

Search Engine Marketing Is Your Customer Acquisition Power Move

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With well over 650,000 e-commerce businesses in the United States, many companies find themselves struggling against customer acquisition, constantly faced with a competitive market where being distinct from the competition is a bit like catching Proteus. Keeping up with the latest market trends, personalization, and shifting consumer behavior means hundreds of new features are added annually to AdWords and Google Shopping. So how is it possible to invest wisely and efficiently in marketing that drives highly-qualified users to conversion? If done effectively, that's where Search Engine Marketing shines.

Once upon a time, the term Search Engine Marketing (also known as SEM), was used to reference paid search (PPC) and unpaid (SEO) strategies to improve a website's visibility on search engine results pages. But these days, SEM refers to paid search that targets highly-qualified users "further down the funnel," while SEO has become a channel of its own.

SO WHY USE PAID SEARCH WHEN YOU CAN GET THE ORGANIC SEARCH RESULTS FOR FREE?

The ultra-competitive market for customer acquisition has created a necessity for SEM to supplement organic search results - using the right ad to match a user query is hands down the best way to drive high-quality traffic to your e-commerce site. And "making up" for your SEO efforts, adapting your messaging in real time, generating brand exposure, and targeting qualified users make paid search invaluable to growing your crowd.

The Power of SEM in E-Commerce

SEO ISN'T ENOUGH TO GROW

If organic SEO is like catching your audience by casting a wide net, PPC advertising is like buying specific lures and specialty bait to catch a particular fish - a particular target audience.

Though you may have access to a handful of fish by swimming in the right waters, knowing what bait to use will help you fill your nets more efficiently. That's all to say that expanding your online visibility and reaching your target audience involves a balance of both organic SEO and PPC.

Increasing brand visibility via top rankings on search engine results pages draws visibility to your site and brand. For example, if someone searches for "women's shoes," the top results on Google are PPC campaigns. By merely paying for ad space on a web page or in search, your brand earns visibility and awareness to potential new customers.

(RE)TARGET QUALIFIED USERS

You can't necessarily control who comes to your website through SEO, but you can use paid search to customize search ad campaigns for people who have previously visited your site. With RLSA - remarketing lists for search ads - you tailor your paid search campaigns based on whether users have previously visited your website (or app) and which pages they viewed. Segmenting data can carve out a more efficient path to growing your user base:

Separate budget allocation

Tailored ad copy language

Control over settings adjustments (e.g. device, location bid adjustments, etc.)

RLSA let you find the conversions and clicks from users who are going to click through at twice the rate, half the cost, and triple the conversion rate.

ADAPT YOUR MESSAGING AND BIDS IN REAL TIME

When you're not making sales, it's tempting to focus on the ways your marketing campaigns are lacking, but you should also analyze when they're performing at their best. "Good performance" may reveal how sales can be influenced by environmental factors such as time of day, user's device or the weather, to which you can also adapt your bidding strategy using SEM.

For both AdWords and Google Shopping campaigns, you can monitor in real time the conversion rates based on geography. Do you only deliver to a certain region? Are there some areas that convert better than others? Bid up! Consider implementing geographic bid modifiers to target or restrict who can see your ads to reach the customers who are more likely to become loyal followers.

DRIVE RELEVANT TRAFFIC THROUGH SEARCH QUERIES

Leveraging the way Google displays results to users is the essence of customer acquisition via SEM. It's programmed to show users what they set out to find via broad, phrase and exact match requirements, so it's no surprise that phrase match and exact match keywords get higher click through rates.

But a high click through rate isn't just metric window dressing; it can actually help you reduce your cost per click while maintaining your advertising position.

Read that last sentence again because it's that important.

Google uses your historic click through rate for a keyword to determine your ad quality score, which in turn influences your cost per click for that keyword. What does that have to do with customer acquisition? It simply means that you are growing your customer base for less, in the most efficient way possible.

Are You Up For The Challenge?

Audience targeting and real-time bidding in particular are the backbone of a productive SEM strategy, but a lack of experience, time and expertise can hinder even the best intentions from retail advertisers. And in February 2016, Google announced its decision to favor paid Google Shopping ads over AdWords text ads in SERPs, placing greater weight on Shopping and Product Listing Ads as the ad format of choice for online retailers.

With all its challenges, SEM has the power to spike your customer acquisition with its gaining significance in the world of e-commerce.

Are you in need of new customers?

We can come alongside you to reach your customers who are looking for you in the most efficient and budget-friendly way possible.