

## Paid Search

Paid Search, Pay-per-Click Advertising (PPC) or Sponsored Search are different names for the same thing. The premise is that advertisers pay to rank high on search results in search engines such as Google and Bing.

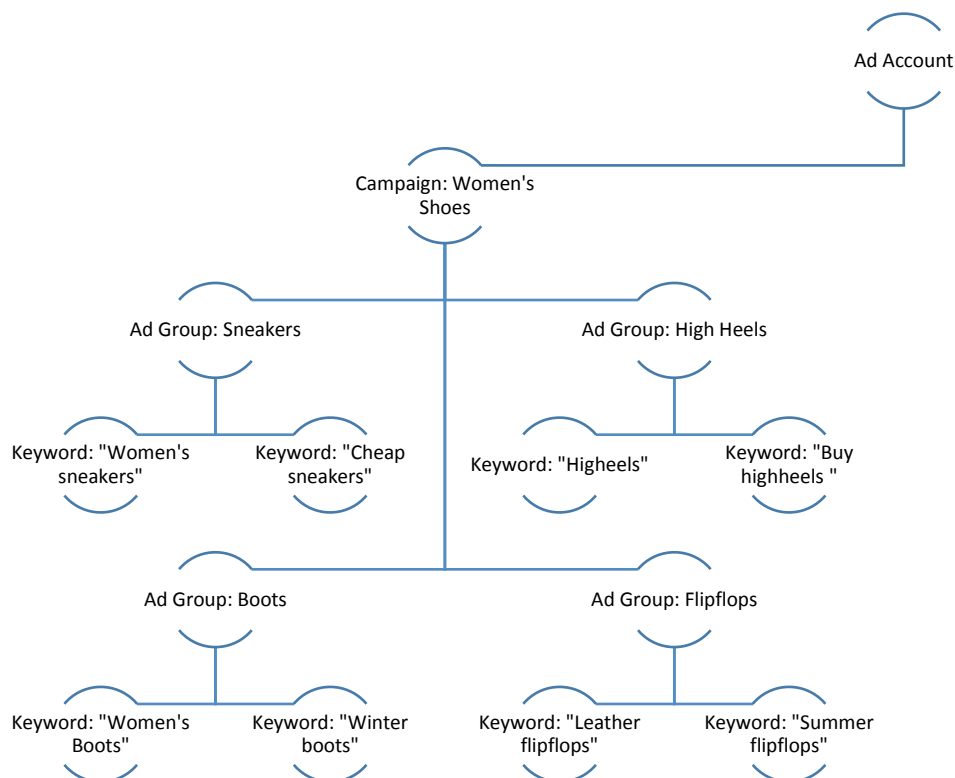
### How does it work?

- Advertisers select keywords they would like their ads to appear against.
- Advertisers then bid against each other to have their ads displayed whenever those keywords are searched for.
- Advertisers pay each time their ad is clicked, rather than each time their ad is displayed (known as an Impression).

### Ad Account Structure

Whether you're building your own ad account for search marketing, or working with an agency, it is a good idea to have a very clear and focused ad account structure to begin with. An account can hold various campaigns, and campaigns can hold various ad groups. An ad group then contains a variation of 3-5 ads which can all be shown for the keywords you've added to that ad group.

Best practise guidelines recommend that you build your structure to match your site structure, with campaigns dedicated to certain areas of your websites and with ad groups splitting out into more specific topics and products. This enables you serve targeted and relevant ads with your keywords.



## Keywords

Compiling an appropriate keyword list that you want to rank for takes a little bit of time and effort. Both Google and Bing offer **Keyword Planners**, that enable you research your planned keywords and find new ones. It enables you see monthly search volume, suggested bids, and level of competition for any keyword in a specific location and language. It also gives you ad group ideas, which group a range of appropriate keywords to your topic ready to go in an ad group that you can export the relevant campaign in your account.

It's tempting to go for the keywords with the most search volume, but sometimes these keywords come with high competition and higher bids. If your budget is small it's worth looking into keywords with lower competition and cheaper bidding, it's more likely you'll rank for these keywords and your Cost per Conversion will be lower.

When setting up your campaign you're going to have to pick your **Keyword Match Types**. Keywords can fall into 1 of 4 categories and which one you choose effects when keywords appear for certain searches.

- **Broad Match:** This is where your keyword gets broadly shown for misspellings, synonyms and variations of the keyword. Upside: Your keyword is eligible for a lot of searches! Downside: Your keyword is eligible for a lot of searches! You risk receiving irrelevant traffic which could negatively impact your overall performance. If using broad match ensure that you have an appropriate negative keywords list. E.G Keyword: Road trip Skye. Ad shown for: <driving holiday skye>
- **Broad Match + Modifier:** This is where ads can be shown when the search contains all the keywords specified (or close variations) no matter the order that they're in. E.G Keyword: +Holidays +Scotland. Ad shown for: <Holidays to Scotland>
- **Phrase Match:** This is where you put in a phrase and ads may show for searches that contain that phrase or close variations of it. E.G "Book Scottish Holiday". Ad shown for: <How to book Scottish Holiday>
- **Exact Match:** Exact match enables that ads are shown for the exact match to the keyword, or very close variations of it (plurality/punctuation). E.G Keyword: [Edinburgh Activities]. Ad shown for: <Edinburgh Activities>

There is no right answer for what the best keyword match type is, it's worth experimenting in separate campaigns to see which ones give you the most clicks, impressions and conversions. You should also include account wide **negative keywords**. Negative keywords allow you to make sure that your ads don't show for irrelevant searches. For example, you could be selling women's boots, but you wouldn't want your ads to appear for searches like "Riggers boots" and "Boots Pharmacy" as they're unrelated and there is no benefit in driving these searches to your website.

**Top tip:** Review your 'search terms' reports to see what searches your ads are appearing for - and add any irrelevant terms as negative keywords to help refine your traffic.

Once your campaign is live you'll be able to start seeing how your keywords are performing. Aside from looking at the clicks and impressions that a keyword is generating, take the time and use **Keyword Diagnosis** to determine how your keyword is performing regarding rank and quality score. If your keyword is ranking poorly and has a low quality score, investigate why. Is the ad copy unrelated? Is the landing page taking too long to load?

## Ad Rank

The position of an ad is determined by the maximum amount advertisers bid in combination with other signals about their campaign's "quality" such as Quality Score and ad extensions.

**Quality Score** take in expected click through rates (CTRs), ad relevancy and landing page experiences to award your keyword an out of ten score. The higher your Quality Score, the better your ad will perform in the ad auction and the higher your ad will rank. Ad relevancy is determined by whether your ad copy and the landing page content match the keyword that you're bidding on.

Ads with bad landing experiences get shown less often or not at all. Use a landing page that loads quickly and is relevant to the keywords you bid on - slow page load times can result in users leaving your site before the content loads, and can also contribute to a higher cost-per-clicks. Ad extensions also play a factor and an ad will rank higher if it has appropriate ad extensions like sitelinks and contact details than an ad that does not.

## Optimising your Ads

Aside from relevancy there are another couple things to keep in mind when creating your text ads for paid search.

When considering **Ad Copy**, have a clear Call to Action and Unique Selling Point in your ad. Why should people click your ad rather than another ad or an organic listing? Tell people in the space that you have what the benefit is of going to your website specifically and what information will they find there.

Test! Rotate at least 3 different ad copy variations in each ad group - continually testing to find the highest click through rate variation. Experiment with different headlines and call to actions to see what's resonating the most. Be careful to test one element at the time, otherwise you won't know where to attribute performance changes to.

Utilise relevant **Ad Extensions** on a campaign level and on an ad group level. Enable sitelink extensions to quickly direct your customer to the area of your website where they'll want to be. E.g. the booking page, the contact us page, pages related to the specific keyword or topic in question etc. Use **Call Out Extensions** to further highlight your USPs to searchers and ensure that your ad is extra mobile friendly by including **Structured Snippets**.

## Targeting

Both Google Adwords and Bing Ads enable you to target by location and language and to put further bid modifiers (increase or decrease bids) by device, location and time. You could also remarket with search advertising by using RSLA (a remarketing list for search ads). This enables

you to adjust your bidding by certain percentages for people who have already been to your website.

## **Bidding**

Both Google and Bing offer various automatic bidding strategies which optimise your bids for specific campaign goals (traffic, conversions, etc.) or you have the option to do manual bidding. If you're starting fresh it's best to start out with manual bidding as it gives you more control over your spend and because both search engines require conversion and performance history to optimise most of their automated bidding options, it's necessary to have a certain number of conversions (and conversion tracking) before you're able to use them effectively.