



Five Best Practices for PPC Search

As search engine marketers, we feel we're blazing a trail into a completely new kind of marketing. To some extent, that's true. Yet we can learn from our offline counterparts as well. Some best practices used by direct marketers and offline brand marketers can be adapted to SEM.

Marketing is progressing, and SEM is just another phase in its evolution. By learning from traditional marketing, we avoid pouring huge sums of money into advertising and marketing with little to show for it.

Unlike the PPC search space, in which most inventories is auctioned in real time, traditional offline, even other online media, are heavily negotiated. Lessons learned from my career media industry experience include:

- Always put the most important and efficient medium on your plan first.
- At the right price, almost any medium can be included in a media plan.
- The media plan is a living document; don't fall in love with specific insertions or placements.
- Branding metric lift is a valuable success proxy, but sales are the real success barometer.
- Spend the client's money as if it were your own.

These lessons apply almost directly to the PPC search market and can provide a strategic basis for a PPC campaign. Below, I'll address each media buying best practice and convert it into a PPC search best practice.

1. Always put the most important and efficient medium on your plan first.

In the auction marketplaces at Google, Yahoo!, and soon MSN, you want to buy the very best clicks first. If you know the value of every keyword's click stream in every engine by knowing the clicks' value, you'll know how to buy the best clicks first. Your best clicks are "power clicks," those with a demonstrated value (typically, a huge ROI).

To catch all power clicks, don't set a daily budget in a tool managed by the engine. Not all clicks are created equal. A budget cap lower than full rotation on your keywords results in a somewhat random selection of which keywords won't be shown. Power keywords could be skipped in favor of less valuable ones. Have a strategy in place that assures you buy the best clicks first, then continue buying until the budget is exhausted or you no longer get a positive ROI.

2. At the right price, almost any medium can be included in a media plan.



Each marketer has a right price for the clicks originating from each keyword/search engine/position/creative/time-of-day combination. One click stream can be worth 10 times that of another. Don't think about your campaign in CPC terms. Buy clicks based on value. Almost any keyword can potentially work in a PPC search campaign. The auction nature of the search marketplace tends to ensure marketers at the top are a good fit for the search.

3. The media plan is a living document; don't fall in love with specific insertions or placements.

Don't fall in love with a position. There may be keywords your CEO or CMO feels must be in the top position. This emotional response must be backed up with data. Otherwise, alternative placements will fit better. When multiple marketers in a vertical category all bid emotionally, the only winners are the search engines.

4. Branding metric lift is a valuable success proxy, but sales are the real success barometer.

Branding metrics are difficult to ascribe to search, but when much of the purchase behavior lags offline or is otherwise untraceable, you can create a branding-style proxy for success. However, behaviors you associate with brand lift should ultimately associate with sales. Brand lift among the wrong target audience is worthless. Brand lift among potential buyers is priceless, as it correlates with sales.

5. Spend the client's money as if it were your own.

Whoever's money you're spending, either as an agency or in-house marketer, treat that budget as if it were your money. Invest it wisely. Also listen to the person signing the checks; she may have a strategic goal or objective that isn't immediately obvious. I was in recent discussions with a marketing VP who was clearly looking to maximize exposure not only to drive revenue but also to increase visibility in the investment community.

Media and Marketing 101 never went out of style; the best practices simply manifest themselves differently. Take a step back from your campaign and apply the proven tenets of media and marketing. You'll be glad you did.

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About Hotel Traffic Builders (HTB):

We are a full-service digital marketing agency dedicated to the boutique hotel & residential resort industry.

Our mission is very simple: ***"To maximize sales success by providing our clients with exceptional internet marketing results"***.

Our clients consistently enjoy industry leading success because of our dedicated focus and experience. Our use of state-of-the art tools, best in class technology and wealth of industry experience enable us to provide full solution applications. We recognize that our clients are experts at running their hotels, and our role is to develop and maintain online marketing leadership for our client hotels.

We differentiate ourselves through:

**Industry Expertise**

We have a singular specialized focus on boutique hotel, resort and vacation home e-Marketing. Our sole goal is to be the best at what we do by ensuring maximum success for all of your e-marketing activities. Our 52 person design and development technology team delivers unparalleled quality and results. Our sole focus is resort marketing.

Individual Customized Creative Approach & Solutions

Every client has unique needs, opportunities and priorities, our e-Marketing plans are always custom built and based on in-depth research of your specific hotel.

Cutting Edge Technology

We use proprietary state of the art tools and applications that enable project efficiency, measurability and success of your e-marketing. We not only promise success, we document it in a 24/7 real-time secured private reporting platform that we create for every hotel client. Our clients never wonder about how hard their marketing dollars are working because they always know!

Return On Investment

The true measurement of our success is our proven ability to deliver reservation bookings. We grow booking results year over year, and we grow advance bookings, which result in higher occupancy levels and ADRs.

Contact us at: www.HotelTrafficBuilders.com or call us **954- 421-6399**