Launching the Long Tail

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Quality Score is King in the Land of Generics

The issue of quality score has been receiving even more press than usual of late. Unsurprisingly the consensus is that click through rate (CTR) is king. We all know the ins and outs of maximising your CTR to ensure the core generics and brand terms get maximum traffic for minimum cost, but how do we get the mid to long tail performing well?

No Sandbox for the Long Tail

When a keyword with low traffic volumes is launched it takes far longer for you to prove its worth to Google. We often see high volume terms appearing surprisingly high in the rankings when they are newly launched, before bedding down to a normal level. This is thepaid search version of the ?sandbox? where Google can quickly assess whether your ad is any good and assign a true quality score pretty quickly. For the less popular terms though Google doesn?t rely on this method, rather it takes the word history from **everyone else?s campaigns.** In this way if you have an obscure term albeit relevant to your account, if everyone else has used it poorly in their campaigns your quality score is likely to be low. Unfortunately the only way to combat this is to raise the bids?

Hang on, That Sounds Like Yahoo! 2004

Though this feels like a bit of a step back, the key thing to remember here is prevention is better than a cure. If you launch your campaign with the bids as you?d like them in month 3, the chances are that your mid and long tail terms won?t perform as expected. Over time you?ll tweak ads, raise bids and probably see minimal improvement as they get trapped in a cycle of lowering CTRs and quality scores.

Back Yourself to be Bold

A much better approach is to go in with quite high bids on these terms. The risk of blowing your budget is minimal as the point of these terms is that they have low search volume, you should be monitoring a new account regularly anyway so nothing will get out of control. Once the quality and relevance of your terms has been established the bids will lower naturally and you can bring them down to the desired level with ease.

Land on Your Feet

It?s not so much a case of hitting the ground running with these, but ensuring you don?t twist your ankle before you set off.

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