SMX Overtime: Evaluating and managing your ad options

Paid Media Director at Red Ventures, Sean Murphy, spoke at the SMX West session, “The Text Ad Reboot: How To Evaluate & Manage Your Current Options” in San Jose. Questions emerged about how to win clients over with responsive ads as well as experimenting with new ad formats and trying new things with hard-close ads.

How do you get clients comfortable with the idea of responsive ads, when they’re used to approving specific copy?

Murphy: It can be tricky to get clients comfortable with responsive search ads, but I suggest following this process to move forward:

- **Show the Value:** Find case studies of RSA's performing well from elsewhere in your agency or the industry. You want your client to be an advocate for this new feature.
- **Understand the True Concerns: Show you are willing to meet their advertising concerns**
  - Ensure that claims and their 'disclaimers' all live in the same description, so they can't be disconnected.
  - Pin required headlines to ensure they show in the appropriate spot.
- **Commit to Reviewing Served Ads:** Address their concerns by committing to show what ad combinations are most commonly showing with them after the ads are live. Seeing what ads are appearing in the wild can help ease their concerns.

How important is it to reach stat sig (95 percent) when testing new ad formats?

Murphy: Not at all, with optimized ad rotation, the champion ad is dead. You're not testing a single new ad format to expecting it to be uniformly better than previous ad formats. There's too much machine learning optimization on top of whatever "statistically significant" A/B test you run. Instead, embrace the move to ad personalization and provide ad platforms with a wide variety of ads to choose from.

See also *How Not To Run an A/B Test* by Evan Miller.

With so much more space should we push a harder close? Book now! Inventory is running low!

Murphy: Love the thought process: What can we do differently now than before, taking advantage of extra ad space? Hard-close ads have a place in an optimized ad portfolio, where the

engine can choose which customers are ready to respond to that messaging. Depending on the search term, they won't typically stand alone as the most-served ad, but providing an ad for people in that stage of the customer journey is important variety that should improve performance.

Is there more pressure to bid for position 1 with Expanded text ads considering that they take up more real estate?

Murphy: How much your CTR scales with position will vary based on your brand and the competitiveness of the landscape. I've been in non-brand accounts where CTR triples from the 2.5 to the 1.5 and where it increases much more modestly. Understanding that is key to choosing bids that maximize value **and** ROI. Lean on new metrics like click share and impression absolute top % to help you understand what click potential is still untapped.

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