



A SIMPLE GUIDE TO PAID SEARCH (PPC)



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WHAT IS PAID SEARCH?

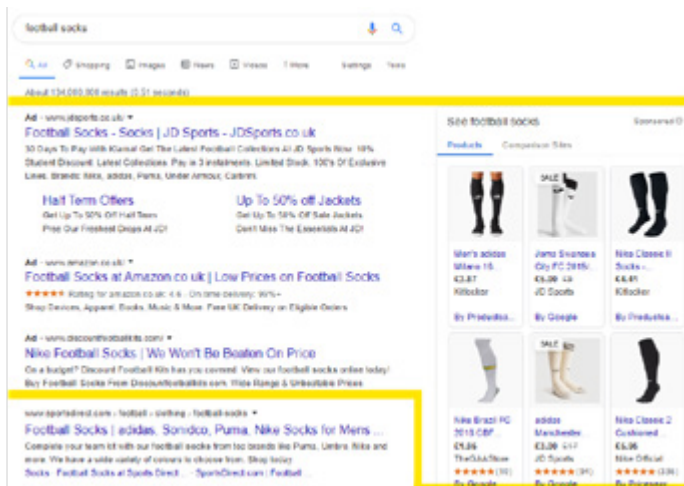
Imagine there was a way to ensure your website appeared on the first page of search engine results when people searched for keywords relevant to your business.

You could write an ad, and it would only be shown to people who had expressed an interest in the product or service you offer and you would only pay a fee (cost-per-click or CPC) each time someone actually clicked on your ad and sent a visitor to your site.

That, as we're sure you already know, is paid search in a nutshell – a way to target the right audience at the right time – and PPC (pay-per-click) is the standard payment model.

PPC

- Display Advertising
- App advertising
- Video advertising
- Paid Search
- Shopping advertising
- Paid social



Paid search ads are those listings that appear at the top of search engine results pages (SERPs), marked as ads or 'sponsored'.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR MY BUSINESS?

Paid search can be a win-win for you and for your potential customers; you drive highly targeted traffic to your website, while they get to see ads that are relevant to them.

Paid search also gives you greater control over your presence on SERPs than a reliance on organic search results alone. In fact, spend on paid search overtook that of traditional SEO back in 2017, according to Forrester Research. As Google's algorithm continues to develop, sustained organic traction takes more effort to achieve, making paid search a good option for immediate results (although, in the long run, most businesses find that using a combination of both paid and organic search techniques is the most effective strategy).

Paid search campaigns are quick to implement, easy to track and amend, and have the potential to yield immediate results with most studies concluding an average of \$2 returned on every \$1 spent on PPC.



Google Ads

Google Ads

Paid search is also a lucrative generator of revenue for search engines - the biggest is, of course, Google, with 87.5% of UK market share (Statista, Feb 2020) and, as a result. Google Ads is the best known and most used PPC platform.



Microsoft Advertising

Microsoft Advertising (whose ads appear on Bing) is the only major alternative to Google's paid search offering (though Amazon has developed a comprehensive paid option). However, while the platform has a smaller market share, it also has less competition as a result and, therefore, reduced cost-per-click prices.

BUSINESS GOALS

One of the problems with trying to add anything new to the marketing mix is making a business case for the additional budget.



Is paid search right for my business?

This depends on what you want to achieve - so you'll need to begin by defining your goals. Once you are clear about what you want to get out of a campaign, you can then begin researching keywords, estimating cost and return and setting KPIs (key performance indicators).

Paid search can help businesses achieve a variety of goals, as set out in more detail below. However, it's not all about getting people to click on your ad – if you want a respectable conversion rate, you also need to put careful thought into what they see when they arrive on your landing page.

Lead generation

Your ads will appear when people are actively searching for the products and services your business offers. You need to ensure you send searchers to a landing page containing content that is specific to their search and includes a clear call-to-action such as a call-back request form, email subscription form, and/or a downloadable brochure.

How will you measure performance?

Your target may be to generate 100 leads at a CPA (cost per acquisition) of £10 per lead. You can set a CPA target in Google Ads directly

Revenue generation

Your ads appear when people are looking for a product or service you sell triggered by one of your keywords, or when they are searching for a need or solution that one of your products could offer. Here, it's important that your landing page includes relevant products - remember to emphasise the benefits they offer, rather than simply listing features.

How will you measure performance?

In terms of KPIs, you might have a target to get 200 sales at a ROAS (return on ad spend) of £5 revenue for every £1 spent. Again, you can set a target ROAS in Google Ads.

Brand awareness

Your ads aim to promote your brand to a highly relevant audience, with the potential to increase traffic to your site. It is vital here that your ads are creative enough to engage people with your brand and promote brand recall – the content on your landing page should reinforce this message, and offer users options to interact further.

How will you measure performance?

Success should also be measured simply in terms of impressions – with the campaign running on a CPM basis, attempting to get as many (relevant) eyes on your ad as possible.

Remarketing

Your ads are shown to a group of people that have already engaged with your site, this is known as [remarketing](#). Whether those who have performed a specific action (downloaded a resource), completed an eCommerce transaction or abandoned a basket. Your ad will remind them of incomplete purchases, of complementary products or services.

How will you measure performance?

Success in this instance could be an increase in recurring revenue, or average lifetime value of users – or simply treated in the same way as a lead or revenue generation campaign.

CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

Paid search campaigns are built around your business goals, split by category or business area. To start a campaign, you need to create an account with your chosen search network – Google Ads or Microsoft Advertising. Each campaign contains ad groups – which is a way of organising keywords that are closely related or ‘themed’ and then pairing these with relevant ads.

Ad groups should contain no more than 20 keywords and 3 ads.



Creating campaigns and ad groups relating to specific products or services, and which also mirror your website’s structure, makes it simpler to create ads that link directly to a relevant area on your site. This in turn will help you gain a higher [Quality Score](#), and help you to achieve a lower relative CPC.

Quality Score is a 1 to 10 metric used by Google to measure the quality of your ads and the landing pages they trigger. This will influence your ad rank and CPC.

Ad formats

Your ads can consist of text only, or can include images or video. The ad formats available to you depend on the type of campaign you choose (there’s more detail about campaign settings later on in this eBook), but for the most part this eBook will deal with standard text ads as we concentrate on paid search.

KEYWORDS

One of the biggest advantages of paid search is the control it gives you over your advertising message and spend. It's important to focus on the keywords that best suit your business goals, without paying more than necessary.



Selecting keywords

There are many tools available to help take the guesswork out of choosing keywords – including the free Google Keyword Planner which will give you some keyword data (though the accuracy of this data does depend on your spend, so it can only be assumed to be indicative in early campaigns).

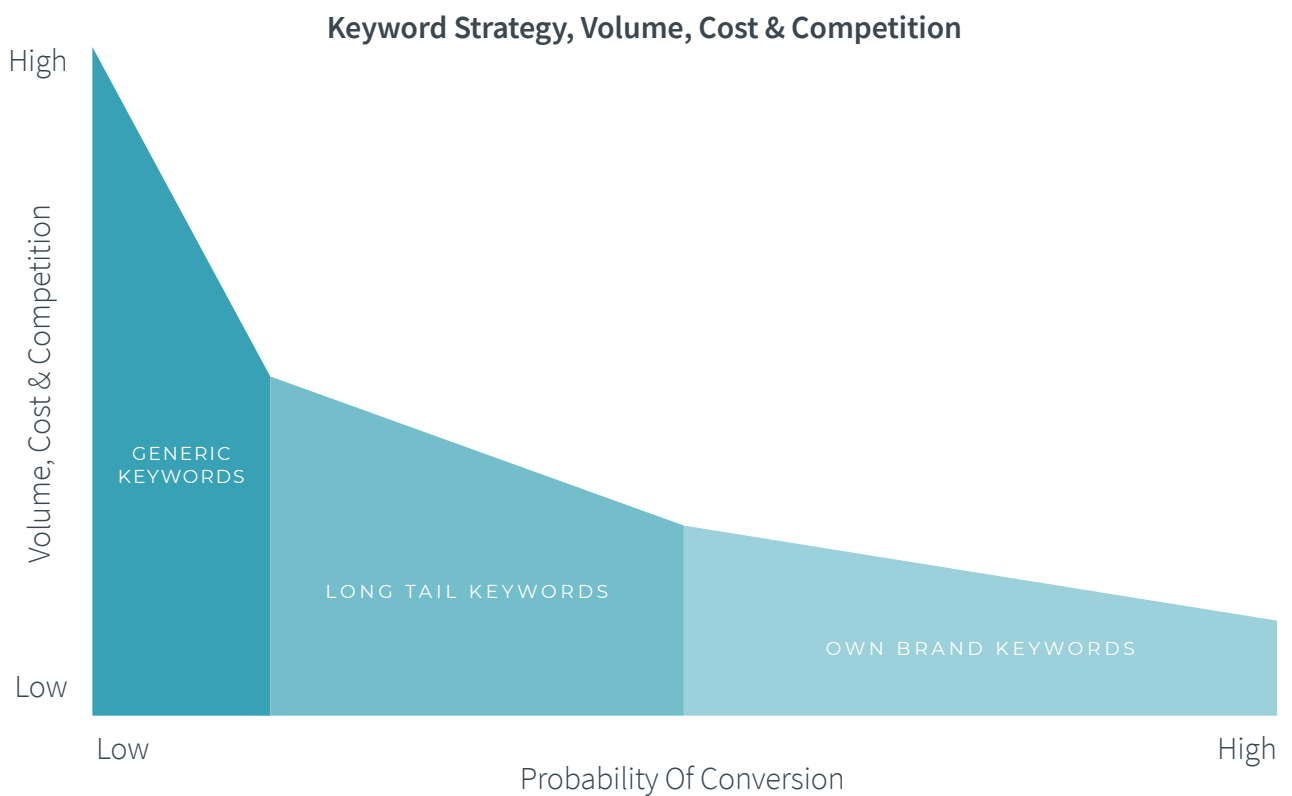
To make the most of your budget, you will need to strike a balance between the keywords which are most relevant or useful to your business and those terms that potential customers are actually searching for. Achieving this balance doesn't always have to be a matter of trial and error, however, you can use Keyword Planner to research potential keyword targets. The tool will also provide an estimate as to how keywords may perform in terms of traffic and cost.

This consideration of consumer intent means that you also need to consider words which indicate these levels of intent – for example, 'buy', 'cheap' and 'sale' have a purchasing intent while 'sample' and 'review' have research intent.

However, continually monitoring the performance of your keywords in a live campaign and fine-tuning your keyword lists allows you to focus your spending on the ones that yield the best results.

Using generic keywords (for example, 'socks') means your ad will reach a larger number of people, but will mean it appears to users who are at a stage of the buying cycle that isn't catered to by your ad. More specific keywords will help you to target a more qualified audience.

This is where you will see the phrase 'long tail keywords' – these are phrases with less volume, but generally with a more explicit intent (for example, 'buy yellow socks') which allows you to target people with greater purchasing intent, boosting the chances of conversion. Another advantage of long tail keywords is that, as they have less search volume, there is also likely less competition for them, which will reduce your cost-per-click.



MATCH TYPES

For each keyword, you set a match type to control how closely that keyword needs to match someone's search term in order to trigger your ad.

Broad match

The default selection for ads, broad match will deliver your ads not only to the keywords selected, but also misspellings, related keywords and more. While this option offers the greatest traffic potential, it is also the least effective at targeting, so this isn't an option we'd recommend if you are looking to preserve your ad budget.

Broad match + modifier

Denoted by the addition of a plus symbol (+football socks), your ad will show when a search contains the words within your keyword, or close variations of the words (close variations can include synonyms, abbreviations and misspellings).

Phrase match

Phrase match is indicated by the addition of quotation marks ("football socks") and your ads will show when someone searches for a term that contains the keyword within the phrase, either matching completely or with additional words before or after it but not within the phrase), as well as close variations.

Exact match

Indicated with square brackets ([football socks]), exact match isn't as exact as it once was. While your ad would once have only appeared when someone searched for your exact keyword, or close variations – the current definition (according to Google) is as follows:

Close variations here may also include a reordering of words if it doesn't change the meaning, and the addition or removal of function words (prepositions, conjunctions, articles and other words that don't impact the intent of a search), implied words, synonyms and paraphrases and words that have the same search intent.

Negative keywords

In addition to the match types, you can also use negative keywords – which, as you would expect, is a list of words for which your ads will not be shown. This is achieved using the minus sign (-ballet socks) and is useful for excluding products or services you do not offer.

	Example keywords	Could appear in a search for...
Broad match	yellow socks	yellow christmas stockings
Broad match + modifier	+yellow +socks	socks in yellow
Phrase match	"yellow socks"	buy yellow socks
Exact match	[yellow socks]	yellow socks

WRITING AD TEXT

You've selected your keywords and match types - now you need to put careful thought into actually creating your ads.

Writing effective paid search ads requires constant revisions and experimentation.

Here are our top tips:

- 1. Create very specific ad groups** – ensure each ad group within your campaign contains tightly themed keywords, perhaps focusing on a single product or service, so that your ads appear more relevant to customers.
- 2. Emphasise ad relevancy** – include your main keywords in your ad text, particularly in the headline, to emphasise to potential customers how your ad is relevant to their search.
- 3. Use a strong call-to-action (CTA)** – give potential customers a reason to click your ad and help them understand what they can do once they reach your landing page.
- 4. Ensure consistency between ads and landing pages** – the content of each landing page should follow logically from the ad that triggers it, giving users a consistent message.
- 5. Leverage your display URL** – the domain name of the website shown in your ad (the display URL) must match the domain name of your landing page. However, anything that comes after / can be used to indicate the relevancy of your landing page for example:

Display URL:	www.yourfootballsocks.com] Not allowed as the URLs don't match
Landing page:	www.yoursocks.com/all-football-socks.html	
Display URL:	www.yoursocks.com/football] However, this would be allowed
Landing page:	www.yoursocks.com/all-football-socks.html	

Here's an example of an ad that would display for someone searching for 'football socks':

Ad - www.mandmdirect.com/Socks Path x2 - 15 characters each
Up To 75% Off Football Socks | Order Now Online Headline x2 - 30 chars each
★★★★★ Rating for mandmdirect.com: 4.7 - 48,390 reviews - Email reply time: 3 hours
Sale Prices Every Day. Miss It, Miss Out. Shop Now! Big Brands - Low Prices. Next Day Delivery
+ No Quibble Returns. Unlimited Delivery £9.99. Free Delivery. Next Day Delivery. Description x2 - 90 chars each
Winter Sale: Up to 65% off Underwear

TARGETING AND CAMPAIGN SETTINGS

So, you have a list of keywords and have created your ads - now you need to decide to whom, where and when you're going to show them. You can use your settings to target a specific audience, and tweak them at any time to improve a campaign's performance.

Selecting where your ad appears

You can select the specific 'networks', or combination of networks, that your paid ads will be shown in.

If you select 'search network', your ad will appear in the search engine results pages, as well as any of its related search sites. For Google Ads, this would mean Google's search engine – including Google Shopping and Google Maps, as well as search partners.

The default network setting is 'Search Network with Display Select'. We recommend changing this to 'Search Network only' in order to focus on your paid search campaigns.

You can also target your campaign by:

- Specific location and language
- Specific days of the week or time of the day (known as ad scheduling)
- Device (whether your ad appears to mobile, tablet or desktop users)
- Demographics such as age and gender.
- Previous site interactions (whether and how searcher has previously interacted with your site).

BIDDING

Once you've selected your keywords, you need to decide the maximum you are willing to pay for each click and set a bid, taking into account your budget and the potential value of each click to your business. Popular keywords and those with a lot of competition from other advertisers will require a higher bid.

Your bid ultimately determines not only how much each click will cost (your CPC); it is also a deciding factor in where your ad will be ranked on search engine results pages:

$$\text{YOUR MAXIMUM CPC (BID)} \times \text{QUALITY SCORE} = \text{YOUR AD RANK}$$

Don't be too preoccupied with ranking number 1 - aim to achieve a position that meets your business goals.

INTRODUCTION TO OPTIMISATION

In this eBook we have only touched upon three variable aspects of paid search:

- Keywords and bidding
- Creating ads
- Targeting and settings

These are all areas that you can influence and optimise to improve the performance of your campaigns and this is something we cover in our eBook series – [PPC Uncovered: An Advanced Guide to Paid Search](#).

GLOSSARY OF DIGITAL TERMS

Ad group – the way in which your keywords are organised within your paid search campaign.

Campaign – the way in which you structure your account (set your budget and targeting) in order to meet your business goals and maximise your return on investment.

Click – when someone selects your paid search ad and ‘clicks’ through to your website.

Conversion – when someone clicks on your ad and takes action on your website as a result, for example, makes a purchase or subscribes to your mailing list; the nature of the conversion depends on your business and your goals.

Conversion rate – the average number of conversions resulting from each click on your ad, expressed as a percentage.

CPA (cost-per-acquisition) – the number of conversions divided by cost.

CPC (cost-per-click) – the actual price you pay for every click on your ad as part of your Paid Search campaign.

CTR (click-through-rate) – the number of clicks divided by the number of impressions. Impression - when an ad is displayed.

Impression share – the proportion of impressions your ad receives out of the estimated number of impressions your keywords make you eligible to receive, ie, how often your ad is shown.

Keywords – the words or phrases you bid on in order for your ads to appear in search results when someone performs a search that’s relevant to your business. Your whole paid search campaign hinges on the effectiveness of your keywords.

KPIs – key performance indicators.

Quality Score – a 1 to 10 metric used by Google to measure the quality of your ads and the landing pages they trigger and which will influence your page rank and CPC (cost-per-click).

Landing page – the first page that people see when they click on your ad; the quality of your landing page is crucial to your conversion rate.

Negative keywords – you can set a negative keyword to tell a search engine what searches you don’t want your ads to appear for, as a way of filtering out unwanted clicks.

Organic search – results generated naturally by a search engine because of their relevance to the terms someone searches for, as opposed to paid search ads. Tactics used to maximise a site’s chances of appearing in organic search results are known as search engine optimisation (SEO) techniques. See our eBook [A Simple Guide to Organic Search \(SEO\)](#).

PPC (pay-per-click) – a model of paid search advertising that drives targeted traffic for a small fee ‘per click’ based on the popularity of your chosen keywords.

ROAS (return on ad spend) – a key performance indicator of paid search, representing the revenue you earn against what you’ve spent on your campaign.

ROI – the return on investment you get for your paid search campaign.

SERPs – search engine results pages.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named SEO Agency of the Year 2019, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The

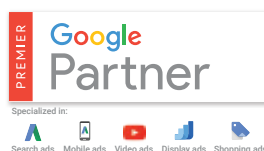
YOUR BESPOKE PAID SEARCH (PPC) ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

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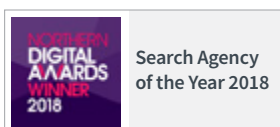
OUR ACCREDITATIONS



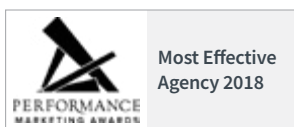
OUR AWARDS



SEO Agency of the Year 2019



Search Agency of the Year 2018



Most Effective Agency 2018



Digital Agency of the Year 2018

OUR TECHNOLOGIES

monitor **TRAX** rank **TRAX** feed **TRAX** link **TRAX** pro **TRAX** page **TRAX**