



CLICK.CO.UK®

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO PAID SEARCH (PPC)

A jargon-busting introduction to
how paid search can help you
to achieve your business goals

eBook

5

Contents

1 //	What is paid search?	03
2 //	Business goals	05
3 //	Campaign structure	07
4 //	Keywords	09
5 //	Match types	11
6 //	Writing ad text	12
7 //	Targeting & campaign settings	14
8 //	Tracking	16
9 //	Bidding	17
10 //	Introduction to optimisation	18
11 //	Glossary of digital terms	19
12 //	References	21

1// What is paid search?

Imagine if 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 clicks on your ad and sends a visitor to your site.

That's how paid search works, in a nutshell. PPC (pay-per-click) is the standard payment model.

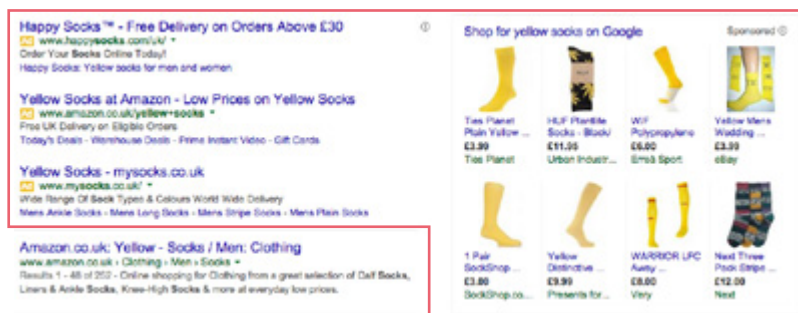
There are three main types of online advertising that use the PPC pricing model - this eBook focuses on paid search:

PPC

DISPLAY
ADVERTISING

PAID
SEARCH

SOCIAL
ADVERTISING



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

What's in it for my business?

It's win-win for you and your potential customers; you drive highly targeted traffic to your website, while they get to see ads that are most relevant to their needs or requirements.

This gives you greater control over your presence on SERPs than a reliance on organic search results alone. In fact, spend on paid search has overtaken that of traditional SEO techniques in recent years, according to Forrester Research, as device usage fragmentation and Google's algorithm updates has made organic traction more difficult to achieve (although most businesses find that using a combination of both is the most effective strategy).

Paid search campaigns are quick to implement, easy to track or amend and have the potential to yield immediate results.



Google AdWords

Paid search is also a lucrative generator of revenue for search engines - the biggest is, of course, Google, with almost 90% of UK market share (Statista, October 2014) and as a result Google AdWords is the best known PPC platform.



Yahoo! Bing Ads

The only other real paid search contender and is slowly gaining more market share. However, this means less competition and therefore comparatively lower CPCs. Bing Ads gives your website exposure on both the Yahoo! and Bing search engines.



2 // Business goals

Is paid search right for my business?

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

Paid search can help businesses achieve a variety of goals, as set out in more detail below. But 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.



Generate leads - your ads 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 callback request form, email subscription form, and/or a downloadable brochure.

How will you measure performance? In this scenario, your target may be to generate 100 leads at a CPA [cost per acquisition] of £10 per lead.



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

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.



Brand exposure & awareness - your ads promote your brand to a highly relevant audience, with the potential to increase traffic to your site. It's vital here that your ads are creative enough to engage people with your brand - the content on your landing page should reinforce this message and encourage people to interact further.

Success could be measured in terms of clicks, for example, targeting 10,000 clicks with a CTR [click through rate] of 3%.

3// 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, ie, Google AdWords or Bing Ads.

Each campaign contains ad groups - a way of organising keywords that are closely related, or 'themed', and pairing these with relevant ads. Ad groups should contain between 1 and 20 keywords and 2 to 3 ads.

Account:	Yoursocks.com	
Campaign:	Socks	
Ad Groups:	Cotton Socks	Football Socks
Keywords:	black cotton socks yellow cotton socks cotton socks	football socks cheap football socks buy football socks

Creating campaigns and ad groups relating to specific products or services and that 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, getting you 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 can also 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.

Football Socks from £3.99

Ad www.yoursocks.com/football

Find Your Football Socks Here. Our Prices Will Knock Your Socks Off!



Nike MatchFit
Crew Football
£6.29
Nike.com



FIFA 15 Goals of the Week

AD by EA SPORTS FIFA

Watch the best goals of the week in FIFA 15! Think you can do better?



4// 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 various tools available to take the guesswork out of choosing your first keywords. To make the most of your budget, you must strike a balance between which keywords are most relevant to your business and what potential customers are actually searching for.

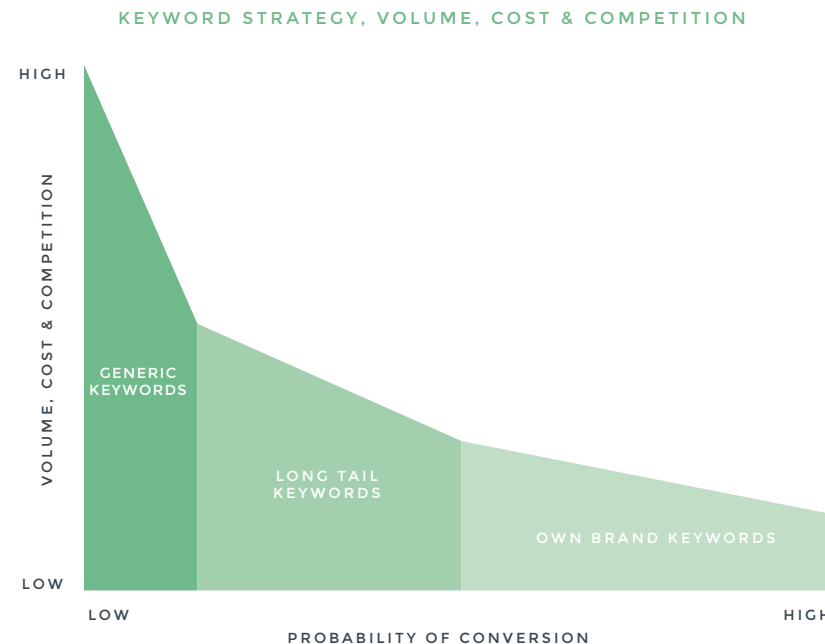
Achieving this balance doesn't always have to be a matter of trial and error. You can use the AdWords Keyword Planner to research your keywords, the tool will also estimate how keywords may perform in terms of traffic and cost.

Also consider using words that could indicate intent, for example, 'buy', 'cheap' and 'sale' have a purchasing intent while 'sample' and 'review' have a research intent.

However, continually monitoring the performance of your keywords in a live campaign and finetuning 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 may mean it appears to users who are still researching and not yet ready to buy. More specific keywords will help you to target a more qualified audience.

Long tail keywords are longer, highly specific, unique phrases (for example, 'buy yellow socks') that allow you to target people with greater purchasing intent, boosting the chances of conversion. Another advantage of long tail keywords is that there's likely to be less competition for them, bringing down the cost of your bids.



5// 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 - has the greatest traffic potential, but is the least effective at targeting, so this isn't an option we'd recommend.

Broad match + modifier - your ad will show only when someone's search contains the words within your keyword, or close variations of the words (close variations can include synonyms, abbreviations and misspellings).

Phrase match - your ad will show only when someone searches for a term that contains the keyword within the phrase, with or without additional words before or after it, as well as close variations.

Exact match - your ad will show only when someone searches for your exact keyword, or close variations.

	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



6// 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 & 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
Landing page: www.yoursocks.com/all-football-socks.html] **Not allowed as the URLs don't match**

Display URL: www.yoursocks.com/football
Landing page: www.yoursocks.com/all-football-socks.html] **However, this would be allowed**

Here's an example of a well-written ad that gives a great user experience to someone searching for 'football socks':

Football Socks from £3.99

Ad www.yoursocks.com/football

Find Your Football Socks Here. Our
Prices Will Knock Your Socks Off!

- - - - - Headline (top 25 characters)
- - - - - Display URL and destination URL (35 characters)
- - - - - Description line 1 (35 characters)
- - - - - Description line 2 (35 characters)



7// Targeting & campaign settings

So you have a list of keywords and have created your ads - now you need to decide who, 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.

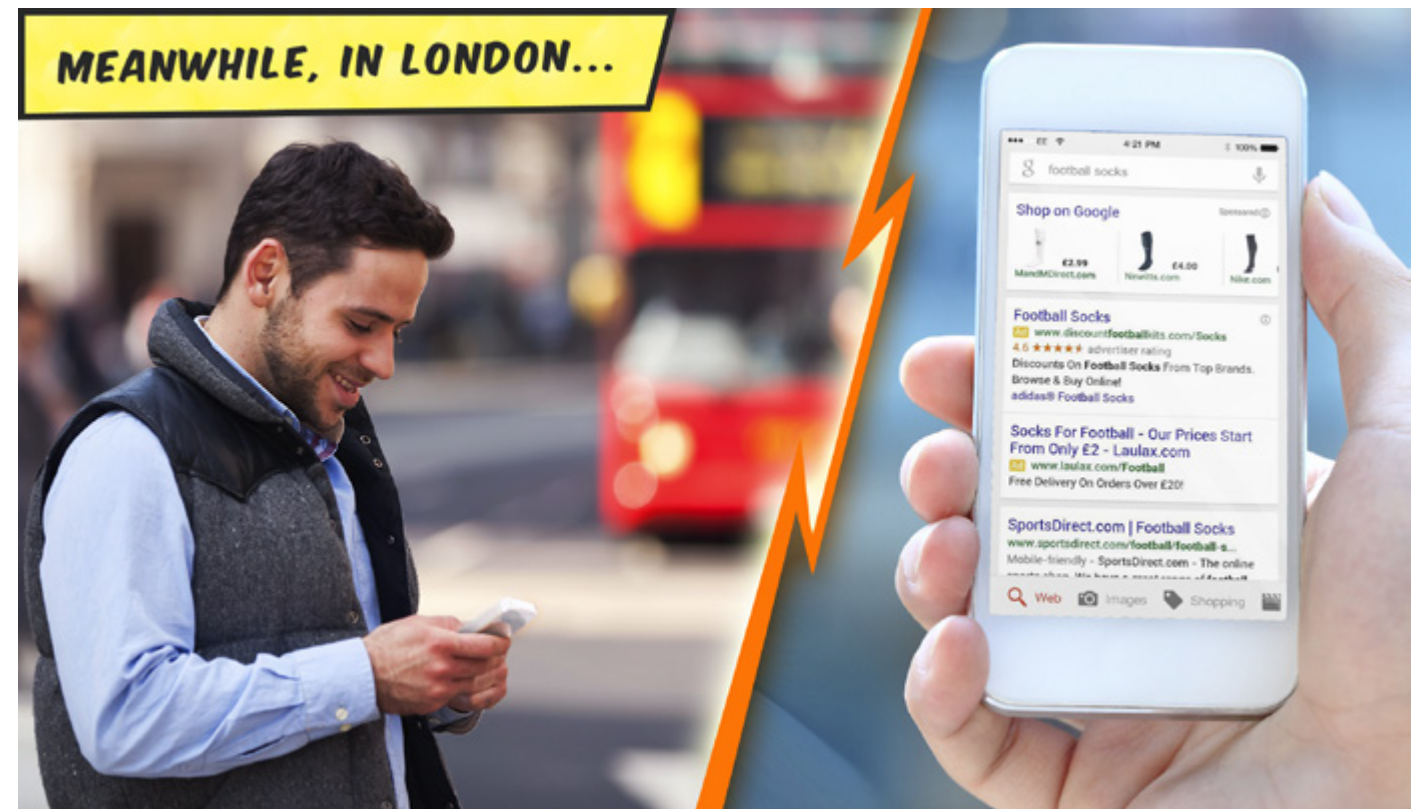
If you select 'search network', your ad will appear in the search engine results pages, as well as any of its related search sites. For AdWords, this would mean Google's search engine including Google Shopping and Google Maps and also its search partners' results, for example, AOL and Ask Jeeves.

You also have the option to select 'display network' (also known as 'content network'). This falls outside the realm of paid search, so is not covered in this eBook.

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 (ie, choose whether your ad appears to mobile users)





8// Tracking

How many people are clicking on your ad (your CTR)? What are they doing when they get to your website's landing page - are they buying, downloading your app, filling in a form?

One of the biggest advantages of paid search is the ability to track the progress and success of your campaigns. This allows you to then maximise the return on your investment (ROI).

By tracking these conversions, you'll know which ads, keywords and campaigns are the most successful. This will help you invest more wisely in the best ones and ultimately, boost your ROI.

Make sure your campaigns have conversion tracking setup, otherwise you are effectively spending money in the dark.

Google Tag Manager is a free tool that allows marketers to easily add and remove tracking code to websites whenever they want. It only requires developer input once, after its set up you can avoid the bottleneck of relying on other teams or agencies.



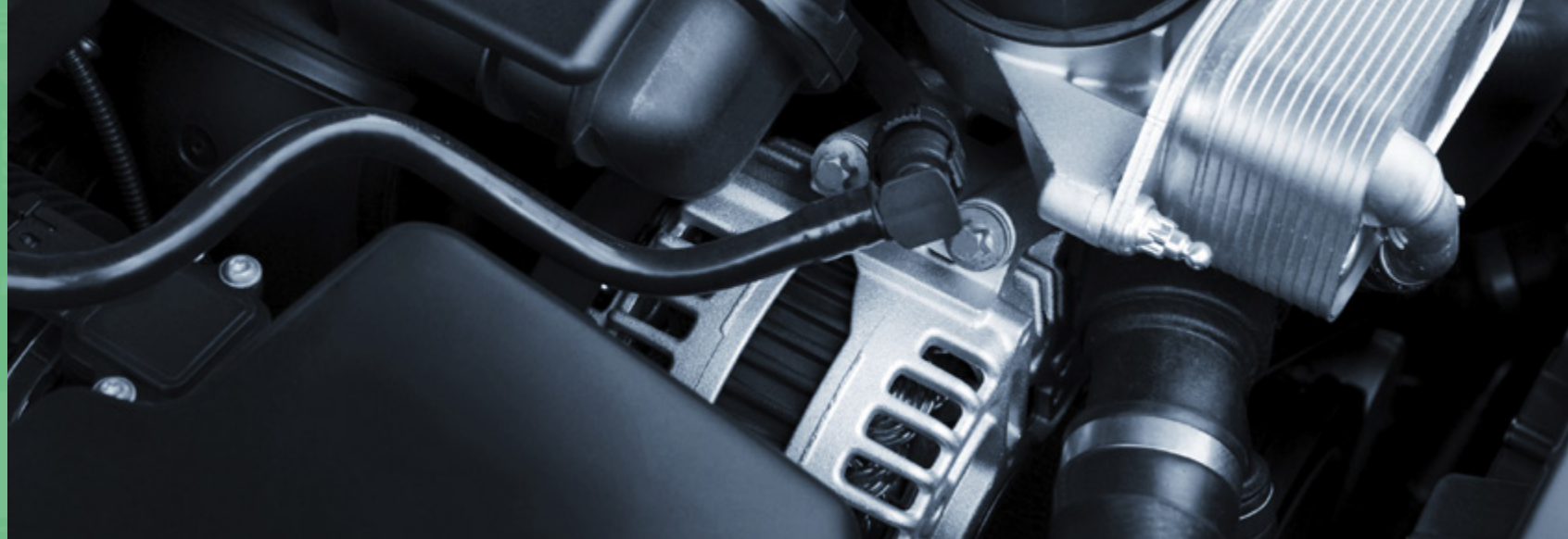
9// Bidding

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.



10// Introduction to optimisation

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

- Keywords & bidding
- Creating ads
- Targeting & settings

These are all areas that you can influence and optimise to improve the performance of your campaigns and this is something we'll cover in our eBook - [A Guide to Paid Search Optimisation.](#)

Remember, clearly defined goals and accurate tracking are the key to paid search success.

11// 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 can 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.

12// References

Google Investor Relations 2014 Financial Tables

Available:

investor.google.com/financial/tables.html

Statista leading search engines October 2014

Available:

www.statista.com/statistics/280269/market-share-held-by-search-engines-in-the-united-kingdom/

Get in touch with us today

Do you need any further assistance with your search marketing strategy?

The Click Consult website features an online resources section, full of useful eBooks. We also write a blog, where you can find an abundance of search marketing tips. If you're feeling social, get in touch on Google+, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.

Looking for an in depth review of your
current PPC strategy?



Get in touch with us on

0845 366 7573

Or request a comprehensive check of your current paid search campaign at

www.click.co.uk/free-13-point-check



