The
DIY GUIDE
to
ONLINE
MARKETING
SUCCESS
MIKE NCUBE

THE DIY GUIDE

TO ONLINE MARKETING **SUCCESS**

By Mike Ncube

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1.Intro

Whether you are new to online marketing or you've spent some considerable time dabbling in social media, SEO, PPC and other methods with moderate success, you will need a strategy to bring it all together and see real benefits from your work.

It's important to have a plan that details your online objectives, what you want to achieve, how you will achieve it, what resources you need and how much you will need. It doesn't have to be a detailed marketing plan; however it should include all the key ingredients to make things happen.

In "The DIY Guide to Online Marketing Success" you get all the key tips on how to make your company's online presence a true success.

2. Know your target market

Online, few businesses know who their target customers actually are. In fact, not a few will define their target market as anyone who has an interest in their products or services. That is a mistake and it often leads to failure in online marketing. For example, many people would like to own a Rolex watch; however, many of them may never be able to afford one. In fact, many searches for Rolex watches and other luxury products are from aspirers who have interest but cannot afford them - so a retailer selling these products has to be aware of these facts.

So, a target market should fit the following criteria to be considered viable:

Size - the market or segment should be large enough to lead to high volumes of sales that will lead to profit for your business.

Money - your target market should have the money to afford your products or services. So that means many people who search for certain products don't actually have the money to buy them and you don't want them seeing your ad and clicking.

Permission - they should have permission to purchase your products or services. There is no point in targeting your ads at people in specific countries or regions were your products are not legal (this is common with health products).

Availability - your target market should be available at the time and place you run your ads and in sufficient numbers to make it viable. So the question to answer is - Which devices and channels do they access?

This is true for both online and offline businesses. Google Adwords and Facebook for example have demographic and location targeting features to target people that match your target market closely.

However segmenting your customers according to demographic and location bases is too general. In fact, a wealthy 30-something living in London has more in common with a wealthy 30-something New Yorker than a person of the same age on a low income in London. So location and demographic targeting alone in this case would not be ideal.

It would be better to combine this with behaviour and lifestyle segmentation to arrive at a better description of who your target customers are.

In Adwords on the display network, you can target people based on their interests and categories and you can combine this with demographic data to make your targeting precise. Also, using the display planner in Adwords, you can identify placements or sites that are frequented by your target market and place your ads there.

These tools and others can be used for extensive research and combined with your demographic and geographic reports in analytics, you will be closer to meeting the needs of your customers.

With greater understanding of your target customers, you can now create more realistic marketing objectives, that ensure profitably and help you meet the needs of your customers.

Your objectives should be **SMART**: *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Related.*

Specific - your goals should be well defined and clear to everyone in your business.

Measurable - you should benchmark your goals against competitors' and know how far you are from completion.

Achievable - you should agree with all stakeholders what the goals should be and it's very important that the goal is obtainable and know how far you are from completion.

Realistic - resources such as time, money and knowledge should be available.

Time Related - there should be sufficient time to achieve the goal otherwise this will lead to frustration and failure. No sufficient time will affect your online marketing success.

An example of a poorly crafted objective is: "To increase sales".

This objective isn't specific enough and does not state when it should be achieved; therefore it is impossible to create a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to benchmark your progress. It is also irrelevant because it doesn't mention the segments that you are targeting and neither is it measurable.

A better objective would be: *"Increase online sales by 20% from Millennials by Dec 31, 2015".*

With the reports available in Google Analytics (Figure 2.1) you can then create KPIs to benchmark against your

competitors. Benchmarking is important because it forces you to create objectives that meet customer needs, while gaining a competitive advantage - so you are not working in a vacuum.

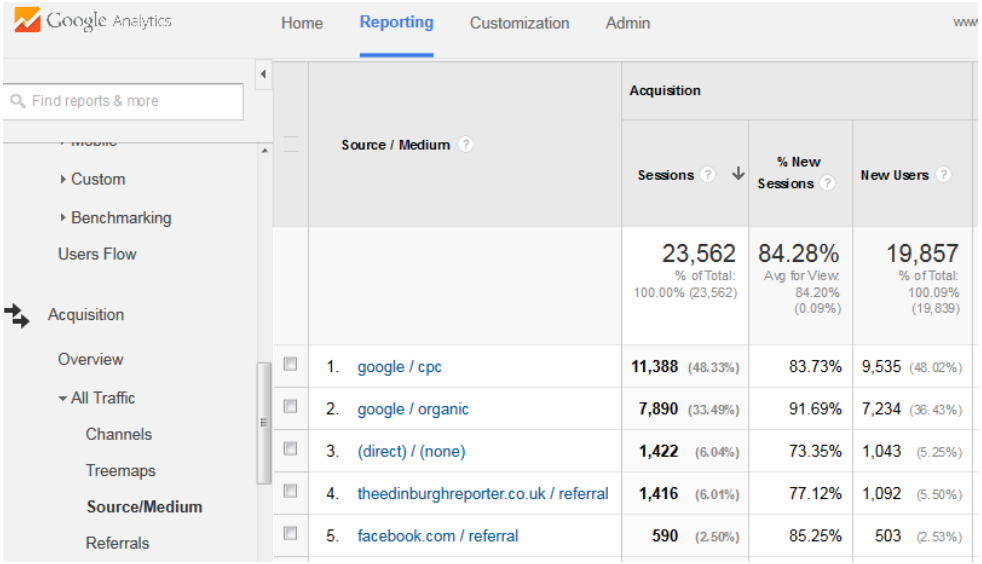

Fig 2.1 - Google Analytics Interface

3. Competitors

There are a wide range of competitors online, both direct and indirect. So competitors are not just companies that sell similar products and services to yours. They will include substitutes to what you are offering. For example an online furniture retailer did research into its competitors and was surprised to discover that holiday operators were one of their biggest competitors - alongside other furniture

retailers. So, many of their customers were choosing either to go on holiday or to purchase new sofas.

Without this research, they would have only considered other furniture stores as competitors, which is not a complete picture of the competitor landscape.

Tools that will help you benchmark against your competitors include Alexa Rank (Fig 3.1) and Compete and they provide comparison data such as:

- Traffic volume estimates
- Pagerank comparisons
- Link profile comparison
- Demographic profiles
- Geographic profiles
- Pages indexed
- Organic keyword traffic percentages

Fig 3.1 – Alexa Comparison interface for 3 sites

With this data, you can create relevant objectives that you can keep track of and measure with your Google Analytics account.

In Adwords you have reports like the Auction Insights Report that shows you who your competitors are, what share of impressions they have compared to you and others, and what their percentage at the top of the results is (Fig 3.2).

1% of available impressions (from 4783 keywords) were used to generate this report. Learn more

Display URL domain	Impression share ↓	Avg. position	Overlap rate	Position above rate	Top of page rate
amazon.co.uk	32.51%	3.1	24.69%	58.86%	26.03%
clarks.co.uk	17.38%	2.4	4.91%	81.39%	41.81%
johnlewis.com	16.15%	4.3	9.05%	68.62%	16.41%
everything5pounds.com	14.97%	3.8	21.35%	79.36%	18.44%
marksandspencer.com	14.36%	3.5	18.30%	63.89%	19.22%
You	12.96%	4.1	--	--	19.37%
fashionworld.co.uk	10.90%	4	12.74%	80.72%	20.36%
fiftyplus.co.uk	10.14%	3.7	7.09%	74.32%	17.63%

Fig 3.2 Example Auction Insights Report for Shopping Site

Many of your competitors are just a few clicks away, so you should be working to create relationships with your customers that will lead to loyalty.

You can sign up to Alexa for a low monthly free to get greater insight about your competitors. The tools available allow you to compare your site with your competitors, and I suggest you start with 3 competitors

4. Website Promotion

Although you can do business online without a website, the reality is few people will take you seriously if you don't have one. You could have a listing on Google My Business and on social media sites without a website, but you will miss out on the real potential of online marketing.

You will also miss out on the opportunity to build a solid relationship with your customers and turn them into advocates for your business. This is what a website does for your business and the possibilities are endless for both ecommerce and non-transactional websites.

There are many online channels and vehicles that you can implement as part of your online marketing strategy and they include:

- PPC
- SEO
- Online PR
- Affiliate Marketing
- Email Marketing
- Social Media
- Blogging
- Directories

- Online Portals
- Co-branding
- Online Sponsorship
- and much more.

However, I list here just 3 of the most important, that every business should take seriously:

4.1 PPC Advertising

Pay Per Click Advertising is one of the most efficient and effective forms of advertising that exists today. It's a type of self marketing where prospects actively seek for products, services or information, unlike most types of mass advertising tools that are broadcast to an audience that has little or no interest in the products.

Its many benefits include:

- quick to implement
- relatively cheap to setup
- highly measurable
- an interested audience
- spend can be tracked and reported
- easy to calculate ROI (Return On Investment) and ROAS (Return On Ad Spend)
- cost effective
- only pay for visits or impressions

- and much more

Google Adwords is one of a number of PPC platforms, however it is by far the most popular and is where you should start if you are looking to get high quality traffic that is interested in your products or services. You can sign up for an Adwords account here www.adwords.com

There are two types of Adwords accounts:

1. Adwords express (Fig 4.1.1) - a basic version mainly for new users who want to run a small account and leave the system to do most of the bidding. I've found it works well for local service businesses that are on a very low monthly budget and are new to Adwords. So you have the option to set a budget, build your ads and choose your category and it will bid accordingly.

2. Full Adwords account (Fig 4.1.2) - This is the ideal account type for most advertisers and for those who are looking to grow their online presence.

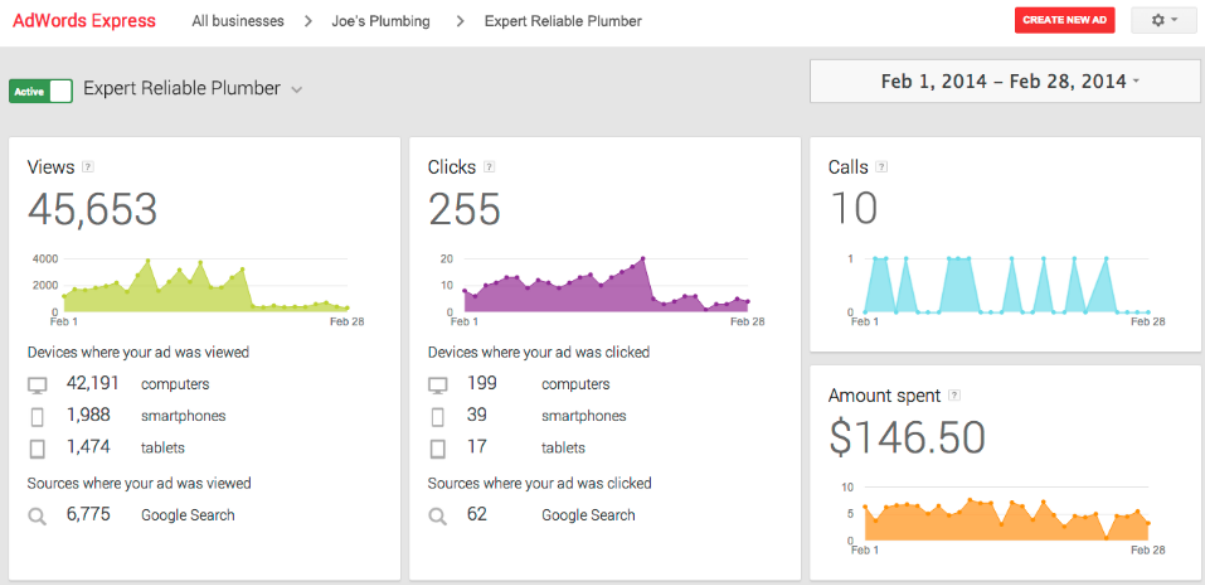

Fig. 4.1.1 – Example Adwords Express Interface – Basic Features

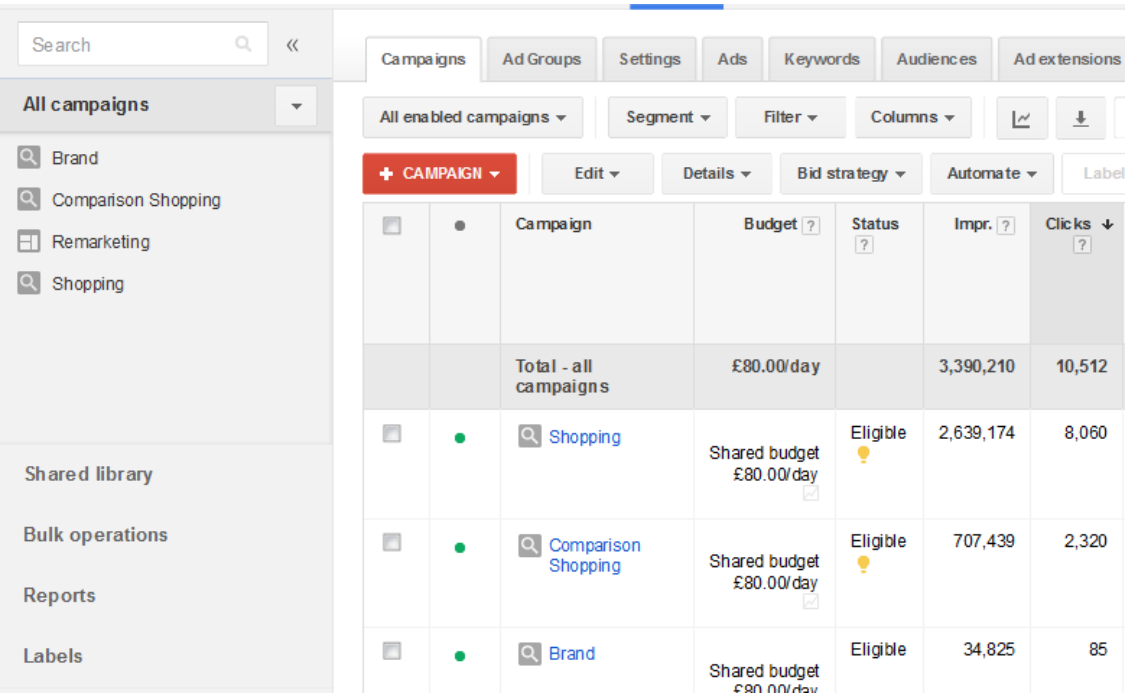

Fig. 4.1.2 – Example Full Adwords Interface

Your Adwords account should have at least one campaign, one ad group, one ad and one keyword to be included in the auction. You will spend most of your time in the campaign section and this is where you will work on your ad groups, ads and keywords.

I'll now take you through some features that are available to you as full Adwords account user.

Campaigns

There are five campaign types in Adwords however the three most frequently used are Search Network with Display Select, Search Network Only & Display Network Only. My preferred campaign type is Search Network Only, followed by Display Network, simply because I don't consider combining the search and display network as best practice.

Click the red 'campaign' tab to create a campaign and choose a campaign type to create from the window that opens:

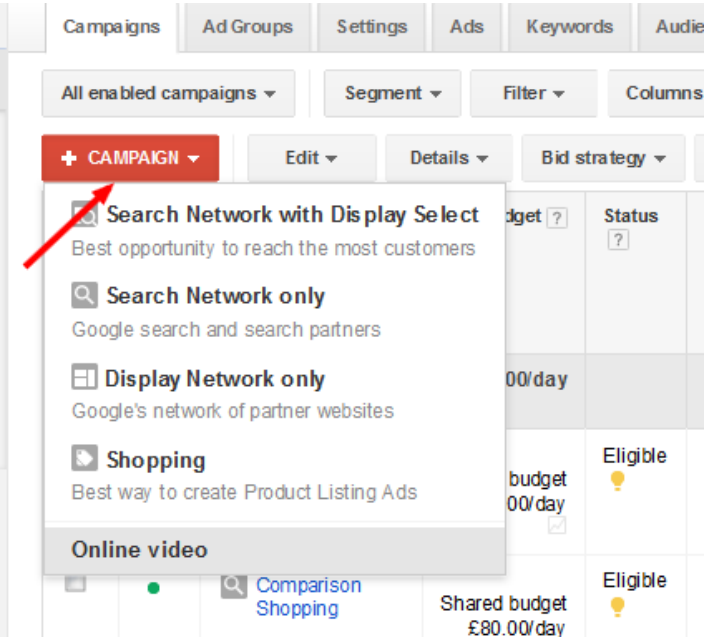

Fig. 4.1.3 – Choose your campaign type

Certainly Google has made major strides by eliminating the 'Search & Display Network' campaign type when they introduced 'Search Network with Display Select' which according to Google is for only quality display partners.

Campaign structure is something of great importance to your account because:

- it makes managing your account easier
- improves quality scores
- easy for other users to find what they need (especially with large accounts)
- saves you a lot of time

There are many ways to structure your campaign and these include:

- follow your website structure
- based on locations
- based on customer segments
- based on product or category
- keyword themes
- and many others

Whatever option you choose, you should consider your budget and the range of products you have. For example an ecommerce site with thousands of products and targeting a number of countries could easily find itself with many unmanageable campaigns and ad groups.

Also, because budgets are set at the campaign level, if you have a low budget, don't create too many campaigns and spread your budget too thinly.

You could even combine two options like location and customer type. Also, there are features that are set at the campaign level and these will help you make the choice on how to structure the campaigns.

Campaign level features are:

- campaign type

- budget
- location targeting
- bidding options (CPC, CPM etc)
- ad scheduling
- device targeting
- campaign experiments

These features are all set and managed at the campaign level and they determine a lot of what will take place in your account. It's important that you plan your campaigns carefully before launching, because this could make or break your online marketing efforts. To find out more about campaigns and how to maximise their performance, visit my site http://www.mikencube.co.uk

Ad groups

Ad groups contain your ads and keywords, and when you click on any ad group, the default landing tab is the keyword tab. The keyword section will show you one of your main ads for that ad group and you can click the ads tab to see all the ads in the ad group.

Ad group structure is important too and you can follow similar guidelines to structure them as I've highlighted under campaign structure, however you can't do that for

location targeting and budgets because these are set at the campaign level and other features set at the campaign level.

You can set an ad group bid which will apply to all keywords in the ad group, however a keyword level bid (Fig. 4.1.4) will take precedence over the ad group bid. Click the keyword bid to change it.

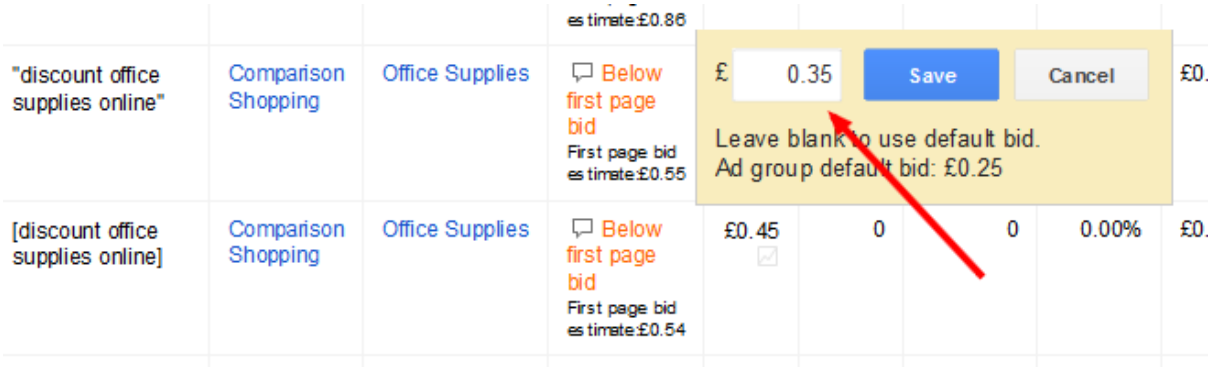

Fig. 4.1.4 – Keyword level bid

Your ad group type will depend on what campaign type you have selected. For example, if you are running a display campaign you can include CPC and CPM (Cost per thousand impressions) bidding options and you can add both text and image ads in your ad group. So you have more options with the Display Network.

Other benefits include:

- wider audience reach
- great for branding purposes to inform and educate people who are not aware of your products or services
- demographic targeting available (gender, age, interests etc)
- generally a lower CPC rate than the search network
- can run a remarketing campaign to retarget people who've visited your site before

Ads

There are two main ad types: text and image ads. Both are available for display network campaigns and only text ads for the search network.

- Your ads as they appear in the search results are the result of all the work that you do in your Adwords account and it's important that you get this part of your online strategy right. Many businesses fail to differentiate their ads and make them relevant to the searchers needs. Some of the problems I often see are:

    - ads not relevant to the search query

- ads not relevant to the keywords in the ad group
- poorly crafted ads that have no benefits
- promoting features and not benefits
- not split testing ads to improve ROI
- boring ads that are not unique
- ads missing sitelinks, call, callout and location extensions
- and the list goes on

In fact, many advertisers copy their competitors' ads or use the same benefits without differentiating their ads. So for a searcher looking for a product or service, the choice between businesses is difficult

There are a number of things that you can do to create a competitive advantage here and that includes:

1. Make a list of your products features and turn them into desired benefits
2. Pick the biggest benefit, especially if it's a USP and promote it prominently in your ads
3. Be specific about your offers - state exactly how much visitors will save by buying from you, and avoid vague offers like 75%, which many advertisers use
4. Include sitelinks (Fig. 4.1.5) to relevant pages that will interest visitors and lead to high CTR (sitelinks also contribute to quality scores)

5. Also include callout extensions to highlight such things as awards, certifications, opening times, delivery rates etc.
6. Add review extensions to increase trust and credibility.

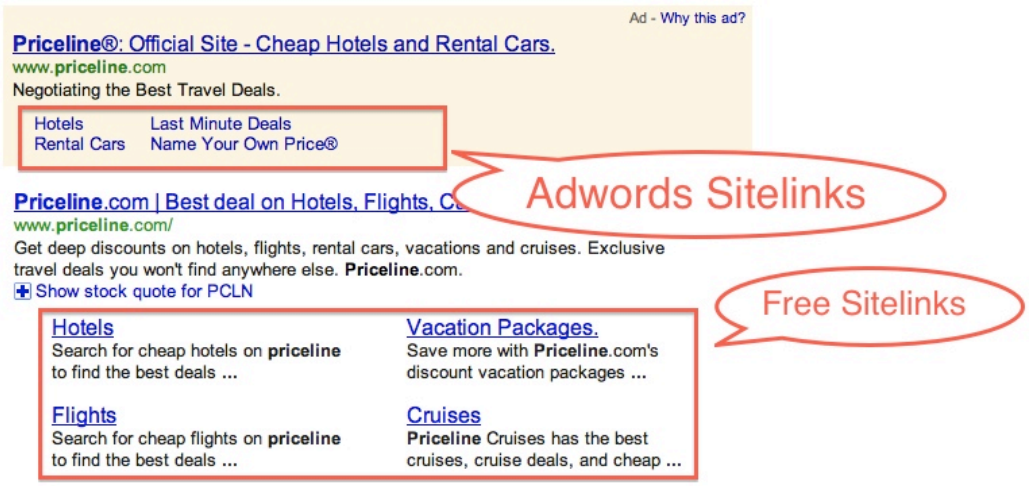

Fig. 4.1.5 – Adwords Sitelinks enhance ads and lead to high click through rates

- You should create at least 2 ads for each ad group and that's mainly for testing purposes. This allows you to run some split tests to see what visitors respond to. For example, you can test:

- Ads with and without price
- Ads with and without an offer
- Ads with a discount and a price
- A normal text ad and dynamic keyword insertion ad
- One benefit against another

- A feature versus a benefit

The possibilities are endless, so it's important to start testing early and get to know what your customers respond to.

Mobile ads are now more important than ever, and mobile traffic has grown by over 400% in the last few years. In fact, over 95% of people looking for a local service use the web to search and many are now doing it on mobile.

To be more effective at mobile marketing, you should create offers specifically for mobile, and this is fairly easy for some businesses such as restaurants and pizza businesses because they receive large mobile traffic.

Keywords

Keywords are perhaps the most important feature of your account, and you could get away with making errors setting up other account features, but not with keywords. Your keywords are what get you found on Google and other search engines, so you want to ensure that every keyword you pick is relevant.

Your keyword research should be thorough and should result in finding keywords that are directly related to what you are selling.

There are at least eight different types of keyphrases with different qualifiers. I have added examples for car insurance:

Comparison/quality - Compare car insurance

Adjective (price/product qualifiers) - Cheap car insurance, women's car insurance

Intended use (Intention)- high mileage car insurance

Vendor - Churchill car insurance

Product type - holiday insurance, car insurance

Location - Car insurance UK

Action request - Buy car insurance

Combination (Mostly Long tail keywords) - Cheap high mileage car insurance

- So, your choice of keyword types will depend on a number of factors which include
    - nature of product or service,
    - who your target audience is,
    - what is your budget,

- where are your target customers in the buying funnel process

Knowing where your keywords fall in the buying funnel is crucial to your success on Adwords. And that's because some keywords are transactional keywords and some are not and if you bid on non-transactional keywords hoping to see a good ROI, you may be disappointed - especially if you are on a low budget compared to your competitors.

For the insurance keywords above for example, action request keywords like 'buy car insurance' and 'purchase car insurance' are best targeted at people who are in the late stages of the buying funnel and have compared insurers and prices and are now ready to make a purchase.

Comparison keywords would be more ideal for an insurance review and comparison site that lists the various insurers in the industry. It's also important to avoid high volume and high competition keywords that are grouped under product type, such as 'car insurance' because these are often very expensive and it's hard to determine the searchers intent.

So it's important to know where your keywords are grouped in the buying funnel and to create your campaigns accordingly.

Long tail keywords

Long tail keywords are usually the most profitable and the cheapest to bid on and they are 3 or more words long. There are a number of reasons for this and they include:

- knowledgeable and experienced searchers who know exactly what they want
- they are ignored by many inexperienced advertisers
- many advertisers bid on competitive high traffic keywords and exhaust their budgets before they can benefit from the long tail
- most keyword tools ignore them, so advertisers aren't aware they exist.
- individually they have low traffic volumes but in total they make up about 80% of all searches
- and because of all the above, they are the cheapest to bid on.

Long tail keywords (Fig. 4.1.6) are also important to SEO management and your Google Analytics and Google Search Console accounts will list many of them. You can use these tools to brainstorm more keywords for your Adwords campaigns.

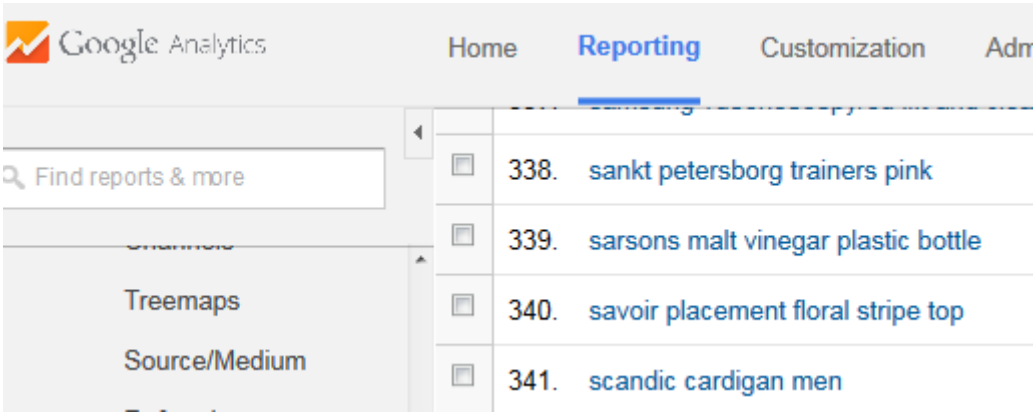

Fig 4.1.6 – Long tail keywords examples

Match types

There are four main keyword match types:

- broad match - example - car insurance
- modified broad match - example - +car +insurance
- phrase match - example - "car insurance"
- exact match - example - [car insurance]

I've deliberately put them in that order - from the highest possible impressions and clicks for broad match, to the lowest traffic for exact match. Your choice of match type will depend on a number of factors such as:

- search volumes
- your experience level

- experience level of your target audience
- nature of products or services
- your budget

A good strategy in setting up your keyword match types is to start by adding exact match keywords and after a significant amount of traffic, you can then review your search terms report to see how they are performing. You then eliminate poor keywords and then add phrase match keywords that are related to your list of chosen keywords, followed by modified broad match and then finally broad match.

Negative Keywords

Part of your keyword research efforts should include negative keyword research. Negative keywords are words and phrases that are not relevant to your products or services. So you don't want your ads to be triggered when people search with these words.

An example is if you run a training program in a class setting, but not online, you can add ‘online’ as a negative match.

Click on ‘Shared Library’ in the left navigation then click the red ‘List’ tab and create a negative list and apply it to any or all campaigns

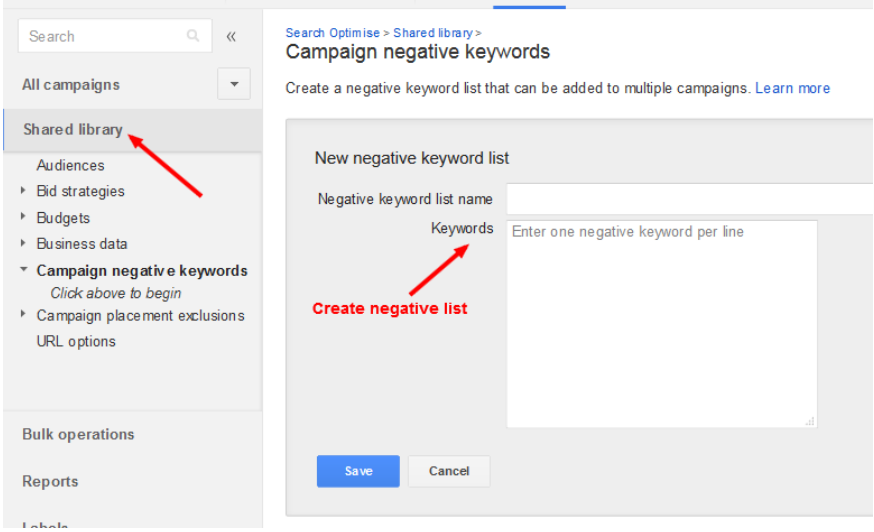

Fig 4.1.7 – Create negative list in Shared Library

You can also add negative keywords in the keyword tab of your ad groups and add negative keywords at the campaign or ad group level as below

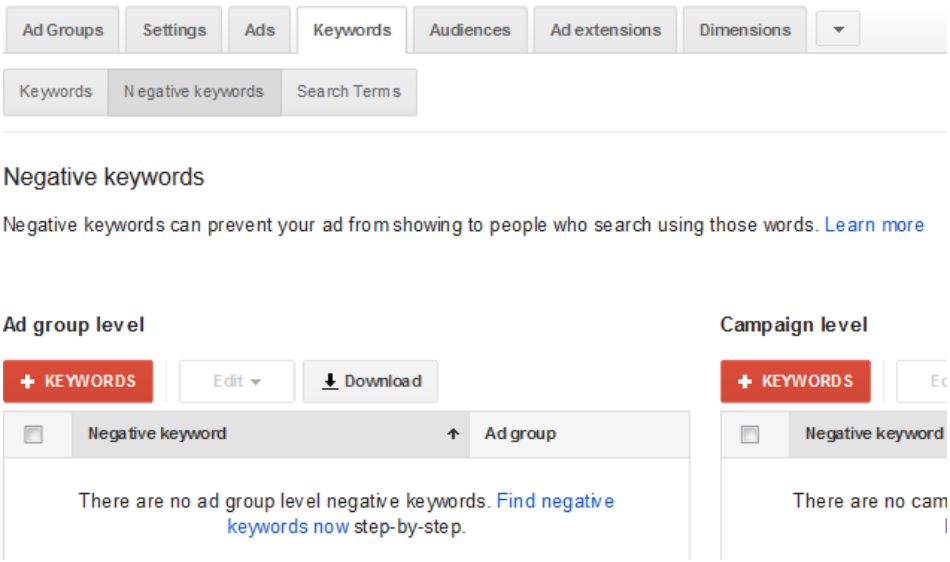

Fig 4.1.8 – Create negative keywords under the keywords tab

Negative keywords are important especially when you have broad match and modified broad match keywords and not so much so with exact and phrase match. However, you should add them for phrase match too, to avoid wasting money.

- Here are some facts about negative keywords that you should know about as you build your negative list:
    - you can use match types too, just as you would with positive keywords
    - you should research them at the beginning and throughout your account management

- you can setup lists which you can apply to your campaigns - all or some of your campaigns
- you can set them up in Shared Library and at the campaign and ad group levels.
- use analytics to research and build your list
- use the search terms report in your Adwords campaigns under dimensions to find negative keyword opportunities

Quality Scores

Now we come to one of the most important features of your Adwords account: quality scores. Quality score is what makes Google's PPC platform what it is today and the reason many businesses and advertisers trust it to improve their campaigns.

Each keyword in your account is scored on a scale of 1 - 10 and this is an estimate of the quality of your ads and landing pages. The lower the score, the lower the quality of your ads and landing pages and you will need to improve this. Generally, any score above 7 is good and 10 is excellent.

To see your scores, hover your mouse over one of your keywords, and it will open a small window (Fig. 1.1.9) that

shows the quality score for that keyword and the factors that determine it.

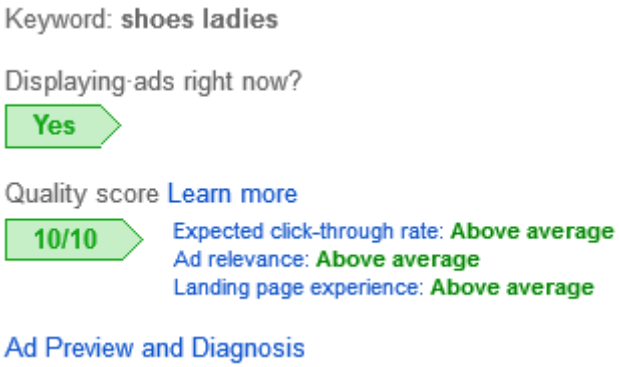

Fig 1.1.9 – Good Quality Scores

Quality score is one of two factors that determine your Ad rank. The other factor is your bid and the ad rank formula is:

Ad rank = quality score x CPC bid

Ad rank is a value that determines your ad position in the auction and to improve it, you should improve your quality scores and/or increase your bid.

Your quality scores are calculated each time your keyword is eligible to appear in an auction.

You can see all your keywords' quality scores by clicking the keyword tab, and selecting columns, then click attributes, select quality score and click apply (Fig. 1.1.10).

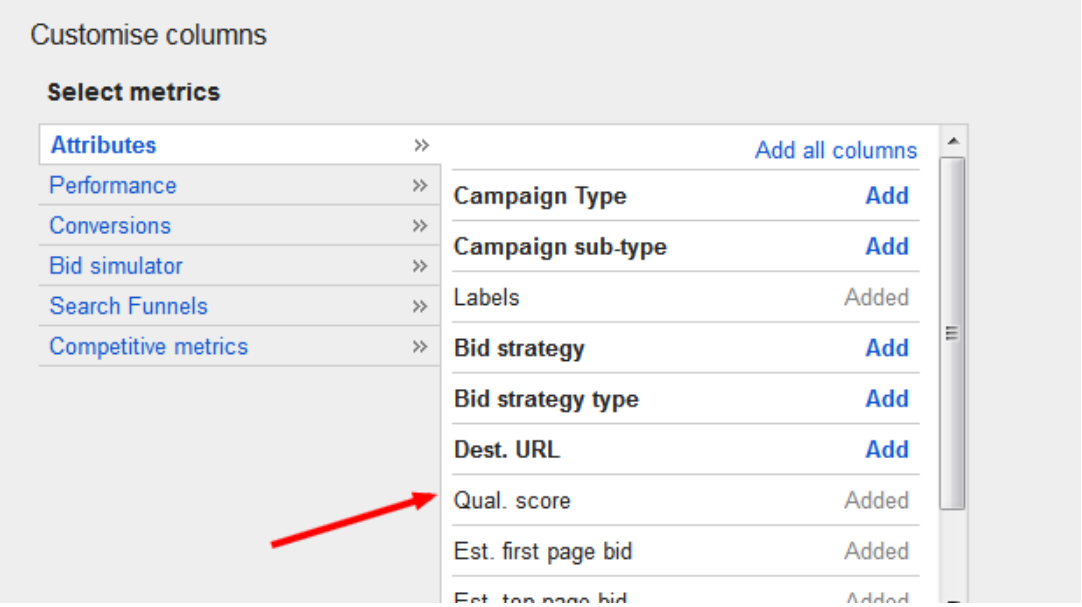

Fig. 1.1.10 – Adding quality scores to keyword data table

There are three factors that determine your keyword quality scores:

- expected click through rates
- ad relevance
- landing page experience

Each of these factors will have one of three ratings that shows how you are performing:

- above average
- average
- below average

So you will have to fix any of the factors that are 'below average' and improve any 'average' factors. For example, if your landing page experience is below average, it means you have a high landing page bounce rate and you need to fix any problems on the page. Some of the reasons why you will have a below average landing page experience include:

- no call to action on the page
- sending visitors to the wrong page
- landing page offer doesn't match what has been promoted in the ad
- poor quality website with confusing navigation
- slow website and poor user experience
- a website that is not secure

In fact, there are many factors that lead to a poor experience and you should address these before you run any ads.

Ad Scheduling

Ad scheduling or day parting (Fig.1.1.11) is a nice feature that gives you control over when your ads appear. You can

choose days and hours to run or pause your ads and you can increase and decrease bids on certain days or hours.

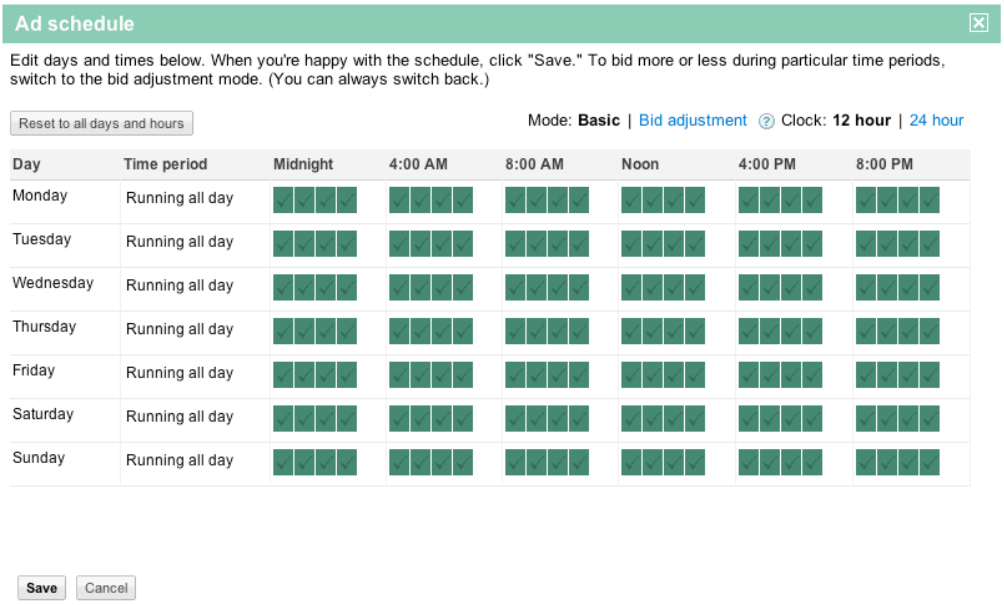

Fig. 1.1.11 – Ad Scheduling

It's a feature that is available at the campaign level, so all ad groups, ads and keywords in the campaign will have the same setting. It's perfect for a wide range of businesses including those that open Mon - Fri only, like B2B companies and even restaurants that are open at specific hours only

It has many other benefits including:

- greater control regarding when your ads are seen
- enhanced exposure at critical times

- less manual change in bids and when your ads will run
- easy to setup in minutes
- reduce bids at lower performing times
- ads available when people are searching and ready to convert

Location targeting

As mentioned earlier, you setup location targeting at the campaign level and it's good practice to structure your account according to geographic locations. For example, if you are targeting 4 countries, rather than adding them all in one campaign, you should create a campaign for each country and this is why:

- it allows you to create location specific ads
- have different shipping rates - for example domestic shipping rates will differ from international rates
- create language specific ads for example Spanish ads for Spanish countries
- location specific offers and discounts
- budget adjusted accordingly for each location
- keywords for specific locations
- better location reporting on performance

The location targeting options available in Google Adwords are:

- country
- city
- region
- radius around a location

You should also add negative locations too, especially if there are locations that you don't want to target but are within or near an area you are targeting. For example, if you have decided to target all countries and territories but have a few countries you don't want to target, you can exclude them in the location targeting settings.

Advanced Location Options

This is one of the most important features in Adwords - but it is ignored by most new advertisers. Advanced location options is available at the campaign level too and I like this feature because you can use it to block people from certain locations seeing your ads.

For example, if you are targeting the UK and your advanced location options is set to "people in, searching for, or viewing pages about my targeted location" you will likely receive impressions and clicks from people in other countries using the UK Google domain www.google.co.uk to search.

So to prevent this, change the settings to "people in my targeted location" (Fig. 1.1.12). With this setting, only people in the UK will see your ads.

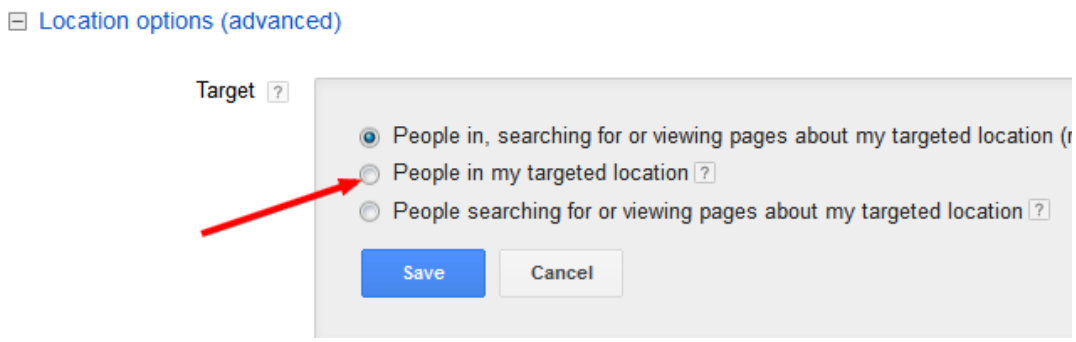

Fig. 1.1.12 – Advanced Location Options

Other benefits of using advanced location options are

- improves CTR (Click Through Rate)
- prevents clicks from people you cannot serve
- improves your ROI and ROAS (Return On Ad Spend)
- improves your quality scores
- and enables accurate reporting

Device targeting

Ever since Google changed the rules regarding device targeting, there has been an outcry from advertisers because of less control over which devices they can

advertise on. However, there have been many benefits especially considering the changes in how people use many devices to access the web over the past 3 years.

There has been a huge increase in mobile search traffic volumes, and although most transactions still occur on desktops, customers are using mobile (Smartphone and tablet) more, to search, browse, research, for showrooming and do many other things on the web.

In fact, without good representation on all devices - which is what many advertisers were doing before the changes - you will miss out on huge traffic volumes that are likely to convert in-store, over the phone and online on desktops and laptops.

Google Adwords has many features to manage devices like:

- you can reduce mobile phone bids and use this to almost stop all mobile traffic
- increase mobile bids to gain more exposure
- run devices reports to see how each device type is performing
- create mobile specific ads with offers specifically for people on these devices
- choose which networks and operating systems to run your ads on at the campaign level
- create call extensions for mobile devices

- create sitelinks and callout extensions specifically for mobile.

Conversion tracking

Conversion tracking in Google Adwords is available in the Tools section. With this feature you can track the performance of your campaigns, ad groups, ads and keywords to see which ones are driving sales and which are not.

Conversion tracking is not just about tracking sales. There are many other things you can track like downloads, registrations and many more which I've listed in the Web Analytics chapter. So, it's not just for ecommerce sites, but all kinds of businesses can use conversion tracking.

However, it's best to setup goal tracking in analytics rather than conversion tracking in Adwords for the following reasons:

You have attribution modelling to see how your ads are contributing to sales, relative to other traffic sources

More in-depth reports in analytics like segmentation

You can setup conversions in Adwords and you have the following models to choose from:

- Sale
- Lead
- Signup
- View page

Your choice of conversion model will depend on your type of business and the sector you are in. For example, an ecommerce site will naturally pick a sale conversion model to track purchases through Adwords.

However, you can setup multiple conversions for purchases, account registrations, downloads, signups and pageviews. In fact, it's best to track as many actions on your site as possible to understand your visitor traffic and what their needs are. You also get a clearer idea of how engaged people on your website are.

Where possible, you should assign a value for each conversion, however that is not so easy for a non-transactional website like a B2B consulting site. If for example, 100 people download your whitepaper and two of them become customers and buy a £100,000 consulting

contract, you can estimate the value per download at £2000.

Key Conversion Metrics:

These are the key conversion metrics to keep an eye on and my favourite is cost per conversion because it shows you instantly how much you are paying for each conversion.

- Conversion
- Conversion Rate
- Cost per Conversion
- Phone Call Conversion

Conversion window is how long you'd like to track conversions for conversion window and view-through conversions. The default is 30 days for both and I've found this to be an ideal setting for most advertisers however you can adjust it to 1 week, 60 days and 90 days for example for the conversion window.

Google Adwords has many more tools and features such as shopping ads, video campaigns, keyword planner, display planner, ad preview and diagnosis, reports, flexible bid

strategies, day parting and many more which are too many to list here. Visit my site http://www.mikencube.co.uk to learn more about these tools.

Remarketing

Remarketing is a powerful feature that you use to retarget people that have visited your site before and who are familiar with your brand, products or services. This is to bring them back to your site to buy and develop a relationship with your business.

There are two options to setting up remarketing. You can set it up in Adwords or in Analytics. Setting up in analytics is a better option because:

You don't have to upload new code each time you create an audience unlike Adwords

You update your analytics tracking code once

Better reporting to see how your ads are performing

You can create hundreds of remarketing audience types for:

- All users
- Returning visitors
- New visitors

- Visitors that have purchased
- Visitors that haven't purchased
- Downloads
- New registrants
- Pageviews
- Time on site
- Number of pages visited
- Add to cart
- And a host of others

For each audience you create, you will set a cookie length or membership duration which just states how long a person is to remain on your list. The default cookie is 30 days but you can adjust it to whatever you like, however for search ads, membership duration is truncated to 180 days.

The cookie length you choose will depend on the nature of your business. For example, expensive products that have a long customer decision process and multiple people involved in the purchase, a longer duration will be required to remind them of your offer and to send them a discount.

When you set these in analytics and have linked your Adwords account, they will now be available in 'Shared Library' in your Adwords account and you will be able to see how many people are in each list.

If you have a datafeed, you have more advanced dynamic remarketing which re-targets visitors based on the products they've viewed on your site and brings them back to your site to purchase. Amazon is one retailer that does this well.

Another shoe retailer has seen a 30% increase in conversions over the Christmas period by just adding dynamic remarketing.

When remarketing is done well, this is what will happen:

- Customers will appreciate timely messages and reminders of your brand and products
- Customers won't feel like they are being followed or hounded by your ads
- Your revenue will increase
- you will be more profitable
- it will increase brand awareness

So it's important that you do not abuse it and one way you can ensure that is by adding a frequency cap in your campaign settings. You can set an impression cap for ad, ad

group or campaign and this can be based on a day, week or month.

I've found 6 impressions per day per ad group to be ideal for many advertisers. However, this depends on your business and the nature of your products or services so you will have to do some testing.

4.2 SEO - Search Engine Optimisation

All businesses want free traffic and visitors - that they can convert to customers. This is almost possible with SEO and the organic search engine traffic that it drives to your website (however there are costs such as hiring an SEO expert).

The three main players are Google, Yahoo and Bing, however when most SEO practitioners talk about organic traffic, they are actually referring to Google. And this makes sense considering that it has over 65% share of search traffic in most countries

Building your website for SEO success

For most businesses, building a website is the most obvious step to promoting their products or services online. They

spend hundreds and even thousands of pounds on their websites and the hope is that it will be a selling tool that will bring them tons of traffic and sales or leads.

The reality however is that the returns are not as great as they had envisaged. In fact, their website is not producing any results and is costing them money in monthly hosting fees.

This is very common and as a business owner looking to build a new website, you should have a detailed plan on how you will drive traffic to your website and increase your sales. Fortunately, there are many ways of doing this, and one way is through Search Engine Optimisation or SEO as it is more commonly known.

SEO is simply defined as employing techniques to get your website to the top of Google and other search engines. Think of it as a battle that website owners are engaged in to get their websites to the top, and the sites at the top are winning that battle.

To win that battle, you should build your website with SEO elements that are proven to achieve high search engine rankings from the word ‘Go’.

So here are a few things you should be aware of as you or someone else builds your website:

Keywords

To achieve that coveted first page listing on Google, you need to identify keywords that match exactly the service or products you are promoting. These keywords will allow your website to be found as people search on Google.

Search engines crawl your website looking for keywords that match user's search query. If your keywords are strategically placed throughout your site, then you are likely to be at the top for these queries, taking into consideration other SEO elements listed below

Site Structure

Your site structure should make it easy for the search engine robots to crawl your website and know which pages are most important.

Your Content

Once you have your pages mapped and found the keywords that you want to rank for, it's now time to create the content. Content includes text and images and they have to be optimised for the search engines and your visitors.

When designing your site, make sure you leave enough space to upload content and your text should be a minimum of 300 words for SEO purposes. Anything lower is still fine but it means you target less keywords.

People also like visuals and you should have good and relevant images that are optimised. Each image should have alt text that describes what the image is about, because search engines can't read images and you need to let them know what the image is about.

Other elements to include in your content are headers (H1, H2) which contain your relevant keywords and this tells the search engines the importance of the page.

URL Structure

Your URL structure is an important factor for SEO success. Your keywords should be included in your URL and this should be in the order that people search.

This is a bad example of a URL structure – www.example.com/id=dynamic

It doesn't say what the page is about and doesn't include the keywords or product name

A good example would be – www.example.com/wedding-dress

Things to Avoid

If you can, avoid Flash or keep it to a minimum if you have to include it. Flash may make your pages appealing but the search engines can't read this content.

Also, avoid duplicate content because the search engines now penalise sites for this. Duplicate content is having the same text across multiple pages on your website with maybe a few variations. Most people who do this are attempting to fool the search engines and even if you do it innocently, the search engines aren't likely to know this and will penalise your site too.

Managing the keyword 'not provided' nightmare for Organic Traffic

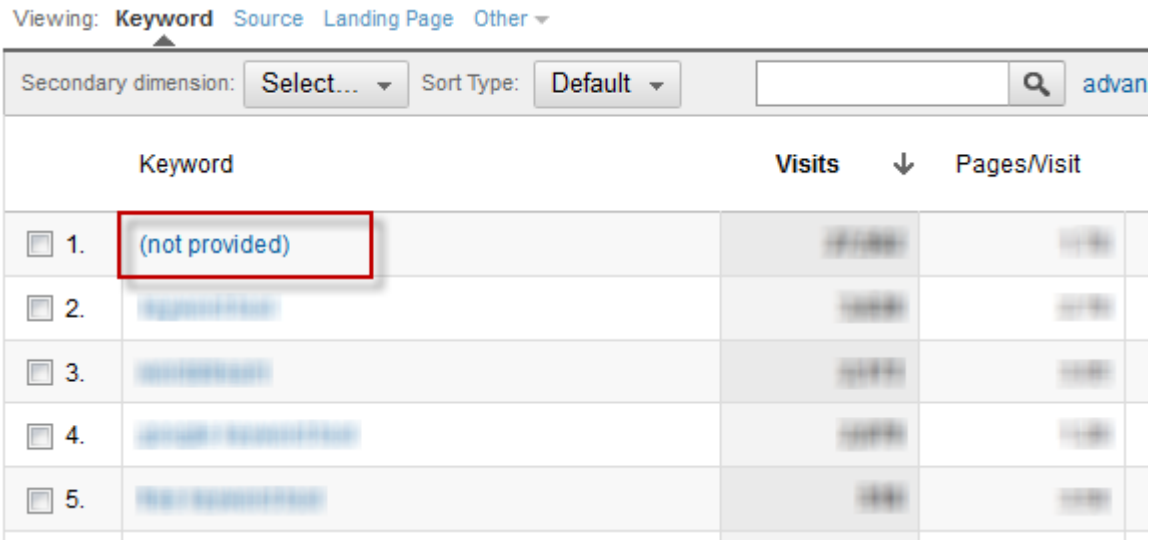

Fig 4.2.1 Keyword not provided

For online marketers, the recent disappearance of keyword data in Google Analytics has been the biggest SEO nightmare. This is a big deal because it has meant the loss of digital intelligence and the ability for marketers to understand visitor intent.

Keywords are a critical part of understanding why visitors have come to a website and without this information, it is impossible to successfully target your visitors.

However, this has not been a new phenomenon and back in 2011, Google started showing 'not provided' in Analytics keyword reports. Initially on a small percentage of keywords were affected – and this was from visitors who were logged in to their Google account at the time of the search. Later,

Google rolled out secured search in the US and the 'not provided' keyword data jumped from 2 to 11%.

Then Google rolled it out to Canada and other countries in early 2012 and this was at 20% of all searches across the globe. Now, Google has completely hidden keyword data and made it secure whether a visitor is logged in or not.

So what can you do about it?

1. Google Search Console (formerly Webmaster Tools) – Remember that Google webmaster tools will still provide you with keyword data that will alert you which keywords are bringing traffic and what some of the missing keywords are for your landing pages. You can also see what your current rankings are for your keywords and which keywords will require extra work from you to get them to the top of the rankings.

2. Non-Google Keywords – Looking at search traffic data from Bing, Yahoo and other search engines will give a good indication of how your rankings are performing on Google. This will also help you decide which keywords to focus on, based on current conversion rates. Unfortunately, Bing and others don't bring a huge amount of traffic, but if you are in a country

where Google doesn't have a dominant position, then you are at an advantage.

3. Advice from Avinash Kaushik – Analytics expert and Google evangelist, Avinash wrote in 2011 a blog post "Smarter Data Analysis of Google's https (not provided) change: 5 steps" about what marketers can do in their Analytics accounts when Google first turned on search encryption. Although it's for high level Analytics users, he gives step-by-step instructions that are well worth following.

4. Paid Search – Finally, it may be worth considering Paid search either through Google Adwords or Bing Search. Your keyword data will come through your Analytics reports and when you link your Adwords and Analytics accounts, you will have full keyword data. This allows you to also target long tail keywords which usually convert better because there is less competition and it makes up about 80% of all search traffic.

Whether we like it or not, Google's secure search is here to stay and complaining about it won't make much difference. In fact, Google is unlikely to revert on this change because they class this as a security decision.

For SEO professionals who are able to adjust to these changes and compensate for the missing keyword data – the future possibilities are endless and they will win the ranking battle in the end.

4.3 Social Media

There are hundreds of social media platforms to choose from and it's becoming ever harder to choose the right ones for your business - and that are used by your target customers. Some of the top social sites include:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Google+
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- YouTube

It's important that you don't spread your marketing efforts too thinly, so you should focus on just a few and build strong relationships and good followers. So you can focus on 3 or 4 and these are the ones I recommend:

Twitter

Despite its recent woes, Twitter is still going strong and is a great platform to create a large following and receive high traffic volumes.

As part of your Twitter strategy, you should setup an account and manage it daily to ensure you are always connected to followers and fans.

There are software programs like ManageFlitter (Fig 4.3.1) that help you to automate many processes like follows, unfollows, posting and more. You can use these effectively to remain in touch with your followers and gain new ones too.

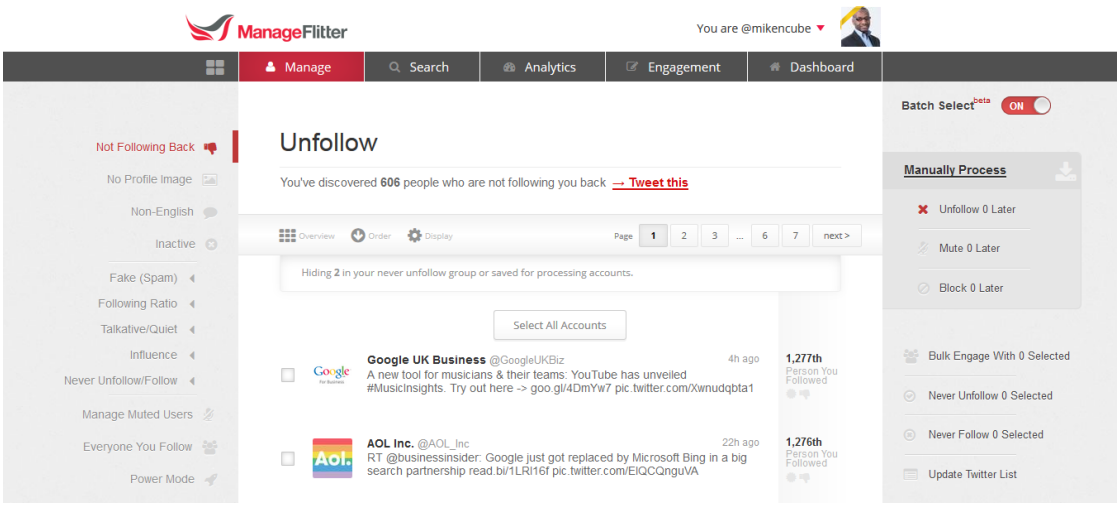

Fig. 4.3.1 - ManageFlitter

#hashtags are an important part of the Twitter ecosystem and you can use these on other social platforms like Google+ and they help you find and join conversations about any topic.

An example is - "I've enjoyed these #Vegancooking tips".

However, many users abuse these and render them ineffective at communication - too many of them annoy users too.

The Twitter handle is your name on Twitter and it will look similar to mine @mikencube. When you create your account, make sure you choose a memorable name that is short and effective.

Like other major social networking sites, adding share buttons on your website, landing pages, and blog posts leads to more people sharing your content and there are plugins you can use especially on Wordpress to list these side by side.

Facebook

Facebook is still by far the largest social media platform with the most users at about 1.3 billion. It has the most evenly distributed population demographics so whatever your business, you are guaranteed to have an audience on Facebook.

Some of the benefits of having a presence on Facebook are:

Precise demographic targeting with campaigns and ads

Promote your website or fan page to grow visitors, customers and fans

Paid ads platform that gives you greater control on what you can put to your target audience

Build a community that is interested in what you have to say and responds too.

Great for raising brand awareness and creating brand advocates

Ideal for creating viral content that will increase brand awareness and make your business more favourable with customers

Can use it for customer service and respond quickly to customer concerns, queries, complaints and questions

Perfect for online reputation management especially when things have gone wrong

Good for sending offers, discounts and coupons to a responsive audience that can push it to their connections

Cheap to implement

However, like many other social media platforms, it's not always easy to see a high volume of sales - because as a social platform, many people are on there to socialise and not to be sold too, so some of its disadvantages are:

A bit of a learning curve for paid ads setup

Difficult to control negative messages

Google+

Google+ has over 500 million users however only about half of them are active. It was launched in 2011 and has quickly grown to be one of the leading social networking sites due in large part to Google's prominence.

Some of its benefits include:

- Ideal for content sharing
- Its compatibility with YouTube makes it an ideal platform for content marketing
- A review system that appears in search engine results
- Reviews help to increase organic rankings
- Web analytics to see how you are performing
- Google's +1 is a very important factor to determining SEO rankings

A wide range of businesses could benefit from being on Google+ including tech firms, local businesses, marketing individuals and many others.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn differs from the social networking sites above in that it is a business social platform. It touts that it is a professional social network and it is correct in that respect.

It is the oldest platform too with over 79% of users being older than 35. However, one of its weaknesses is that about only 13% of LinkedIn users are signing into their account daily.

Whatever business sector you are in, it's important to connect with other professionals and your colleagues and join groups within your industry. Being part of these groups includes sharing and learning from other experts and posting your own content that is helpful and will be of interest to other members.

One thing you should avoid doing is commenting when you have little to say. For example, comments like "Great post" or "Thanks for this" just don't add any value and it's best to just 'like' the post if you have nothing more to say.

Here are 6 tips to help you make a success of your social media efforts:

1. Define Your Goals

Before you jump in and start creating your campaigns and connecting with people on social media, it's useful to have goals that guide your social media strategy. This is important because you need to measure and benchmark your work, especially against your competitors.

There are many goal types to choose from, however they will mostly be based around increasing brand awareness, seeking direct response in the form of sales and strengthening loyalty with your customers.

It's important to have one overarching goal as you progress and objectives that marry up with the main goal.

2. Don't Over-Promote

Resist the temptation to promote at every turn. People don't go on social media to be sold to, so your aim should be to build content that meets the needs, wants and challenges of your target audience. You should do some market research and find out what challenges they face and how you can help them overcome them.

So you should change your mindset from 'what can we sell you?' to 'what can we do for you'. You should adopt the 80/20 rule to balance your social efforts and remain on the good side of your customers. The 80/20 rule states that

80% of your content should be non-promotional and reserve the other 20% for promotional content.

3. Provide great customer service

You should respond to any queries, complaints, comments or questions in the quickest and best possible manner. People expect a swift response on Twitter and Facebook and this is normally within a few hours of their queries.

You should give them several options to contact you including email, telephone and private message and these should be easily accessible.

4. Be consistent

Use a social media calendar that ensures you consistently publish high quality content for your fans. Posting regularly is a challenge that many brands face and when they don't they lose the personal touch with their customers.

With a social media calendar, you will be able to plan your activities for weeks or even months in advance. This will help you to build seasonal themes into your updates and stop you from posting below par stuff just because you need to publish something.

5. Repurpose content across social media platforms

You should make more use of your content by repurposing and publishing it on many platforms. So you can take any content you've created for online or offline purposes and blog about it, tweet it, share on Facebook, turn it into an infographic or Pinterest and create more interest from your target market.

This is a great opportunity to make the most of your content work, particularly if you have little time and resources.

6. Measure with Google Analytics

Google Analytics has a wide range of tools to track, measure and improve your social media strategy. You can track events such as shares and likes and with this data, you can improve your marketing efforts to ensure you meet your customers and fans needs.

You also have more advanced tools like Multi-channel funnels (Fig 4.3.2) that help you see how your social media platforms are helping to contribute to your sales. So you can see how to allocate your budget and resources for maximum profit.

Fig. 4.3.2 – Multi- channel funnels in Google Analytics

5. Website Content

Content is still king, however, defining that is not something that many businesses do very well. In fact, many website owners don't have a strategy for creating quality content that is relevant to their target audiences and content is therefore neglected. That is a big mistake!

Content means different things to different businesses and some definitions I've heard over the years include:

- website text
- images, pictures and illustrations
- blogs
- articles
- products or service descriptions
- logos, banners, and adverts
- sales copy
- videos

Actually, all the above are correct and this is what many people understand content to be. However, what is more important is what that content can do and that is based on the needs of your visitors. Content is a buzz word nowadays and almost every business is concerned if their content is doing enough to connect with their customers.

This is what you can achieve with your content:

- connect with your customers and meet their needs
- improve sales and your ROI
- differentiate your business from your competitors
- provide timely and updated information to target audiences

Now we come to the question, how do you produce quality content that is unique and turns your loyal customers into advocates for your business?

The first thing to do is to know your customers as mentioned earlier. You should understand what their needs are and ensure that you tailor your products and services to fill those needs. So your content should put across to your prospects how your products are able to meet those needs and wants.

Copywriting is a word which is used a lot, and this is basically sales writing. You should avoid hard sales tactics when writing your content. So if you are hiring a copywriter ensure that they understand who your target audience is, what they need and the nature of your products - and you can cover all this in the brief.

You should have a process in place to create content regularly and to help you do that you should:

- Have a content calendar
- Hire a content writer
- Create a list of topics and articles that you will write
- Create a blog on your site
- Welcome guest bloggers and writers
- Encourage user generated content

Following these tips will help you stay focused and in little time your site will have a lot of good quality content that is bringing you massive traffic from organic searches. And the more content you produce, the easier it becomes.

The other benefits to your business are:

- Positions you as an expert in your field
- People signing up to your blog to receive regular updates
- Targeting more keywords that lead to high volumes
- You build an authority website

Thin sites no longer work online. Search engines are now penalising such sites and it's near impossible to see a site with only 10 pages with high rankings. It's now more

important than ever to create regular content and have many pages too

6. Web Analytics

One of the first things to do when you've setup your Google analytics account is to link it with your other Google properties such as Adwords, search console and Adsense (if you are planning to place 3rd party ads on your site).

This has many benefits and means you can get much more accurate data for your campaigns, traffic, goals and reporting.

For example, without linking your Adwords and analytics accounts, your Adwords traffic will show up as Organic traffic in the data table and this is obviously incorrect. So you won't have accurate campaign reporting data in analytics.

Google Analytics is free and it's unlikely that you will ever need their paid for premium service which is for large websites that receive millions of visits each month.

Some of the major features in analytics are listed below:

1. Full campaign reporting - you can track all your traffic sources including organic search, social media, paid

ads, referrals, emails, affiliate campaigns, PDF files, direct visits and any other medium or search engine that sends people to your website.

2. Advertising ROI - with just a few clicks you can integrate with Adwords and Adsense and track the performance of your paid ads and the clicks to third party sites on your website. The result is detailed information that shows you what is driving conversions and clicks. You access this feature in admin

3. Social media love buttons - these are buttons that you place on your site and encourage your visitors to share your content. Examples include Google+1, Facebook Like, Twitter Follow and LinkedIn share and they record visitor engagement and there are reports for analysing them.

4. Ecommerce reporting - you can track your campaigns and keywords and get loyalty metrics to assess your performance and you can drill down on a per product or category basis.

5. Goal conversions (KPIs) - goal conversions are important events that bring you closer to

understanding your visitors. These are your most valuable pageviews and an obvious goal is an ecommerce transaction.

However, there are other goal types and they include:

- Registration
- Whitepaper download
- Contact form
- Submitting a survey
- Watching a movie
- Commenting on a blog
- Add to cart
- And many others

You can also assign values to your goals and this is important because it helps you calculate your ROI. And you can setup funnel steps to see where people drop off on the path to conversion.

Goals are setup in the admin section of your account (Fig 6.1).

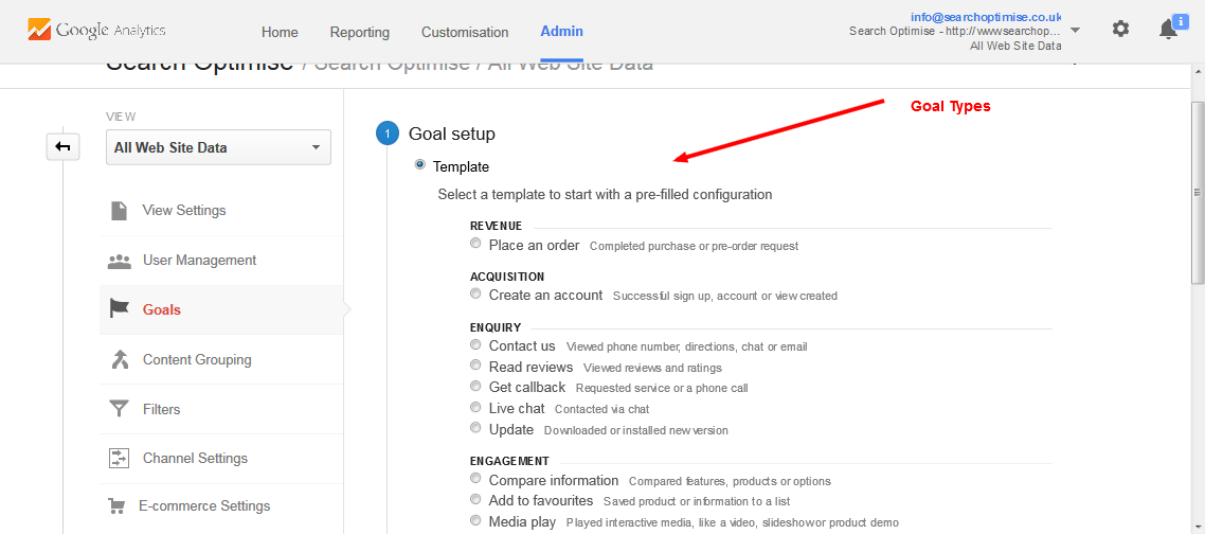

Fig 6.1 – Setting up goals in Analytics

6. Funnel Visualisation - funnels are the paths that your visitors take to conversion. An ecommerce checkout process is an example of a funnel process, however there are funnels for other goals like a subscription process. By visualising the funnel path you can discover which pages lead to lost conversions and where these people go.

7. Customised Dashboards - you can create custom dashboards on a per user basis, so different user logins will have different dashboards. The dashboard is a selection of reports from the main sections of your analytics account and it is great for an at-a-glance comparison.

8. In-page analytics report - you use this report to look at the popularity of links on your web pages and it shows your key metrics overlaid on the page links. It shows

you which links are the most popular and the most effective.

9. Geo-map overlay report - this report shows where your visitors are in the world when viewing your website. You will see your key metric overlaid on a world map and you can zoom in and out to see continent, subcontinent, country or state, regional detail. This shows you how each region is performing and where you can allocate your budget to make your online marketing successful.

10. Customised reports - another feature that allows you to create, save and edit your bespoke reports and present the information in an organised way. They are created on a per-user basis and you can share them with your colleagues

11. Event tracking - this is to track actions that don't lead to a page view on your site, for example widgets, embedded video, and Ajax and you will want to see how your visitors interact with these. Events can be grouped into categories and even monetised and they have their own dedicated collection of reports that show them separately from pageviews.

12. Administrator and individual access controls - administrators have full access to all account functionality including creating profiles, funnels steps, goal conversions, data reports and more; And they are also gatekeepers for other users. A report viewer has access to report data only , but they can customise their user interface.

Advanced tools - attribution modelling is an advanced feature that shows you which channel paths people are taking to goal conversion. So you can see which are your best traffic sources and allocate budget and time accordingly or even optimise things to make them more effective.

7. Customer loyalty

Here is why you need loyal customers:

- ✓ They spend more
- ✓ They refer other customers
- ✓ They are more receptive of your new offers
- ✓ They can be your brand advocates
- ✓ They are cheap to service
- ✓ They are more profitable

So how do you make your customers loyal, and create zero defections?

To gain the loyalty of customers, you must first gain their trust. That's always been the case, but on the web, where business is conducted at a distance and risks and uncertainties are magnified, it's truer than ever.

On the web, customers have to rely on images and promises, and if they don't trust the company presenting those images and promises, they will look elsewhere

- Your website should inform and educate.
- You can't buy trust with advertising or salesmanship, you have to earn it - by always acting in the best interest of customers.

- Your website shouldn't be designed to sell your services. It should be designed to educate your customers and provide better and more timely information and advice so they can make better decisions
- price does not rule the web, trust does - make sure your visitors trust your website by including trust marks, awards, certifications, accreditations and others
- show that your website is secure and that your visitors can enter their details
- have a privacy policy that states what you collect, what for and where it will be stored

How customers demonstrate trust on the web?

1. They purchase or request a quote
2. They provide their personal details - quote, contact form,
3. Register
4. Act on information provided by an online retailer
5. As seen in Engagement metrics - bounce rate, average time on site, return visits, page views

So by tracking the above metrics and goals, you can assess the impact of your website and advertising campaigns and assess how much visitors trust you.

8. Conclusion

In "The DIY Guide to Online Marketing Success" I've listed and described the steps you need to take to make your business more profitable online. Whatever industry you are in, you need to start with a good marketing plan that sets out your objectives, competitors, positioning, strategy, tactics and budget requirements to make it all happen.

So to summarise:

- ✓ know who your target market is
- ✓ know your competitors and assess their performance
- ✓ promote your website effectively with PPC, SEO, Social Media and more
- ✓ create a great website experience
- ✓ track your progress
- ✓ build a relationship with your customers

With a carefully crafted strategy you will achieve true online marketing success while meeting your customers' needs and differentiating your business from your competitors.

9. About the author

Mike Ncube is a digital marketing consultant and Marketing Author with over 10 years digital strategy experience. He has been recognised as one of the Top Independent Digital Marketing Consultants in the UK and he has worked with a wide range of businesses in Retail, Travel, eCommerce, B2B services and more.

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