwords account will start to establish a track record with Google, affecting the amount you pay (Cost Per Click - CPC) and the placement you achieve (average position). New accounts with broad match keywords and poor conversion records pay the highest price.

If you have a desire to increase your bidding involvement, you can switch from automatic bidding to manual bidding and adjust the maximum CPC on each keyword. If you are really keen, you

can adjust your advertisement scheduling to display only at certain times. For example, if you want to attract mothers of primary school children, you can schedule your Google Adwords Advertisements to display from 10:00am - 2:00pm and 8:30pm - 11:00pm during school weeks.

2. Refine your keywords

Google Ad Groups is a way of categorising your keywords into like groups; your categories should have a story or theme. Google deduces a meaning from the keywords in an Ad Group and displays your Google AdWord advertisement when it finds a match with users' search terms. For example, you may decide to set-up a Whitening Ad Group and an Implants Ad Group, having consistent keywords will increase the overall performance of your campaign.

After categorising your keywords into Ad Groups, the next step is to look for new advertising opportunities by expanding your keyword list. Your Google Analytics account and Google Keywords Generator Tool will be a rich source of new potential keywords or phrases. Also, from time to time Google will suggest new keywords under the "opportunities" tab, and it is worth looking at these suggestions. Consider including plurals, compound words and common spelling mistakes as these can yield surprising results.

Active management of your negative keywords list (terms that you don't want to be associated with) at the same time will help with this process. Keyword list refinement is an ongoing process of adding new keywords, adding new negative keywords and removing under-performing keywords.

If you decide to use a long tail strategy, minimise generic keywords (broad match) and use brackets (exact match) or quotation marks (phrase match) around your keywords. This has the effect of targeting your advertisements excluding similar or associated words.

3. Advertisements matter

The copy or advertising message in your advertisement is what draws potential patients to your practice (via your website). There are no hard and fast rules about what you must write in your advertisement but as a guide your advertisement should:

- Have keywords in the headline, body and displayed link (displayed URL);
- Be interesting, compelling and creative;
- Be specific and credible;
- Have a call to action; and
- Adhere to the Dental Board's Guidelines for Advertising of Regulated Health Services (available: www.dentalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines/Policies-Codes-Guidelines.aspx).

If you haven't written an advertisement before, it is three short lines that can be changed at anytime. In fact, testing different advertisements is considered best practice. If you have at least two advertisements in each Ad Group, clear differences will occur over time.

4. Ensure landing page relevancy

Your advertisement directs visitors towards a page on your website called the "landing page". A high level of consistency between Ad Groups, advertisements and your landing pages improves your ROI. Ideally, the landing page content should be optimised (dedicated) to the theme in the Ad Group. If it doesn't match, fix it.



Yes, Google Adwords is an auction, but it isn't a winner takes all competition. There is little gain in spending several hundred dollars to attract patients worth \$50 a year in profit; only invest where you can make an attractive return on your marketing investment.

After all it is your money and as the yanks say "you want bang for your buck".

If you have implemented the suggestions above and want to push your ROI higher, a more strategic approach to marketing and business is required. As dentists and support staff, you are in the services industry, every interaction online, offline, over the phone and face-to-face is a moment of truth. It is these moments where credibility is enhanced or destroyed. The next article in this series we will introduce you to touch point management for dental practices.

About the author

Mr Kim McCotter is Business Development & Marketing Manager at Levitch Design Associates. With a background and passion for business and marketing, Kim comes to LDA with experience in both service and product based industries. Having over five years of professional services experience and five years of marketing experience, he brings a fresh and professional approach to LDA. Kim holds a Bachelor of Business (UTS), Masters of Business in Marketing (UTS), and a Certificate in Digital Marketing (ADMA). He is continually investigating marketing and business techniques to find the next competitive edge. His methodical business development and marketing approach is outcome driven, his initiatives will be beneficial to the future success of our clients. He can be contacted on (02) 9880-9300.