

PPC Basics for Small Businesses

Pay per click or PPC is often discussed in terms of a wider internet marketing campaign, or as a method for large businesses with huge advertising budgets to buy their way to the top of the search engines. However, small businesses and SMEs can benefit from implementing a PPC campaign too.

Depending on your product or service, investing in pay per click might even be more worthwhile than considering a search engine optimisation campaign because of the speediness of results (or lack of) and you may find that being a small enterprise, where your strategy can be changed and adapted quickly, may even give you the edge in your sector.

Keywords:

Knowing which keywords/phrases to target for your PPC campaign is likely to be the most important aspect to get right. Being a small business with a tight advertising budget means that the more comprehensive your research and the more compromising you are with your terms, then the more successful you shall be. In simple terms, unlike SEO, you will be paying for the privilege to be at the top of the search engines up front. But at the same time, you will be able to see where your campaign is and isn't working within a couple of weeks, compared to months or a year for SEO.

That said, when considering which keywords/phrases to bid for, the rules are quite similar to those of search engine optimisation, i.e. general terms (such as 'paints' or 'shoes') will be highly competitive, whilst smaller, niche phrases ('watercolour paints' or 'non-leather shoes') are likely to be cheaper and should generate more conversions due to their specificity.

When you have put yourself in your customer's head, carried out your keyword research, and established which search terms to target you then need to be sure to optimise your landing pages for those terms. Although the idea is simple, many websites still fail to remember the following: every time a prospective customer clicks through to your site, you will be paying; it is therefore of utmost importance that the page they arrive on is exactly what they are looking for. Using the example, 'watercolour paints', it would be less logical for the landing page to display art supplies or a huge range of paints, and far more worthwhile to the consumer if that page just shows 'watercolour paints'; exactly what the customer wants.

Titles and Ad-Copy:

Similarly, your titles and ad-copy should be as related to the search terms as possible, and it is not worth spending on the clicks of prospective customers and not having exactly what they want. Therefore, be sure that your titles contain your keywords/phrases, and strive to make them grammatically correct so they are clear and easy to read. For example, the search term 'watercolour paints' will most likely benefit from a title along the following lines: 'Buy Watercolour Paints from Arty UK';.

Following this you must also think about the ad-copy that appears below. Here you can certainly flesh out your description a little. But it is important to remember that, due to the variety of ways your advert might be displayed, your first few words are the most important and the rest may not always be displayed. Consequently, this is a good place to put your brand name or a unique selling point of your site.

Tracking Results and Modifying Your Campaign:

Once your campaign is set up and your adverts are established, you then need to keep an eye on what's working and what isn't. One of the benefits of PPC itself is that it is easy to see results quickly, and modify the campaign accordingly. Additionally, being a small business or SME also means that the process of changing target terms etc is not as likely to be held up by multiple levels of signoff and approval.

When tracking the success of PPC, it is often advised to think about each ad group alone, but also to consider each in the context of the overall campaign. However, there are two basics to focus on that will ensure a certain degree of progression. First, be prepared to eliminate any links that don't get clicked or don't lead to conversions; be confident and try a new term instead. Secondly, build on the terms that are clicked through often and lead to conversions; try additional variations and phrases that are subtly different.

Simple PPC can prove very worthwhile for small businesses that are trying to sell products or services, and can allow them to move into a position to compete with the biggest companies. It must be acknowledged that the above basics are an outline of the groundwork of just one strategy for online success, and just a small part of a comprehensive SEM campaign. However, for a small business, [pay per click](#) can be a good starting point and testing ground before implementing a full internet marketing plan.

About the Author

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