



PAID MEDIA TIPS FOR THE PANDEMIC



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INTRODUCTION

Due to Covid19, it's possible your budgets will have been cut, potentially you'll be asked to achieve more with less; while not impossible, the demands that economic downturns (especially those of the size presently on the horizon thanks to the global pandemic) place on marketing of any kind are always pretty intense. When it comes to paid media, cut backs combined with increased targets are becoming an everyday reality.

While there's a huge pressure, both in terms of time and from senior stakeholders, to make what you're doing go further somehow, it is worth considering that at a time when we're seeing such a huge shift in searcher intent and in how users are buying, it may be worth taking a step back to evaluate everything from the ground up, so this is what we're going to try to approach with this eBook.

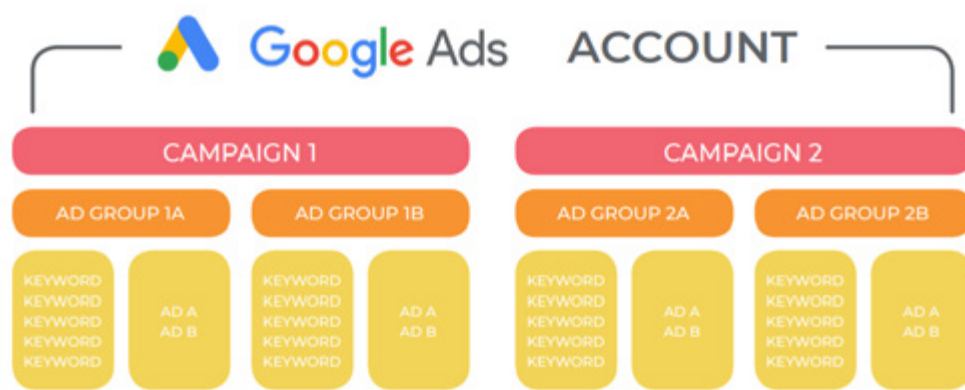
Whether you have the time for a complete clear out and reboot of your PPC strategy, or just need something to give you a clue as to how to operate in a skewed paid media landscape, we hope there'll be something for you.



SPRING CLEANING

As stated, budgets can end up tightening, but that shouldn't mean you have to despair about your paid media. Even the best accounts will move towards full kipplization. Kipple – coined by Philip K. Dick – is the rubbish that seems to accrue without human intervention, and it happens in ad accounts as much as anywhere else. With most ad accounts having multiple users over multiple years, bits and pieces will go awry, and there is no time like the present to thoroughly audit your account and ensure you're getting the biggest bang for your proverbial buck.

Search campaign structure



Campaigns should be structured around your business and campaign objectives. For example, own brand keywords should always be in their own campaign because they are expected to perform very well. Likewise, generic keywords would be in a separate campaign because they are expected to have a lower click through rate (CTR) and conversion rate.

It may be the case that your search campaigns and ad groups need to be restructured, particularly if they are not split out enough and ad text is too generic and not keyword dense.

Similarly, if the account structure is convoluted, this unnecessarily dilutes the data, making it more difficult to complete simple admin tasks and to spot trends which would allow you to focus on the most important and profitable terms.

Some specific questions to ask

Are your ad groups tightly themed?

Ad groups contain keywords with varying intent, ie, it's likely that searchers are looking for different products or services and/or are at different sections of the purchase funnel.

For example, an ad group themed with keywords such as:

- ink epson printers
- cheapest epson inks
- quality epson ink
- epson picturemate ink

The completely different search intents, eg, 'cheap' and 'quality' make it impossible to get a keyword dense ad that perfectly encapsulates the theme of both of these search terms. This can impact your Quality Score.

Fix:

Ad groups need to be well split out, so that ads can be highly targeted to their keywords, which will increase your Quality Score. Similarly, an ad group with a large number of disjointed themes, including keywords such as:

- buy hp ink cartridges
- black hp ink cartridges
- amazon ink cartridges hp
- tesco hp ink cartridges
- refilling hp ink cartridges

Ad groups set up such as these mean that neither the ad copy nor the landing page can be relevant for such disparate keywords. There is also a large difference in a searcher's position in the purchase funnel between the first and last keywords in the above list. 'Buy hp ink cartridges' is quite specific and shows purchase intent, whereas 'refilling hp ink cartridges' is much more research focused.

Fix:

Split out campaigns not just by intent but also position in the purchase funnel, as different call to actions work best for each. By segmenting these into their own campaign, we can accurately monitor search funnels, and whether these users go on to convert at a later time after revisiting the site. Importantly, the research campaign can be used to create an audience list, which can then be used to remarket to, and bring back the users to convert.

Do you have multiple locations in same ad group?

An example of this would be:

- “no win no fee solicitors glasgow”
- “no win no fee claims surrey”
- “no win no fee birmingham”
- “no win no fee manchester”

Fix:

Keywords relating to different locations should be placed in their own ad group for each location, ideally in a purpose built location tailed campaign. People using locations in their search terms want to be reassured by the ad copy that the business has an office in their specified area. By not splitting these out, it is not possible to have location specific ad copy within the ad text, which would greatly increase click through rate for these terms.

Are brand keywords are included in non-brand campaigns?

This could be positively skewing the perceived performance of these non-brand campaigns, which makes it difficult to see where optimisation should be focused and where to apportion budget at a top level.

Fix:

All brand keywords should be placed in their own dedicated brand campaign, so that their performance can be judged independently from non-brand search terms.

Is your campaign is set up as Standard Search?

Standard setting with search campaigns does not allow you to apply bid modifiers such as segmented location targeting or ad scheduling. There is also no option to apply all ad extensions such as callout. This is greatly limiting the potential for your campaign to maximise profitability and click through rate.

Fix:

All campaigns should be set to ‘All features’ and not simply ‘Standard’. This is an easily fixable error that should be rectified immediately to improve campaign efficiencies.

Is driving calls an important KPI for your business?

Consider building a call-only campaign to provide a focus for generating calls for your business. As you are charged per click to call, and each call is treated as a conversion, it can be a very cost effective way of driving more conversions.

Display campaign structure

Have you got a remarketing campaign set up?

Remarketing campaigns are a great way of bringing visitors back to your site who haven't previously converted or even for repeat sales.

Fix:

Set up audience lists for users that have visited particular sections of the site. This way you can retarget them with ad messaging specific to the products/services they have demonstrated interest in previously. You can vary the ad messaging based on how long it has been since they last visited the site and tailor remarketing bids on a number of factors, including overall engagement indicators from their previous visit, such as time on site and number of pages viewed.

You can also use a number of advanced types of audience lists, in order to generate the best return. For example:

- **Customer match:** This enables us to upload your mailing list to remarket to.
- **Similar to audiences:** This isn't strictly remarketing as these are new users, but allows you to target new users who display similar characteristics to people in your other remarketing lists and have previously converted on your site.
- **Smart lists:** A list of users that Google believes are 'ready to convert', determined by a number of factors such as engagement metrics from their previous visit.

With dynamic remarketing, you can make use of your product feed to deliver ads featuring products that visitors have previously expressed interest in. When set up correctly, these generally result in a much stronger ROI than standard remarketing campaigns.

When dynamic remarketing campaigns are set up, Google Ads automatically generates the following audience lists:

- General visitors
- Product viewers
- Shopping basket abandoners
- Past buyers

You can use these to target users differently dependent on their previous actions on the site. This allows you to set more effective bids for users at different points of the purchase cycle.

Are you targeting effectively?

While remarketing is a very effective way of reengaging potential customers who have already visited your website, there are a number of other display targeting methods we can use to attract new users to the website:

- **Keywords:** These will either solely target websites that contain or relate to keywords you add to your campaign, or also target users who have shown an interest in that subject while browsing the internet.
- **Affinity audiences:** Lists of users who have shown an interest in certain categories, such as 'Shopaholics' and 'Luxury Travellers', based on their browsing and search habits.
- **In-market audiences:** Lists of users who have recently shown interest in purchasing certain types of products.
- **Topics:** Lists of website categories, such as 'Price Comparison' and 'Health Insurance'. This enables you to show on the types of websites that are relevant to your business.
- **Placements:** Specific websites that you manually add into (or exclude from) your campaigns.

You can also use Smart Display campaigns, especially to see which audiences would be most effective to target on the Google Display Network. All you need to provide is a target cost per acquisition (CPA), a daily budget and some assets to create ads from (headlines, descriptions, images and logos) and Google Ads will automatically create ads and target users.



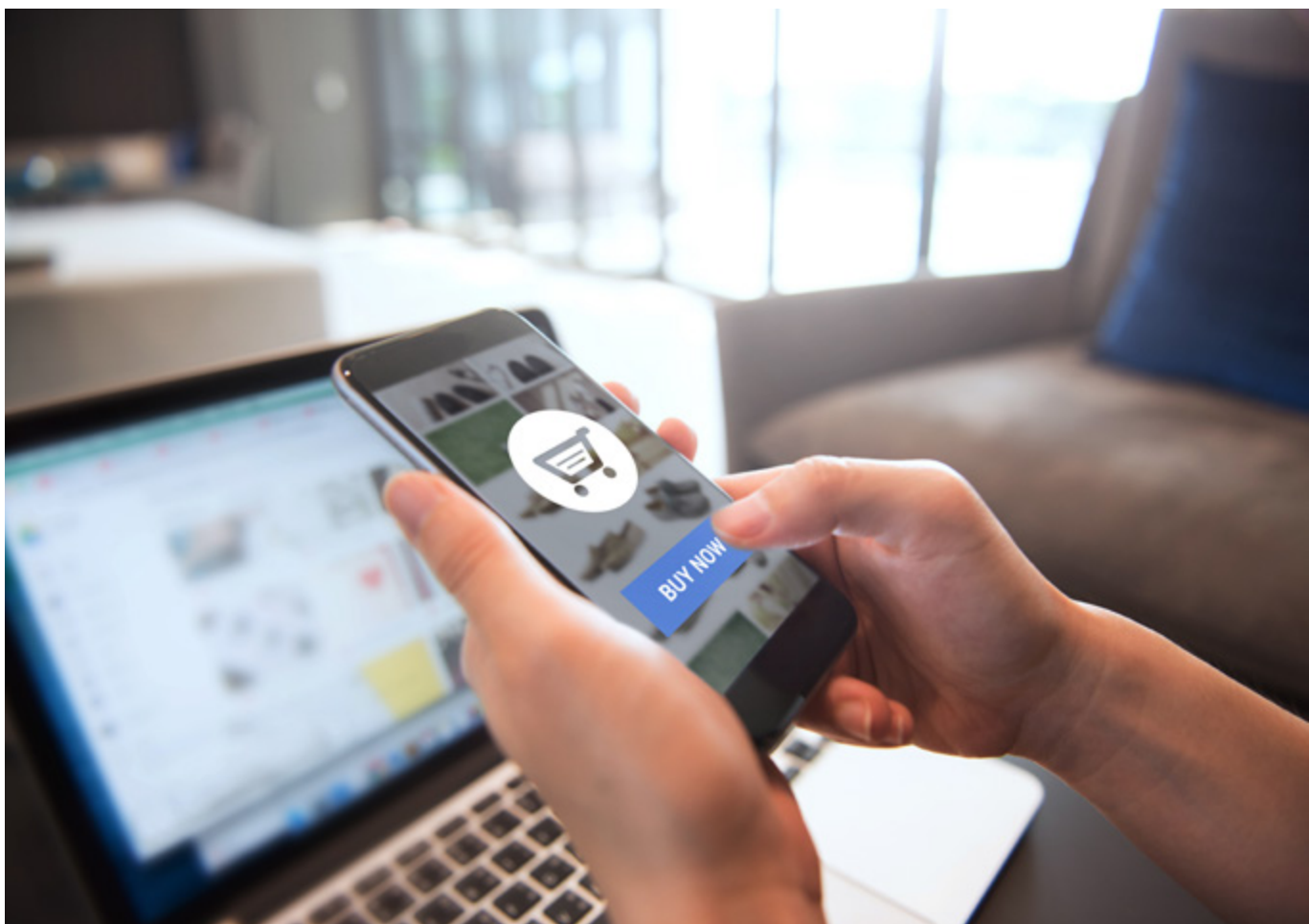
SHOPPING CAMPAIGNS

The Shopping Campaign set up represents one of the biggest opportunities for moving an eCommerce account forward. A well-optimised Shopping Campaign should account for around 60% of Google Ads budget.

Are you only using one campaign for all products/services?

Watch out for very basic Shopping Campaign structures, with just one campaign for all products. Make use of the priority system to create a robust structure. An ideal structure would be of the following form:

- **High priority campaign:** Used for top products or bestsellers that you want to prioritise over other stock to ensure you're always maximising visibility for these.
- **Medium priority campaign:** Follows the same structure of the Search campaigns, so that products are split out by type, to allow for more effective reporting and optimisation.
- **Low priority campaign:** Set up as a 'catch all' in case any products are not captured by the medium or high priority campaigns.



Are campaigns split out down to product category, but not down to ID level?

Bidding by product ID rather than at product group level allows greater control over spend and creates better optimisation opportunities.

Fix:

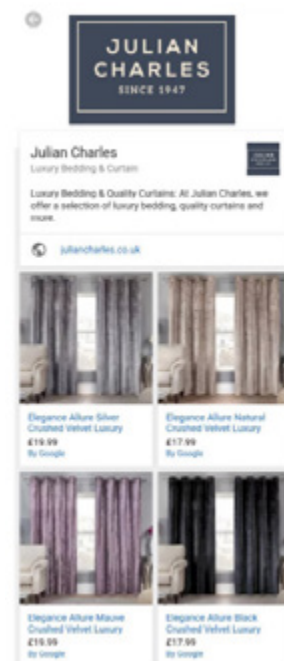
Split out the Shopping Campaign structure and dedicate one item per ad group. This will allow you to control spend and monitor performance at a more granular level, and also refine search queries for each individual product.

Are you making use of showcase ads?

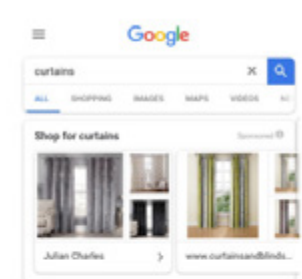
A relatively new and lucrative feature that the account is missing out on is showcase ads. They appear as shown in the examples below for competitive generic searches, displaying the brand name and then a selection of products connected to the search. If not implemented, then this is a missed opportunity for relevant incremental volume and exposure on generics.

Test and improve search term performance product titles, descriptions, and categories as they are the main factors Google's algorithm takes into consideration when matching searches to products.

Expanded ad



Contracted ad



RE-EVALUATING

In addition to the spring cleaning and optimisation activities listed above, it is worth noting that as up to half of some industries have begun to work remotely, there have been marked shifts in various aspects of our lives online. As such, to ensure our paid media budget is working optimally, we need to ensure that such changes are accounted for in our planning.

Bid modifiers

Brands will be running brand monitors which were calculated based on the time of day consumers visit, on their demographics, on the devices they typically use and more beside. However, what we are seeing is huge shifts in how and when consumers are going online. Intent is shifting; trends thought irreversible have, well, at least partially reversed and what brands need to do now is look at our GA data to see how that is changing and adjust our bid modifiers accordingly.

Reduction in mobile traffic

In this regard, what we're seeing for many brands is an increase in desktop sessions at the expense of mobile sessions – this is fairly easy to understand: with fewer commutes, fewer lunch breaks, more people are at their desktop rather than their mobile device throughout the day. Again, this is something you can check in your Google Analytics account – make sure you're continuing to cater for where your customer is, especially if that has changed.

Keyword targeting

The same is true of keywords – there has been tremendous intent shift in recent months. While the rise of 'near me' searches has been phenomenal over the last few years, we're now much more likely to see passive searches, delivery searches and far more information queries. This means having to conduct a whole new keyword research project for your paid search – you'll need to be careful of using only Google's Keyword Explorer tool, however, as more and more keywords are combined in to themes. Instead, look at tools such as Ahrefs and SEMrush to try to determine more reliable volumes for your target keywords.

SOCIALISING

It will probably surprise nobody that the current, near global, lockdown has seen spikes in social media use – with a [report from GlobalWebIndex](#) claiming that 45% of global consumers are spending more time on social media while various reports indicate that engagement rates are up across platforms. For this reason, it's worth considering reallocating some of your usual paid search budget to social media platforms.

Facebook

With over 2.5 billion active registered users, Facebook has the largest potential audience of any social media platform. Your competition is almost certainly there already, with more than 60 million active business pages on the site.

There are, on average, five new profiles created every second, which means that the Facebook audience does not face the stagnation in growth of some other platforms. In addition, efforts to maintain growing profitability mean that ad targeting, placement and campaign management options are good – arguably the most developed of all the social platforms.

In terms of ads themselves, Facebook offers many creative options, including:

- **Instagram ads** - a fantastic cross-platform opportunity for brands, with Instagram targeted as part of Facebook's ad network.
- **Carousel ads** – with the option to show up to five product images, these are a great choice for eCommerce websites (example shown right).
- **Lead ads** – which have great potential as a remarketing tool for previous non-converters.
- **Dynamic product ads** – similar to Google Shopping ads, allowing brands to upload a feed to Facebook to showcase their products.
- **Canvas ads** – which are specifically targeted to mobile devices.
- **Stories** – these are customisable, edge-to-edge experiences permitting you to immerse people in your content.
- **Messenger** – messenger ads allow you to start conversations with your brand, reaching out to current or potential customers with interactive and automated content.
- **Playable ads** – these help to improve downloads by offering interactive previews of apps and games.

You can also use Facebook to promote your branded content using video (it's often credited as a main driver of video content's proliferation), as well as drive users to apps and websites.

Other advantages of advertising on Facebook are that it allows advanced targeting for devices (for even greater audience segmentation), and allows for ad scheduling option (convenient and timesaving).

Instagram

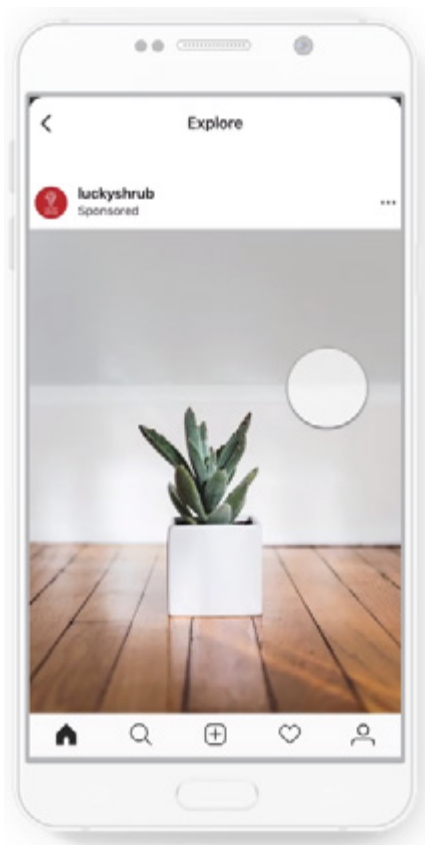
Targeting on Instagram, the photo and video sharing platform, is the same as for Facebook's ad network (as it's owned by Facebook).

Instagram's ads are very much creative-led, and aimed at allowing businesses to 'share their stories' with a highly with the options off photo, video (up to 30 seconds) and carousel ads.

This platform is ideal for brands who want to showcase their creatives, even just simple photography, particularly if they fit within one of the massively popular Topics, such as fitness, food, fashion or make-up. For those who want to focus on brand growth and awareness, this can be indispensable.

Instagram ads feature action-oriented buttons that appear below the image: Learn More, Shop Now, Install Now, and Sign Up. While many of the options are a match for those offered on Facebook, there are also opportunities unique to Instagram.

- **Ads in 'Explore'** – which allows you to reach potential consumers as they search for interests.
- **Stories ads** – which offer the opportunity to connect with the almost 500 million accounts currently using stories every day.



Twitter

One of the advantages of Twitter ads is the ability to target audiences very precisely. Twitter allows both geo and language-targeting, which means you can promote your content in specific local markets. A similar approach can be taken to verticals, by targeting a core list of thought leaders using appropriate hashtags.

You can choose from a range of campaign options based on your objectives:

- **Follower campaigns** – aimed at boosting follower growth, which is beneficial for new accounts looking to build their social presence and/or further establish their brand. They can also be used to drive purchases, leads, downloads, and signups; increase brand awareness and word of mouth sharing; and drive web traffic.
- **Awareness campaigns** – these maximise the reach of your ads and help expose them to as many people as possible.
- **Tweet engagement campaigns** – allow you to start conversations and engage with your audience. You can promote Tweets that are published organically or create tweets that are only promoted to the audiences you target and only pay when users you target engage with your content.
- **Click/conversion campaigns** – optimised to drive traffic and generate website conversion to a specific group of users. A 'website card' is featured in the tweet and this gives users more context about your site and you only pay per website click.

These are just a selection of the objectives which are split across the 'awareness, consideration, and conversion' funnel – though the only conversion option available at the moment is app reengagement.

Some of the actual ad options available are as follows:

- **App installs/engagement campaigns** – these enable you to drive users to download or open mobile apps directly from within a tweet.
- **Video campaigns** – videos on Twitter drive the highest recall and emotional connection, and these campaigns allow you to use them to reach targeted, engaged consumers. A major USP of Twitter is its powerful search engine search.twitter.com. Twitter search will help you find usernames of relevant influencers and industry leaders to target. It's also easy to identify the followers of competitors and target those users. Like FACEBOOK, Twitter is very device-driven and offers the opportunity for advanced targeting by device, and to schedule your ads in advance.
- **Conversational ads** – allow you to get your audience to engage and interact with your ads by including call to action buttons with customisable hashtags that encourage customers to share your ad with their followers. For example, they can be used to ask customers to express an opinion.
- **Instant unlock cards** – these build on the conversational ad format by offering exclusive content to those who retweet your hashtags.

Pinterest

The online image sharing and curation site positions itself as a platform for online search as much as a social networking site, allowing brands to align their content with relevant search terms as well as user interests.

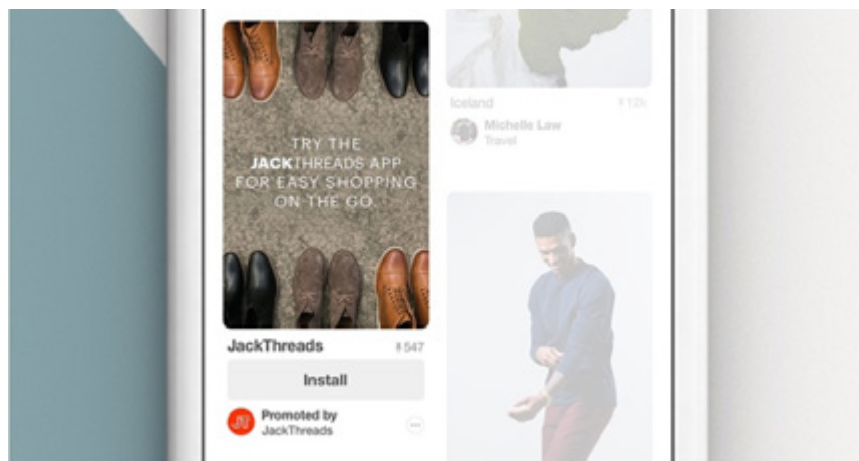
People come to Pinterest seeking ideas and inspiration (most often related to DIY, recipe and home décor), rather than to network with friends, and that this makes it an ideal place for your brand to showcase its products and services via Promoted Pins.

As three quarters of content posted on Pinterest comes from businesses, it's more likely you'll attract more qualified clicks and engagement than on other social networks. According to Pinterest, Promoted Pins drive 77% more online conversions than other social platforms.

Promoted Pins take the same format as organic content, in that their success visually-led and rely on creativity, and are signposted as paid-for. Pinterest has been one of the leaders in social media marketing – recruiting various high-profile people from Walmart and Google to head up their paid offering.

Among the ad types on offer are:

- **Promoted Pin** – the basic ad format with a single featured image. Any business account (with an active billing profile) can use Promoted Pins.
- **Promoted Video Pins** – aim to grab people's attention and tell strong stories with video. There are various lengths and video formats.
- **Promoted Carousel** – these contain multiple images (up to five) to allow brands to tell a deeper story.
- **Promoted App Pins** – these make it easy for people to discover and download your app directly from Pinterest. When clicked, users can download your app without having to leave Pinterest.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn has a much smaller audience than Twitter and Facebook and it focuses on business connections, so is a good choice for B2B marketers. While it lacks the integration of professional bid management platforms, it allows very precise targeting reach. You can target by job title, employer, role, skills, and interests. Another advantage is that user profiles usually contain very detailed and up-to-date information compared with what people are likely to list about themselves on other social networking sites.

Another valuable aspect of a LinkedIn campaign is the ability to turn on 'lead collection', which allows users to send you their contact info and ask to be contacted. It's similar to a contact form approach, but due to its tight integration with the platform, it's simple for the user and has a more secure feel to it.

While some of the targeting options on this platform are very similar to Facebook and Twitter (target by age, friends, company, etc.), LinkedIn allows you to get even more granular, as you can target people by job title, employer, industry, and even skills/interests. Usefully, as you pick your targeting options, a preview screen shows the possible reach.

Text ads

- Allow you to advertise to decision-makers across companies, target potential consumers on desktop devices across LinkedIn.com, and drive leads.
- Consist of a headline (25 characters), description (75 characters) and optional image.
- Can be set to cost per click (CPC) or cost per impression (CPM).
- May appear on homepage, profile page, search results page, Groups pages, LinkedIn inbox, People You May Know page, Who's Viewed My Profile page.

Sponsored content

A type of native advertising that can appear either directly in the LinkedIn feeds of a targeted audience, or via personalised messages on LinkedIn Messenger (Sponsored InMail).

- Can include rich media to stand out in the feed.
- Allow you to collect leads using pre-filled lead gen forms.
- Allow you to test and optimise campaigns in real time.
- Can be set to cost per click (CPC) or cost per impression (CPM).

YouTube

As the second most used search engine after Google, with over a billion views every day, YouTube probably has the largest comparative reach out of all the social advertising channels.

As most people visit YouTube with the aim of watching a specific type of content, advertising here allows for precise targeting.

However, YouTube ads are more about creating brand awareness and loyalty: you can't measure success in terms of clicks and conversions in the same way as other channels.

Instead, the key metrics with YouTube are:

- View Through Rate (the number of completed views of a skippable ad over the number of initial impressions)
- Average Cost Per Click
- Video Viewership (how long your ad is watched for)
- Earned Views (when someone who views your video ad and then watches another video or videos from your YouTube channel)

These are the key formats within the YouTube ad realm:

- **Display ads** – appear to the right of the video playing and above the video suggestions list.
- **Overlay ads** – are semi-transparent overlay ads appearing in the lower 20% of a video.
- **Skippable video ads** – are ads allowing viewers to skip ads after five seconds and are inserted before, during or after the main video.
- **Sponsored cards** – these display content that may be relevant to a video, such as products featured in the video.

YouTube Ads can be shown across YouTube Search and YouTube Videos, including Google partner sites, apps and the Google Display Network.

To ensure your ads reach the relevant user, we can target users with a combination of options including: behaviour, interests, Remarketing, placements and keywords.

However, the greatest YouTube advertising strategy won't be successful without great content: the first five seconds of an ad is the most important time to capture a viewer's attention and forge a connection. So follow the same advice as given earlier in this eBook about clarifying objectives, developing a brand personality and communicating your message, as you would for creating nonpaid-for content.

CONCLUSION

Paid media professionals are used to working under tight budgetary constraints and, as one of the most easily measured digital channels, are used to having to prove their worth. Despite this, the current situation is going to take all of your many skills to ensure that you're managing your budgets in the best way possible.

However, there is nothing presented by the pandemic crisis that most paid media professionals have not overcome at some point in their career. By beginning your analysis and optimisation from the ground up as you would with any other account you view for the first time, you can look to implement the changes you and the brand you're working with or for that will ensure they come out of the current situation stronger than ever – and, importantly, with a greater respect for the role that paid media plays in the success of brands large and small.



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ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning search and digital marketing agency with two decades of experience. 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.

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 Drum Recommends.

We're here to help - whether you're looking to hire an agency to undertake technical and creative work behind the scenes until the present situation is clear, or you just need some free advice. You can get in touch using hello@click.co.uk.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

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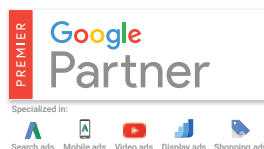
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