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Adthena
competitive intelligence for search

Epic PPC Fails and how to Avoid Them

A close-up photograph of a desk with a notebook, keyboard, and glass. The notebook page shows the letters 'PPC' written in a thick, hand-drawn, textured style with black marker. Below the letters, the words 'pay per click' are written in a cursive script, and 'click = \$' is written and underlined in blue ink. A blue pen is visible at the bottom right of the page.

PPC

pay per click

click = \$

Epic PPC Fails and how to Avoid Them

Although PPC and search marketing are both vital to a company's success, it's amazing to see the massive mistakes some brands still make today.

Building a successful PPC presence can seem like a mammoth task, and although AdWords' addition of tools like upgraded URLs has made it a little easier to manage campaigns, mistakes do still happen. And although many seem like small splashes in a much larger ocean (especially if you have a big budget), these accidents can have a significant impact on your company's reputation and ROI.

We're going to take a look at some of the silliest sponsored search errors of the last few years, and offer some advice about how to avoid them.

Dynamic Keyword Insertion

eBay quit using Google AdWords for its advertising a couple of years ago, after it came to light that the company was going a little overboard with dynamic keyword insertion. Thanks to a poorly-managed AdWords strategy, eBay was advertising things like babies, wives, and loneliness, just to name a few.



At first, these ads would appear to be pretty funny, but for those consumers who didn't realise this was an error made by lazy marketers and an automated ad platform, they seemed offensive, meaning the exact people eBay was targeting lost trust in the brand.

Although eBay has recently jumped back on the PPC train, it has adapted its strategy to ensure its marketing is relevant, not laughable. By limiting dynamic keyword insertion, it's also limited the risk of damage to the brand.

However, other companies are still making the same mistakes, including House of Fraser, which is advertising "love." When you click on the ad, it's not even redirected to a relevant page, instead taking the customer through to a page that says no items are available in the collection.



That said, just because these companies have made the mistake of letting a machine run their sponsored search campaign doesn't

mean you should completely avoid using dynamic keyword insertion. It can actually be an effective way of creating ads covering the whole range of products you offer.

However, to avoid these potentially embarrassing types of errors, companies should make sure that they are using negative keywords and choosing the right pages to be used for this sort of campaign and not just the whole domain. Luckily, finding the most effective keywords to bid on is a simple task when you're using market driven competitive intelligence for search. Adthena's solution is the only one that allows marketers to identify the keywords outside of their hit list, taking the whole market sector into account.

Spelling/Grammar Errors

If you're using dynamic keyword insertion, another issue you're likely to come across is the appearance of grammatical errors, created when a keyword is inserted into the copy, but doesn't fit into the context of the sentence.

Amazon offers a great example of a company that doesn't think about how a sentence will be structured before publishing its ads. Granted, the company sells so many products that will auto-

Shelf Unit Wall at Amazon

www.amazon.co.uk/shelf+unit+wall ▼

Low Prices on Shelf Unit Wall.

Free UK Delivery on Eligible Orders

matically be picked up if dynamic keyword insertion is applied, it's probably tricky to keep tabs on all of its ad copy. However, when something just doesn't make sense, the likelihood of someone clicking on the ad will decrease, meaning you're giving your clicks away to a competitor instantly.

Cake Decoating at Amazon

www.amazon.co.uk/cake+decoating ▼

Low Prices on Cake Decoating.

Free UK Delivery on Eligible Orders

Once again, it's a great example of a company not using negative keywords to filter out the incorrectly spelt keywords and then applying dynamic keyword insertion on them.

Negative Keywords

We've given some examples above of how negative keywords are an essential part of any AdWords campaign, allowing you to omit any words that may render your search query irrelevant to your business.

However, it would seem that some companies have decided not to set up their negative keywords and, as a result, they are serving ads advertising products and services they don't actually offer.

Breast Cancer Checks

www.currentcatalog.com/ ▼

Great Low Prices on 1st Orders & Reorders. Over 100 Check Designs!

check their breasts for signs of cancer.

For example, this company is displaying an ad for breast cancer checks when actually, it's a printing company that offers things like cards and also, personalised cheques (or checks as they're called in the US). Not only is this incorrect, but it could be viewed as insensitive by those genuinely looking for information about how to

Additionally, search for 'windows installation pc' and you'll find loads of ads advertising to fit windows in your house, rather than installing Windows on your PC. If these advertisers correctly set up their negative keyword groups, they could exclude any search string with 'PC' in it and therefore, present relevant search results to users. As it is, someone looking for help installing Windows on their PC will be somewhat disappointed with the results thrown up by these disorganised window and door fitters.

If a potential customer clicks through on your ad to find you don't actually offer what you're advertising, your bounce rate will rise and conversions may decrease, which isn't helpful for anyone and is, quite frankly, a waste of ad spend.

Safestyle - Windows - 55% Off All Windows

Ad www.safestyle-windows.co.uk/ ▼

4.5 ★★★★★ rating for safestyle-windows.co.uk

Our Prices Won't be Beaten.

UK's Number 1 Installer · Buy Now & Pay Later · 10 Year Product Guarantee

730,000 Happy Customers - Like-for-Like Price Match

Massive Sale On Windows - new-window-offers.co.uk

Ad www.new-window-offers.co.uk/ ▼

Up to £3,000 Off New Windows + An Extra £500 Off Online Bookings

47.5% Off Anglian Windows - AnglianHome.co.uk

Ad www.anglianhome.co.uk/Windows ▼

Bespoke and Stunningly Affordable. Hurry! Book An Appointment Today.

Same Copy, Different Keywords

Lazy ad copy is a big no-no in paid search marketing, and using the same ad copy for all your sponsored listings should be outlawed.

Tailored ad copy offers the best way to get clicks and conversions, boosting your ROI and generally making a much bigger impact than if you were using the same ad copy for every keyword you're targeting.

You should always add context to your ad copy, and changing your wording for specific ads will allow you to do exactly that. If one of your ads is marketing an all-inclusive holiday, for example, add something individual to your copy - such as the perks your customers are getting - to make them want to click through. For family self-catering deals, change the copy again to appeal to those looking for the best deals for kids, or for entertainment on their break.

Always consider who you're targeting and why they would want to click your ad, rather than those of your competitors.

Feeling uninspired? Adthena's competitive intelligence for search pits your ad copy against that of your competitors head-to-head, so you can see what messaging gets the most clicks and get some ideas about how to improve your copy.

Add Your Keywords Here

Add your keywords here

www.resortsandlodges.com/ ▼

Official Site: Breck Resorts for Families, Couples, Spa, Ski, Luxury

Add your keywords here

www.ntheo.net/earrings ▼

Custom hand-made earrings.

Your dream is our design.

While we're on the subject of lazy ad management, do you notice something a little off about these two ads? The brands have obviously forgotten to change the auto prompt in their ad setup, meaning that they're not only targeting the string "add your keywords here", but they have also set the ad to auto-fill the headline based on the keyword, resulting in a rather silly ad that is unlikely to get any clicks (except from marketers like us looking to make an example of lazy brands, of course).

Although this could be a simple oversight - since the prompt text sometimes fails to disappear when you start typing your keywords into the box - checking your targeted keywords is an essential aspect of successful PPC management.

Competitive intelligence for search doesn't only have its uses for checking how your campaigns fare against your competitors - it can also help to pick up anomalies just like this one.

Adthena's competitive intelligence for search makes it much quicker and easier to browse through the keywords you're targeting, meaning that you're less likely to miss any of these silly mistakes. It's unlikely that "add your keywords here" will have gained any clicks, but there may be some other, subtler errors you've made along the way that need to be rectified.

How to Ensure You Never Make These Mistakes

The common theme throughout these mistakes is a lack of attention - it's vitally important that you monitor your campaigns at all times, to ensure you don't make the same silly mistakes as these big name brands.

Using market-driven competitive intelligence for search can boost your visibility and help you keep tabs on your ad copy, as well as that of your competitors. It will help you see both where you're going wrong and what your competitors are doing right, helping you to quickly rectify the situation and make your campaigns the strongest they can possibly be.

The mistakes above may have made consumers and the industry laugh at the companies in question, but it also may have had a big impact on their reputation or resulted in wasted spend. To executives, reputation and ROI gained or lost from your PPC campaigns is no joke, so it's important to keep track of what you're serving to customers before it's too late.

We all make mistakes, but the key is to learn from them, have the right tools in place, and have a trustworthy data source to stop them happening so frequently. Adthena is exactly that source.

AdThena Report:

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About Adthena

Adthena is the only market-driven Search Intelligence service that enables digital marketers to understand their search landscape as a whole by dynamically monitoring all relevant competitors and keywords, rather than relying on client-provided inputs; thus allowing them to protect market share and identify new customer acquisition opportunities through their search activities.

Our market-driven approach provides more actionable data at our clients' fingertips, whilst our team of competitive intelligence experts supports them by helping to analyse the results and derive meaningful insights for enhancing campaign performance and driving customer acquisition!

"We consider Adthena a key part of our search marketing toolbox."
Angus Wood, Head of Earned Media, iProspect

Want to know more? We'd love to hear from you.

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