# Which PPC Metrics Should You Focus On? via @navahf

There is no “right” way to run a PPC account – trial and error will help you find the best path to positive ROI.

In this installment of **Ask Me Anything About PPC**, we will address the following question:

> *“Which metrics should I actually pay attention to? I get reports from my agency and it’s really overwhelming – can you help me understand what they’re sharing with me?”*

Distilling down the right workflow, structure, and strategy for you comes down to knowing:

- Which metrics to focus on?
- What kind of “improvement” do you need to see in the metric?
- How long to give your tests before checking the metric again?

As we answer these questions, we’ll also parse the metrics into three buckets:

- **Core metrics:** Important success/failure indicators.
- **Directional metrics:** Not important enough to report on/be accountable for, but useful in directing management efforts.
- **Vanity metrics:** While a case can be made for every metric being “important”, these are truly just fluff.

It’s important to note my designation of a metric as “core”, “directional”, and “vanity” are my opinions and not official

designations from the ad networks.

# Which Metrics to Focus On

Focusing on core metrics may seem like a no-brainer, but depending on the campaign objectives, it might not be obvious which metrics to designate as “Core”.

## For Leads/Sales

If you’re after leads/sales, the following metrics should be your core metrics:

- **Conversions**: actions you’re telling the ad network to treat as important.
- **CPA**: Cost per conversion, determined by what you’ve allowed to be included in conversions.
- **ROAS**: Gross profit generated from conversions attributed to ad spend.
- **Conversion rate**: Of the prospects who clicked your ad, how many converted?

These will be your directional metrics:

- **CTR (click-through rate)**: Of the people who saw your ad, how many clicked?
- **Impression share**: Of all available impressions, how many is a given campaign/keyword getting.
- **Top of page rate**: Of the times your ad served, how often was it at the top.
- **Average CPC**: How many clicks can your budget fit in the day?

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I consider these vanity metrics in leads/sales campaigns:

- **Quality score**: Score 1-10 Google gives you based on historical CTR, ad relevance, and landing page experience.
- **Impressions**: How many times your ad has been viewed.
- **Optimization score**: Score Google gives your campaign based on how many suggestions you implement.

Metrics fall into these buckets because of their varying impact on the leads and sales goal.

## For Brand Awareness

If the goal were to change to brand awareness, metrics would shift.

Core metrics for brand awareness:

- **Impression share** (including top of page and absolute top of page): Of the potential impressions you could be getting, how many are you securing, **and** how many are at the top of the page.
- **Impressions**: Amount of times your ad is displayed.
- **Views**: Amount of times your ad is seen.
- **Brand lift**: Increase in branded search/recall

Directional metrics for brand awareness include:

- **Conversions**: Getting leads in a new market indicates you're going in the right direction.
- **Assisted conversions**: How much the campaign is empowering other campaigns.
- **Earned views**: How many organic views of your content come from an ad?
- **CTR**: Are the clicks intentional or accidental (leading to an evaluation of placements)?

Vanity metrics for brand awareness include:

- Quality score
- Optimization score

## The Takeaway

Depending on your goals, you'll want to value metrics differently and adjust success/failure criteria accordingly.

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# What Kind of Improvement Do You Need to See in a Metric?

Every metric has its own unique criteria and behaviors, and it's important to know when you want to see a metric go up/down.

However, it's also important to note what kind of percentage improvements, to expect out of a metric.

If you had inaccurate conversion tracking, it's reasonable to expect a giant percentage decrease (or in some cases increase) in conversions.

Small budgets will have less impressions and clicks, which means any increases will have larger percentage changes than a large budget.

The important part is that your improvement is consistent and constantly growing.

If the improvement is temporary, that implies the wrong variable in a test was celebrated, and you'll need to go back to what you were testing.

# How Long Should You Let a Test Run

# Before Checking Metrics?

As a rule, tests should have at least seven days to run before modifications are made.

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However, there are certain metrics that can help you understand a test is completely flawed within the first 1-2 days.

Check the following for sharp declines in the first 24-48 hours of a test:

- **Impression share** (especially if lost to rank): This likely means whatever is being tested is causing underbidding.
- **Conversions**: This might mean an incorrect conversion action was tracking/bidding strategy is focusing budget away from conversions.
- **CTR**: Ad copy might be off and/or the keywords might be pulling you into bad queries.

# The Takeaway

The metrics you focus on will depend on your goals, as well as whether you're in testing or scale mode.

*Have a question about PPC? Submit via this form or tweet me @navahf with the #AskPPC hashtag. See you next month!*

**More Resources:**

http://tracking.feedpress.it/link/13962/13721449