



The Ultimate Guide To Google Ads Optimization

Checklist & Tips for Marketers

30-POINT GOOGLE ADS REVIEW CHECKLIST

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- ☐ Audience Segments & Bid Adjustments
- ☐ Demographic Settings & Bid Adjustments
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HOW TO PERFORM A THROUGH GOOGLE ADS OPTIMIZATION

PPC CAMPAIGN OPTIMIZATION PRIORITY CLASSIFICATION	
Area of Focus	What to look for
Assign Priority Levels Priority 1 - The highest level of clicks/orders per month Priority 2 - Medium level of clicks and orders per month Priority 3 - Low volume campaigns or off-season campaigns	<p>Not all campaigns are created equal, so it's helpful to assign priority levels to specific campaigns to determine the level of effort and frequency of optimization.</p> <p>The higher the priority, the more time you should spend digging into all of the nuances of the campaign, breaking out segmentation, bidding strategies, etc.</p> <p>Basically, if you get a 10% improvement on a Priority 1 campaign that delivers \$500,000 in revenue - that's \$50k more in revenue. However, a campaign that drives \$5,000 in revenue would need a 10X improvement (1000%) in order to generate the same contribution.</p>
Performance Against Projections	<p>If a campaign is significantly underperforming (or overperforming) campaign targets, it should be flagged for optimization or expansion sooner rather than later.</p>

CAMPAIGN LEVEL OPTIMIZATIONS

Area of Focus	What to look for
Compare Current Performance Against Expectations	<p>Look at the total spend, conversions, and other metrics to score the campaign against your client's targets. Metrics should include cost, conversion, CPC, cost-per-conversion, and conversion rates.</p> <p>You'll also want to understand the current daily budget and if the campaign is limited by budget. Segment by conversion action and look at different date ranges (Lifetime, Fiscal YTD, Last 30 days, Last 2 weeks, In-Season) to see how much the data changes over time.</p>
Review Device Bid Adjustments	<p>Review performance by device type (Desktop/Mobile/Tablet) and adjust accordingly. For example, if the CPA is far lower on Mobile than it is on Desktop, consider increasing the Mobile Bid Adjustment to drive more mobile traffic.</p>
Review Audience Demographics Bid Adjustments	<p>Review performance by audience type and reduce bids on significantly underperforming audiences, especially if it makes sense for the target audience.</p> <p>Look for patterns in age groups with enough impressions, clicks, or conversions to be relevant. E.g. Does the 18-24 demographic make sense in this campaign or should you reduce those bids? Whenever possible, avoid putting in bid adjustments on "Unknown" unless the campaign is extremely limited (eg. you are ONLY marketing to Gen Z).</p> <p>Remember that bid adjustments multiply on top of each other, so they should RARELY be increased by more than 50%.</p> <p>However, they can be "decreased" as you need if that segment performs poorly. Of course, if you decrease the bid too much, you have effectively taken yourself out of the auctions for that term among that audience. If that segment is really terrible, remove them as a last resort.</p>

CAMPAIGN LEVEL OPTIMIZATIONS CONTINUED

Area of Focus	What to look for
Review Ad Schedule (aka Dayparting)	<p>Review performance by day of the week and time of day and adjust bids up or down based on performance data.</p> <p>This feature is especially handy when a campaign is currently limited by budget but the ROAS is not quite high enough to warrant investing more money. Reduce or eliminate certain poor-performing time blocks and focus the spending on the times/days when performance is best.</p> <p>Again, make sure there are enough Spend/ Impressions/Clicks/Conversions to make a reasonable decision. To determine the right time blocks, look at the Day report and the Hour report to gauge patterns (e.g. does Midnight to 7 a.m. drive clicks but no conversions? Or is there a particular day of the week that tends to perform poorly). The Day & Hour report will combine these to show you the difference between Saturday at 8 a.m. and Tuesday at 10 p.m.</p>
Audiences	<p>Make sure that you are focusing the right audiences on the right campaigns. For example, you should be excluding your remarketing audiences from your general audiences so that you aren't targeting the same people in two similar campaigns.</p> <p>You may also want to exclude key actions that they have already taken (e.g. Booked a Demo, Signed up for a Free Trial, etc.) if that is the focus of the campaign and move them into a different campaign.</p>
Settings - Networks	<p>Check the Networks Settings. In most cases, only the Google Search Network should be used. However, "Search Partners" can be added (as a test) for highly targeted campaigns such as Brand campaigns and Search Remarketing.</p> <p>Just make sure, if you do this, that you check back on the results within one week to make sure performance warrants continuing to extend to the Search Partners.</p>

CAMPAIGN LEVEL OPTIMIZATIONS CONTINUED

Area of Focus	What to look for
Settings - Locations	<p>Review bid adjustments by location to determine if select areas are performing better or worse. If current bid adjustments are unreasonable (e.g. 200% increases across almost every location) it is usually best to bring the bid adjustments down and adjust the baseline max CPC. This reduces the risk of multiplied bid adjustments turning a \$5 max CPC into \$40+.</p> <p>Use other eCommerce metrics (e.g. sales by city or state) to influence your bid adjustments if you find that there is more of an appetite for your client's products or services in certain locations.</p>
Settings - Languages	<p>Set the appropriate language based on the country, the ads, and the landing pages. For example, campaigns in Canada could be set to English or French, and campaigns in the US could be English & Spanish.</p>
Settings - Bidding	<p>Make sure that you have the right bid strategy allocated to your campaigns. You'd be amazed how often a simple setting like that can be missed and a campaign that was supposed to be set to a target CPA is accidentally set up for Target Impression Share.</p>
Settings - Start and End Date	<p>In most cases, you want to make sure there is no end date set (unless you are running a short-burst promo campaign) so that a campaign doesn't stop running when you're not looking.</p>
Settings - Ad Rotation	<p>If you optimize based on Google data, set this to prioritize higher-performing ads. However, this can often make A/B testing difficult as it could shift a majority of the impressions to one ad before it has reached statistical significance.</p>

CAMPAIGN LEVEL OPTIMIZATIONS CONTINUED



Area of Focus	What to look for
Settings - Conversions	<p>Select the appropriate conversions for the campaign. This can include a very specific conversion (e.g. downloading a whitepaper), a custom conversion action set (e.g. purchase and SQLs), or default groupings (account level conversions).</p> <p>You should also review the conversion window and whether you want to track just one or every conversion of that type per user.</p> <p>Typically, with high-value conversions such as purchases, you will want to track every time a user converts. However, with top-of-funnel conversions such as leads, you may want to limit to one conversion so that it doesn't duplicate conversions if a user downloads multiple whitepapers or signs up for multiple webinars.</p>
Optimization Score	<p>Take a look at the recommendations made in order to improve the optimization score of the program and apply the ones that make sense and ignore the ones that don't.</p> <p>Always remember that Google's recommendations are based on a) the data it has and b) what can be in Google's best interest instead of your client's best interest. Therefore, it will often recommend things that will extend your reach, but not necessarily things that will improve the ROI.</p>
Budget	<p>Review the current budget against spending to make sure you are not limited on campaigns that are performing at or above ROAS targets. Do not rely solely on the "Limited by Budget" labeling as that is not always accurate.</p>
Review Shared Library	<p>Are the data elements in shared libraries (e.g. negative keyword lists, customer lists, remarketing lists) up to date and accurate?</p>

AD GROUP LEVEL OPTIMIZATIONS

Area of Focus	What to look for
ROAS Review	Utilize ROAS performance to identify strong and poor performers to isolate ad groups that should be removed (e.g. those far below acceptable levels) optimize those that are close to or only slightly above acceptable levels or expand high-performing campaigns.
Rescue Good Performers	<p>If an Ad Group has driven conversions but is below the acceptable ROAS, look at the keyword level to see if a majority of those conversions were driven by a single keyword.</p> <p>Consider using SKAGs (Single Keyword Ad Groups) or STAGS (Single Theme Ad Groups) for top-performing keywords, but be careful not to abuse this practice as it can lead to a bloated campaign that is difficult to manage.</p> <p>However, if you find those gold nugget keywords, keeping just them active in the ad group will usually improve performance.</p>
Bid Management	<p>Adjust default Max CPC bids up if ROAS is above target, Adjust bids down if ROAS is below target. Always review enough of a time period to get relevant data:</p> <p>For example, create a matrix such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >50% higher than your target ROAS = 30% increase in bid >20% higher than your target ROAS = 15% increase in bid >20% lower than your target ROAS = 15% decrease in bid >50% lower than your target ROAS = 30% decrease in bid <p>Remember to check back after this has been completed to ensure that you haven't reduced it to the point where impressions are no longer being served.</p>

AD GROUP LEVEL OPTIMIZATIONS CONTINUED

Area of Focus	What to look for
Impression and Click Share	<p>Look at the impression share to make sure it is appropriate. High-performing and very targeted ad groups (e.g. branding campaigns or the highest ROAS ad groups) should have a higher impression and click share.</p> <p>You also want to look for campaigns that have a significantly higher impression share than click share, as that would be an indication that you are not getting the CTR you need and the ads may need further testing. Find this data by modifying the columns and adding these “Competitive” metrics.</p>

KEYWORD LEVEL OPTIMIZATIONS

Area of Focus	What to look for
Identify Search Intent	<p>For high volume keywords, especially ones that have been underperforming, actually search for that keyword in Google and see what kinds of results Google is displaying.</p> <p>This will give you a sense of what Google has determined is the “intent” of those searching for that term, and see how closely it matches with the action you want the searcher to perform.</p>
Keyword Harvesting	<p>Review search terms and add relevant keywords to the ad group that has a decent amount of impression and click volumes (aka more than 10 clicks).</p> <p>Don’t go overboard with really long keyword phrases, as they will likely never match again. Make sure to look at a long enough date range (e.g. 2 weeks or 30 days) to show enough data to make a decision. The fewer impressions and clicks a campaign gets, the longer the date range you’ll need.</p>
Negative Keyword Audit	<p>Same as above, but the reverse. And you’ll probably want to look at a 60-90 day window for this. Remove keywords that are obviously irrelevant to the campaign and have spent on clicks.</p> <p>E.g. Filter for Cost > \$50 and Conv. < 1 and Added/Excluded = None to find high cost, low converting keywords that you have not already taken action on. Typically you’ll sort by High Cost to Low Cost so that you deal with the worst offenders first.</p> <p>Remember to add appropriate negative keywords at the campaign level, or they will likely just pop up in another ad group within that keyword.</p> <p>Do not worry about single click, long-tail keywords with a minimal CPC, or you will spend too much time playing whack-a-mole with keywords.</p> <p>Instead, look for commonalities and add the base keyphrase (e.g. “how to”) that will eliminate a large grouping of low-purchase-intent keywords.</p>

KEYWORD LEVEL OPTIMIZATIONS CONTINUED

Area of Focus	What to look for
Bid Management	<p>Similar to what was done at the Ad Group Level, this looks at the performance at the keyword level. Adjust bids up if ROAS is above target, Adjust bids down if ROAS is below target. Always review the last 21 days, and increase/decrease bids based on your agency's own matrix, such as:</p> <p>>50% higher than your target ROAS = 30% increase in bid >20% higher than your target ROAS = 15% increase in bid >20% lower than your target ROAS = 15% decrease in bid >50% lower than your target ROAS = 30% decrease in bid</p>
Review Quality Score	<p>Add the Quality Score column and look for keywords that have a lower quality score (anything under 7/10 should be looked at).</p> <p>Quality score is impacted by the keyword, ad text, landing page, and click-through-rate. A higher-quality score usually leads to a lower CPC on that keyword.</p> <p>However, this number can sometimes feel arbitrary and won't budge no matter what you do. So if you've tried everything and simply can't move the needle, move on to the next item.</p>

AD LEVEL OPTIMIZATIONS

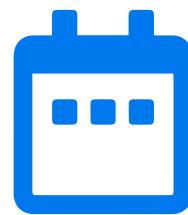
Area of Focus	What to look for
Current Ad Tests	Are poorly performing ads paused and replaced with a new test?
Create New Ad Tests	Do new ad tests need to be added (volume high enough, no current test, change in competitor tactics)?
Test Promotional Ads	When promos are running, are you testing ads that mirror that promotion?
Ad Extensions	Review for all ad extensions to make sure they are active and applicable: Sitelinks, Callouts, Structured Snippets, Locations, & Seller Ratings are just a few of the available ad extensions that you should capitalize upon.
Test Responsive Search Ads	Responsive search ads let you create an ad that adapts to show more text—and more relevant messages—to your customers. Enter multiple headlines and descriptions when creating a responsive search ad, and over time, Google Ads will automatically test different combinations and learn which combinations perform best.
Check Landing Pages	Click on the ads to make sure they land where we would expect (you'd be amazed how often ads have an incorrect link and that's why the performance had been subpar).

CALENDAR REMINDERS FOR FOLLOW-UP ANALYSIS



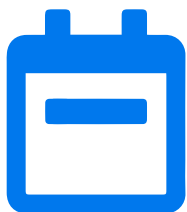
24 Hours

Set Calendar reminders to check back on campaigns to make sure the changes have not negatively impacted the campaign or ad groups.



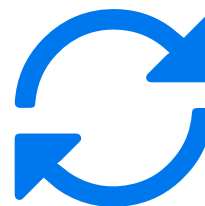
3 Days Later

Review the CPCs, Traffic, and Cost Per Conversion (at the top of the funnel, likely too early for ROAS impact) to make sure it has improved.



7 Days Later

Review the CPCs, Traffic, and Cost Per Conversion (at the top, middle, and bottom of the funnel) to make sure it has improved from a cost per lead, and, if available, ROAS.



Ongoing

Highlight the campaign in your reporting dashboard and note when it was optimized so that you determine how long to give the campaign to stabilize before taking more action.

Spend less time manually creating client reports and more time optimizing campaigns with an easy-to-use, automated Google Ads reporting platform.

