6 great tests guaranteed to help you create higher converting PPC ad copy

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Developing highly relevant, punchy ad copy is a vital step to boosting the performance of your paid search campaigns. The benefits of developing high-performing creative messages are well known and can be easily and objectively measured. The positive effects of great PPC ad copy include increased clickthrough rates, reduced CPCs and increased conversion rates - all factors which will come together for you in a mighty confluence of plummeting cost per acquisition values and soaring sales volumes!

Unfortunately there is no magic formula to writing highly effective paid search but here at iCrossing our approach is led by a simple four-step process which we?ve seen get great results time and again: Test, Analyse, Refine and Repeat.

Test

Develop a hypothesis and implement a change. Keep your test simple and manageable. Ensure you capture enough data to make a decision.

Analyse

What was the impact of the test? What was affected? Was the result positive or negative? Can you call the test a success?

Refine

What learnings from the test can be implemented on a wider scale? What changes were not successful and need rolling back?

Repeat

Keep up the momentum! Most testing programmes fail because people don?t keep at them long enough.

The key to success is iteration and tenacity - you may not see stellar results from your first test but persevere and you will be rewarded. The testing process is simple but highly effective: choose a high traffic adgroup, write a new creative and run it against your existing copy (make sure that you tick the ?rotate? campaign setting in Adwords to ensure a more even split of impression). Analyse the results and keep the winner. Keep testing and beat your last set of results, extending your tests to cover more adgroups and campaigns.

To help get you started with your own testing programme for paid search ad copy I?ve sketched out 6 different ideas, which if you work through methodically (not all are going to yield improvements so make sure you don?t skip the ?refine? step) I **guarantee** will improve your conversion rates!

1. Ditch your brand terms

You?re brand is an asset and I?m not suggesting stopping bidding on your brand. What I am suggesting however, is that you may be better off without your brand term in your copy for generic keywords. Why? Well, the characters saved by cutting out the brand term (which users will still be able to see in your display URL anyway) may well mean you can better convey your USPs and get those extra clicks.

2. Test different ?calls to action?

Do your ads tell users what you would like them to do? If not, they should! People are far more likely to buy or apply for your goods or services if you ask them (nicely) to. Test different ?calls to action? and see which garner you the highest response rates.

3. Differentiate your messaging

Paid search SERPs, at their worst, can be a bit bland and repetitive due to limited character limits and a high pressure for relevance. Use this propensity for homogeny to your advantage and differentiate your message from the 9 other ads on the page which all promise ?Cheap car insurance? (or whatever). Get creative. You may initially increase CPCs but a higher CTR from standing out from the crown will soon see them drop again.

4. Use ?official?, ?authentic? or ?TM? symbol in your copy

Conveying to users that you?re *the* official vendor for your product or service can offer a clickthrough and conversion boost. Don?t be afraid to draw attention to your quality or market-leading position.

5. Include a price point

The extent to which this tactic will work will largely depend on the competitiveness of the price on offer. If you know you?re price is good, shout about it. If your price is not so good, this will likely reduce your clickthrough rates although a potential upside may be that it reduces your overall cost per acquisition (as you?re only going to be paying for more qualified clicks).

6. Include a phone number

Get yourself a unique phone number for paid search and include it in your copy. Even though people are searching online, many will still take the opportunity to speak to a sales person (and thus also an opportunity for your team to help close a sale) if you let them - especially if it?s a high-consideration purchase. Including a number in copy may well save you a few clicks and enhance conversions.

Happy testing and let me know how you get on!

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