

PPC for Travel: 3 New Tactics to Try This Year by @cchaitanya

It's a new year, and for those of us who work in PPC for travel, a significant opportunity.

Statista predicts that digital travel sales will grow to \$693 billion this year, up 30 percent from 2017.

So how can you take a bigger slice of this seemingly bigger pie?

With some new tactics, as well as revised versions of existing strategies you may already be familiar with.

Here are some tactics to try out for your PPC programs tied to travel destinations.

1. Brand Bidding

Bidding on branded terms may not be the first travel PPC tactic that comes to your mind.

But it should – brand awareness matters!

Fifty-two percent of site traffic to the top 10 travel websites in the world is direct.

So, longer-term, establishing your brand identity is important.

Your company is (or will eventually be) a huge name in travel that will drive significant traffic on name recognition alone.

Not buying that? OK, fine.

The same study I referenced also points out that 37 percent of all traffic for the top travel sites is search-based (that includes organic and paid).

Remember, your competitors are also bidding against you.

That means they're bidding on your own brand keywords.

Why?

So their ads show up in search queries for your company's name.

To ensure you box out the competition, you need to make sure you control the top SERP real estate for branded queries.

If you do, people who do search for your company by name will be more likely end up visiting your company's website; not that of your competitors.

In addition, studies show that bidding on brand + non-branded terms provides significant lift in clicks.

On Bing, brand + non-brand bidding lifts clicks by as much as 27 percent.

Remember, branded ads will tend to come up in queries for more-knowledgeable searchers who are bidding beyond generic terms ("tropical cruise," "5-star hotel England," etc.).

So, it's important to provide additional extensions to drive in-a-hurry travelers to proper website destinations.

These include sitelinks that point directly to your reservations pages or promotional pages.

It's also a good idea to make use of additional extensions such as review extensions and callout extensions for travelers who are further up the funnel and still in research mode.

2. Proximity Targeting

Paid search for travel isn't just about finding travelers who are planning months ahead for a vacation.

It's also about grabbing travelers on the ground to invite them to your shopping centers, restaurants, or other attractions.

For this purpose, you can make use of the variety of location-based targeting tools available through AdWords and elsewhere.

Fortunately, these tools offer surprisingly tight coverage near your physical location – in some cases, a mile or less:

AdWords Radius Targeting

Even a generic keyword campaign set in a tight proximity to your business can potentially pay dividends using AdWords radius targeting.

You can set AdWords ads to cover an area as small as 1 kilometer (or about 0.6 miles) around your business.

Are there spontaneous travelers who might be interested in your business's scuba diving experience, Michelin-star rated eatery, or a similar local business? Absolutely.

Aggressively targeting popular, generic keywords in a tight proximity can potentially drive significant traffic at a reasonable prices.

Facebook Location Targeting

Facebook location targeting offers a slightly larger range within which you can target prospects: 1 mile (or 1.6 kilometers).

Unfortunately, Facebook can't exactly offer the deep-funnel

intent of search as a channel.

However, it offers a significantly richer experience that lets you use all those beautiful, high-resolution photos and logos you've been collecting for just this occasion.

Again, this is potentially an economical way to drive interest in your local business.

You can also use Facebook's interest targeting to more-precisely segment and target audiences here.

Google Display Network

Like Facebook, GDN is also more of a top-funnel channel.

Therefore, you likely won't see quite as many conversions as deep-funnel search queries.

However, like Facebook, GDN offers the ability to add rich media experiences in the form of high-resolution photos and logos.

GDN also includes options for segmentation via interest, though they may not be as robust as those of Facebook.

On the other hand, this option is potentially the most economical of the three.

3. Facebook Lookalikes & Page Post Engagement Ads

Facebook lookalike targeting has a relatively lenient threshold to get started (100 confirmed emails you've collected from your customers).

So launching a campaign of this sort (assuming you don't already have any in flight) should have relatively low barriers to entry.

To start creating lookalike audiences, you must upload of your email list.

You can then choose which country to target and vary the lookalike percentage.

One percent is the most highly relevant (but also the smallest and potentially most constrained).

Small businesses may find 1 percent to be a good start, but larger businesses will likely want to expand their list.

You can also augment this list using other social sources, such as travelers that have already Liked your business's Facebook page.

To target travelers before they even begin booking their next trip, consider Page Post Engagement Ads.

These are potentially more economical than other engagement-focused ads.

You can get one of these campaigns started by including a Facebook post along with your regularly-scheduled social update cadence.

This post should focus on a specific audience, such as out-of-towners who are interested in visiting your location.

You can then use this post as a basis for your Page Post Engagement Ad to specifically target travelers who are a certain distance *away from* your business's physical presence.

Takeaways

Paid search for travel is an exciting place to be in 2018.

Since the market will likely grow in size this year, consider using these advanced tactics to capture and convert travelers in different funnel stages.

More Paid Search Resources:

<http://tracking.feedpress.it/link/13962/8008752>