

10 of the Most Common PPC Mistakes

AND HOW TO FIX THEM

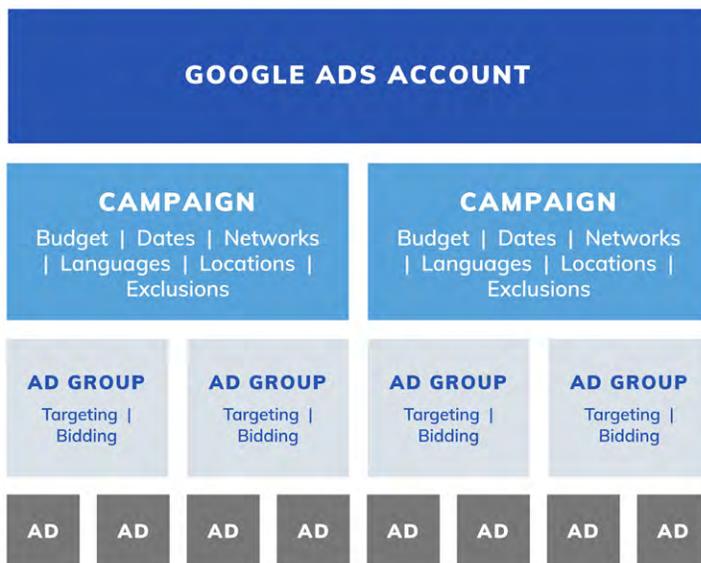


We've collected and ranked over 260 million ad copy variations, 95 million keywords and over 53 million websites. After working with thousands of PPC advertisers, we decided to publish the 10 most common PPC mistakes businesses make and how to fix them.

MISTAKE 1

Not Grouping Keywords

Not using ad groups is one of the biggest mistakes people make when it comes to Google Ads. Apple, for example, sells laptops, desktops, tablets, phones and watches. If they don't segment their products into different ad groups, they won't be able to show specific ads for different products, and they would have to resort to an ad with a headline such as "Buy an Apple Product" instead of "Buy a Macbook" or "Buy an iPad".



RECOMMENDATION

No More Than 20 Keywords

It's best to use no more than 20 keywords per ad group. Sometimes you can get away with using more, but exceeding 20 keywords is a sign that your ad copy isn't matching the keyword being searched for as closely as it should. Each of the ad groups in your campaign should target different themes.



MISTAKE 2

Not Using the Right Keyword Match

Google Ads allows you to add keywords to a campaign as either a broad, broad match modifier, phrase, or exact match. Broad match keywords deliver more impressions, but are less precise. Phrase and exact matches often provide higher conversion rates, but they deliver significantly fewer impressions.

MATCH TYPE EXAMPLES

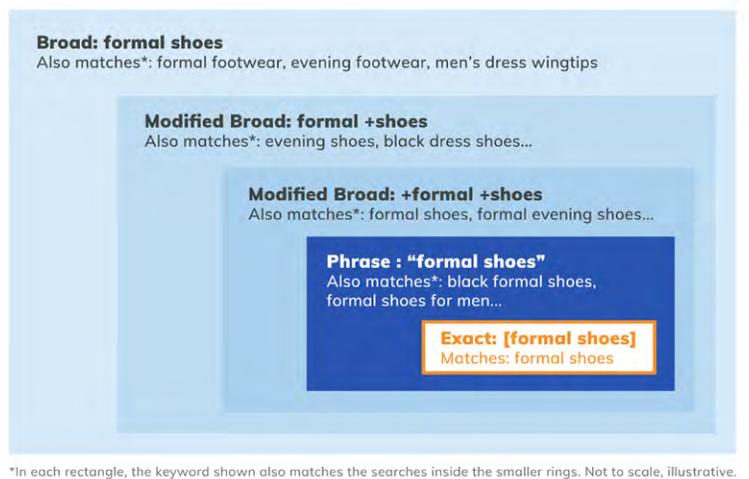
MATCH TYPE	Special Symbol	Example Keyword	Ads may show on searches that	Example Searches
Broad match	none	women's hats	include misspellings, synonyms, related searches, and other relevant variations	buy, ladies, hats
Broad match modifier	+keyword	+women's +hats	contain the modified term (or close variations, but not synonyms), in any order	hats for women
Phrase match	"keyword"	"women's hats"	are a phrase, and close variations of that phrase	buy women's hats
Exact match	[keyword]	[women's hats]	are an exact term and close variations of that exact term	women's hats

RECOMMENDATION

Start with Exact Matches

A good approach is to start with exact matches and then to expand to phrase, broad, and broad match modifier as needed.

Exact match gives you the most control which search terms your ads will show up for, and broad match modifier is a good middle ground to get more impressions without giving up complete control. Use exact match for keywords that you know are relevant to your business and use phrase match or broad match modifier to ensure you don't miss out on other relevant keywords you had not thought of.



*In each rectangle, the keyword shown also matches the searches inside the smaller rings. Not to scale, illustrative.



MISTAKE 3

Not Using Negative Keywords

Google Ads allows you to use negative keywords as a way to exclude terms that are not a good match for your product. For example, if you own a store that sells designer women's shoes but not athletic shoes, then you don't want your ads to show up on searches for "women's running shoes" but do want them to show up for "women's shoes." Thus, you can add "running" as a negative keyword, and your ads won't be shown for any searches that include the word "running". Negative keywords are the easiest way to reach the most targeted audiences, lower your costs and boost your ROI.



NEGATIVES CREATE A VIRTUOUS CYCLE: LOWER COST & INCREASING REVENUES

RECOMMENDATION

Run a Search Terms Report

To find negative keywords, run a search terms report in Google Ads and figure out which keywords convert and which don't. Once you find ones that don't, check to see if there's a negative keyword you can add so you won't show up for that term anymore without excluding terms you do want to continue showing up for.

The screenshot shows the Google Ads Search Terms report interface. The interface includes a navigation menu on the left with options like Overview, Recommendations, Campaigns, Ad groups, Ads & extensions, Landing pages, Keywords, and Audiences. The main content area shows a table with the following data:

Search term	Match type	Added/Excluded	Campaign	Ad group
<input type="checkbox"/> yext	Exact match	✓ Added	Yext Review_PPC	Yext
<input type="checkbox"/> yext alternative	Exact match	✓ Added	Yext Review_PPC	Yext
<input type="checkbox"/> yext pricing	Phrase match	None	Yext Review_PPC	Yext
<input type="checkbox"/> yext reviews	Phrase match	None	Yext Review_PPC	Yext



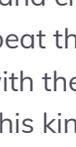
MISTAKE 4

Poorly Written Headline and Ad Copy

Falling in love with your own ad copy is a problem. You may write an ad and think, “I love this copy! It’s great!” That’s fine, unless the numbers tell you otherwise. You should always test your copy. You can try two different headline variations, the same headlines but different body copy, or the same copy but a different call to action. Testing different variations will help you to know what works best.

VARIATION A 

[Nike Women’s Running Gear](#)
www.nikeshoes.com/ ▼
Shop the latest Nike women’s running shoes & gear!

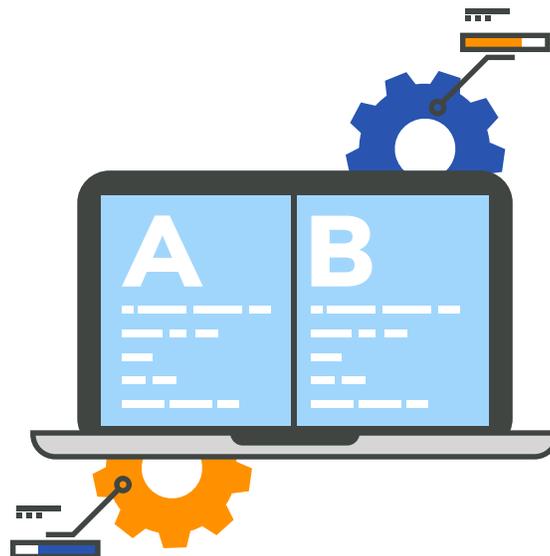
VARIATION B 

[Nike Women’s Running Shoes](#)
www.nikeshoes.com/ ▼
Shop the latest Nike women’s running shoes & styles!

RECOMMENDATION

Always Be Testing

It’s recommended to always be testing. Once you have a winner for one test, turn off the less performing ads and change the ad copy. Always try to beat the winner until you’re happy with the results. You may be surprised that this kind of testing can eventually lead to doubling your conversion rates and lowering your CPA by 50%.





MISTAKE 5

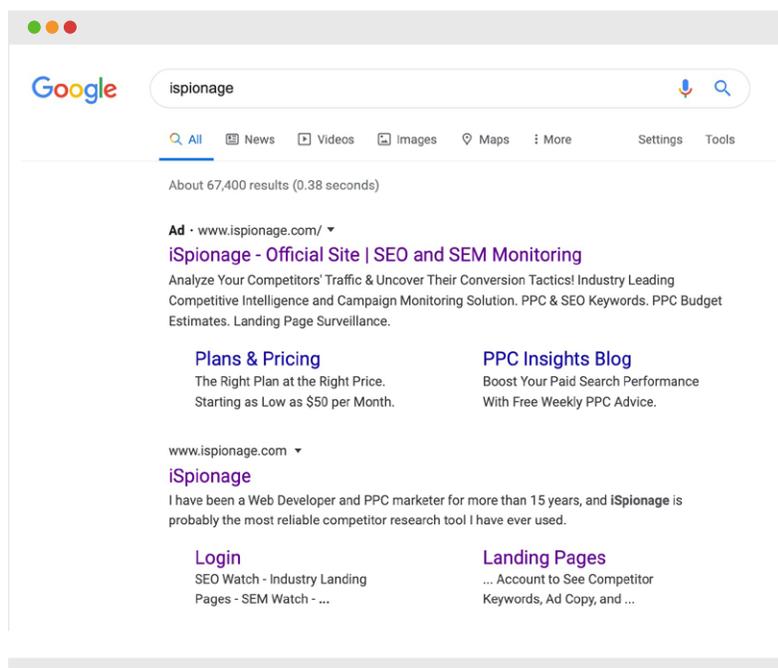
Not Bidding Your Own Brand Terms

A lot of people assume that since they already rank for their own brand, they don't need to advertise for it. It's good to rank number one for your brand in both the ad space and organic results. Why? Because your total clicks will go up, the cost per click for your own brand is really low, and you'll make sure a competitor doesn't outrank you with an ad above organic result.

RECOMMENDATION

Bid Your Own Brand Terms and Own the Top Spot

Make sure you're ranking #1 for branded terms so you don't sacrifice valuable clicks to your competition. If you're not bidding on your own brand terms, your competitor will. Bidding on your brand name will ensure your company to have maximum visibility on the first page of Search Engine Result Page -- for both paid and organic search results. Brand terms are likely to have a high quality score and CTR, which helps decrease average CPC.



MISTAKE 6

Not Knowing the Lifetime Value (LTV) of Customers



Have you ever calculated the LTV of your customers? If not, there's no way to know how much you can spend on Google Ads per acquisition. Let's say your LTV is \$100. This means you'll earn \$100 on average over the lifetime of doing business with your customers. If you're paying \$25 per acquisition, then you're ok, because you're making more per customer than your spending. But if your LTV is \$40 and you're spending \$60 per acquisition, eventually you'll go out of business.

RECOMMENDATION

Take some time to calculate the LTV for your customers, and then manage your campaigns accordingly.

HERE'S A SIMPLE FORMULA YOU CAN USE TO DO SO:

$$\text{LIFETIME VALUE (LTV)} = \frac{\text{Average Monthly Revenue / Customer} \times \text{Gross Margin / Customer}}{\text{Monthly Churn Rate}}$$



MISTAKE 7

Not Testing an Optimal Ad Position



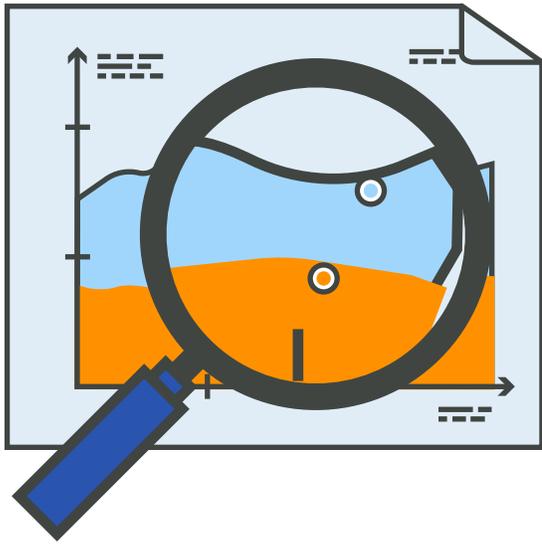
If your goal is to improve brand recognition, then it's a good idea to be in one of the top two ad positions, but if your goal is to get the higher CTR and most conversions, sometimes it's better to be in position 3-5. Can this really be true? How is it possible that it's better to be in a lower position than first or second? It's because naturally people tend to be click happy with the top two ads, they may click whether they're seriously interested or not. Those who click on ads in position 3-5 are usually serious prospects who are actively seeking for a product or a solution.

RECOMMENDATION

Test for Position & Bid Cost per Click

Test to find the optimal position by raising or lowering bid for cost per click. Lower it and then see what happens. If Google suggests a \$1 or \$3 bid, start with \$1 to see what the results are. If they're good enough, you may not need to pay more per click.





MISTAKE 8

Not Knowing Who You're Competing Against

Another mistake is not knowing which ads your competitors are using. You need to know who you're competing against, what keywords they're using, and what their landing pages look like. Specifically, you want to put yourself

in your customers' shoes and see which ad you're most likely to click. Then, once you do click (although it's recommended to find ways to do it without actually clicking on your competitors' ads and making them pay for it), pay attention to their landing pages, see their offers and ask yourself a question, "Which landing pages and offers do you think are most appealing to your audience?"

RECOMMENDATION

Review Your Competitors

Review your competitors' ad copy and landing pages on a regular basis to see if there's anything you can learn from their campaigns. iSpionage makes this easy to do by saving your competitors' ads and landing page URLs all in one place.

The screenshot shows the iSpionage tool interface for the domain gotomeeting.com. The browser address bar shows 'gotomeeting.com' and the page is in English (US). The tool provides a summary of competitor data: PPC Keywords (14,590), Ads (10,800), Landing Pages (highlighted in green), Organic Keywords (17,300), Competitors (3,500), and a Compare button. Below this, there are tabs for 'VIEW' and 'GOTOMEETING.COM' (selected), and another tab for 'COMPETITORS'. A table displays competitor data with columns for Keyword, Ad Copy, Landing Page, and Last Seen. The first row shows the keyword 'screenshare mac' with an ad for 'GoToMeeting Free Trial' and a landing page for 'Gartner' with the headline 'Connect with anyone, anywhere. On any device.' The last seen date is 01/30/2020.

Keyword	Ad Copy	Landing Page	Last Seen
screenshare mac	Video Conference Screen Share GoToMeeting Free Trial www.gotomeeting.com Professional Online Meetings and Collaboration with GoToMeeting. Try Free! Share Your Screen. Meet Face-To-Face. Calendar Integration. Types: Meeting App, Screen Sharing, Video Conferencing, Conferenc	Gartner Connect with anyone, anywhere. On any device. Start a 14-day free trial and take meetings with up to 100 participants - no credit card required.	01/30/2020





YOUR COMPANY



YOUR COMPETITOR

MISTAKE 9

Expecting Too Much From AdWords

Have you ever considered whether you expect too much from Google Ads? Many businesses have a small budget and expect to launch the next big business for \$10 to \$20 per day. That's not going to get you very far. Your budget may vary depending on your industry, and if you're bidding for keywords that cost \$3-\$5 per click, a \$10-\$20 budget won't give you enough traffic. Also, since your campaign requires some A/B testing, you may want to consider setting some of that budget aside for testing purposes.

RECOMMENDATION

Start With a Good Budget Plan

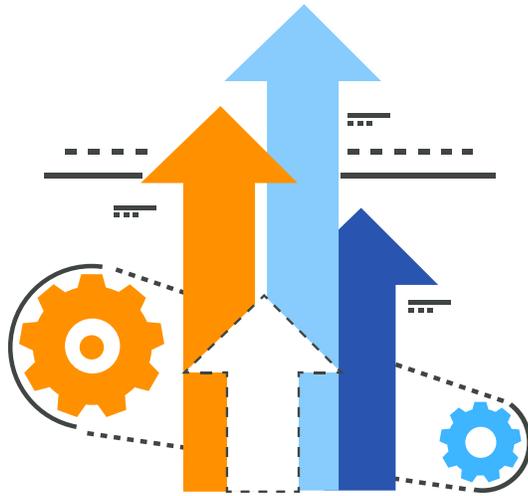
Start with a large enough budget that allows you to drive a significant amount of traffic and gives you time to tweak and optimize your campaigns. Initially, you'll have to spend some to learn what works and what doesn't and will be able to optimize over time.



MISTAKE 10

Not Directing Visitors to the Appropriate Pages

Possibly the biggest mistake of all that people make with Google Ads is not directing customers to the appropriate landing page. Instead, they direct everyone to their homepage. If you're offering multiple products, it's better to send them to a specific product or category page where they can learn about the specific product as advertised in your ad copy. Not only will this help increase conversion rates, it will also improve your Quality Score to help you reduce your PPC costs.



RECOMMENDATION

Direct Your Audience to the Right Content

Make sure the page people land on matches the ad copy they clicked. If you're selling wedding related items create ad groups based around themes like "bridesmaid gifts" and "groomsmen gifts", and then take people to category pages for each of these items instead to your homepage where they'll have to self-navigate around the page to find the products they were initially searching for.

BONUS

Not Using Ad Extensions

Google Ads offer this feature for free. You could easily set it up in your account. Not having the ad extensions while your competitors do could mean you may have missed some click opportunities to your ads.



RECOMMENDATION

Add at Least 1 or 2 Ad Extensions to Your Ads

Ad extensions provide additional pieces of information that give people more reason to choose your business (click on your ads). With the Ad Extensions, you could show sitelinks, phone number, star ratings and location to enhance your ad. Adding Ad extensions give your ad greater visibility and prominence on the search result page.

The image shows a simulated Google Ad for Macy's. At the top, it says 'Ad · www.macys.com/'. Below that is the main headline: 'Macy's.com Official Site | Discover the Magic of Macy's'. A star rating extension shows five stars and a rating of 4.7. The main text of the ad reads: 'Save on Apparel, Home Items, Shoes & More. Find Everything You Need at Macy's! Sign Up For Email. Find A Store. Track An Order. Download Mobile App. Types: Apparel, Home, Shoes, Handbags, Beauty, Jewelry, Furniture, Bed & Bath, Watches.' A location extension shows a pin icon and 'Newark · 4 locations nearby'. Below the main text is a large orange-bordered box containing two columns of promotional offers. The left column is titled 'Sale & Clearance' and features '\$29.99 Diamond Pendant'. The right column is titled 'Gift Cards' and features '65% Off Heart Necklaces'. The background of the ad is white with a light gray border, and the entire ad is set against a light gray background with a window-like header.

Ad · www.macys.com/ ▾

Macy's.com Official Site | Discover the Magic of Macy's

★★★★★ Rating for macys.com: 4.7

Save on Apparel, Home Items, Shoes & More. Find Everything You Need at **Macy's!** Sign Up For Email. Find A Store. Track An Order. Download Mobile App. Types: Apparel, Home, Shoes, Handbags, Beauty, Jewelry, Furniture, Bed & Bath, Watches.

📍 Newark · 4 locations nearby

Sale & Clearance Shop Sitewide Sales & Clearance Apparel, Shoes, Jewelry & Home!	Gift Cards Custom, Personalized & Ships Free! Give the Gift of Choice Today
\$29.99 Diamond Pendant Get A Diamond Heart Pendant For \$29.99 w/ Any \$25 Purchase!	65% Off Heart Necklaces Shop A Special 65% Off Diamond & Gemstone Heart Pendants Today!





There you have it —the top 10 mistakes PPC advertisers make, and how to fix them.

To learn more about how competitive PPC intelligence can give you a nearly unfair advantage over your competitors visit:

www.ispionage.com



TapClicks, Inc. is the leading provider of unified marketing operations, analytics and reporting solutions for media companies, digital marketing agencies, brands, franchises, and HIPAA covered entities. The TapClicks Marketing Operations Platform provides end-to-end business intelligence capabilities that include SEO, social and PPC reporting, automated order entry, set up and approval workflows, marketing performance analysis and the creation of interactive visual reports and presentations. TapClicks integrates more than 200 different data sources via its Connector Marketplace to provide marketers with the ability to analyze data from the full breadth of popular marketing and advertising tools used in the industry today.

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