# PAID SEARCH ANALYSIS

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# INTRODUCTION

Though machine learning and AI seem omnipresent, the practice of PPC has been more impacted than many skillsets in digital marketing. Automated bidding is now the default setting for various parts of Google Ads campaigns.

There are two distinct types of non-manual strategy:

- **Smart Bidding:** A conversion focused strategy.

- **Automated**: Strategies including 'Max Clicks' and 'Target Impression Share' and other manual strategies.

However, while campaigns which do not employ automated or smart bidding may find themselves left behind, the need for human data analysis and account review should not be overlooked.

| Activity | 👥 | 💻 |
|---|---|---|
| Bidding | | ✓ |
| Calculating split testing statistical significance | | ✓ |
| Creating and testing new ads | ✓ | |
| Reporting | | ✓ |
| New negative keyword from SQR | | ✓ |
| Keyword expansion from SQR | | ✓ |
| Competitors analysis in real time | | ✓ |
| Identifying trends in large datasets | | ✓ |
| Data analysis | ✓ | |

Google has pushed Ads users toward further and further account automation for years – and for the most part, the changes implemented have improved performance for most accounts, but especially for inexperienced advertisers.

There are a huge number of signals that modern paid search algorithms take into account that could not have been considered by previous versions of the algorithm, or indeed by a person (at least not at the same speed or volume).

However, it's important that automation is monitored to ensure that any potential negative impact is caught quickly. For that reason, Click Consult recommends regular reporting and analysis to monitor account performance and ensure that optimisation is an ongoing process and that accounts don't revert over time due to inattention.

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SMART BIDDING

While this eBook focuses on analysis, it's important to get to know what the various bidding strategies that Google has introduced actually do so that they can be monitored correctly. For that reason, we though it best to offer a little overview of the Smart Bidding strategies before moving to how they can be analysed.

## WHAT IS SMART BIDDING?

Smart Bidding is a subset of the automated bid strategies Google has introduced. Using machine learning, Smart Bidding aims to optimise ads for conversions or conversion value in each auction. Google refers to this as "auction-time bidding". The types of smart bidding are as follows:

- **Target CPA:** Aims to increase conversions while also targeting a specific 'cost per action'
- **Target ROAS:** Aims to maximise conversions while targeting a specific return on advertising spend
- **Maximize conversions:** Aims to achieve the highest possible number of conversions
- **Maximize conversion value:** Aims to achieve the highest value per conversion
- **Enhanced CPC (ECPC):** Combines manual bidding with machine learning to amend bids in auctions more likely to lead to a conversion

## WHEN TO USE SMART BIDDING

Brands should consider using Smart Bidding to maximise an ad or campaign's conversions or conversion value. Smart Bidding uses a range of auction-time signals (device, location, language, operating system and time of day) to identify the context of every search, allowing it to deliver the best possible results.

# WHAT YOU NEED TO LOOK FOR & WHERE

UX writing is the art of crafting the texts that appear throughout the interface of digital products (websites, mobile apps, etc.). Just as in the world of traditional publishing, this text is referred to as copy. But UX writing differs from copywriting in that it aims to guide the user through the interface in an intuitive manner.

As the apps and websites that we use become increasingly complex, the need for clear guidance within them also grows. But more than that, as these digital products become more a part of our daily lives, we as users seek out those that give us the most natural and fluid experience. These changes in the way we interact with technology have led to the creation of UX writing as a discipline in its own right.

## GOOGLE ADS

Google Ads generates a tremendous amount of data on your PPC campaigns which you can harvest to help you improve your campaigns. You should be looking to collect as much of this data as you can in order to compile reports which include:

- **Clicks:** The number of times a user has clicked on your ad.

- **Impressions:** The number of times your ad has been presented to users and it has been 'seen'.

- **Click through rate (CTR):** The percentage of those users who have seen your ad and clicked through to your landing pages.

- **Average cost per click (CPC):** How much, on average, each click has cost you.

- **Cost:** Overall spend for the campaign/ad or keyword.

- **Conversions:** How many users have completed a specified action.

- **Cost per conversion:** How much each of these conversions has cost.

- **Revenue:** How much you have earned through your ad/campaign/keyword etc.

- **ROI:** The ratio of spend to income (where 0 = parity and positive numbers indicate a return greater than spend).

- **Impr. (Abs. Top) % and Impr. (Top) %:** Tell you the location of your ads on the SERP and the percentage of impressions you received at the top of the page.

- **Search Abs. Top IS and Search Top IS:** Give you an indication of the chance for your ads to place at the top of the SERP and the percentage of eligible impressions that you gained at the top of the page (meaning that you can gauge the impression share you're missing out on).

All of these can be reported on in a number of ways – including by campaign and by individual keyword, allowing you to judge the success of various levels of your efforts. You can then look to build on any successful techniques and modify any with sub-optimal performance as well as plan tests for future campaigns based on the results.

## GOOGLE ANALYTICS

In addition to the data visible in Google Ads, Google Analytics allows further possibilities for analysis and reporting (and will automatically import many of the Google Ads metrics if the accounts are correctly connected). These include:

- **PPC sessions:** Which shows the number of sessions resulting from PPC campaigns in the selected date range; this can allow you to identify daily fluctuations and patterns.

- **PPC revenue:** Shows what revenue has been generated by your PPC campaigns in the selected date range. Though this figure is based on revenue where the last (non-direct) session came from a PPC ad, it offers only a guideline as your PPC will likely be contributing more than just this figure.

- **Top PPC keywords:** Gives you the top revenue keywords in your PPC campaigns. You can also see how many sessions these keywords generated. The best keywords will generally be those with a lot of revenue for a comparatively small amount of traffic.

- **Top PPC campaigns:** Shows the top revenue PPC campaigns, allowing you to review performance at a macro level, giving you an idea of what is working well and what isn't.

- **PPC revenue map:** Shows the location from which the PPC traffic that converted came.

- **Top PPC landing pages:** Shows those pages which, when landed on, generated the most revenue with PPC as the source. If, for example, a large amount of your revenue comes from a landing page with a low conversion rate, then improving that page will lead to a much better overall ROI.

- **Top PPC products:** Shows the highest revenue generating products bought by users coming from PPC. It also shows the Quantity sold of each product. This data shows you where your revenue is coming from and if it is due to volume or high value products.

- **Device performance:** Shows the number of sessions and eCommerce conversion rate for all traffic across desktop, tablet and mobile devices. You can, as mentioned in the previous chapter, review how the traffic for each device changes over time to understand how your audience is accessing your site, while the ecommerce conversion rate shows how your site is performing on each device.

## DIFFERENCES IN REVENUE MEASUREMENT

Google Ads and Google Analytics handle attribution differently, and so will often show different totals for the revenue generated by paid search:

- **Google Ads:** The revenue is attributed to when the click happened

- **Google Analytics:** The revenue is attributed to time the goal is completed

This difference, while slight, can lead to differences in data between the two platforms depending on the conversion window set in Google Ads, and the average time to conversion.

# HOW ANALYSIS CAN IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

While many of the aspects of your Google Ads paid search campaigns will be automatically optimised, there are metrics you can analyse to ensure that you're doing the best you can with the aspects you can control.

## IMPRESSIONS

Impressions and clicks are your first port of call when it comes to analysing your campaign performance. You'll have created your ads to target specific keywords – does the level of impressions reflect the number of impressions you would expect the campaign to be achieving based on the volume of searches you're targeting?

## SEARCH IMPRESSION SHARE

Search impression share provides an 'at-a-glance' indication of how well your ads and campaigns are performing versus their competition by telling you what percentage of available impressions your ad appeared for. You can use a custom column to give you an approximation of that number.

## SEARCH TOP IMPRESSION SHARE

Search top impression share (IS) shows the impressions received in the top spot on the SERP divided by the number of impressions you were eligible for in the top location. Top is defined as anywhere ads appear above the organic results while eligibility is based on targeting settings, approval statuses, bids and quality.

## TOTAL ELIGIBLE IMPRESSIONS

Google Ads permits the use of "Search Impression Share" in a custom column, this means that a column using the formula "Impressions / Search Impr. Share" can be used to give you the total eligible impressions that were available for your campaign (or ad or keyword).

However, if the account has a small spends or large number of eligible impressions, the column cannot be calculated (as the search impressions share of <10% can't be calculated).

**Adding 'Total Eligible Impressions'**

First, you'll need to select 'Columns' from the table menu:

If you then scroll down, you can create a custom column:



Then just add the formula and name the column (you can also add a description if needed).



## CLICK THROUGH RATE (CTR)

Click through rate is an indication of how well your ads are catering to the search intent and if you're featuring in the top ad positions, but not getting the expected click through, it's an indication that your ad copy is not doing what's needed.

## COST PER CONVERSION

While some of the automated bidding options will optimise specifically to achieve conversions, you'll need to ensure that you're comfortable with the cost – a conversion should never cost more than it is worth to your business unless there are very good reasons (long-term benefit of free trials etc.).

## DEVICE PERFORMANCE

Device performance will help you to determine whether there are bid-modifiers required for your campaigns – if a device is performing better than expected, can you alter your budgets to get more out of it? The same vice versa, if a device is performing especially badly, or below your expectations, consider what you could do to improve performance or whether it's worth excluding that device entirely.

## GEOLOCATION

While it's mostly important to brands that have specific location requirements (stores with physical locations, for example), but if your ads are appearing in places your services are not available, you're wasting budget.

## CONVERSION TO IMPRESSION

Another metric that can be created is CTI. Conversion to Impression calculates the number of impressions that lead directly to a conversion. This shows the end-to-end efficiency of your ads and campaigns and smooths out when there are high click-through-rates and low conversion rates or vice versa.

## OPTIMISATION CHECKLIST

Part of analysis is ensuring that your fundamentals are still as they should be. Therefore, in addition to monitoring performance, you should also check on your top-level optimisation techniques (especially for accounts with multiple users):

- Are your campaigns correctly structured – tightly themed and focused?

- Are your ads sufficiently targeted and grouped by theme?

- Are you using ad customisers to improve your ad performance and relevance?

- Are you improving usefulness and relevance using ad extensions?

- Have you built a sufficiently comprehensive keyword list?

- Are you employing the right mix of exact, phrase and broad match types?

- Have you compiled a list of negative keywords to differentiate ad groups and remove irrelevant keywords?

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Are you using the most appropriate Smart Bidding strategy for your account?

- Target CPA

- Target ROAS

- Maximize conversions

- Maximize conversion value

- Enhanced CPC (ECPC)

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- Are your ads pointing at the most relevant landing page for the query/keyword?

- Are you using the right attribution model to ensure credit is given to the right channels?

- Have you linked your Google Ads and Google Analytics accounts?

- If appropriate, have you set up website call conversions to monitor inbound calls?

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Analysis should be a regular activity for any Ad account manager – whether that's through the platform itself, through Google Analytics, or through setting up a specific Google Data Studio report that measures performance and provides clear oversight of the metrics you need to see.

Analysing your performance is not about (or not only) demonstrating how well you have performed, your reports should also be capable of providing insights in to and opportunities for improving your campaigns. There's a lot to be said for providing a positive ROI – but not if it comes at the cost of missing opportunities to improve.

# GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

## ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning search & digital 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, social media and analytics. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named both SEO Agency of the Year and Organic Search (SEO) Team of the Year 2020; ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, and a Microsoft Advertising Select Agency Partner.
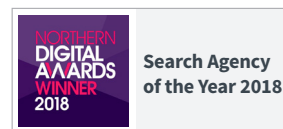
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