Choosing Appropriate Keywords & Match Types

Choosing the right keywords and match types is vitally important in AdWords - go too broad and you'll squander budget on irrelevant traffic, go too narrow and you won't see any volume. This guide will help you hit the sweet spot in the middle.

Understand Match Types

Every keyword in AdWords has a match type that you can set. The match type determines how the engine matches the keyword with the search queries that users are actually typing in.

For example, broad match gives Google a license to match your keyword to related terms that may or may not contain the actual words in your keyword. This can be helpful, but needs close monitoring to see what it's pulling in. At the other end of the spectrum, exact match keywords will only pull in searches of the exact keyword.

Research Keywords

Researching keywords for AdWords is similar in a lot of ways to researching keywords for your other inbound marketing efforts. Start building a list by looking at –

- **Your organic search traffic.** In HubSpot, go to analyze > sources > filter down to see organic search. Look through the list and find relevant keywords that drive traffic and leads – these are excellent prospects for AdWords.
- **Keyword grader.** In HubSpot, go to optimize > keyword grader. Look through the existing list of keywords you see here for highly relevant keywords that see some monthly searches.

- **The keyword suggest tool.** Don't have a lot of keywords in your keyword grader, or want to broaden your list? Try the keyword suggest tool in the upper right corner.

When choosing keywords, keep in mind that your keywords should be broad enough so as not to eliminate the natural variations users search with, but specific enough to keep searches on topic.

See Search Terms (Search Query Report)

As was mentioned above, it's easy to accidentally pull in irrelevant searches when you are using broad, modified broad, and phrase match keywords in your account. Luckily, there are a couple of different ways that you can see what those searches are…

- In AdWords, open up the date range to view a sufficient period of time. Then, click the campaigns tab > click "all online campaigns" > click the keywords subtab > click the "see search terms" button below the graph.
- Sort the list by cost to see the highest costing terms at the top. Are they relevant? Are they driving new leads and conversions? If not, consider adding these terms as negative keywords using the process below.

Refining Using Negative Keywords

Once you know which words drive clicks but aren't relevant to your business, consider adding them as negative keywords. Negative keywords block your ads from showing for searches containing certain words or certain combinations of words, which is especially helpful when you are using broad match.

Example Scenario
- You are a reseller of antivirus software for Apple computers.
- You bid on the keyword "apple virus" on broad match.
- "apple virus" on broad match draws in clicks from users searching "apple tree diseases" – clearly not what you were hoping for.
- In this case, adding "diseases" as a negative phrase match keyword would block out any searches containing "diseases", which is more often used in references to diseases of the fruit rather than viruses in Apple computers.

Adding Negative Keywords
- Click on a campaign name > click the keywords subtab > scroll to the bottom of the list, and expand the negative keywords list.
- Here, you can add negative keywords of any match type to your ad group or campaign.
- Match types matter here too - broad match blocks some variations of a keyword, phrase match eliminates any searches containing the phrase, and exact match prevents an exact phrase from showing your ads.

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