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Make the Power of Google AdWords Work for Your Business

Learn the basics of creating ads on the web's most powerful search engine.

What's the first thing most people do when they need a contractor? Google is the number one online tool customers use to seek out information about businesses and their services. So, naturally it's one of the most effective ways for you to market your business.

Google Adwords are text ads shown based on words and phrases the user types into Google search. By using a complex algorithm, these ads recognize when someone is searching for your services based on the specific search terms used. These search terms are also called "keywords." After the user submits their search words that match your keywords, your ad is displayed above the non-paid Google content for your targeted audience.

Follow these steps to create your own Google Adwords and take full advantage of what Google has to offer.

Establish key search terms. Put yourself in your customers' shoes. What would you search for if you were looking for the type of services and products you offer? The first step to creating effective Google ads is to identify the words and phrases your potential customers are typing in when searching for a contractor. A good way to start is to create lists of different types of keywords.

- **Straightforward**—Create a set of 10-20 terms that are straightforward and common sense for your business. These could include "home contractor," "new furnace," the name of your business, etc.
- **Problem**—Create another set of 10-20 terms that describe everyday problems that customers are trying to solve. These could include "drafty house," "broken furnace," "icicles," etc.
- **Benefit**—Create a set of 10-20 phrases associated with the benefit of your services. These could include "lower energy bills," "energy savings," "home energy efficiency," etc.

By completing this exercise, you'll explore many of the possible ways customers might search for your services, which will help you write your ads.

Write your ads based on your keywords. Google ads are all text, so they're easy for you to create. They're made up of a few simple elements: a headline, two lines of supporting copy, and a URL. A good approach to writing ads is to create different sets of ads based on the groups of keywords you brainstormed. By doing this, you'll be able to test the sets against each other to see what's working best. To get a sense for what this might look like, below is a side-by-side comparison of a straightforward ad vs. problem-oriented ad vs. a benefit-oriented ad.

COPY GUIDELINES	STRAIGHT FORWARD	PROBLEM	BENEFIT
Headline (25 characters)	Acme Energy Contractors	Drafty rooms in your home?	Stay warm. Save energy.
Support Copy Line 1 (35 characters)	Upgrade your home and save.	Insulation for drafty windows and doors.	Find ways to stay warmer this winter.
Support Copy Line 2 (35 characters)	Schedule a home assessment today.	Schedule a home assessment today.	Schedule a home assessment today.
URL (25 characters)	AcmeEnergyContractors.com	AcmeEnergyContractors.com	AcmeEnergyContractors.com

Set up your Google Adwords account. Start here and follow Google's step-by-step process. This is where you'll enter your ads and other important information, including:

- **Setting your ads' target audience.** Identify the people you want to see your ad based on geographic location, types of websites, and the keywords you established above.

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- **Setting your bid and daily budget.** With Google ads, you only pay for ads that are clicked on. How much you pay for each click is determined by a preset bid amount you tell Google you're willing to pay. This is called your max cost per click (CPC). Once you've set your CPC, you'll be charged up to that amount for each ad clicked, until your daily budget is spent. After that point, your ad stops being served for the day, helping control your costs.

Continually track and test. One of the biggest advantages to advertising through Google is the ability to track and test your ads so you know which ads are performing best. You can do this by tracking critical metrics provided by your Google Adwords account, including:

- **Click-Thru Rate (or CTR).** The number of times people clicked on your ad.

- **Conversions.** The number of actions generated by an ad that are positive for your business, specified by you. These actions could include phone calls, purchases, etc.

A best practice is to continually introduce new messages into the market. Testing will help you hone in on the most effective approach to drive your business—which will help you know where to focus more of your marketing budget.

Quick tip: Ask customers how they heard about your business, and note these responses for future marketing plans.

The following chart is a quick overview of how to get started with Google Adwords.

4 Steps to Get Started on Google Adwords

Step 1:

Go to adwords.google.com and click "Start Now."

Step 2:

Enter your email address and website URL.

Step 3:

Enter key specifics about your ad:

- **Budget:** The total amount you're willing to pay per day or month for your ads.

- **Target Audience:** The people you want to target by geographic location, websites, and search terms.

- **Bid:** With Google ads, you only pay for ads that are clicked on. How much you pay for each click is determined by a preset amount that you tell Google you're willing to pay. This is known as your bid.

- **Ad:** Your ad copy, which contains a headline (25 characters), two lines of supporting copy (35 characters each) and website URL (25 characters).

Step 4:

Enter your payment information.

For more sales and marketing insights, look for the Selling Efficiency Series on your NY Home Performance Portal dashboard.