How To Launch A Profitable PPC Advertising Campaign For Your Business

Shawn Livengood

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Introduction

This presentation will cover:

- An overview of Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising

- Information flow, and why it matters

- How to set up a PPC account efficiently and effectively
using the TRE method

- Q & A

About Me

Shawn Livengood

- Has managed PPC accounts for clients in various industries since 2008
- Currently Senior Marketing Associate – PPC for uShip.com
- MSIS 2011 at UT-Austin, concentrating in Information Architecture
- Owns and writes the blog www.ppcwithoutpity.com

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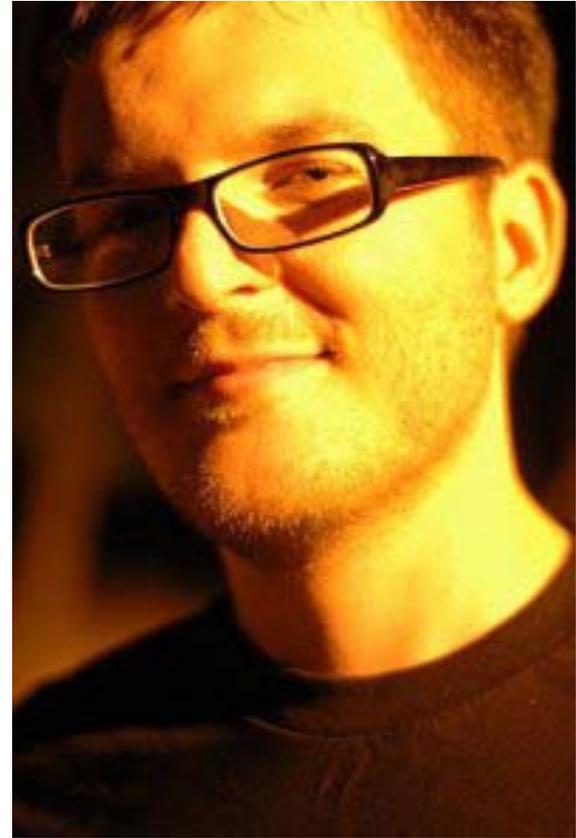
PPC In A Nutshell

- sponsored ads on search engine results

- you select keywords relevant to your product, and when a searcher types in one of those keywords, your ad appears in sponsored links

- …or on the Display Network, your ads show up on websites you specify, or on websites Google determines is relevant to your keyword list

- two major players include Google (Google search results + AdSense sites) and Microsoft (Yahoo search results + Bing search results)

- You set keyword bids, indicating how much you are willing to pay for a click. Ads are ranked via an auction system (higher bid = higher position), plus quality/relevance factors to prevent spammers from dominating search results.

Information Flow In PPC

Think about the user experience as they use a search engine and find your site through PPC:

search query
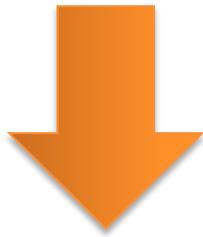
Text Ad
How relevant is your text ad to what the user is looking for?
www.YourSite.com
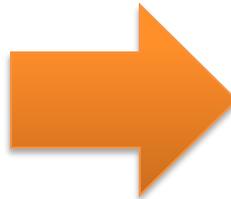
Landing Page

The landing page is the first page your user sees when they visit your site through a PPC ad. Make sure that it tells them where they are, what you can offer, and how you can solve the information need they were searching for.

Act Now!

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Information Flow In PPC

Why does information flow matter? Remember, searchers are on the hunt for a specific piece of information. If they lose the "scent" at any step of the process and think they won't get what they're looking for, they might drop out of the process and look elsewhere. This could cost you a valuable customer.

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PPC Account Setup: The TRE Method

Proper PPC account setup occurs in three stages. You can remember these stages by using the acronym TRE:

T   - Tracking

R   - Research

E   - Execution

Stage 1: Tracking

Before you start on anything else, make sure you have the means to track your traffic and success metrics. If you have no way to keep track of the traffic and leads/sales that your PPC account is generating, then you will have no idea whether it's working or not.

At the most basic level, this means you need to install conversion tracking on your website.

Conversion – any event that a user performs that you count as a success for your organization (sale, lead form completion, newsletter signup, etc.)

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Stage 1: Tracking

Conversion tracking – a short code snippet that sends information to your PPC account when a user clicks on an ad and then reaches a "goal" page (i.e. the "thank you" page after they have made a purchase).

Available in both Google and Microsoft PPC accounts, and looks something like this:

```
<!-- Google Code for Sample Conversion Conversion Page -->
<script type="text/javascript">
/* <![CDATA[ */
var google_conversion_id = 1038699242;
var google_conversion_language = "en";
var google_conversion_format = "2";
var google_conversion_color = "ffffff";
var google_conversion_label = "Mr5GCLT-9wEQ6pWl7wM";
var google_conversion_value = 0;
/* ]]> */
</script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="http://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/conversion.js">
</script>
<noscript>
<div style="display:inline;">
<img height="1" width="1" style="border-style:none;" alt=""
src="http://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/conversion/1038699242/?label=Mr5GCLT-
9wEQ6pWl7wM&amp;guid=ON&amp;script=0"/>
</div>
</noscript>
```

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Stage 1: Tracking

Don't be intimidated if you're not familiar with coding –
installing conversion tracking is easier than you think.
Many content management systems (CMS) have
conversion panels where you can just copy and paste the
code in.

If you have to do it the hard way and install it manually,
just copy and paste the code anywhere between the
<body> and </body> tags in your HTML page.

Stage 1: Tracking

Web analytics are essential if you want to track the traffic to your website. These tools also work via a code snippet, but you need to put them on every page of your site that you want to track. After installation, you will be able to track which pages your users visit, where they came from before reaching your site, how long they stayed, and other factors like their web browser, OS, and screen resolution.

Google Analytics is a popular free tool for this, and is very flexible. Popular paid tools include Omniture and Crazy Egg.

Stage 2: Research

You've got your tracking set up – that's a good start. But before you begin building your account, you need to do your homework.

The research phase consists of two components:

1. Keyword Research
2. Competitive Analysis

Stage 2: Research

Keyword Research

DO:
- Find keywords relevant to what you are offering
- Use keywords that indicate an intent to purchase ("widget installation quotes" > "how to install a widget")
- Seek out industry-specific phrases and slang

DON'T
- Use overly-broad, vague keywords just to get traffic
- Use keywords that are not at all relevant to your business (if you have to think about whether it's relevant, it's not)

Stage 2: Research

Free Keyword Research Tools

- Google Keyword Tool:

https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal

- Wordstream Keyword Tool:

http://www.wordstream.com/keywords

- Competitor/industry websites

- Imagination!

Stage 2: Research

Competitive Analysis

1. How much are your competitors spending on PPC, and what keywords are they bidding on? **Tool: www.spyfu.com**
2. What are your competitors offering in their text ads? **Tool: Google/Bing Search**
3. What do your competitor's landing pages look like, and what do they offer there? Is there consistency between what they offer in their ad and what they offer on their landing page? **Tool: Click some ads!**

Stage 3: Execution

You have your tracking set up and you've done your research. Now let's start building your account!

Stage 3: Execution

PPC Execution Toolbox

Google AdWords Editor
http://www.google.com/intl/en/adwordseditor/

MSN AdCenter Desktop
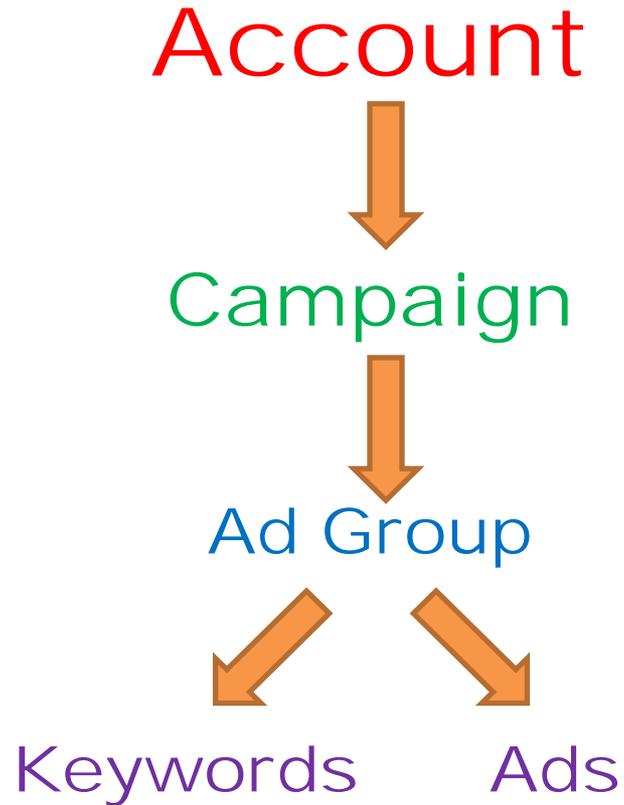http://advertising.microsoft.com/support-center/adcenter-downloads/adcenter-desktop

Microsoft Excel
(or http://www.openoffice.org/ if you're broke)

Stage 3: Execution

PPC Account Structure

Stage 3: Execution

Keyword Tips:
- Segment your keywords into groups based on relevance.
- Match types: broad = more traffic, worse ROI, exact = less traffic, better ROI, phrase = happy medium
- Use CPC estimates from the Google Keyword Tool for your initial keyword bids

Ad Tips:
- Only use 2-3 ads per group, test them against each other, and rotate out underperforming ads
- Display URLs only have to match your domain. You can use made-up display URLs like www.YourSite.com/SpecialOffer

A Few More Basic Tips…

- Always have separate campaigns for Search-targeted and content/display-targeted ads

- Try to keep the number of keywords per ad group somewhere between 4 and 25

- Don't target the top position. Bidding is highly competitive for the top spot, so you could end up spending a lot of money with little to show for it. Ad positions 3-5 generally provide the best ROI.

- Checking up on your account multiple times a day will drive you crazy. Think of it like the stock market – take a long-term strategy. Wait for keywords/ads/campaigns to gather a significant amount of data, then take action.

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Additional Resources

AdWords Online Classroom
http://www.google.com/adwords/onlineclassroom

Microsoft AdCenter Training
http://advertising.microsoft.com/support-center/training-accreditation/adcenter-training

PPC Without Pity
http://www.ppcwithoutpity.com

Q & A

If you want to recap, a copy of this presentation will be available on PPC Without Pity tomorrow.

http://www.ppcwithoutpity.com