

Using Google Ads to Drive More Local Foot Traffic

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With the expansion of the number of digital ads, the increase in Google profits, and the advertising landscape only becoming more competitive, it can be surprising to learn that five retail stores are opening for every one that closes [IHL Group, 2018]. It would seem that as e-commerce continues to boom, so does the need for consumers to visit stores for a variety of reasons:

- > Physically inspecting a product
- > Understanding sizing, fit and feel
- > Communicating face-to-face with an industry expert
- > Delivery and return logistics

It can be near impossible to compete with Amazon, Zappos, and the actual brands that retailers carry in a paid campaign due to budget alone. That being said, local retailers can win in driving local, high intent traffic into your store through a well-thought-out Google Search Ads campaign. Not only can this strategy increase brand awareness in your area, it can increase customer lifetime value as well. Some basics to keep in mind when building out a Google Search Ad campaign: include what keywords you're willing to bid on, negative keywords (or keywords to be excluded), your budget, the maximum you're willing to bid (per click), what you consider a conversion (and what that conversion is worth to you), landing pages being used, and compelling and on-brand ad copy.

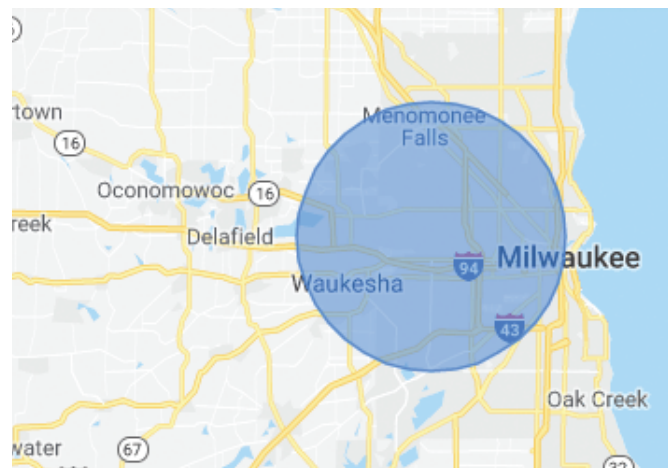
It can be near impossible to compete with Amazon, Zappos, and the actual brands that retailers carry in a paid campaign due to budget alone. Still, local retailers can win in driving local, high intent traffic through a well-thought-out Google Search Ads campaign – and this strategy can increase both brand awareness in your area, and customer lifetime value as well.

Google Ads understands that not everyone can compete with e-commerce giants, and they've introduced a few fea-

tures to be aware of as you set up your campaigns to offer a more level playing field and increase return on investment.

1. Geo Targeting

Using Geo Targeting around your city is a smart, effective and cost-efficient way to ensure your ads are only shown to potential customers who are near your business. The recommended radius depends on your city – highly populated metropolitan areas will want to use a tight radius because competition is high and travel is more difficult. If you're in a less populated, more suburban or rural area, you could expand your geo targeting to 15-20 miles around your physical location, as people will be more willing to travel to get to your store.

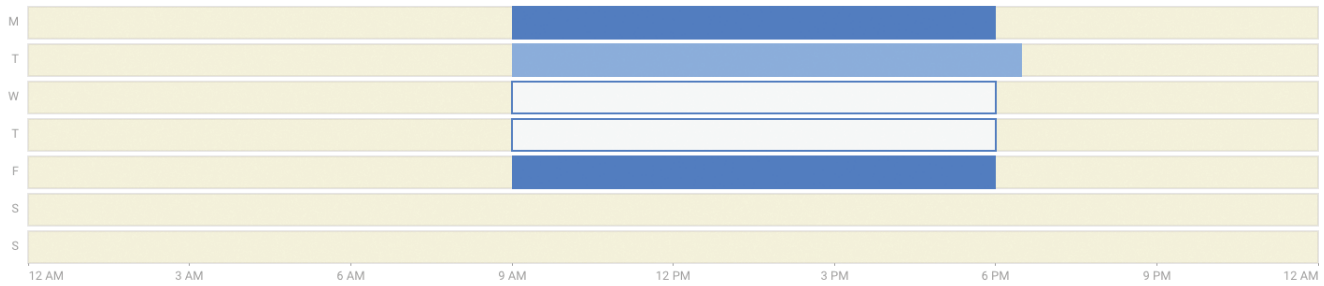


Geo targeting allows businesses to make sure their ads are shown only to nearby potential customers.

2. Ad Schedules

If the primary goal is to drive foot traffic, it makes sense that the majority of your budget should be spent during business hours. Using Ad Scheduling to turn off ads when your business isn't open will maximize your allocated spend and yield the best results.

Instead of scheduling for your business hours, schedule your ads to run 15-30 minutes before you open and to end 30 minutes-one hour before you close. That way, people who are looking to shop early in the morning will be able to find your location, and people searching for a store 2 minutes before



Google Ads, visible by searchers, allow advertisers to set the times for each day of the week that their ads run.

closing time won't see your ads.

3. Extensions

One underutilized function in Google Ads is the Ad Extension addition. Google doesn't make this function easy to use, but it can have dramatic effects on your ad campaign if you can properly add certain extensions.

a. Location Extensions

For any local campaign, adding a location extension is vital. This involves connecting your Google My Business (GMB) account – your homepage on Google – to your ad account. By connecting a location extension to your Google Ads account, your GMB profile is able to show in Local Map Packs, which promotes phone calls, directions to your store, location details, and reviews, as well as allowing you to start tracking store visits.

By tracking store visits, you can get a real idea of how many customers your ads are drawing into your physical location.

4. Chat Features

a. Message Extensions

The added benefit about using proper location targeting and ad scheduling is enabling messaging extensions. A messaging extension will allow potential customers to communicate with you through the Google Search Engine Result Page, eliminating the friction of going to a website or having to find directions.

b. On-Site Chat Bots

On-Site Chat Bots are a smart alternative, or addition, to message extensions, allowing potential customers to communicate with your staff – or AI – to answer questions that may be a barrier to visiting your location.

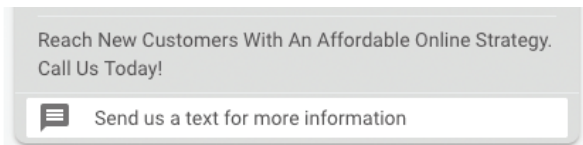
While competing with retail giants, original brands and other global e-commerce businesses can seem daunting, it can be done effectively on a local level with a fairly modest budget. Even \$500 per month can generate 200+ clicks to

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Store visits	Store visits	Other	No recent conversations	Every	30	No	–	23.00	23.00
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A business's Google My Business account allows users to track, from their Google ads, how many people are visiting their stores.

b. Promotion Extensions

While local competition doesn't stack up to Amazon or Zappos, it's still important to differentiate yourself from potential competition. Using promotion extensions when you have local deals is a great, efficient way to catch a person's attention and differentiate your ad from organic results. According to SparkToro, only 4.22% of people click on ad results as of September 2019 data, so advertisers need to use whatever is available to them to increase click-through rate whenever possible.



Adding Calls to Action within an ad allows searchers to click -- and either call the store's phone number or text and submit information.

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your website for high-intent, local keywords (i.e. "shoe stores near me") as long as the time is taken to properly set up your ad account. The first step is identifying your target audience, defining what makes your business unique, and using those insights to set up an effective ad campaign. ■

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