

Why Search Engine Advertising Fails

Search engine advertising offers one of the most targeted communication channels known to advertisers. While it offers great potential, it can also become a money pit if not developed and deployed properly. Below are a few of the most costly mistakes – and some tips on how to avoid them!

Right message. Wrong location.

OK. You know your brand, the benefits your prospective customers stand to gain and you've been able to communicate all of that in a snappy, ridiculously short search engine ad. Problem is – no results. Either traffic is nominal or if you are generating lots of traffic you're not seeing any conversions.

Generally, the cause relates to one of two problems. If you're purchasing keywords that are highly competitive, your position may be too low in the listing of ads to be visible. You may consider improving your positioning. A second problem may relate to your choice of keywords. Analyze those terms that are generating traffic and keep only those that are producing conversions. If you need additional web traffic, then expand the number of keyword phrases you advertise by further segmenting your market – you may uncover some new opportunities.

Perfect execution of the invisible message.

If you're confident you have selected keywords that are most relevant to your target audience and have also secured one of the top positions in the list of search engine ads, then you can pretty well conclude that there's a problem with the messaging. Remember, as a search engine advertiser you are trying to pull viewers away from the list of organic search engine results, so your story must be compelling.

The brain is an incredible processor of information and we typically don't want to miss out on any opportunities available to us; as a result, there's an almost subconscious scanning of all the information on the computer screen – so you have one chance to motivate the viewer to stop and read! Since your search engine advertisement doesn't offer much real estate in which to tell your story, what you do say must be compelling. As with a traditional print ad, your headline is critical especially in an all-text format. And don't neglect the craftsmanship devoted to the descriptive copy that follows the headline. It's of nearly equal importance and will be the catalyst for action.

You don't know what you don't measure.

The amazing thing about online marketing is the tremendous amount of data available to the marketer. When measuring the results of a search engine advertising campaign, your analysis should extend beyond the campaign report of clicks and costs – what happened once the visitor came to your website?

A low number of clicks may not be a bad thing if you're seeing high conversion rates; likewise, a large influx of web traffic is not necessarily a marketing success if they're not reaching the specific markers that you've established in your website. Install your campaign metrics and then you'll discover just how well you may be doing!