PPC UNCOVERED
[REMASTERED]

An Advanced Guide To Paid Search

CHAPTER 1
*Strategy*

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The total percentage of digital spending reached almost $101 billion in 2019/20 on paid search alone – a massive 46% of total spend – and the growth seems set to continue. One of the reasons for this (and there are many) is that it works.

The trend in revenue between 1996 and 2016 was staggering (see below), which obviously encourages more and more brands to adopt paid search (PPC) as a key part of their marketing strategy. We've referenced this because in the last four years the trend has doubled hand over fist with the revenue trajectory producing a graph far beyond a humble PPC guide. More brands are advertising, more consumers are clicking and more money is being generated by this marketing channel. When this is combined with a near constant effort on behalf of the main search engines to improve ad functionality, visibility and performance, there seems to be every reason to be involved and few to miss out.

However, for those that have been working on their Google Ads accounts for a number of years, or for those whose accounts have been managed by multiple individuals over the years, your paid search performance is almost certainly not all it could be.

The longer a Google Ads account is running, the more people are involved in its maintenance, the more likely it is that inefficiencies will creep into the mix, robbing even the best performing accounts of the chance to achieve everything they can.

Quarterly revenue growth trends 1996-2016 ($ billions)
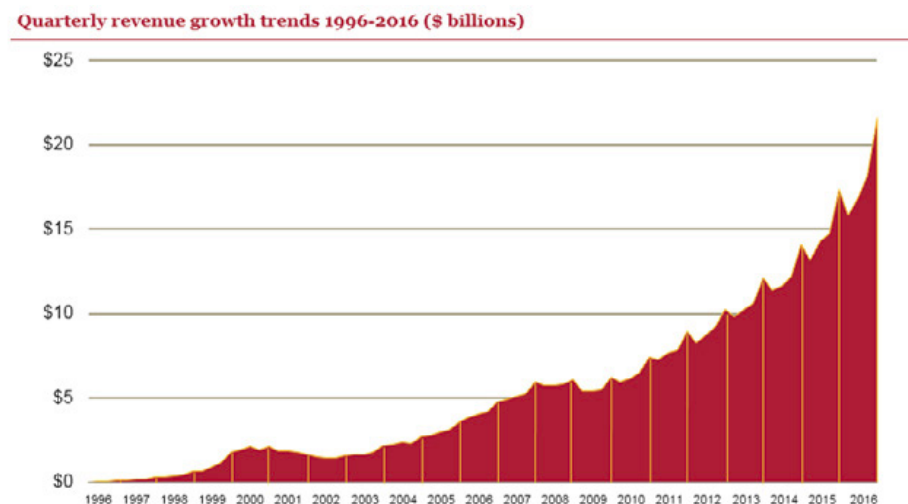
Source: IAB/PwC Internet Ad Revenue Report, FY 2016

CREATING CONSUMER PERSONAS

In various research projects, both from Click Consult and industry bodies, it is confirmed time and again that one of the leading factors in customer loyalty, and in selection of brands to purchase from, is the level of affinity they feel for the brand – and this is largely achieved through personalisation and targeting.

WHY CREATE CONSUMER PERSONAS?

Whether for B2C or B2B, consumer personas should be at the core of a data-driven strategy. These personas are idealised versions of your prospective or existing customer base, and the primary focus of your search strategy will be to ensure that your site is as relevant and appropriate to these personas as possible. Though, of course, these should be open to change based on the data you discover later in the process, it is important for you to have at least a sketched outline to build upon and add to.

The main reason for this is that search marketing is, in essence, a method of engineering a customer journey. Though a good marketer will ensure that there are routes and entry points that begin in various places, the destination for each journey should be eventual conversion. For this reason, it makes the process easier to know who you want these journeys to appeal to and, therefore, how to lead them through all of the variously constructed paths to conversion.

The following represents key aspects of research to consider when developing these personas. As stated previously, there is no one size fits all – but all good persona creation will consider these aspects.

Target demographic (industry specific)
At the point of beginning a business venture, there will have been at least some knowledge of where and to whom similar companies are pitching their goods and service. Though it is increasingly the desire for online consumers to receive highly relevant marketing, at this point it is safe to generalise – think of this stage as a rough sketch, the detail and shading of your personas will come later.

For example, if you are a fitness instructor leading Zumba or yoga classes, it could be reasonably assumed that your clientele will be predominately female, more so that they may be 25-50 years old. Though, clearly, this will not represent the full extent of the consumer base for the service, it represents an outline which is useful to carry through to the following steps.

Device use

Understanding how your consumers (both existing and idealised) use their devices is important for a number of reasons – not least of which is in the development of your site following the move to Mobile First Google update which indexes the mobile version of a site first as a priority to non-optimised or desktop only optimised sites.
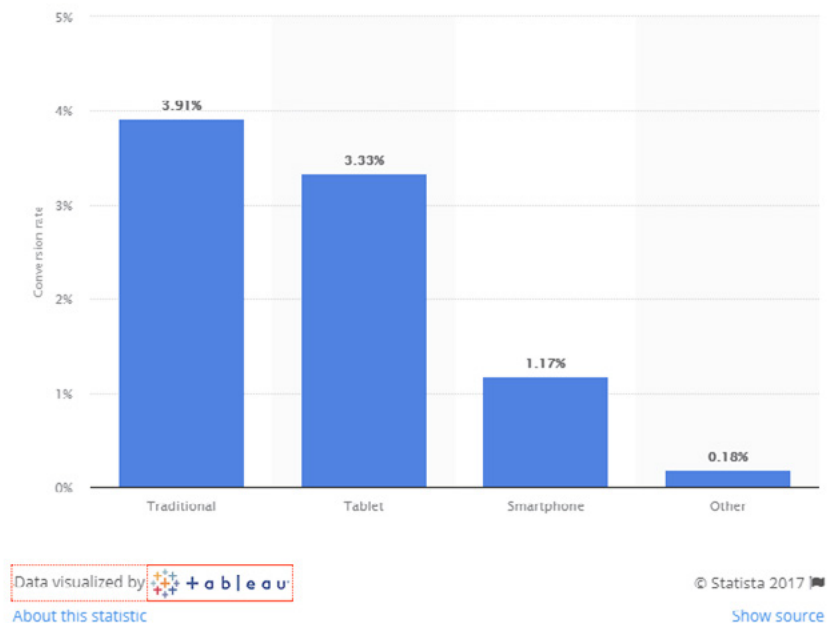
Device use also offers correlation with intent – with buyer research, search investigation, and resultant purchasing being performed predominately on desktops (see table above), while solution based searches, local searches and voice searches tend to drive mobile intent.

Being able to determine device intent will feed directly into any good search marketing campaign, granting rather than permitting brands the ability to design a strategy which permits cross-platform journeys and personalisation, nurturing consumer relationships to increase eventual conversion whichever device they use.

Mobile search also tends to be influenced more by location, offering brands with a location specific, or multiple, location specific offers or products – whether this is a store locator or direct call function, thereby allowing brands to focus on driving mobile users to convert in person, while expecting desktop users to purchase online – for example, while promoting a 'store locator', RadioShack estimated that somewhere between 40% and 60% of users visited a store, while 85% of those made a purchase.

Clearly it may be the case that the products or services offered by specific brands may be friendlier to one device over another – but this is the reason a strategy should be data-driven. Here we are talking generally, but a good search strategy must deal with specifics.

Useage charts

As much as knowledge of device use will help you to plan your site and the way you deliver product and service information, knowing about the times of consumer use is also important in deciding time dependent parts of any strategy. If, for example, use peaks in working hours then this should be your focus for updates, offer message, fresh content and the like, or if an eCommerce site is to make the most of its consumer base it must also look to work to its strengths during periods of high seasonal or holiday activity – think Christmas for toy manufacturers, or summer for BBQ equipment.

It's not enough to be online for these periods; it is important to use gathered data and your buyer personas to make your best pitches at times when your services are most required, to help you stand out from the competition. Though this is predominately of relevance to paid search campaigns, it is also useful when planning asset marketing for inbound sales, email, social media and content marketing, and even for seasonal updates to product feeds.

Device Preferences Throughout the Day
Most Weekday Tablet Usage Occurs Between 8pm and 9pm
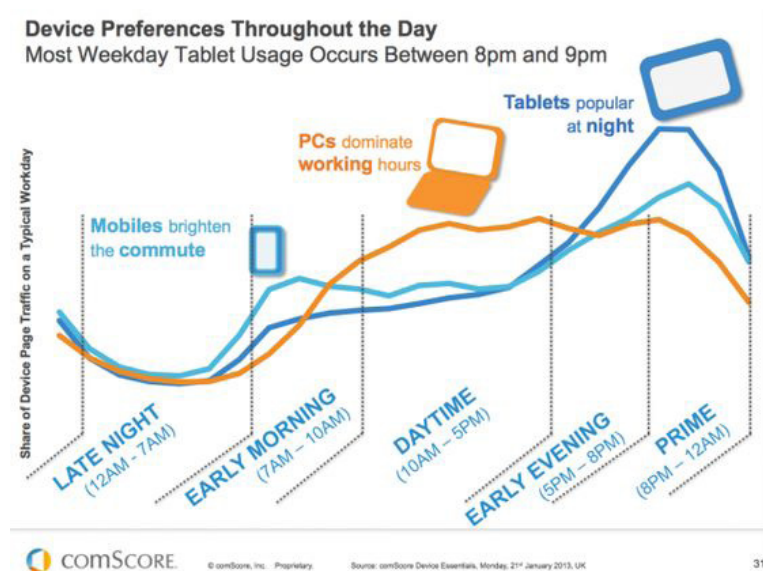
KEYWORD ANALYSIS

DEVELOPING A LIST

Brainstorming

As with an organic keyword strategy, we'd recommend creating buyer personas – archetypal consumers of your goods or services with which you can plot levels of intent and queries that may typify these stages. Though consumers are never the same individually, a large enough consumer base will allow for more generic assumptions so that personalisation to a number of personas can lead to a greater appearance of personalisation throughout the conversion funnel.

Once the buyer personas are in place, the next step is to brainstorm words or terms around your goods and services – as in the example below, each word or term can then become a hub for further expansion of the list. With 'shoes' broken down into varieties of shoe, then into colours, gender specific varieties and on and on, each step increasing your list of words and terms for the next step.

This can then be combined with information from your Analytics account to see what consumers are searching for on your site, or to check anchor text for inbound links, Google's autocomplete can be used to find the top performing autocompletes for your terms.

> **DID YOU KNOW?**
> The most expensive keyword to target in 2020 is "insurance".

Using search

As latent semantic indexing has improved with the advent of 2013 Google algorithm update Hummingbird and the new levels of query relevancy determination offered by RankBrain, a lot of brands and agencies have begun to place less importance on the role of keywords in SEO – but in PPC, the right keyword approach is vital.
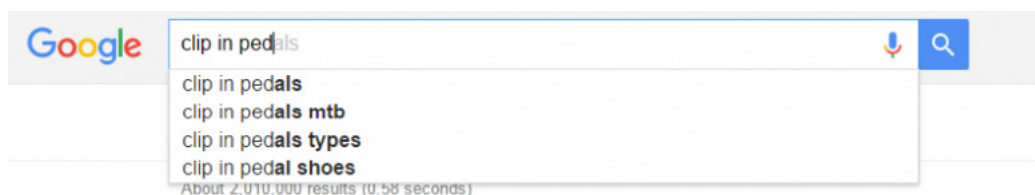
For example – if someone is looking to make a purchase for a new hobby, in which they are interested, but about which they lack a degree of knowledge of key terms, then they are going to be searching more general, long tail keywords and are going to rely on strategies that account for this.
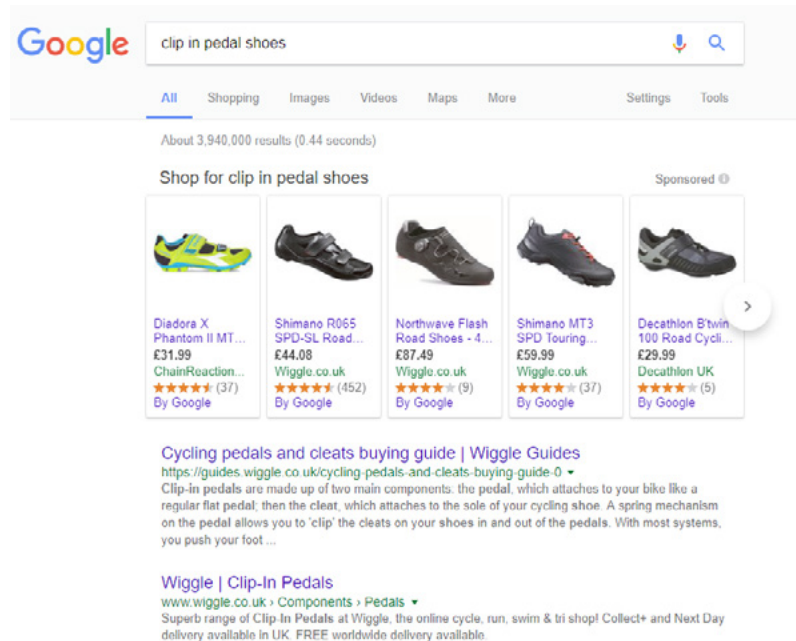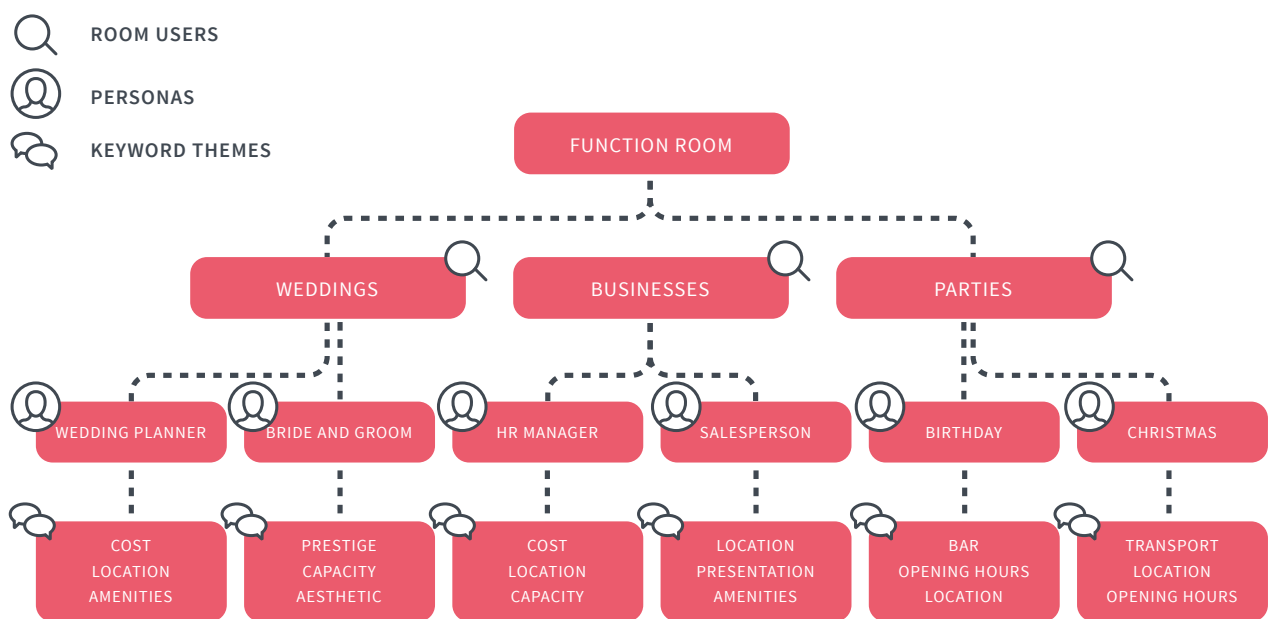

In addition, good keyword research will reveal gaps – areas with low, no or little competition from your rivals. If your brand is new to a marketplace, the chances are that competitors will be well established for trophy keywords, whereas there may be appropriate, industry specific long tail gaps that can be exploited for early gains.

This is a good time to start thinking about your buyer personas, what are they looking for, what will they want to know and at what stage in the buying cycle will they want to know it? Think about how you search on a phone as opposed to on a laptop. Are there differences in your own search types from one device to another? What are your intentions across devices?
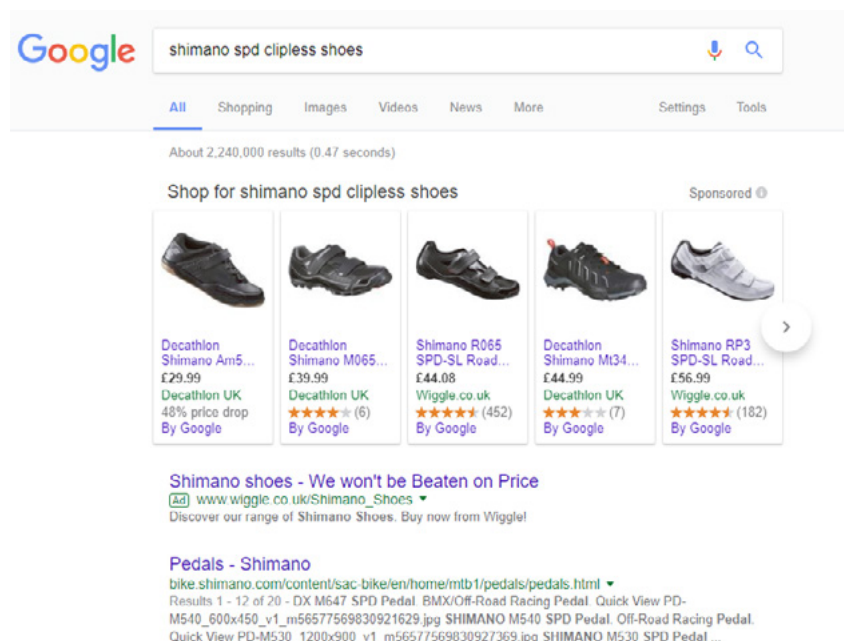
Think about levels of interest and expertise of your buyer personas – are people looking for brand specific items, using specific industry jargon more likely to want to buy or to need information than those searching for generic, non-specific terms? How can your keyword targeting nurture the buyer journey by delivering the right content at the right time?

Once you have assembled lists of key terms and questions, use online tools (such as Google's Keyword Planner) to quantify density and, therefore, which of these should be the focus of your efforts. Ideally you're looking for the golden ration of low competition and high volume. Also, use Analytics to monitor in-site searches – those customers are searching while on your page – as well as popular landing pages and seek to consolidate these terms externally.

ROOM USERS

PERSONAS

KEYWORD THEMES

FUNCTION ROOM

WEDDINGS

BUSINESSES

PARTIES

WEDDING PLANNER

BRIDE AND GROOM

HR MANAGER

SALESPERSON

BIRTHDAY

CHRISTMAS

COST
LOCATION
AMENITIES

PRESTIGE
CAPACITY
AESTHETIC

COST
LOCATION
CAPACITY

LOCATION
PRESENTATION
AMENITIES

BAR
OPENING HOURS
LOCATION

TRANSPORT
LOCATION
OPENING HOURS

Three simple steps

Think like a customer – pick short and long tail keywords likely to be searched by your buyer personas.

- **Look for gaps –** in a crowded marketplace it can be difficult for newcomers to compete against established companies. So don't compete, find where they aren't present.

- **Rank for priority –** it is counterproductive to spread yourself too thin, so choose your targets wisely and look for the golden ratio of high volume, low competition.

- **Consolidate gains –** if you begin to rank for certain terms, don't rest on your laurels but continue to target these keywords as you expand your target list.

Using Google's Keyword Planner

We're going to assume you have a list of keywords already and are simply looking to expand your lists and obtain some more data (if not, you can take a look at our guide to SEO strategy to create one – a process that can be used for both SEO and PPC).

What is Keyword Planner?

Keyword Planner is a Google tool within Google Ads which enables brands to get visibility of search volume and potential costs of specific keywords and also to build out their keyword lists for both SEO and PPC purposes.

How to use Keyword Planner

First up, you'll need to log in to Google Ads before you can use the tool, then you can access Keyword Planner. Here there are two distinct types of research you can do through the tool:

- **Keyword research** – you can use Keyword Planner to find additional keyword targets for your Google Ads campaigns and SEO keyword targeting which are relevant to your industry, landing pages and marketing collateral.

- **Keyword analysis** – secondly, you can use the tool to mine data for search volume and see how your budget may perform for select keyword groups. This can help you prioritise content for high volume search terms, as well as help you to decide which keywords you need to bid on and how much.
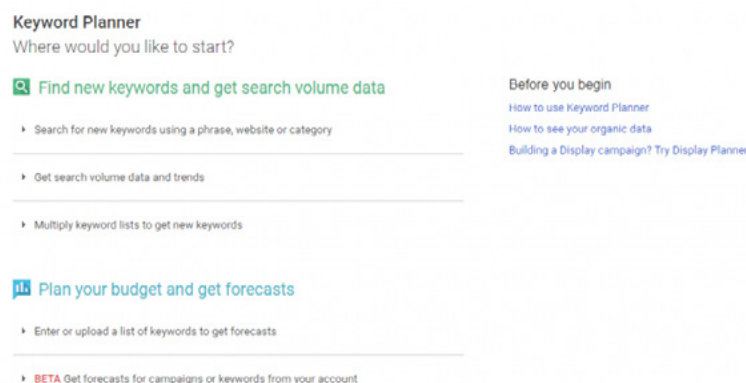
Building on or improving your keyword list

Building out your keyword list predominately involves the top of the two options above – 'Find new keywords and get search volume' – which is broken in to three options. These options are, loosely, a keyword generator, a concatenation tool and a keyword explorer.

Keyword generation

The first step to building or improving your keyword list using Keyword Planner is to generate some keywords – this can be done quite quickly and easily by expanding the 'Search for new keywords using a phrase, website or category' box.

A dummy example using the Click Consult site

If you input your service or product offering, site address and product category and click 'Get Ideas', you will be taken to the next screen which will give you keyword ideas, search volume, the level of competition you can expect and a suggested PPC bid amount.
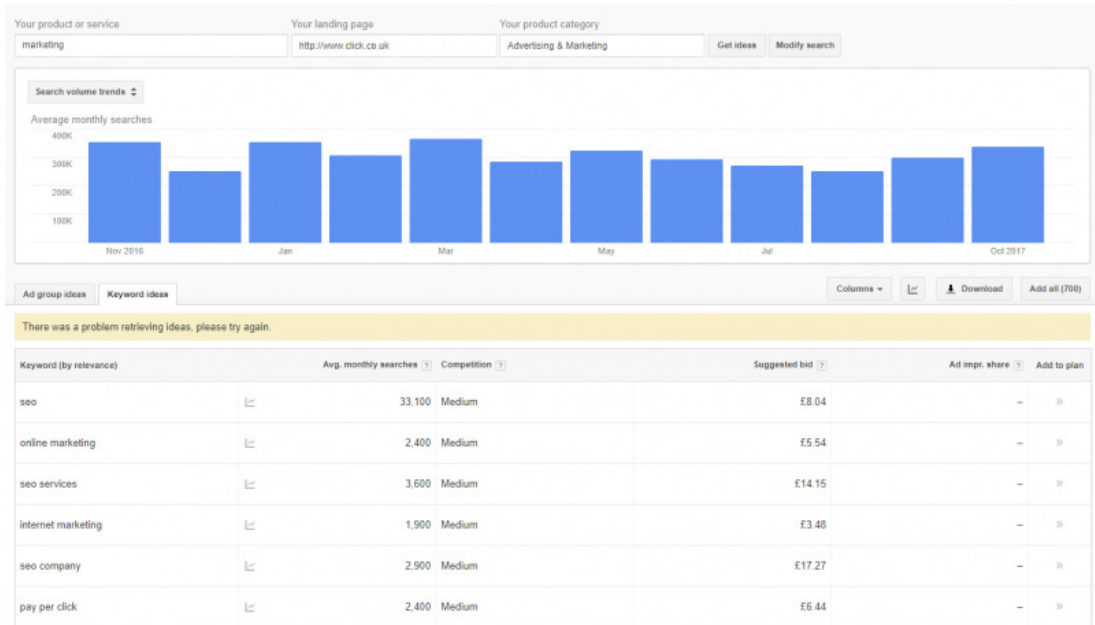
As you will see from the above results, the answers provided are pretty generic – but this is a problem you can resolve by being more specific with the product or service description. In addition, you can reorder the results by search volume, competition (and the rest) which can allow you look for more niche terms to target.

The box below this in the main option list is 'Get search volume data and trends', but as the other two options both show this data, we can leave this and use the keywords generated in the first step and use the concatenate function in the third.

Concatenation

By expanding the 'Multiply keyword lists to get new keywords' box, you have the option to paste some keywords in to the two revealed boxes and further extend your lists.

By clicking 'Get search volume', you will then be taken to another search volume report which will give you a breakdown of average monthly searches, competition and suggested bid for a host of combined terms (the small lists above returned keyword options).
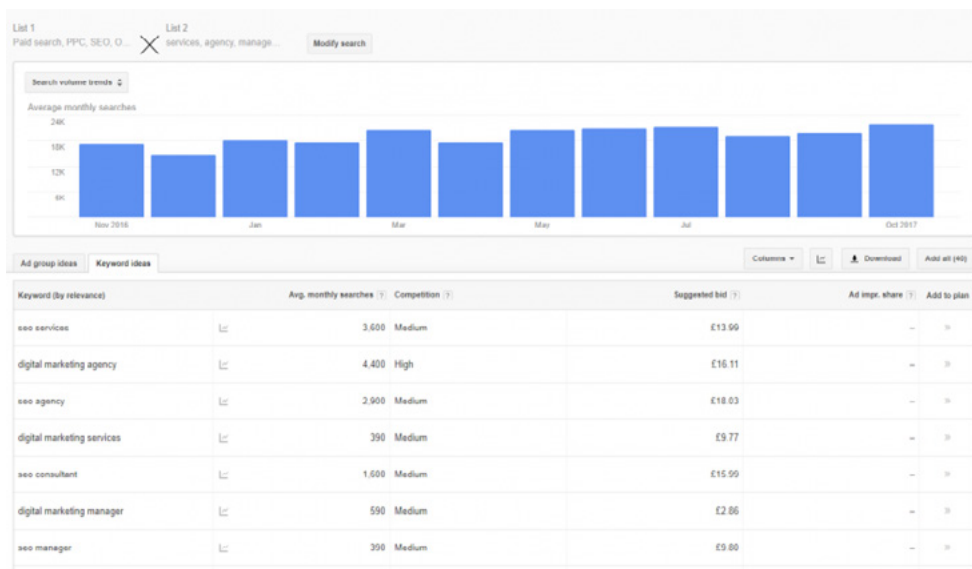
These keywords can then be incorporated into your Google Ads account – using the 'Add all' button at the top right of the table – or downloaded for reporting.

PRIORITISING KEYWORDS

This process of refinement is about finding those areas which are best suited to your brand's financial and market position, in which to compete. By narrowing down your list by those terms with the highest traffic and a recommended bid which is within your comfort zone, you can reduce your list to terms you know you can successfully compete for, that have sufficient traffic to drive conversions and which are representative of your brand.

Once you have these lists, you can then segment them by the level of intention they demonstrate. As shown below, there are levels of intent inherent in specific searches. A 'buy white adidas trainers' search, for example, is much closer to conversion in our spiral diagram than simply 'white trainers'.

WHAT MAKES THE RIGHT KEYWORD "RIGHT"?

AUDIENCE TERMS

COMPLEMENTARY PRODUCT TERMS

PRODUCT TERMS

CONVERSION

BRANDED TERMS

COMPETITOR TERMS

SUBSTITUTE PRODUCT TERMS

Keywords for PPC are part of a journey toward conversion - that's why we've used the spiral over the conventional target metaphor. With a target, anything less than a bulls eye (conversion) is a miss, yet each keyword target fulfills a separate need, caters to a different level of intent. To ensure you are practicing the right keyword strategy, ideally you should be covering as many of these as possible to guide the consumer toward your goal. Some journeys start closer to the centre, some do not follow the expected route - but by being present at each step, you can avoid missing an opportunity.

Brand Terms: These are those closest to conversion - representing the highest level of intent. The consumer knows your brand, have done their research and are well on their way.

Product Terms: These are about what your product is or does - and represent probably the last stage of research before the consumer is ready for purchase level searches.

Competitor Terms: Consumers at this level are far enough along to be looking for types of specific goods or services. Competing at this point is less effective than it was, but could still sway potential consumers of rival brands.

Substitute Product Terms: At this level, consumers are looking for items or services in the same area as those you provide and with the right ad, may be convinced yours are right for them.

Complementary Product Terms: Consumers here are looking for items that accompany the services or items you sell - accessories etc. With well crafted ads, they could see the need for your products too.

Audience Terms: These are terms remaining (that do not fit with other groupings), but that might represent activities or searches typical to your buyer persona, at this stage ads would be considered as predominately to raise awareness.

INDUSTRY AND COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

Unlike with industry research for SEO or content, you are not necessarily competing with your biggest rival or drawing solely on your industry knowledge when looking at PPC (though, obviously, industry expertise helps) – it's for that reason we'd recommend that your industry research is conducted predominately through tools that cater specifically for paid search.

> **DID YOU KNOW?**
> Facebook's ad revenues eclipsed the entire print industry in 2019. As a result, marketers who invested in these advertisements reaped huge benefits...

COMPETITION IN SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS PAGES

These tools include Searchmetrics (which offers a competition report that reveals competition for your keyword targets with clickable features that show which specific keywords you overlap for), SEMrush which has both free and paid options that allow you to view competitor ad copy, average position and more, and the free-to-use Auction Insights option in Google Ads (though this will require you to have at least run an example campaign to test the water).

'Auction Insights' can be found in Google Ads in the Campaign tab, by selecting the campaign you want competitor insights for (obviously, the more campaigns you have, the more granular and useful your data will be).


Once you select the insights for the ticked campaign, you will be taken to a report that breaks down the campaign between you and your competition – this can be broken down by day of the week, day, week, month, quarter, year or device and reveals your campaign performance compared to that of competitors for keywords, ad groups and campaigns participating in the same auctions.

Display URL domain	Impression share ↓	Avg. position	Overlap rate	Position above rate	Top of page rate	Outranking share
ask.com	18.42%	3	40.88%	57.86%	6.88%	6.13%
Other	18.42%	3.0	40.88%	57.86%	6.88%	6.13%
virginmedia.com	11.94%	1.5	8.03%	88.74%	88.08%	7.46%
Other	11.94%	1.5	8.03%	88.74%	88.08%	7.46%
You	< 10%	2.8	--	--	4.58%	--
Other	< 10%	2.8			4.58%	
broadbandchoices.co.uk	< 10%	3	3.01%	100.00%	63.92%	7.79%
Other	< 10%	3.0	3.01%	100.00%	63.92%	7.79%

Show rows 500 ▾   1 - 4 of 4

From this report it's possible to deduce how close you are in terms of bid amount through the 'Outranking share', how often you compete in the same auction through 'Overlap rate' (and therefore if there are any keywords you are potentially missing out on).

If you are looking to check out the competition for free prior to the launch of your first campaign, however, there is always the option of searching for your keywords and checking in the SERPs what your competition is doing – this can give you some insight as to standard industry tone, the calls to action that your industry is employing, what kind of extensions they are using and more – these, for example, are the ads showing above our organic result for 'search marketing agency'.
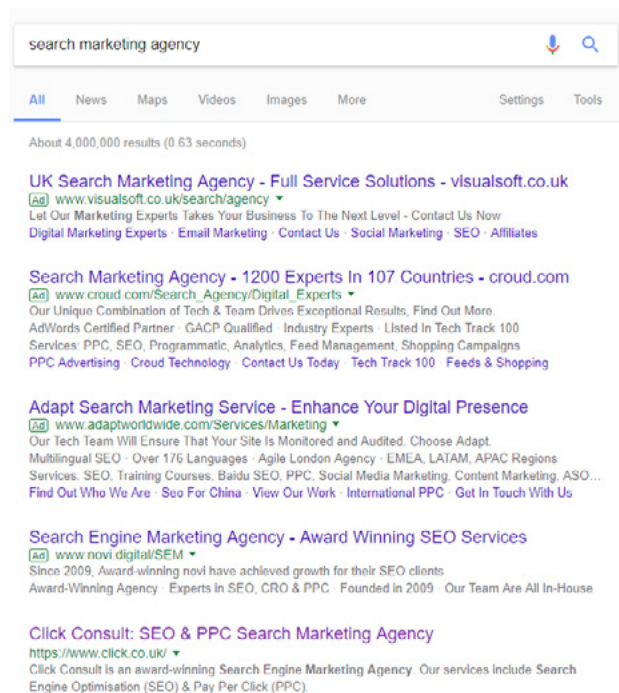
INDUSTRY TRENDS

In addition to scouting your competitors for their presence in the SERPs, checking out their offering etcetera, it is also important to have a strategy in place for seasonality. This is one area where your knowledge of your industry is absolutely invaluable. You can look to track the click through rates (CTRs) and cost per click (CPCs) of various keywords over the year for any sociological, cultural or political events that typically have an effect on your industry as a whole – this will allow you to properly allocate your budget throughout the year and to make predictions based on potential and historic conversion rates.

TAILORING THE JOURNEY

It is common knowledge that brands cannot simply show the same ad to all consumers at all points of the journey and expect to achieve the best results possible. While a great ad can, of course, lead to conversions, it is vital in the digital age to tailor your ads to numerous segments of population and buyer intent. But which platforms are usually best for each stage in the buyer's journey?

UPPER FUNNEL - AWARENESS

Google Display Network
Enabling the building of brand or need awareness, regular and static GIFs can be placed using broad keyword and topical targeting (as well as strong branding) to build desire.

Display advertising
Whether you use pop-out catalogues, static pop-outs, or video – ads using rich media formats are great for initial exposure. By ensuring strong and consistent branding across formats, there is plenty to do that can raise awareness of a product or need.

Remarketing
Arrival on your homepage demonstrates an initial interest or brand awareness. With use of retargeting cookies, visitors that have gone no further than your homepage can be targeted with branded ads to educate them on the scope and variety of products available through your site.

Search campaigns
Search campaigns are, really, better used later in the funnel, but careful research of keyword and keyword intent, followed by intelligent broad keyword bidding, can place your ads in appropriate searches for the initial 'query-level' intent.

Paid social ads
Whether on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or any of the many other social media platforms now offering ad options, you can segment ads here by demographic to tighten the focus of specific ads, delivering a more individuated ad experience. Paid social ads also offer the benefit of reactive potential - where in addition to targeting users on stated, permanent interests, tweet topics or post content can be tracked to deliver pertinent, highly relevant ads to social media consumers.

MID FUNNEL - CONSIDERATION/PREFERENCE

Dynamic remarketing

This is for those consumers that showed an initial interest, but for whatever reason were drawn away from the page. The dynamic remarketing approach aims to get products in front of the consumer that they have already viewed, as well as other similar products. By visiting a product page they have acknowledged a need, this kind of ad is to show them various ways of fulfilling that need with the intention of drawing them back in.

High engagement remarketing

This variety of remarketing is really to re-engage with consumers that have shown a consistent high engagement with products or services previously (be careful to set your parameters for what constitutes 'high engagement' carefully, for this variety ad you really want to be targeting users with high time on site/page view to make the most of the campaign). By showing products and services similar to those with which they have previously engaged, you can capitalise on an already high level of interest.

Previous purchase remarketing

Clearly those consumers that have already made a purchase will have been delighted with your supply and aftersales services, now is the time to begin offering them linked products and services – whether this is by way of offering accessories for electronic or fashion purchases, or service extensions and upselling packages, this method of marketing seeks to capitalise on a consumers previous enjoyment of your offering and increase their attachment to your brand for subsidiary or follow-up purchases.

Search campaigns

Search campaigns at the mid-funnel level will focus on a suitable mid-level intention – such as the search for product descriptions, comparisons and reviews. Using keyword strategies which target search terms at this level of the buyer's journey the aim is to convince consumers that not only is the product or service they are researching is the right one, but that they should be buying it from you.

LOW FUNNEL - PURCHASE/LOYALTY

Google Shopping Campaigns

Via the Google Shopping Search vertical, consumers with an easily defined, high intention to purchase can be targeted specifically with image and promotion based ads, which seeks to capitalise on their high intent searches. By ensuring your products and services are in front of them at this stage, you have a much higher chance of reaping the conversion they are about to make. In addition to this – if you have ensured your brand has been raising awareness at all other stages of the journey, the trust and awareness levels at this stage are likely to be high.

Remarketing (cart/basket abandons)

It is safe to assume at this stage that the consumer is ready to make a purchase, but that there is something holding them back from clicking that final button leading to conversion. At the point of leaving the basket there can be a number of factors – from time issues, to payment method, price or delivery method. Depending on where they abandoned, seek to offer quick fixes, offers and alternatives to enable them to make the purchase both sides now want to make.

Search campaigns

Search campaigns in the lower funnel category are all about the push to purchase. By bidding on high purchase intent keywords, however, you are likely to face stiff competition. It is your responsibility for search campaign ads at this stage to really heighten the desirability of your brand over the others that will likely be competing for their attention. Provided you have been nurturing the buyer's journey at the other funnel levels you will have developed a level of trust and brand awareness that will put you ahead, but now is the time to push promotions, discounts and other payment options which will really elevate your brand over the competition. A well-executed keyword strategy here is worth the extra cost entailed in the bidding process, because at this stage you will be competing on the quality of your ads and merchandise for a far higher percentage chance of conversion.

Loyalty remarketing

Loyalty remarketing primarily targets previous converters, seeking to capture return custom through upselling and accessories. By tailoring ads to previous purchases, it is possible to predict needs - so that sunglasses purchases could lead to remarketing ads for other 'holiday' themed accessories, while those taking out a free trial subscription can be targeted for upgrade to premium packages, thereby seeking to capitalise on an initial positive interaction to drive repeat custom.

CLICK CONSULT®

CONVERSION FUNNEL BASICS

UPPER FUNNEL
Awareness

The point of entrance into our funnel is the initial stage, we seek to fill this by raising customer awareness, generating a desire for a product or service, or in seeking to fulfil an extant need.

MID FUNNEL
Consideration/preference

Consumers here are aware of products/services, and have been shopping around and comparing prices. We are seeking to entice rather than educate. This section of the funnel is described as 'consideration /preference' is because at this time in the buyer's journey, many consumers will have decided what to buy, but not necessarily where from.

LOW FUNNEL
Purchase/loyalty

Consumers at this level know what they want and have intent to purchase; they may however have difficulties at the basket stage or require a final gentle nudge in the right direction. This section takes in both purchase and loyalty because not only do we seek to convert at this point, but also to retain custom.

SETTING BUDGETS

PLANNING BUDGETS

Having downloaded the keywords from the previous step, you can then use them to create a performance forecast for your possible campaign (for which I've just used broad match for ease of input, but wouldn't recommend it for most campaigns – for more information on match types, see our blog on the subject).

This option (under the 'Plan your budget and forecasts') tab, allows you to make projections regarding possible Google Ads campaigns carried out with your uploaded keywords.

You can look to experiment with the graph slider to optimise your possible campaigns for impressions, clicks or cost, allowing you to make decisions about how best to incorporate this group of keywords in to your strategy (again, this is excessively large and diffuse for most Ad Group requirements, but used for illustration – see here for advice on keyword groups).

Keyword Planner forecast graph

By using these forecast modifiers, you can look to craft a rough budget for your campaign (notice the Avg. Pos. is 3.68 – something you can improve by improving your Ad Quality, which will also potentially lower your cost).

CREATING AD GROUPS

Google recommends that a minimum of two ad groups are created, implying, for good reason, that more is in actual fact more at least when it comes to ad groups – depending on the campaign this can rise into the thousands. The reasons for this are numerous, but essentially boil down to the fact that the more ad groups you have, the greater the specificity and targeting options you have to ensure your ads are getting in front of the right people.

Ad groups are where you will:

- Write your ads.

- Choose the keywords that will trigger the ads.

Assuming best practice has been adhered to in the set-up of your campaigns, you will have a number of fairly broad scope campaign titles generally associated with top level product categories or services. Your ad groups represent a broadening of these campaigns by variations of these products or services.

If we use a cosmetics supplier or manufacturer as a basic example, it could be assumed that it has three key products it wishes to promote (apologies in advance for my clear lack of cosmetics knowledge), which in this case are lipstick, foundation and eye shadow. These broad product descriptions become your campaigns while subsections of them become your ad groups.
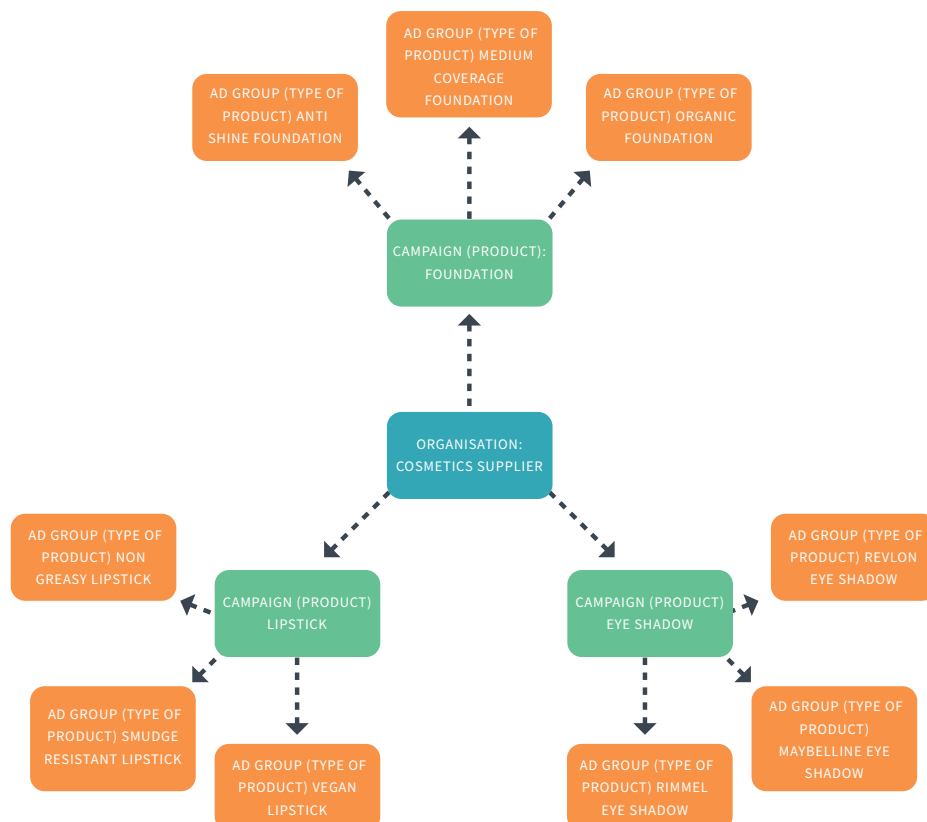
These can then be segmented further (and further stretch my failing knowledge of cosmetics) to the level of keywords.
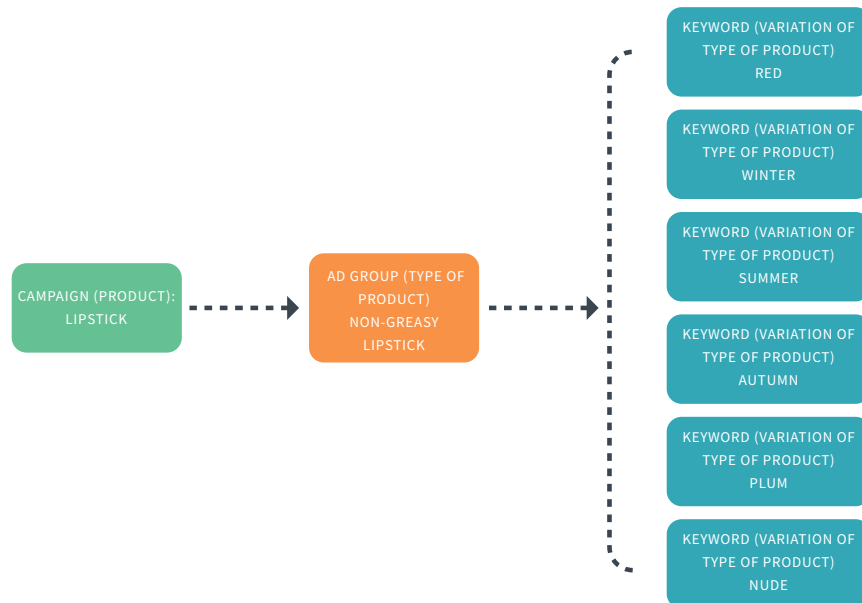
Once you have set up your campaigns and have worked out how you are going to organise your ad groups, the next stage is to actually create them. In order to do this, you will sign in to your Google Ads account, and select the campaigns tab.

Then select the campaign you wish to add ad groups to before you click the '+AD GROUP' button (virtually unmissable).

The following steps are reasonably self-explanatory – insofar as you can't go too far wrong if you follow the instructions provided next to the boxes – which ask you to name the ad group and create the ad (for tips on creating ad copy, see here).

Then select the keywords your research process has produced (checking for search volume using the 'estimate search traffic' button if necessary).

Then set a maximum CPC for the ad group.

This process is repeatable for any number of campaigns and ad groups, with one of the main benefits of ad groups being the possibility to effect bulk changes so that, as you monitor the data that comes in from campaigns, it is possible to implement the lessons learned to batches of ads, gradually refining your ad groups to ensure the best possible results.

WHICH SHOULD YOU USE

Google's PPC offering changes with a degree of regularity these days, with alterations to SERPs, as well as the permitted ad copy and headline length being the most recent, but there is a simple paid search feature which can confuse newcomers – and that is the ad extension.

As is discussed in our Beginner's Guide to Ad Rank, the make-up of an ad can be as important as its content insofar as calculating its quality for ranking in the paid positions on SERPs, so it's vital for businesses to be aware of what the options are and when to use them.

WHAT ARE AD EXTENSIONS?

According to Google, ad extensions are:
The most common of these enhancements range from the addition of 'call' buttons for mobile, to

> **[visual] enhancements to search ads that display information about your business more prominently**

location extensions to sitelinks (where additional site sub-pages are listed). Google sees these extensions as providing useful additional information which can be used to help consumers determine whether or not the ad is of use to them, and so rewards them as indicators of ad quality.

BENEFITS OF AD EXTENSIONS

Improved visibility
Ad extensions tend to improve your ad's visibility. They often appear above the search results, rather than along the sidebar. If two competing ads have the same bid and quality, the ad with greater expected impact from extensions will generally appear in a higher ad position than the other.

Better return on investment (ROI)
Extensions can help improve the click-through rate (CTR) of your ads. More clicks mean more customer traffic. Extensions also affect the Ad Rank algorithm and can lead to higher positions without needing to increase CPC.

VARIETIES OF EXTENSION

| MANUAL EXTENSIONS	AUTOMATED EXTENSIONS
Apps	Consumer Ratings
Calls	Previous Visits
Locations	Seller Ratings
Reviews	Dynamic Sitelink Extensions
Sitelinks	Social Extensions
Callouts	Dynamic Structured Snippets

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MANUAL AND AUTOMATED EXTENSIONS

The differences between manual and automated extensions are essentially in the names of the two types. Manual extensions require the ad-buyer to set them up and, while there are no associated costs, manual extensions are more likely to be shown to consumers and therefore necessary to drive clicks (or your metric of choice) with your ad. Automated ad extensions, alternatively, are automatically shown to consumers when Google Ads predicts they will make the most impact – though obviously useful, they should not be relied upon as a substitute for the correct implementation of manual extensions.

MANUAL EXTENSIONS

Sitelink extensions
These offer the consumer something extra – with alternatives to the main link providing similar pages or pages with additional information.
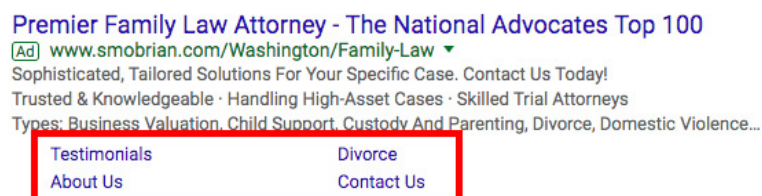
Callout extensions

Callout extensions are your chance to let consumers know what you have to offer – special selling points for your brand, or reasons to purchase from you ahead of the competition.
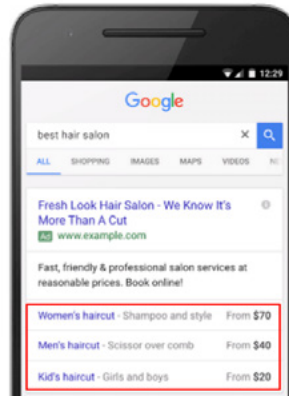
App extensions

For brands with an app available for download, the app extension places a download link (either beginning the download or redirecting to the app store).
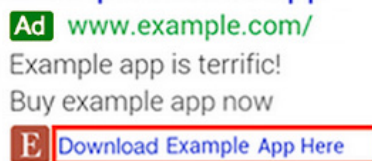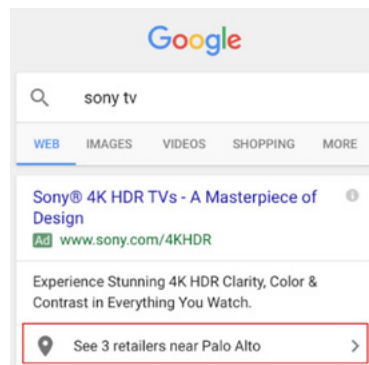

Call extensions

Facilitating the consumer in contacting you, call extensions allow you to place a shortcut button initiating a call with your brand.
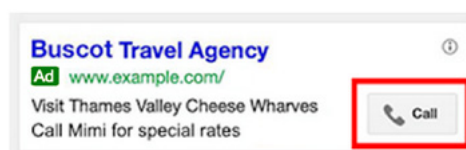
Location extension

This extension provides potential consumers with directions to your physical premises – making it even easier for walk in traffic to find you.

Review extensions

Your current consumers love your brand, so let prospective consumers know too with a review extension – though these aren't to be confused with seller ratings, which use data from Feefo/Trust Pilot etc.
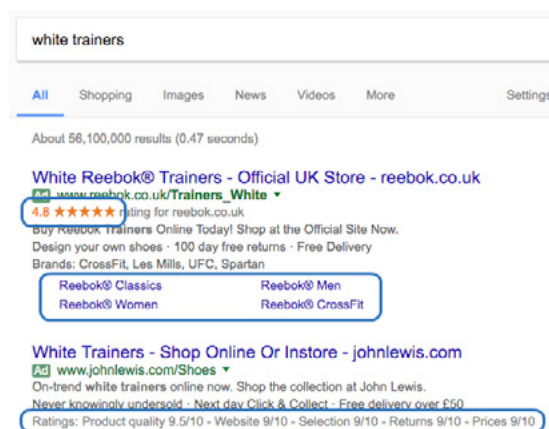
Structured snippets

Structured snippets are a feature that allows you to list all the various brands, services etcetera that you have available. As with the other extensions, they will help increase CTR and setting up mobile structured snippets will also help boost mobile Quality Score.
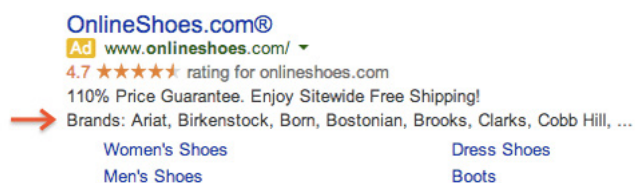
Price extensions

Price extensions are a new type of extension to showcase the different products provided and price points. These show predominantly on mobile devices. These provide an opportunity for highlighting price competitive product lines.


Promotion extensions

Promotion extensions are a new extension currently only available through the Google Ads Beta interface. It allows you to add in any promotions or offers currently available. These should be regularly updated where possible.
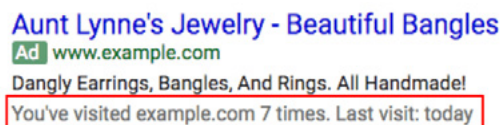
AUTOMATED EXTENSIONS

Consumer ratings

This extension allows potential consumers to see your brand's ratings from past consumers, so that they can judge your business from your past performance in various areas with others.
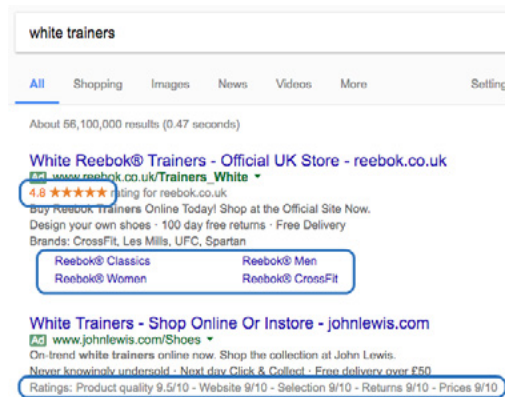
Previous visits

Has the consumer visited previously? Maybe they need a little reminder of the times you've shared together – for this reason there is the previous visits extension.

Dynamic structured snippets

In addition to the main headline of the ad, dynamic structured snippets automatically show additional landing page details alongside your ad.

Seller ratings

Similarly to the 'consumer ratings' extension, the seller rating offers the potential consumer a view of previous consumer's experiences with your brand – only this time in the form of a star rating.

Message extensions

This extension allows consumers that see your ads to click an icon and contact your brand by text message. If you have set up a call extension with a mobile phone, Google Ads may set up this feature automatically.
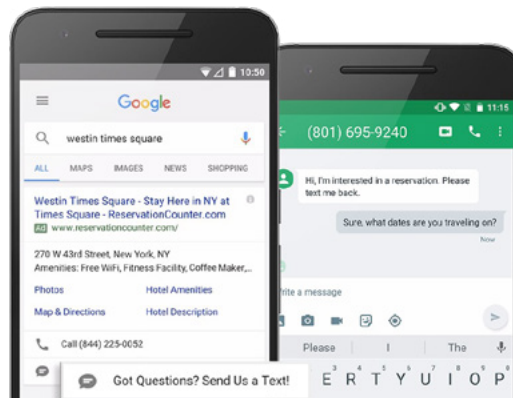
KILLER STATS FOR 2020

According to Social Media Today:

• The industries spending the most on PPC advertising in 2020 include retail, travel, publishing and education. The consumables, automotive and home improvement industries are spending the least on PPC advertising.

• The most effective PPC channels are text ads, remarketing and mobile.

• 4 out of 10 marketers want to increase their PPC budget.

• Google Ads, Facebook and mobile are the most popular PPC platforms.

• 80 percent of respondents surveyed view artificial intelligence as an important player in the digital advertising industry during 2020.

• Programmatic is gaining importance and popularity as a PPC channel in 2020.

CONCLUSION

As with all aspects of search marketing, strategy is absolutely imperative for successful paid search campaigns. Not only should this represent a large portion of your initial set-up around your brand's paid search presence, its maintenance should be considered a rolling activity, scheduled month to month in order to pluck out further negative keywords, add others and to build the best campaign possible.

The main benefit for brands beginning their paid search journey today, however, is the host of tools and technology available to help with many of the tasks. So use them. Whatever your budget, there is plenty you can use to push your paid search to the next level through assisting with the creation of a killer paid search strategy.

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 Organic Search (SEO) Team of the Year 2020, 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.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Blog
Click Consult regularly posts actionable insights on its blog – dealing with all aspects of search marketing. From technical SEO to PPC, content marketing and Analytics advice, the Click Consult blog has something for everyone of any ability.
eBooks

Click Consult produces in depth eBooks on aspects of search marketing on a regular basis, dealing with the latest best practices, changes to standard practices, methods of improvement and more.
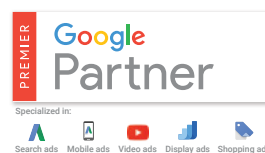
InfographicsSometimes what you need is a quick point

of reference about complex subjects. Thanks to its team of highly talented designers, Click Consult is also able to distil its vast experience into easy to understand visual content.
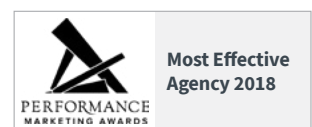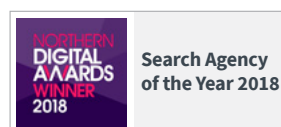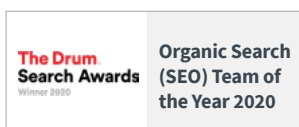
Follow us on Google+, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, or to find out what Click Consult can do for you, call:

0845 205 0292

OUR ACCREDITATIONS

OUR AWARDS

| | Organic Search (SEO) Team of the Year 2020 | | SEO Agency of the Year 2019 | | Search Agency of the Year 2018 | | Most Effective Agency 2018 |

OUR TECHNOLOGIES

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