Ask A PPC: What Marketers Need To Know About Micro Conversions In Google Ads via @sejournal, @navahf

Micro conversions are among the most misunderstood – and underutilized – tools in a PPC marketer's toolkit.

While they don't represent final goals like sales or leads, they can provide critical signals that improve campaign performance, inform audience strategy, and enable smarter automation.

Here's what marketers need to know to harness micro conversions effectively.

What Are Micro Conversions In Google Ads?

Micro conversions are the smaller, trackable user actions that occur on the path to a primary (macro) conversion. These can include:

- Button clicks (e.g., "Learn More" or "Book a Demo").
- Time on site thresholds.
- Scroll depth (e.g., 50% or more of a page).
- Video views or completions.
- Downloads of gated or ungated assets (PDFs, white papers, brochures).
- Add-to-cart or view-a-product actions (especially in ecommerce).

- Account creations or newsletter signups (in lead gen or SaaS).

In technical terms, micro conversions are events configured in Google Ads or Google Analytics 4 (GA4) events to be imported into Google Ads. These actions need to be set as primary actions so they impact the algorithm and reporting.

Advertisers can also create campaign-level conversions or conversion groups within Google Ads to group and value these actions based on their strategic importance.

It’s important to note that conversion data is stored at the conversion action level, so using both account-level and campaign-level conversion actions isn’t advisable. This is because you might end up double counting.

Who Should Use Micro Conversions?

While all advertisers can benefit from micro conversions, there are specific cases where they’re particularly critical:

Long Sales Cycles

For B2B, high-ticket, or enterprise brands, the conversion path often spans weeks or months. Relying on sparse “true” conversions (like closed deals) limits algorithmic learning.

Micro conversions feed Smart Bidding strategies with faster, more frequent signals, improving optimization while nurturing intent.

Low Conversion Volume Accounts

Advertisers with fewer than 50 conversions per month often find themselves stuck with suboptimal bid strategies.

Layering in high-quality micro conversions, like “contact page views” or “start checkout” events, can help reach the volume

threshold needed to unlock Maximize Conversions, Target CPA, or Target ROAS bidding.

Top-Of-Funnel Or Awareness Campaigns

Display, Video, and Demand Gen campaigns often drive engagement but not immediate conversions.

Micro conversions give advertisers a way to demonstrate value and engagement upstream, helping justify investment in brand-building initiatives.

Brands With Multi-Touch Journeys

If a business relies on several touchpoints, such as a blog reader later becoming a webinar attendee and eventually a customer, micro conversions allow marketers to track and optimize for each meaningful step, rather than only the final destination.

How To Report On Performance Using Micro Conversions (Without Losing Credibility)

The biggest risk with micro conversions is miscommunication, especially when stakeholders assume that all “conversions” reported in Google Ads are sales, leads, or revenue-driving actions.

To keep reporting accurately and strategically, advertisers should lean heavily on Google Ads’ conversion settings and be proactive in setting expectations.

1. Use Primary Conversions Wisely

In Google Ads, each conversion action includes a toggle for primary vs. secondary:

- If Primary is toggled, the action contributes to the “Conversions” column and influences Smart Bidding strategies.
- If Secondary is toggled, the action is still tracked but only appears in the “All Conversions” column.

Best Practice: Only include high-intent micro conversions (e.g., “Start Checkout,” “Request Demo Click”) in the “Conversions” column if they reflect a strong signal of purchase or lead intent and your account doesn’t yet have sufficient macro conversion volume for Smart Bidding.

For awareness-stage micro conversions (e.g., video views, scroll depth), keep them out of the bidding unless you are struggling to hit conversion thresholds.

2. Be Honest About Conversion Rate Discrepancies

There’s a difference between the conversion rate in Google Ads and the actual business conversion rate (e.g., sales closed, qualified leads, or revenue).

When micro conversions are included in the primary column, Google Ads will report an artificially high conversion rate.

Example:

- Google Ads reports a 7% conversion rate (including ebook downloads and demo button clicks).
- Customer relationship management (CRM) data shows that only 1.5% of those sessions became qualified leads or customers.

To maintain credibility and stakeholder trust:

- Label micro conversions clearly in both platform naming and external reports.
- Segment performance by conversion type (e.g., “Soft

Conversion Rate" vs. "True Conversion Rate").
- Use blended metrics like "Cost per Qualified Lead" or "Lead-to-Sale Rate" alongside platform metrics to provide the full picture.

3. Set Up Custom Columns For Clean Reporting

Google Ads allows advertisers to build custom columns that isolate specific conversion actions. This is key to preventing performance inflation and aligning reports with what actually matters.

You can create:

- A column for Primary Conversions Only (macro).
- A column for Micro Conversions.
- A column for All Conversions.

This structure helps teams tell the story: "Here's how many people meaningfully engaged, here's how many took the final action, and here's what we spent to get both."

4. Strategically Value Micro Conversions

If you're using Target ROAS or Maximize Conversion Value bidding, assigning values to micro conversions must be done carefully.

These should reflect relative business importance, not just arbitrary numbers.

For example:

- Demo Request = $50.
- Ebook Download = $10.
- Video View = $1.

This hierarchy ensures Google's bidding logic prioritizes actions that are more likely to lead to revenue, without

starving the algorithm of lower-funnel signals.

Final Takeaways

Micro conversions are powerful, but they're also easy to misuse, especially in reporting. They must never be presented as equivalent to actual sales or leads unless there's proof of correlation.

Advertisers should:

- Structure Google Ads conversion settings to clearly separate micro and macro actions.
- Educate stakeholders on what each "conversion" type means in context.
- Bridge the platform vs. reality gap by layering CRM or offline data into their performance analysis.

In environments where the final conversion volume is too low to fuel automation or draw meaningful insights, micro conversions provide the volume and behavioral data needed to optimize, but they're only as valuable as the strategy behind them.

The key is transparency. Micro conversions can absolutely drive long-term success, but only when advertisers set the right expectations, use Google Ads' tools to their full extent, and align campaign optimization with real business outcomes.

More Resources:

Featured Image: Paulo Bobita/Shutterstock

https://www.searchenginejournal.com/ask-a-ppc-what-marketers-need-know-about-micro-conversions-google-ads/543045/