



CAMPAIGN OPTIMISATION

DRIVING SUCCESS THROUGH PAID SEARCH



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INTRODUCTION

The art of good paid search marketing can best be described as a bridge between you and your potential customers. It is a type of marketing that is both inexpensive and scalable, and which puts your products in front of potential customers at the exact time they are looking for or considering the products and services you provide.

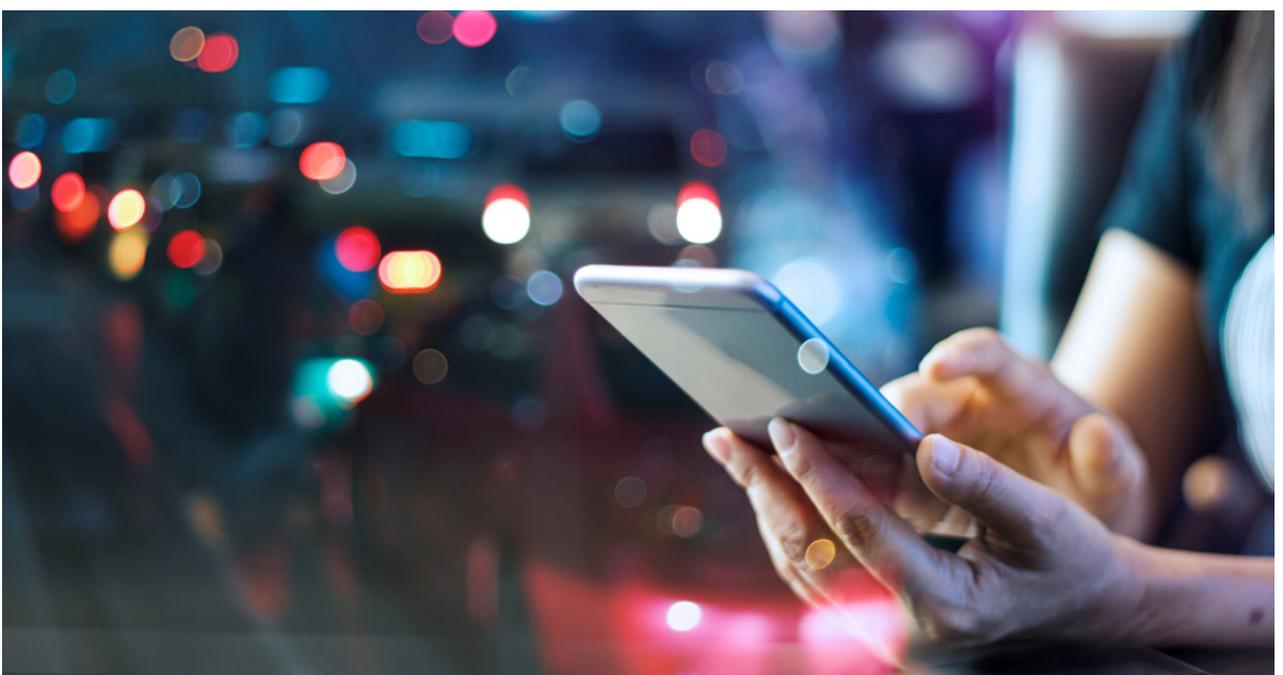
To put it simply - PPC campaigns, and the logic behind them, can be summarised by the following steps:

- Create your ads
- Bid on ad placements in a search engine's sponsored links section related to your business and target keywords
- Pay the search engine a fee for each click

Sounds simple, right? Well, whilst the basics are easy to understand, the secret to success is in the way you optimise your campaigns and the changes you make in order to get the best from your ads and your paid search.

This eBook will look at a range of ideas relating to paid search, will aim to tell you how to create a campaign, and will look at some of the things that you can tweak in order to get the very best from your marketing.

Ready? Let's begin...



WHAT IS PAID SEARCH (PPC)?

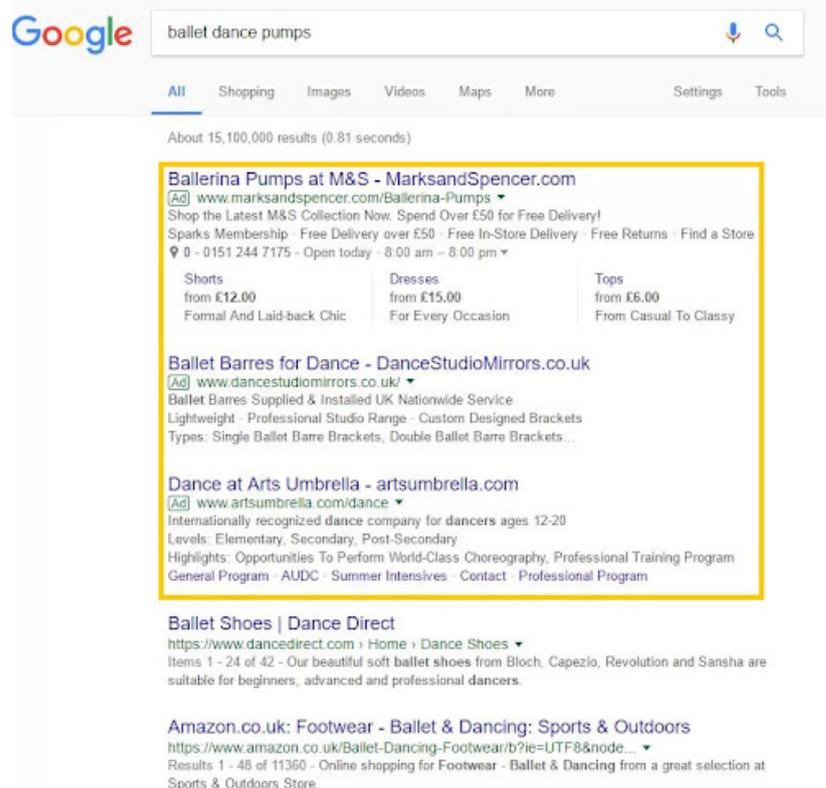
PPC is the model of internet marketing whereby businesses pay a fee every time their ad is clicked on by a potential customer. Placing a PPC advert that correlates with a specific search can help expose your offering to a relevant audience, driving highly targeted traffic to your website.

This exposure improves if the ad links to a fully optimised site, with unique, well written content. If this is the case, you should be able to climb the paid results on the search engine results pages (SERPs).

There are four main types of online advertising that play a role in the standard payment model of PPC. They are:

Paid search

Paid search ads are those listings that appear at the top and bottom of SERPs, marked as ads or 'sponsored results'. The listings are paid for by the advertiser either on a cost-per-click (CPC) basis when the visitor uses a link to navigate to a designated landing page, or (less frequently), as a cost-per-impression, for being displayed next to the search.



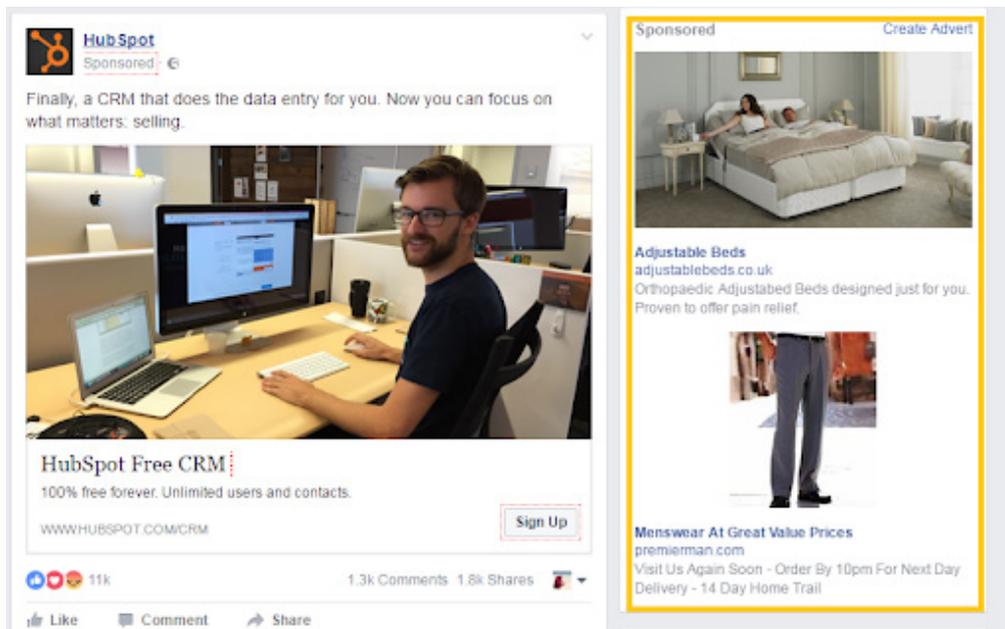
Display advertising

Display advertising features on third party websites. It includes many different formats and contains items such as text, images, video, and audio. The main purpose of display advertising is to deliver general advertisements and brand messages on a site based on knowledge of its visitors.



Social advertising

Social advertising relies on social information or networks in generating, targeting, and delivering marketing communications. The advertising platforms provided by Google, Twitter, Facebook and others involve targeting and presenting ads based on relationships articulated on those same services. Social advertising can be part of a broader social media marketing strategy designed to connect with consumers.

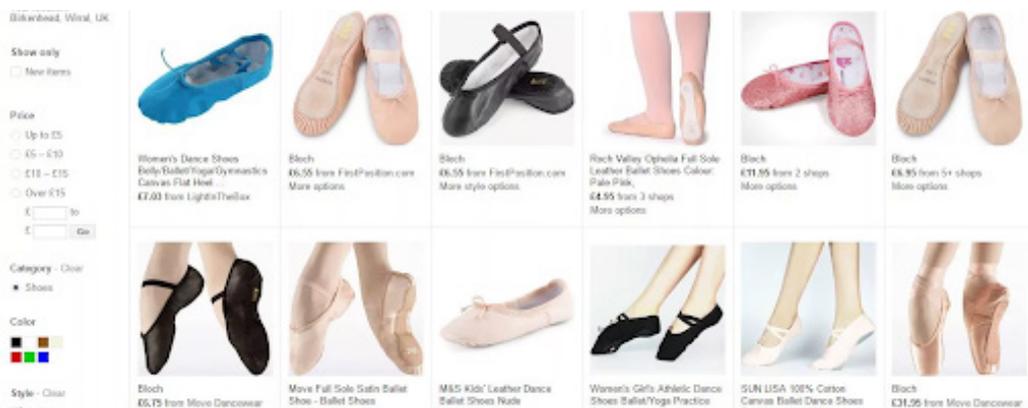


Shopping Campaigns

Shopping ads offer a different experience for those searching for a product, mainly because they display more than the ad text. Shopping ads show users a photo of the item as well as the title, price and retailer. The overall concept of a shopping ad gives the user a stronger perception of what you are offering them, and this can lead to more conversions.

There are many benefits to running digital ads as part of a search and digital marketing strategy. The first main benefit is that well-crafted and highly optimised ads can raise brand awareness and exposure. They put your immediate details into the public domain at the time they are searching for products in your sector. Your ads get your message out to a highly relevant audience, and this ultimately increases the potential of extra traffic and additional revenue.

If your ads are correctly placed and optimised to appear next to certain searches, then they can improve your unique visits. If the content on the landing page is specific to the user's search and includes a clear call-to-action (CTA) such as a downloadable brochure, an email subscription or a call back request, you are another step along the marketing path. These leads direct customers to your online store where they can convert from browsing to purchasing.

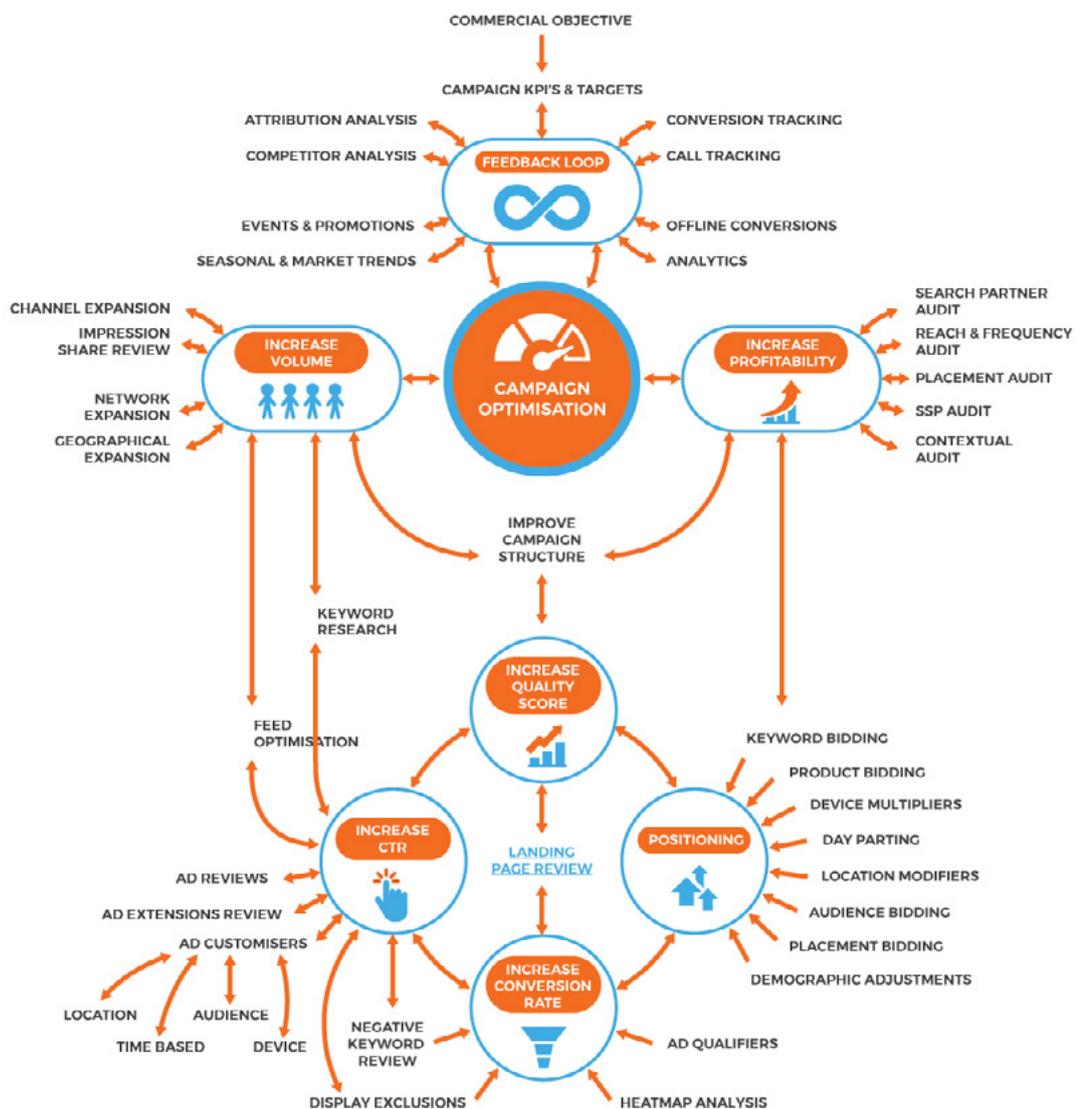


IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF PPC AND WHICH ELEMENTS OF A CAMPAIGN YOU CAN OPTIMISE

According to former Googlewebmaster Frederick Vallaeys, the secret to success with Google Ads is: “All about developing a great management methodology and sticking to it rigorously.” In other words, it’s regularly optimising the most important aspects of your campaigns towards your number one goal.

The following diagram shows the complexities of optimising a campaign and touches on the thing that you should be looking to test.

Here are some of the elements that you should be looking to optimise.



Audience targeting

Audience is everything when it comes to marketing. You want to reach a targeted audience which is much more likely to convert if taken to the correct page or products. In order to choose the right audience for your advert, there are a number of factors to consider and questions to ask. You could use a 'user targeted' approach for those that have shown a particular behaviour or interest, or you could use 'inventory targeting' whereby you focus on a type of content that is often visited by individuals within a particular demographic.

You could also choose to create ads that will show based on the searches of an individual, or on factors like gender, age, income, location, marital status etc. Above is an example of the pages within Facebook that allow you to choose a location specific campaign. Here you can use a preset or saved audience, or can make a bespoke strategy for your campaign.

You can also gather information from competitors and see what your followers might also be looking at, via their likes on social media. Above is an example from Facebook. When picking an audience based on behaviour you may decide to look at dayparting – the practice of targeting individuals at a certain time of the day or day of the week. You may also wish to retarget past visitors to your site.

Depending on the aim of your ad, there are a number of different ways you can track these interactions and measure their performance. All you need to do is establish your goal and what you would consider the key performance indicators (KPIs). If you are looking to use the ad to generate leads, then this can be measured in terms of the cost per acquisition (CPA). Your plan could be to generate a certain number of leads from a predetermined budget, eg, 250 leads for £2500 or £10 per lead.

When your aim is to encourage brand awareness and exposure, then the success of a campaign will be based on the number of views and then the click through rate (CTR) from this. If you were to receive 20,000 clicks and had a landing page CTR of 5%, you put yourself in a solid position to convert a high percentage of these to sales.

The index that most businesses want to talk about however is the ROI, in terms of PPC this is often referred to as return on ad spend (ROAS). The KPI could be to generate 100 sales with a return of £5 per £1 spent.

Setting your budget

When it comes to the planning stage of a PPC ad campaign, it's important that you understand your market and have a clear set of objectives. If you're in a competitive marketplace, you may find that your budget doesn't go as far as you thought.

A restricted or smaller budget can be channelled into very specific areas which in turn should increase the chance of conversions in your identified market, no matter how niche. Big brands throw huge amounts of money at certain advertising and marketing strategies, so make sure you are realistic.

Adjusting and automating your bids

Maximising profits from conversions should normally be the key performance goal of every Google Ads account and paid search campaign, it is business after all. Here are the four steps that Google outline to effectively manage your bids and maximise profits from your account:

- Define a formula that calculates total profits from Google Ads.
- Why: You need a formula to measure and optimise for profit in Google Ads.
- Run a broad-scale manual bid test.
- Why: Get an edge in the auction by finding profitable bid opportunities faster than others can.
- Evaluate results and measure your profit.
- Why: Identify areas for improvement as you analyse results.
- Use automation to adjust your bids.
- Why: Free up your time so that you can focus on other strategic priorities.



Automating your bids with Google Ads can deliver better, more informed bids while saving you time. Automated bidding is objective-based bidding, which means a single campaign should generally have the same type of objective. For example, if you're optimising for clicks on certain keywords but for conversions on other keywords, they should get their own campaigns. Key considerations here include:

- Avoid campaigns that are limited by budget – Campaigns that consistently hit their average daily budget have an artificial limitation on performance. Ideally, you'll want your average daily budget at least 20-30% higher than your campaign average daily spend. This allows for quicker learning when using Target CPA or Target ROAS and more volume at a similar efficiency. Use Maximise Conversions strategy if your campaign consistently hits its daily budget.
- Don't worry about maxing out Impression Share (unless your objective is visibility) – An impression share lower than 80% is expected for any campaign on Smart Bidding. This allows for growth opportunities. If Impression Share is higher than 80%, it may be time to expand your reach.
- Make ad groups (or campaigns) coherent and high volume – Relevance within ad groups is still important. Relevant ads are more useful for users, and click-through rates and conversion rates are often better with high relevance from search term to ad to landing page.
- Bid adjustments can be done at several different levels, and there are many different aspects of a paid search campaign where you could and should apply bid adjustments. These include adjustments by device, hour of day, location, audiences and more.

If we take the example of bidding by device, many advertisers are just using the new bid modifiers for desktop and tablet to make slight adjustments without much thought to overall strategy.

The issue with this is that you shouldn't really be applying bid adjustments to all three devices. Instead you should use your highest traffic device source as an 'anchor point'. This ensures that you have a good correlation between your keyword bid and how much you are prepared to pay for each click.

If you have the following situation...

Keyword bid: £1.00
Desktop bid modifier: -50%
Mobile bid modifier: -70%
Tablet bid modifier: -80%

... then you are actually bidding 50p, 30p, and 20p respectively for each device, which does not correlate well with the £1.00 bid. If these are indeed the amounts you want to bid, then you should set it up as the following instead:

Keyword bid: £0.50
Desktop bid modifier: -%
Mobile bid modifier: -40%
Tablet bid modifier: -60%

This means that the amount you are prepared to pay for each click and the keyword bid are strongly correlated, as they should be.

Split out top traffic campaigns by device

Before enhanced campaigns launched in 2013, it was fairly standard practice to split out campaigns by device. This was made impossible by enhanced campaigns.

Savvy advertisers will have realised that it is now possible to once again create device specific campaigns with the following set up:

Desktop Campaign
Desktop bid modifier: -%
Mobile bid modifier: -100%
Tablet bid modifier: -100%

Mobile Campaign
Desktop bid modifier: -100%
Mobile bid modifier: -%
Tablet bid modifier: -100%

Tablet Campaign
Desktop bid modifier: -100%
Mobile bid modifier: -100%
Tablet bid modifier: -%

More on smart bidding

According to the support team behind Google Ads, with Smart Bidding, you get 4 key benefits that can help you save time and improve performance.

- **Advanced machine learning** - In bidding, machine learning algorithms train on data at a vast scale to help you to make more accurate predictions across your account about how different bid amounts might affect conversions or conversion value. These algorithms factor in a wider range of parameters that affect performance more than a single person or team could compute.
- **Wide range of contextual signals** - With auction-time bidding, you can factor a wide range of signals into your bid optimisations. Signals are identifiable attributes about a person or their context at the time of a particular auction. This includes attributes like device and location, which are available as manual bid adjustments, plus additional signals and signal combinations exclusive to Smart Bidding. See a list of several of these important signals below.
- **Flexible performance controls** - Smart Bidding allows you to set performance targets and customise settings to your unique business goals:
 - Optimise Search bids to your selected attribution model, including data-driven attribution.
 - Set device-specific performance targets for mobile, desktop and tablet with Target CPA bidding.
- **Transparent performance reporting** - Smart Bidding offers reporting tools that give you deeper insight into your bidding performance and help you quickly troubleshoot any issues. These include:
 - Bid strategy reports that help you understand how your Smart Bidding strategies are performing.
 - Detailed bid strategy statuses that show you what's going on under the bonnet of your bidding.
 - Campaign drafts and experiments for Search and Display campaigns that make it easy to test how well Smart Bidding performs against your current bidding method.
 - Simulators that forecast how your ads might have performed in terms of key metrics like cost, conversions, conversion value, impressions and clicks if you had set different CPA, ROAS targets or budgets.
 - Alerts and notifications that flag issues with conversion tracking and provide clear steps for fixing them.

Optimising your landing pages

Making great ads is one thing, but the truth is you have to back this up. If you have a content-filled ad which engages with the visitors, you must also have a landing page of equal standards. One mistake that is often made by those new to the industry is that they see a high quality ad that promotes you as a brand to associate with and then they reach your URL, and feel disappointed.

A content rich website is a must as it encourages further interactions and ultimately sales. Think of it this way: landing pages tend to be most responsible for converting users. Keywords and ads get users to your website. But landing pages close the deal.

Channel performance

When you are advertising in multiple channels, it's important to see which is helping you to achieve your primary KPI (key performance indicator). After you have an understanding as to which channels are performing best, you can allocate your budget accordingly. Remember also to review your impression share (especially those top performing campaigns losing impression share due to budget).

Keyword strategy

Choosing your keywords might just be the most important consideration to make when it comes to creating a successful ad campaign. If you are looking to make impressions that convert into sales, you have to make sure that you're bringing the correct audience to your page. If a user makes a general internet search for a product that you specialise in yet you don't feature as an ad or in SERPs you are missing out. Cover your bases and perform thorough research.

Good keyword research will reveal gaps in the market and highlight areas your competitors are not competing in, or competing only marginally. If your brand is new to a marketplace, the chances are that competitors will be well established for some of the prize keywords, whereas industry specific long tail gaps might not be covered.

A good strategy means you can exploit these gaps to get ahead with your ads. As you can see from the above chart, getting the balance right is key if you are to identify a good keyword strategy. The words that form the strategy will be based on internet searches, your content and the competition for keywords in your industry.

You should also think about negative keywords and use them to your advantage. Negative keywords enable you to filter out search terms that aren't relevant to your products and services, so your ads won't show up for those irrelevant searches. In the long run, this can save you a lot of money in wasteful clicks.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The contents of this eBook highlight many facets of PPC and should give you an idea of the versatility with which ads and campaigns can be created. This being the case there are many things you can tinker with and if you get it right then there is a real opportunity push on and gain more conversions.

We'd recommend that you constantly trial different methods and test different areas. Campaigns should be flexible and get the most from your audience, something that only happens through constant evolution.

For those of you out there who want a more comprehensive look at PPC then why not get your free copy of our [PPC Uncovered series](#)?



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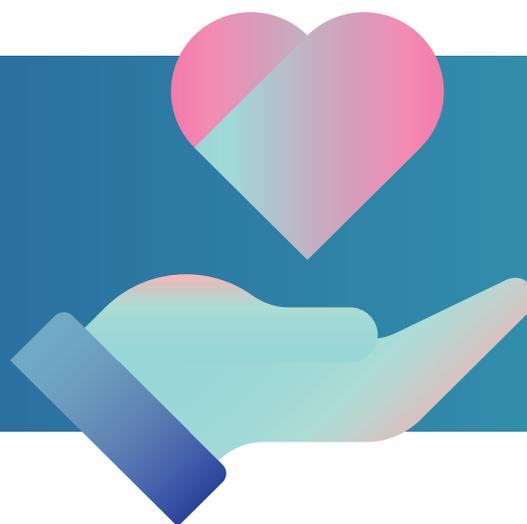
Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

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.

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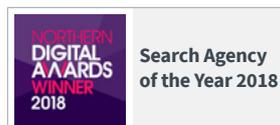
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