

165 PPC Tips, Tricks and Tools (updated)

In early January we wrote 145 tips for 2012. It's been a whirlwind year in the land of PPC so this is an update to that post with an additional 20 tips. These new PPC tips come from conferences, tests, failures and new Google services and features that have been rolled out of the past 5-6 months.

The new tips are at the top and numbered 146-165 and below them you will find the original tips from earlier this year.

146. Use [relative quality score](#) to identify keywords that are killing ad group, campaign, or account quality score and fix it!

147. Use Auction Insights for competitive research, negatives, and bid management. <http://www.ppchero.com/top-5-ways-to-use-adwords-new-auction-insights-tool/>

148. Remove navigation on cart and check out pages. This can increase conversion rates by 15% or more.

149. Outstanding keyword research is an underrated skill. We recently hired a keyword research genius that added 300 new keywords to an account that had been around for over a year. 30-days later 20% of all leads came from those keywords.

150. For some accounts, [near exact](#) isn't as bad as we thought it would be. In one account, CPL is down 20% since this feature went live and volume is at record levels.

151. [Mobile PPC](#) is growing as fast as Google says it is. Stop ignoring it. (Yes, this was an original tip.)

152. Every 7-days do bid changes based on past 30-day average conversion rate by keyword and past seven average CPC. This will give you the ideal bid based on most recent performance. $(1 / \text{average conversion rate} = \text{number of clicks} \cdot \text{Goal CPA} / \text{number of clicks})$ gives you average CPC. Increase that by 5-10% to set your bid price.)

153. Math is awesome.

154. You learn a lot through failure. To learn from failure with our actually failing simulate worst-case scenarios such as losing a major client. Run a drill on what action you'd take, and what the reasons for them leaving would be. You know what they are; they are the things that keep you up at night now. After you identify what would have to happen if you lost that client and what the reasons are, proactively fix it!

155. Start your ad testing process by getting a group of two or more people together and listing the features and benefits of the services you are advertising. From them, brain storm variations of ways to say the most compelling features and benefits. Lastly, choose the favorite variations and test them together. This process will take about an hours but will leave you with a few finely honed messages to test.

156. SQR's have diminishing returns. The more you do, the less they do for you, and the longer it takes to do them.

157. Half of Google betas are great, the other half do nothing. But the half that are great make up for the half that does nothing so keep getting into them!

158. For ecommerce accounts, use [PVV](#) to determine which keywords to push and which to pull back on.

159. Analytics not only can be used to tell you how to improve conversion rate, ROI but it can pull out insights such as [why are mobile users visiting your site](#) in the first place. Which then can lead to entirely new product offerings, such as apps targeted specifically to current market needs.

160. Proactively audit your accounts. aimClear recently posted an amazing tip sheet on this. <http://www.aimclearblog.com/2012/06/06/57-amazing-ways-to-audit-ppc-campaigns-like-a-pro-straight-from-smx-advanced/>

161. Use [Google labels](#) to make sense of your accounts and making reporting better and easier.

162. If a client, your predecessor, your boss, tells you that something doesn't work, test it anyway. It's called Truth Busting. The trick is to go at it at another angle. So if broad match keywords didn't work for you, try them with a lot of campaign level negatives that weed out irrelevant traffic.

163. Ask more questions than you answer.

164. If you don't bid on brand terms, test it for 14 days. At the end of the test look for lift in overall leads, revenue. A major concern for businesses is that bidding on brand terms will get the same volume of conversions but that it costs more than letting organic listings get all the sales/leads. The truth is, there is almost always a synergistic lift from doing both together.

165. If you go to a conference, such as [Hero Conf](#), shake 10 hands for every break out session you attend. The knowledge you gain from these events is valuable; the connections you gain are invaluable.

The original 145 PPC Must-Do's for 2012

1. Next year mobile will outpace desktop search queries. Get creating, testing, and optimizing mobile landing pages and campaigns.
2. Do better ad testing. After you find a winner, pause all your ads, re-create the winning version, and test it against 2-3 other variations. This prevents historical performance from being a factor.
3. Speed up your site. As technology gets better, people are less patient.
<http://www.websiteoptimization.com/services/analyze/>
4. Use Analytics to have a 3D view of your PPC results. <http://www.ppchero.com/4-ppc-mistakes-that-kill-your-career/>
5. Your competition is getting smarter. Attend at least 1 PPC conference this year.
<http://www.heroconf.com/>
6. Say, “yes” 50% more. You’re client, boss, and bank account will thank you for it.
7. Remarketing is available, and profitable, beyond Google’s network. Expand!
8. Do the hard stuff first. It’s likely what you are avoiding will make the biggest dent in performance.
9. Test button colors. Specifically, contrasting colors to your website theme.
10. Test button text. For example, how does “Download” perform compared to “Download Free Whitepaper”?
11. Make your Google and Bing reps work for your money. They have resources, such as statistics, that you can’t get anywhere else.
12. Social media sites produce good leads. If you need a place to start, for B2B use LinkedIn, for B2C use Facebook.
13. Slow down your tests. Make sure you reach [statistical significance](#) before making decisions.
14. Test “Free Shipping” versus “Lowest Price” in ad text.
15. Include estimated shipping costs on product detail pages to avoid sticker shock and cart abandons.
16. Be original. What works for others might not work for you. Focus on optimizing what you have, not trying to copy what someone else is doing.

17. Get more customer reviews. Once visitors hit your page, testimonials and reviews give them a reason to trust you.
18. Don't ask for personal information, even an email address, until you have created value.
19. Make your site accessible to visitors with disabilities.
20. Break the ad writing best practice rules. The only way we got to what works best was by doing something different.
21. Restructure your account(s) until no ad group has more than 10 keywords. Then write new ads for each ad group that talks specifically to the intent behind those search queries.
22. Implement explicit bidding in Bing.
23. Ask your Bing rep for a QUAC report. They'll give you insights into your account that can drastically increase clicks, and conversions.
24. Test multi-stage lead gen forms. Ask for only an email up front, and then ask for more information in a step 2 (and explain why.)
25. Tell your users what fields on a form are required with an asterisk.
26. Segment your campaigns by targeted regions so you can include geo-specific language in ads and landing pages.
27. Use remarketing to cross-sell. After someone has submitted a lead or purchased an item, keep remarketing to them. Tailor your message to the next step of your sales process or a related item.
28. Use "Sign in with Twitter" and/or "Sign in with Facebook" buttons to increase conversions. <http://www.komodomedia.com/blog/2009/05/sign-in-with-twitter-and-facebook-buttons/>
29. Display advertising is getting smarter and more effective. If it hasn't worked for you in the past test Interest Category Marketing and Topic campaigns.
30. If your goal is to get someone on the phone, use phone extensions.
31. An hour analyzing data may be worth 3 hours of general account maintenance. Become an Analytics guru, or hire one. Forrester Research reports that web analytics can lift ROI 900%-1200%.

32. Test your website on Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari. It may look a lot different across each.
33. Listen to [webinars](#) instead of music while you work.
34. Use smart segmentation when analyzing data. Looking at total conversion rate doesn't tell you a lot if you have mobile, search, display, and/or branded campaigns. Review the performance of each individually, and set goals for each based on [ROAS](#).
35. Create good, insanely valuable content first, worry about traffic second.
36. Use live chat. The generation that is spends the most money, spends the least amount of time talking on the phone.
37. Test publishing prices in your paid search ads.
38. Big buttons work best. <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2009/10/13/call-to-action-buttons-examples-and-best-practices/>
39. Explain the value you create in the following order: Explain the pain you relieve, the benefit of your product in regards to that pain, give proof that it really works.
40. Put your privacy policy in an easy to find place, including right under all form submit buttons.
41. Make sure your mobile landing pages are "finger click" friendly. That means large buttons, links, and asking for limited information.
42. Always have a link to a desktop version of your site on a mobile landing page.
43. User testing is cheap, easy, and effective. So use it! <http://www.usertesting.com/>
44. Don't ignore seasonality. Some months will always be better for you than others, adjust your budget, bids, and strategies accordingly.
45. Use IP relocation tools to present site visitors to the most relevant information.
46. Include contact information on your landing pages. Even if people don't use it, it creates trust.
47. Use your site search logs to find out what people are searching for once on your site. Use that to find new keywords to bid on.
48. Write customer/user-focused copy. Test your site now:
<http://www.futurenowinc.com/wewe.htm>

49. Homepage/landing page sliders are becoming outdated. Replace yours with dynamically created images that speak to what the user is searching for.
50. Use CSS to make your site more user friendly for visually impaired (works better with screen readers than tabular layouts.)
51. When you add remarketing codes, conversion tracking, and/or analytics codes to your site make sure you do not delete existing tracking codes on the page. A few days without conversion tracking can lead to damaging changes to your PPC campaigns.
52. Analytics doesn't track time on site unless a user visits more than one page. Know this before optimizing pages based on that data.
53. Use Google insights for valuable information about your industry and marketing channels. <http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/insights/>
54. Look at what organic keywords drive you traffic and make sure you are bidding on them.
55. Use [multi-channel funnels](#) in Analytics to determine how many conversions PPC is really driving for you.
56. Bid high on newly added keywords to increase initial CTR and start the keyword off with a better quality score.
57. Reduce the number of negative keywords in your campaigns.
<http://www.ppchero.com/negative-keyword-audit/>
58. Test explicit bidding in Google. Do 100% for exact, 85% for phrase and 75% for broad match terms.
59. Determine a goal for every page on your website. If you are an ecommerce site, the goal of a product page isn't a sale; it's an "add to cart". It's the cart page's job to move the client to the payment details page, and the payment details page to get the sale.
60. Segment your campaigns by Branded and Non-Branded terms, Search and Display, and Desktop and Mobile.
61. Optimize based on ROI, not CPL/CPA.
62. Ask non-techies to test your site for you. Make sure it's easy for them to use.
63. Set up bid experiments before doing bid changes. It's a safer, smarter way to optimize your bids.

64. Use automatic rules to keep your ads running on page 1 and/or top of page.
<http://www.ppchero.com/faster-more-accurate-bid-changes/>
65. Review the reports you are sending to your clients/boss. You might be spending time reporting on metrics they don't care about.
66. Increase communication with your PPC clients. Staying in front of them prevents you from being blindsided by changes.
67. Set up a Google + page so you can take advantage of that extension in AdWords.
68. Use site links extensions, they can drastically increase CTR.
69. Write ads for every season (including holiday seasons.)
70. Make Quality Score a primary focus. It lowers your CPC and increases your reach. <http://www.ppchero.com/ultimate-guide-to-adwords-quality-score/>
71. Use m.yoursite.com URL's for mobile campaigns so users on mobile devices know that you have a site that will be easy for them to use.
72. Segment your mobile campaigns by specific device and carrier and write ads that speak directly to them.
73. Delete duplicate keywords in your accounts that are running to the same geo-locations, networks and devices. This can lower your CPC and make your account easier to manage.
74. Do general account maintenance (bids, ads and keywords) less and major restructures, optimizations, and expansions more.
75. Monitor your impression share frequently. If you have good performing campaigns that are losing impressions because of budget you have a good case for more money to present to your client/boss.
76. For one month, only look at your account in 7-day increments (meaning don't look at just 1 day's performance.) There's a chance that if you are constantly monitoring your account, you are over optimizing.
77. Delete keywords that get 0 impressions over a significant amount of time.
<http://www.ppchero.com/the-ppc-renegade-wants-to-delete-your-hoarded-keywords/>
78. If you aren't already, start remarketing campaigns. Today!
<http://www.ppchero.com/baseball-and-ppc---know-your-cleanup-hitter/>

79. Test 3rd tier search engines such as 7Search<http://7search.com/advertise/>. It's possible you'll find that clicks and leads come cheaper on these networks.

80. Expand your skills with PPC specific education. <http://www.ppchero.com/is-internet-marketing-school-worth-it-a-story-about-my-full-sail-degree/>

81. Ad location extensions in all your campaigns, these can drastically improve CTR. <http://www.ppchero.com/ad-extensions-in-5-days-series-location-extensions/>

82. Test stand alone landing pages versus landing pages that are contained within your main site.

83. Switch your AdWords account from your current billing method to an AMEX Skymiles card so you can each some free trips.

84. Compare how your ads perform at Top Vs. Other positions. Sometimes you'll find you perform best when not at the top.

85. Get AdWords and Analytics certified. Even if you've been at the PPC game for a while, it's possible that there are a few things you don't know that can help your account. <http://www.ppchero.com/everything-you-need-to-pass-the-google-advertising-fundamentals-exa/>

86. Spend some time in Analytics on the real time feature. Not sure how much you'll learn, but it's pretty fun to see what's happening, while it is happening. <http://www.ppchero.com/google-analytics-real-time/>

87. Run reports on the performance of your top 10 keywords (by spend). These are the keywords that make the biggest impact on your account, so analyzing and optimizing them first can pay huge dividends.

88. Refrain from clicking your competitors' ads. It's tempting to do, especially to research what your up against. But it raises the costs for everyone.

89. Look at the top 3-4 organic results for the keywords you are bidding on. Are their similarities in their headlines and meta descriptions that you can incorporate in your ads?

90. Add {Keyword} to the end of your display URL's. This dynamically inserts the users search query into it, and could help CTR and Quality Score.

91. Test new domain names. You only have so much space in an ad. So don't waste space with an irrelevant domain name.

92. Go for more walks. Experts say that people who step away from their desks a few times a day are more productive than those who just try to grind it out.

93. Read Avinash Kaushik's blog on Analytics. <http://www.kaushik.net>

94. Set up Google Alerts for your brand and your competitors. Staying on top of the news will let you take advantage of trends by identifying popular topics and knowing when you might see a spike in search queries and should increase your budget.

95. Use the Dimensions tab to identify the best day of the week and/or time of the day to run your ads. Increase bids during those times.

96. Use the Opportunities tab to find budget and keyword suggestions direct from Google.

97. Get a Place Page in Google. <http://www.ppchero.com/how-to-get-a-place-page-in-google-and-why-it's-essential-for-all-businesses/>

98. Step up your Excel game to increase your reporting capabilities. <http://www.ppchero.com/my-top-5-excel-tips-for-ppc-managers/>

99. Go budgetless. Set ROAS goals and make your budgets flexible based on results. So if you are hitting your goals, you're not needlessly limiting potential revenue.

100. Audit your keyword lists and insure that every match type of every keyword is in there. Then pause/adjust bids based on which perform best.

101. Stop using the word "cheap" in your ads. It looks...cheap.

102. Test background colors on your landing page. It's simple, and can have a big impact.

103. Test white papers against webinars as lead generation tools.

104. Create video ads to be ran across the display network, including YouTube. <http://searchengineland.com/how-to-get-started-with-youtube-promoted-video-102625>

105. Try Conversion Optimizer on campaigns with over 50 clicks in the past 30-days. For some campaigns, this can drastically improve performance. <http://www.ppchero.com/to-optimize-or-not-to-optimize-googles-new-ad-setting/>

106. Unsubscribe from every PPC newsletter you currently subscribe to. Then only subscribe to the one or two that you find yourself missing.

107. Create, test, and optimize image ads for Remarketing and Display Network campaigns.
108. Decrease your bounce rates by dynamically inserted the users search query in the headline of your landing page.
109. Reduce the headroom on your daily budgets. Having too much headroom reduces your control of budgets.
110. Run Search Query Reports once a quarter to see if you are getting traffic for keywords that you do not bid on and add them into your account.
111. Add negative keywords to ad groups running broad match to reduce irrelevant traffic. <http://www.ppchero.com/using-negative-keyword-lists/>
112. Target ads to Gmail users. <http://www.ppchero.com/if-you%E2%80%99re-not-using-this-gmail-ad-targeting-tactic-you%E2%80%99re-missing-out/>
113. If you have physical locations, create “geo-qualified” versions of all your keywords. i.e. PPC Indian, Pay Per Click Indiana, etc.
114. Subscribe to Visibility Magazine for great PPC insights. <http://www.visibilitymagazine.com/>
115. Save time, money and brain space with Bid Optimization software. <http://www.optimine.com>
116. Do a Network audit and exclude any automatic placements that send you lot of traffic that doesn’t convert.
117. Ask your Google rep to do an Audience Composition Report, which analyzes your remarketing campaigns and tells you what audiences to target through ICM and Topics campaigns.
118. Analyze your performance on Google and Bing Search Partners. Including CPL/CPA and quality of sales and leads. You might find that these traffic sources underperform Google and Bing network.
119. Audit the alternative text on all your images. Make sure it is there, relevant, and not spammy.
120. Participate in PPC Hero’s “Heroview” sessions on Twitter. <http://www.ppchero.com/heroview-ppc-for-smbs/>
121. Use bullet points on your landing pages to convey your most important points.

122. Test long-form versus short-form lead collectors. Sometimes having less required fields result in poorer quality leads and are worth the lower conversion rates they tend to have.

123. Use the In-Page Analytics report in Google Analytics to determine where users click on once in your site. This will tell you if they are going where you want them to, or if you're distracting people from your desired conversion path.

124. Make sure you are accurately tracking Bing visitors and conversions in Analytics. <http://www.ppchero.com/the-secret-of-tracking-yahoo-keyword-data-in-google-analytics/>

125. Create a worksheet that [projects your account performance](#) so you can better optimize for future performance.

126. Test a landing page with video against a landing page with no video. Some verticals find that video can increase conversion rates, while others find it sends their bounce rates soaring.

127. Make sure to include singular and plural versions of your keywords.

128. Use [Dynamic Keyword Insertion](#) in your ad headlines.

129. Take a look at the [Intelligence Events](#) report in Google Analytics. It provides automatically triggered alerts for when key performance indicators see drastic changes.

130. Trade accounts with someone for a week, or a month. Often, a new set of eyes on an account can spot opportunities that you're not seeing.

131. In your ads, test different variations of call-to-actions in description line two. Such as, Call Today Vs. Call Now.

132. Use authentic images for your hero shots. The Internet has made stock photos cheap and easily identifiable. If you're going to hand your web presence on a hero shot, use an authentic, original image.

133. Calculate your ideal CPC by taking dividing your total lead goal by your average conversion rate and then dividing that number (which will be the total clicks needed) by your budget. (50 leads / .03 conversion rate = 1,666 clicks. \$10,000 budget / 1,666 clicks = \$6 per click.) Now optimize your account with this target CPC in mind.

134. Finish your tests by making a conclusion and then reverting to the original settings if things didn't work out, and systematically making the changes permanent

if they did work out. <http://www.ppchero.com/the-single-biggest-mistake-you-can-make-in-ppc/>

135. Report to your clients/boss the percent of clicks and conversions they are getting from mobile devices, and then compare it to what they are paying for those clicks and conversions. That may make the case for mobile without further discussion needed.

136. Spend more time in Bing. It's impression share is growing, and they are working diligently to increase volume and quality of clicks.

137. Refine your unique selling proposition. Having a strong value proposition differentiates you from your competition and makes your keywords, ads, and landing pages feel more cohesive.

138. Follow best SEO practices for your site. The line between PPC and SEO is narrowing. <http://mashable.com/2011/11/08/seo-best-practices/>

139. Don't just measure leads or sales. Track other events that help you gauge interest and effectiveness of your different pages.

140. If you use a paid analytics tools, such as Omniture, use Google Analytics too. If you ever decide to leave Ominture you'll lose your historical data unless you have another analytics program collecting it too.

141. Write in short sentences. And brief paragraphs. It's easier to read.

142. Test dollar versus percentage discounts when running sales.

143. Create different [landing pages](#) for each campaign you have in Google or Bing. Optimize the messaging to insure it is relevant to the keywords you are bidding on, and fulfills the intent behind the search.

144. Build better ad groups for the Display Network with the [contextual targeting tool](#).

145. The last tip is to be brave! There will be tests that lower performance. The important thing is to keep testing, learn from the results, and incrementally push your accounts forward.