



Search Advertising: A Smart Marketing

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1. Introduction

In order to understand the concept of Search Engine Advertising it is vital that we look further into the concept of the Search Engine itself.

A Web Search Engine is a particular type of program which is designed to send out a spider to fetch as many documents on the web as possible. Another program, called an indexer, then reads these documents and creates an index based on the words contained in each document. Each search engine uses algorithm to create its index so that, ideally, the most relevant results are shown on the search engine results page for each search query.

We can find a variety of Search Engines throughout the World Wide Web. Some of the most commonly used Search Engines are Google, Yahoo, Bing, Yandex and Baidu. In our article we will mostly be focusing on Google since it is the preferred Search Engine for most of Ecommerce Wiki's readers. Moreover, other search engines tend to follow Google's lead on new features and developments.

Apart from the Search Engine results based on the relevancy algorithm, often called organic or natural results, there is another set of Search Engine results that may appear with a particular Search Query. Now we have arrived at the concept of Search Engine Advertising, also called SEA. SEA is often referred to as PPC (pay per click) advertising, but strictly taken, PPC advertising is also possible on other platforms, such as Facebook.

2. How does Search Engine Advertising work?

When Internet users are looking for something and don't know yet where to get it, they usually start their search on a Search Engine, such as Google. Based on the type of search query Google shows two types of search results: organic and sponsored results. The sponsored text ads are above and below the organic results, with a maximum of 7 ads per search result page (4 above and 3 below). These ads are recognizable by a yellow or green label with "Ad" before the URL. In addition to text ads, Google might also show Google Shopping results. These Google Shopping results have a different format, as there's no text, just a product image, price, title and seller. All sponsored results are linked to the specific keywords of the user; therefore they only appear when these keywords are entered in the search bar.

The Internet user selects a specific search result by clicking on it, in this case the advertisement. The Internet user is then led to a landing page, from where he can continue that particular Internet journey. A Web Search Engine is a particular type of program which is designed to send out a spider to fetch as many documents on the web as possible. Another program, called an indexer, then reads these documents and creates an index based on the words contained in each document. Each search engine uses algorithm to create its index so that, ideally, only relevant results are returned for each query.

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Apart from the Search Engine results based on the relevancy algorithm, often called organic or natural results, there is another set of Search Engine results that may appear with a particular Search Query. Now we have come to the concept of Search Engine Advertising, also called SEA. Search Engine Advertisements are advertisements shown on search engine pages when specific keywords are typed.

3. How does Search Engine Advertising work?

An Internet user goes online with the reason to search for something on a search engine site, for example www.google.com.

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4. Benefits of Search Engine Advertising

Acquiring a desirable ranking in the organic results of a Search Engine results page can be difficult. It requires you to optimize your website so that it can be detected by the Search Engine spiders and filtered as a relevant result for the Internet user. This is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and can consist of optimizing your website's content and technical set up, link building and other elements that may show that your website is relevant in relation to a particular Search Queries.

Search Engine Advertising (SEA) can be a great alternative, especially if you need results fast. It allows you to be visible on the Search Engine results page without the lengthy process of Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Some of the benefits:

1.Targeting

Because SEA is based on search queries by keywords, it can offer highly targeted advertisements. The advertisers bid on specific keywords and based on a number of factors their ad will appear for that specific keyword. Because the search query is based on the consumer's own needs, Search Engine Advertisements are considered far less intrusive than pop-up advertising or banner advertisements and can be tailored to the specific needs of the consumer based on his search query, current location, time of day and even device. For instance, a consumer looking for a beauty salon on her mobile phone in her hometown on a Saturday morning can be targeted with an advertisement by a beauty salon in her vicinity, specifically offering her a discount for a treatment that same day. The ability to match the advertisement exactly to the consumer's query can increase conversion rates and consequently the ROI.

2.Faster results in comparison with SEO

SEA provides the possibility to make information accessible to the consumer within a limited time frame which otherwise would not as easily be accessible to the user without extensive SEO efforts or other marketing activities such as TV commercials, newspaper ads, etc.

3.Cost Control

SEA is in most cases based on a Cost-Per-Click model. This means that the advertiser only pays if a user clicks on the advertisement. Cost-Per-Clicks (CPC) can get as low as 1 cent per click. Most SEA platforms offer the possibility of setting daily budgets in order for the advertiser to effectively control

his costs. Advertisement campaigns can be switched on and off with one click, giving the advertiser all the flexibility which traditional media lacks.

4.Measurability

Compared to traditional marketing channels like TV and magazine advertising, online marketing is highly measureable, and SEA is one of the most measurable of online channels. Looking for example at Google's AdWords we see numerous measurable features like number of impressions, Cost-Per-Click, average advertisement position, Click-Through-Rate, Conversion Rate, Cost per Conversion, etc.

5. Challenges regarding Search Engine Advertising

In some cases Ad Words may not give the advertiser the desirable results. What are the most common issues and how can we solve these?

1.Poor Traffic

Most businesses would want more visitors to their site at an accelerated rate. However, increasing budget just for the sake of getting a higher volume of clicks and impressions may not be the best strategy. Instead, advertisers need to focus on getting relevant traffic in relation to their goals. Think about tightly themed keywords, relevant ads and landing pages.

2.Manage your Campaigns

Related to the topic above, spent some time on your campaigns each day in order optimizes and improve. Analyse your keywords, ad texts, bidding strategies, ad extensions and work on a strategy to constantly improve your results.

3.Proper Tracking

In order to make the best use of Google AdWords' possibilities, it's necessary to set up proper tracking for conversions in your account: Calls, Forms Filled, Ecommerce for purchases and even consider creating goals in Google Analytics making sure they are properly imported to the account.

4.Determining the value of mobile traffic

Google Ad Words allows you to adjust your bids for mobile devices, but you cannot set separate campaigns that only target mobile devices, which increases difficulty to analyse results for your mobile campaigns. Additionally, mobile devices are frequently used in the beginning of the funnel and therefore direct returns of mobile are usually lower than of desktop campaigns.

5.High competition

Advertising in a highly competitive market mostly means high costs per click. New or smaller advertisers often find themselves paying a lot for the clicks (/visitors) they receive, but not getting an even amount of revenue in return. To make their campaigns profitable it is necessary to optimize their campaigns in the ways as described above.

6. Conclusion

Search engines like Google make vast amounts of money through search-based advertisements. These are shown in response to a query, which means that the target of the advertisement, the search engine user. This makes search-based ads unique to other forms of advertisements. In the context of search engines, an ad is defined as the commercial portion of message content for which an advertiser has or will pay when a searcher sees their content after submitting a query in a search engine or Web site search box, which will typically take a searcher to another Web page.

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