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Search Engine Marketing: Advertising for your customers only

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20th Century industrialist John Wanamaker made legendary his quote, "I know that at least half of my advertising dollars are wasted, I just don't know which half." This was true of most advertising all the way up until digital technology and the Internet started to dominate how we broadcast marketing messages.

Now there's a way to assure that every dollar you spend buying advertising will be the direct result of physically engaging a person with your message based on keywords, phrases and questions they are typing into search fields. Search Engine Marketing (SEM) has given you control over the type of clients you would attract and exactly how much you will spend to reach and engage each prospect. John Wanamaker would be impressed! He might say, "Now I know exactly what my advertising dollars are doing. I just wish website visitors weren't so fickle!"

Google, the dominant search marketing giant, wants its customers to get results. To that end they've put together a nice best practices guide encapsulated below:

Keywords: Effective keyword management helps you reach the right customers and grow your business. Keyword research and analysis is a fundamental step you must take initially to make sure you reach your target audience searching online for your products & services.

Negative Keywords: Words or phrases that allow you to filter out who your ads will be served to in the search results page. Upon deciding that a term is irrelevant to your campaign, you can add that term as a negative keyword. Whenever someone searches on Google with that term included, depending on match types, Google will refrain from showing your ad and you won't waste money paying for an irrelevant click.

Your Ads: Creative relevance drives more qualified clicks. Make your ad relevant and resonant to pull qualified click through engagement.

Your Advertising Budget: Google AdWords lets you set daily budgets for your campaigns with the flexibility to change them at any time. A key benefit of developing and fine tuning a SEM campaign is your ability to measure, adjust and actually begin to control your response rates within a spending limit.

Reporting & Analytics: AdWords and Google Analytics together offer insights into the performance of your campaigns and those insights help you become a better marketer. By carefully measuring, analyzing and making adjustments to your keywords and messaging, you will continually improve the ROI performance of your SEM campaign.

Within each of the four major components of SEM listed above, there are entire sets of best practices with various tactical options that will help you customize your campaign to generate the best results. An experienced, reputable marketing professional can help.

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