



Top 8 Google AdWords optimisation tips for Australian agencies

Want to make your clients' AdWords advertising even more successful? These tips can help.

1. Limit the number of keywords in each ad group.

Keep your ad groups skinny. The more narrowly targeted the theme of a given ad group, the higher the Quality Scores, relevance, and rankings of its keywords will be. Aim for between five and 20 keywords in each ad group, and don't exceed 50 unique keywords per ad group. Structure campaigns to suit your client, not your tracking system.

Using lots of keywords is fine – as long as they're distributed among lots of ad groups.

2. Don't bury high-performing keywords.

Great keywords deserve a chance to shine. If you have a stellar keyword, consider helping it perform to its full potential by putting it in its own ad group. For example, imagine you're advertising "out of this world" vacations on Mars, and the best-performing keywords in your *Mars Tours* ad group are *mars package tours* and *mars package deals*. By creating a *Mars Packages* ad group for these keywords, you can make your ad creatives even more relevant.

3. Be careful with keyword insertion.

Keyword insertion can seem like an easy way to make your ads relevant, but it can also result in ads that seem generic or don't make sense. Always make sure that:

- There's at least one static ad in every ad group;
- All ads will make sense and comply with AdWords editorial guidelines when the keyword is inserted; and
- Most of the keywords are short enough to be inserted, and you have alternate text.

And remember, if you have lots of ad groups with a small number of keywords in each, your ads will be more relevant than if you have one big ad group.

4. Be judicious in using broad match, phrase match, and exact match.

It can be tempting to use all three of these match types to build out keyword lists – to include each keyword as broad, phrase, and exact matches – but in practice, using all three match types just gets messy. Using all three match types in the same ad group at the same Max CPC doesn't improve your Quality Score or reduce your costs – and spreading your statistics across three keywords makes it more difficult to diagnose problems or recognise successes in your account, and to optimise your account based on what's succeeding.

The best practice is to associate each keyword only with the most appropriate match type. Use phrase match only where changing a phrase's word order changes its meaning (for example, *share market* vs. *market share*), and use exact match for high-traffic keywords so you don't spend your entire budget on just one keyword (for example, *home loans* or *recipes*). In all other cases, just use broad match.

5. Keep your keywords short.

No-one searches for *cheap martian all-inclusive package deal with swim-up bar and cable*. Most search queries are two- to three-word phrases, so that's what most of your keywords should be. If your client's account is full of keywords that haven't generated an impression in six months, it might be time to review the keyword list.

6. Create separate campaigns for Google search and the Google content network.

Leverage the reach and branding power of the Google content network by creating separate campaigns specifically for it. You can then use general keywords to help enhance the overall theme of your ad group in a way you can't do for your search campaign (because it would be too expensive). For example, if you're selling Mother's Day greeting cards, you can use general keywords such as *mother*, *mum*, *greetings*, and *cards* in addition to more specific keywords in order to strengthen the performance of your ads.

Don't use keyword insertion on content network campaigns. Pique the interest of visitors to content network sites using engaging text, image, or video ads instead.

7. Be sure to include some negative keywords.

No campaign is complete without at least a handful of negative keywords, at either the ad group or campaign level. Think about the goods or services your client doesn't offer – for example, if your client provides 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. child care, add the negative *after hours*. If your client provides luxury holidays, add the negatives *cheap* and *backpacker*. The Google Keyword Tool can provide more suggestions for appropriate negatives.

8. Let “test and change, test and change” be your mantra.

Just as it's smarter to bring your car to the mechanic's for regular maintenance than it is to wait for a major problem, it's better to do a little maintenance on your AdWords account every week than to rely on large, infrequent overhauls. Delete a few underperforming keywords. Identify which keywords are performing, and add a few new ones that are similar. Add a new ad group, and a few more negatives. Update your ad creatives so they stay fresh and relevant. Show your clients' accounts some love on a regular basis, and their ads' performance will benefit.