

5

THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR CAMPAIGN STARTS WITH YOUR AD GROUPS

Make no mistake, the way you structure your campaigns will determine the maximum amount of traffic you'll be able to drive to your Web site.

Last year I revamped a PPC campaign for a client using the technique described in this chapter. Traffic increased by over 1,000%. Eight months later, this same client asked me to take another look because their traffic had dropped 60%. I found that they had substituted the new campaign with one that had fewer ad groups and was "easier to manage."

The client didn't realize that the campaign was structured in a particular way to ensure that every important keyword was assigned its own optimized ad. The new campaign architecture didn't have room for as many targeted ads, and the clickthrough rate suffered as a result.

Unfortunately, there's a tradeoff between convenience and performance, so you'll need to decide which is more important. However, if you set up your campaign using an organizational scheme such as the one we discuss next, you'll find that you can minimize the amount of additional work while maximizing your campaign's traffic-generating potential.

THE WRONG WAY TO SET UP YOUR CAMPAIGN

There are two primary mistakes people make when setting up new campaigns.

The first of these is using too few ad groups. Ads perform best when they are targeted at a specific keyword phrase or perhaps a small group of closely related keyword phrases. Lumping all of your keywords in too few ad groups means that you'll have too few ads. This makes it virtually impossible to optimize the ad copy beyond a nominal clickthrough rate.

Ad copy optimization is one of the primary efforts you can undertake to beat your competitors, so your campaign should be set up in a way that allows you to tweak ads all the way down to the individual keyword level, if necessary.

The second mistake is failing to group closely related keywords together. This is the opposite end of the spectrum of the first mistake we just mentioned. Sometimes first-time marketers get overzealous and assign every keyword to its own ad group. A typical campaign should have over 1,000 keywords, so this ends up in over 1,000 ad groups. Although this affords a high degree of precision in tuning ads, managing your campaign becomes too cumbersome.

The solution lies somewhere in the middle: group related keywords together into a reasonable number of ad groups. Later on, keywords that drive the most traffic or sales can then be broken out into their own separate groups for fine-tuning. For most campaigns, I find 20–30 ad groups to be sufficient.

THE RIGHT WAY TO SET UP YOUR CAMPAIGN

Begin planning your campaign not in AdWords but in Excel. Create columns for category, keyword, browse, shop, buy, and ad group.

Start by using the tools mentioned in the next section to build an extensive keyword list. Don't worry about categorizing them or assigning them to behavioral buckets yet. Just capture them in the keyword column.

After collecting an exhaustive list (minimum of 1,000 keywords), group the related keyword phrases together.

Next, assign each keyword to one of the three primary behavioral buckets (browse, shop, or buy). You may optionally also add the navigational bucket for keywords such as competitors' company names or URLs, but we generally don't recommend advertising on these terms (use your discretion).

Finally, give every unique combination of category and behavioral bucket an easy-to-remember name.

Here's how your spreadsheet should look at this point:

Category	Keyword	Browse	Shop	Buy	Ad Group
Keyword suggestion	Keyword suggestion	X			Keyword suggestion (browse)
	Google keyword suggestion		X		Keyword suggestion (shop)
	Good keyword suggestion tool		X		Keyword suggestion (shop)
	Keyword suggestor tool		X		Keyword suggestion (shop)
	Professional keyword suggestion tool			X	Keyword suggestion (buy)
Find keywords	Find keyword		X		Find keywords
	Find keywords		X		Find keywords

You're finally ready to set up your campaign! Create your ad groups, assigning the keywords in the second column to each.

Save this spreadsheet for later reference. You will inevitably discover more keywords, and this spreadsheet will allow you to insert them quickly into the appropriate place in your campaign.

SUMMARY

The long-term potential of your campaign is determined by the keywords you choose and how you assign them to ad groups. The vast majority of advertisers dump their keywords into arbitrary ad groups. Don't be one of them. Instead, organize your keywords within Excel according to category and behavioral bucket. This blueprint will serve as the foundation for your campaign and will allow you to outperform the vast majority of competitors from the very start.