



# How to Avoid Wasting Ad Spend on Google Ads

VERSION **1.0**

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## INTRO

One of the biggest fears business owners have is flushing money down the drain. It prevents many of them from putting resources into marketing services, including spending money on Google Ads.

If poorly managed, Google will spend your advertising dollars inefficiently and wind up making you wish you had never spent the money to begin with.

Fortunately, whether your ad account is managed by an in-house ad specialist or an agency, there are ways to avoid wasting ad spend on Google Ads. Let's Dive in!

## SET UP PROPER CONVERSION TRACKING

At the core of any ad campaign is the campaign goal, which in most cases is in some form of conversion. A conversion can be a contact form submission, phone call, or even a transaction or purchase.

If you don't have any conversion set up, Google (and your ad manager) will not have any data to refine your campaign and know if the ads are working or not.

## USE NEGATIVE KEYWORD LISTS

If you've looked into running ads on Google before, you might be familiar with the idea of buying keywords. But you might not know that you can also add negative keywords.

A negative keyword is a keyword or search term that you DON'T want Google to run ads on. A great example of this is the term "public defender" for lawyers. People that are searching for public defenders do not want to spend money on a private lawyer and thus are not worth spending ad spend on.

By adding this keyword phrase to a negative keyword list, you can tell Google not to show your ads to anyone searching for a public defender.

## KNOW YOUR IDEAL LTV, CPA OR ROAS

LTV (lifetime value), CPA (cost-per-acquisition), and ROAS (return on ad spend) are ways to understand the value of your ads.

The LTV or lifetime value of a client or customer is how much they are worth to you over a span of time. For example, let's say you sell a hair care product, and you know that your average customer will buy a \$20 product from you once a month for at least 18 months. So their lifetime value is \$360.

CPA or cost-per-acquisition is how much it costs you to get a new customer or client. Let's say you close 20% of your leads, and your average lead costs you \$10. If you do the math, you are closing 2 clients for every 10 leads. Since 10 leads cost you \$100, your CPA is \$50.

## KNOW YOUR IDEAL LTV, CPA OR ROAS (CONT.)

ROAS or return on ad spend factors in your LTV, CPA, and cost to deliver the product or service. Let's say for our above example, our product costs us \$5 to produce, meaning that the total cost of making our product and getting a new customer is \$55. Since that customer will, on average, spend \$360 with us, we're making \$305 for every \$55 we spend; we get a 5.54x or 554% ROAS.

Along with digital advertising, businesses can reach customers through map services and business directories most notably Google My Business and Yelp. For lawyers, this could also include lawyer specific directories such as Super Lawyers and Avvo, to help your firm show up where people are searching.

Regardless of the platform being used, it's essential to maintain consistency around your core contact information: business name, address, and phone number. This information is checked by search engines and helps inform their results for different search queries.

## GIVE YOUR AGENCY FEEDBACK ON LEADS

Who has been in your business longer? You or the agency you hired? In most cases, the answer is you. You know what kind of leads close or work best for your business, and it's important to relay that information to your ad agency.

Any good agency will have a regular check-in with you to make sure things are going well. Those calls or meetings are a great time to provide feedback on their work.

This feedback can help refine negative keyword lists, ad copy, or other elements that might be affecting your campaigns.

**ALIGN YOUR  
KEYWORDS, AD COPY,  
AND LANDING PAGE**

This is going to sound obvious, but you'd be amazed how many people mess this one up.

You need to align your keywords, ad copy, and landing page.

Think about it. You're targeting a specific keyword, so your ad should discuss that keyword. And then, the searcher sees that ad, clicks on it, and ideally goes to a page that discuss the same topic as the ad they clicked on.

Imagine clicking on an ad for hotels in Towson but landing on a page for hotels in Baltimore. It's close enough to be helpful but still confusing for the user.

Additionally, Google gives each keyword a "quality score" that factors in keywords, ad copy, and the landing page. While not a perfect metric, it can be helpful in understanding how well the components of your campaign are aligned.

**NOT USING INSIGHTS FROM  
SEO OR COMPETITORS**

A huge part of Google Ads' success comes from proper keyword research, and fortunately, you don't have to reinvent the wheel here. SEO tools can tell us which keywords people are searching for, how often they click on those results, and how frequently those terms are searched.

Your website and competitor's websites also already rank for a wide range of keywords that can and should be targeted in your Google Ads campaigns.

Not only does this make sense, but you also gain a digital real estate advantage over your competitors when you have a paid ad, and an organic result show up for the same search result.



# Structure Your Campaigns The Right Way

## STRUCTURE YOUR CAMPAIGNS THE RIGHT WAY

How you organize your campaign has a major impact on your ability to drive leads or sales from Google Ads.

The general breakdown is at the top of your account you have Campaigns. Inside of a Campaign are Ad Groups. And inside of Ad Groups are Ads and Keywords.

To give an example. Let's say you run a bike shop.

### **Your account might look something like this:**

Campaign: Adult Bikes

- Ad Group 1: Mountain Bikes
- Ad Group 2: Road Bikes
- Ad Group 3: BMX Bikes

Campaign: Kid's Bikes

- Ad Group 1: 12-inch Bikes
- Ad Group 2: 16-inch Bikes
- Ad Group 3: 20-inch Bikes

By organizing your Campaigns and Ad Groups like this, it makes it easy to keep your ads and keywords aligned, allowing Google to better deliver your ads to the right people. It also makes auditing and maintaining your account easier.

## LEVERAGING SEARCHER INTENT

There are different stages of the buyer journey, and with Google Ads, you can target each segment of your customer's journey. To do so, you need to understand searcher intent.

Searcher intent refers to what the searcher is actually looking for when performing a search. Some searches are informational, navigational, transactional, or commercial investigation.

Informational searches are when people have a question and want an answer. For our bike shop example from before, this would be someone searching for "what size bike is right for a 6-year-old."

Navigational searches are when people are aiming to get to a specific part of a website, such as a login or a tool they often use. These are mostly useful for websites that are well known and have searches directly seeking out their website.

Transactional searches are when people are looking to buy something. These are very valuable for any company. For example, "where to buy a Trek mountain bike" would fit the transactional search category.

Finally, we have commercial investigation, where people are in research mode before making a purchase. Think of comparison searches or looking for the "best" of something. An example for our bike shop would be "best road bike for kids."

Aligning your keywords to searcher intent will significantly improve the performance of your Google Ads campaigns.

## TARGETING LIKE A BOSS

One of the great advantages of paid ads is the ability to target based on various metrics.

From location targeting to time of day, age, household income, parental status, and more, you can narrow down your audience to who you want to run ads to specifically.

For example, running ads to women ages 25-34 that are parents, living in Towson Maryland, with a household income in the top 10%, searching for kids bikes on the weekend between the hours of 7 am and 3 pm.

You don't need to get that specific for every campaign. But the important part is, you can.

## USE PROPER BID TYPES

Last, it's essential to use the right bid strategy when you run Google Ads. You have a wide range of options, from maximizing clicks or maximizing conversions to setting a Target Cost-Per-Action and more; Google offers some flexibility with how you'd like to manage your campaign.

How should you use a bid type? If you're running a new campaign and testing out a landing page, you might want to get as much traffic to the page as possible to find out if it converts or not. In this scenario, a maximize clicks bid strategy might work best.

If you already know what you want your target cost per lead to be, Target CPA (cost-per-acquisition) would benefit you most as this strategy can help you aim for a target cost.

## WRAPPING UP

As you can see, Google Ads is a powerful marketing tool. But with power comes responsibility. Understanding how to pull the right levers and shift strategies and approaches within your campaigns are what separates a successful campaign from a failing one.

# Looking to send qualified leads and traffic to your website?

Send an email to our VP of Business Development, **Sean Mulcahy** ([sean.m@rollwithduckpin.com](mailto:sean.m@rollwithduckpin.com)), or give us a call at **443-478-3311**.

# Thank you.



## Questions?

<b>Sean Mulcahy</b>	Vice President
sean.m@rollwithduckpin.com	<b>443.478.3311</b>