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PAY PER CLICK (PPC) 101

Reading time: 10 minutes	Prerequisite: n/a

Search engine marketing, also called pay per click, is a cost-effective way to increase your online visibility. This tutorial will give you the knowledge to get started with pay per click.

1)   WHAT IS PAY PER CLICK?

Pay per click (PPC) is a form of e-marketing that involves setting up an online advertising campaign which will be displayed on search engine results pages and advertising networks such as websites and blogs.

In Australia, the 3 major PPC players are Google AdWords (http://adwords.google.com), Yahoo! Search Marketing (http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com) and Microsoft adCenter (http://adcenter.microsoft.com).

Setting up and managing search engine marketing is time consuming and necessitates a lot of research. However, all the tools are at your disposal to do it yourself, without the assistance of a professional. If you do not have sufficient time to dedicate to optimise your campaign, we recommend you hire a pay per click professional to at least set it up for you.

2)   HOW DOES IT WORK?

Once you have selected the search engine you would like your ads to be displayed on, you will need to:

1)   Set up an account

2)   Do your keywords research

3)   Create your campaigns (groups of ads, keywords, bid price)

4)   Go live

5)   Let the campaign run its course

6)   Track and fine tune on a weekly basis

3) WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

The main difference and benefit between search engine pay per click and other forms of online or offline advertising is that PPC targets an audience that is **ready to buy and actively searching for your product.** The ads will only be displayed when people enter the keywords you specified.

Imagine you are a company located in Cairns that sells PADI diving courses. Your ad in a local paper or tourism publication might not appeal to all the readers. However, when you set up a PPC campaign you can target it to your audience by specifying your ads only to be displayed when people search for "PADI certificate in Cairns" or other relevant keywords.

Photo copyright: Yahoo!

a)   Cost effective

PPC is cost effective: you will only pay a predefined amount when **someone clicks on your ad.** Your ads will therefore be displayed for free. In PPC jargon, the number of times your ads are displayed is called the number of impressions.

b)   Immediate

There is no need to work with a third-party such as an agency or pay per click consultant: you can set up your campaign yourself and it will be live as soon as you press "ok". You can also make all the changes you like to your campaign 24/7.

c)   Flexibility

Pay per click is a form of advertising that can be set up, left running for as long as you want, paused, re-started, altered, cancelled, etc. The campaign can be accessed and changed at any time using any Internet-enabled computer as the majority of PPC services are online-based and fully automated.

d)   Tracking

Because everything is based online, you will be able to know exactly which ads were clicked, which ads converted, and which keywords your target market is using to search. Basically you will gain market intelligence on what works, what doesn't and will be able to use the keyword information within the content of your website to naturally increase its search engine rankings!

4)   WHEN COULD I USE IT?

Because of its high flexibility and very low cost, PPC is an online marketing avenue that every tourism business should consider. If the campaign is not successful or timely, you can simply pause it.

Below are a few examples of uses of PPC campaigns in the tourism industry

Low occupancy for upcoming peak period:	It's the start of the school holidays in 2 weeks and you haven't sold all your rooms/tours/trip
Upcoming seasonal event:	There is a seasonal event in your region (e.g. Mt Isa rodeo) happening every year. People are going to search for it online so use the event's name in your add and offer these people an experience that complements the event.
Strategic purpose:	Set up a PPC campaign to research what your target market searches, what keywords they use and use this market intelligence in your own website to optimise it for search engines.

5) RELATED MATERIAL

a) Related tutorials

- Search engines 101

- Critical components of optimising a website

- Keywords

- Setting up a PPC campaign with Google AdWords