

HOW TO HIRE A PPC PRO

What You Need to Know to Hire an Awesome PPC Manager



HABIT 1:
Regular Account Activity

Introduction: Avoid the Posers.

Hiring a paid search manager is easy. Hiring a great paid search manager is not. The unfortunate thing about paid search is that it's one of the easiest skills to fake. Making a campaign look good on paper could simply mean opting into [Google's Display Network](#) and showing an Excel chart with increasing leads at a decreasing price, without ever taking the quality of said leads into account. But the paid search managers who truly stand out are the ones who aren't ordinary. They don't focus on an industry standard click-through rate (CTR) or a generic cost-per-lead (CPL) goal. They don't get bogged down by a typical keyword list, simply testing [dynamic keyword insertion](#) (DKI) ads vs. non DKI ads, or updating bids so that the change history report looks active. Nope. The best paid search manager in the world is the one who genuinely cares.

So how do you go about hiring one of these much more desirable paid search managers? What questions should you ask during the interview process? Almost anyone can come to an interview and talk about all the trending and historic [paid search strategies](#), but if they are feeding you pure BS that you can't recognize, then you'll have wasted months of time, energy and cash as a result of their hire. Whether you're hiring a day-to-day manager or a team lead, there are 5 critical things to look for that will help you during your hiring process. Certainly there are additional qualities to be mindful of, but a few key characteristics have risen to the surface time and time again. Let's discuss them.

5 Qualities to Look for in a PPC Manager.

1 *Passion.*

Passion about what? This person should be passionate about paid search, their career, and your company. They should care that bid prices increase during certain holiday seasons, they should present flawless work that is a direct reflection on their ability, and they should always be interested in how to grow the bottom line (never complacent).

Questions to Ask:

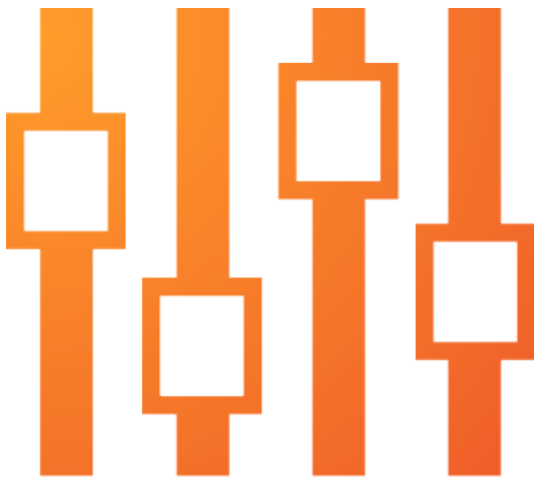
- What frustrates you during a year of paid search management?
- How would you expect your boss to describe you as a paid search manager, and what lengths do you go to ensure your expectations are met?
- Describe examples of how you've grown campaigns historically, and explain which strategies you would plan to employ here?

What to Look for in Their Responses:

- How mundane are the frustrations?
- How high of a standard is this person willing to be held to?
- Do those types of growth strategies work?

2 *Work Ethic.*

Paid search isn't easy. It requires countless hours in an Excel spreadsheet, regular tweaks to a bid management platform, frequently appending URLs, trafficking, updating bids, etc. Search management also tends to be monotonous. Once your company figures out which methodologies work best, it becomes a game of repeating and scaling.



Therefore, you need to ensure that your paid search manager understands that although the tasks may be repetitive, simply going through the motions won't cut it. Every time an optimization is performed, it needs to be done thoroughly with attention paid to every detail. After all, finding

success in paid search is like tectonic plates shifting; the tiniest crack can lead to new masses of opportunity or failure.

Questions to Ask:

- How have you optimized campaigns in the past?
- What strategies have you found to be successful for PPC?
- What part of the PPC management process do you like? Why?
- What have you discovered while managing PPC campaigns that has helped you optimize other campaigns?

What to Look for in Their Responses:

- Do they have a clear understanding of how to optimize a campaign?
- Will these strategies succeed in your industry/business?
- They better like all of it, especially the attention to detail!
- Did they actually discover something useful?

3 *Creativity.*

While your paid search manager needs to be an expert on all the latest trends and nuances within search, this person also needs to be creative. The vast majority of paid search campaigns are way too similar, and generic keyword lists and straightforward ad copy pollute Google's real estate day in and day out. A great manager will find new, innovative ways to write ad copy, test keywords with no little to no competition, and come up with new campaign concepts that aren't already in the mainstream.



Questions to ask:



- Google AdWords trainings teach you how to best manage AdWords, not necessarily how to best manage paid search. Tell me the things you choose not to focus on within AdWords in order to ensure you're managing paid search as best you can, not just managing AdWords.
- How do you write ad copy? What steps do you take to prevent your paid search accounts from becoming stagnant? Explain a time when an account you were managing had stagnated and what you did to revive the account and test new things.

What to Look for in Their Responses:

- Make sure it's clear that the manager does what's best for the account, and not what Google always suggests (Google is incentivized to get advertisers to spend more).
- Conduct a mock ad copy writing session: have the candidate write an ad on the spot, and watch the ideation process. Do you see a creative thought process that includes a benefit, offer, and call-to-action within the copy?

4 *Data-Driven.*

This is an obvious one, but if your manager is going to be hanging out in Excel all day, they better know what to do and what to look for. Just because an interviewee has 5+ years' experience doesn't mean they know how a pivot table or VLOOKUP works. Give them a quick test. Performing analysis is perhaps the most important aspect of paid search management, so it's imperative that your manager optimizes and analyzes effectively. Everyone who does PPC has learned it differently, so it's essential to understand how your potential manager learned PPC and how they apply those learnings to their current management style.

Questions to ask:

- How did you learn paid search, and what, if any of those principles, do you still apply in your search management tactics today?
- What things do you look for when optimizing a paid search account? How do you analyze the data?

What to Look for in Their Responses:

- Pivot tables and VLOOKUPS should be second nature to them.
- Who the candidate learned search from can often be the genesis of their inspiration and passion.
- In listening to the candidate discuss [analysis and optimization](#), see how in depth they go and what their process is. How often do they optimize? How? What do they look for? How do they know how

much to bid up or down, or when to pause keywords or ad copy? Do they look at time of day, day of week, seasonality? Do they consider pre-click vs. post-click? Make sure the candidate has an arsenal of data points that they consider when performing analysis and that they are the right things to be evaluating.

5 *Ability to Connect the Dots.*

99 times out of 100, paid search is a component of a business' overall marketing strategy. It may complement traditional media or display advertising. Paid search is also the first step of a sales

cycle or lead generation campaign that has additional steps after the "conversion." The success of a campaign depends on many factors, but one that is critical for a manager to consider is both the pre- (before a searcher clicks on your ad) and post-click (what happens after a searcher clicks on your ad) experience.

Make sure your candidate understands the components of both sides and how they must work together in harmony. For example, if the copy of a paid search ad offers red shoes for \$30 and the landing page the searcher is sent to offers green shoes for \$40, then the pre-click and post-click experience is definitely not consistent.



Questions to Ask:

- How do you run your search campaigns in conjunction with other digital channels such as display and mobile as well as traditional advertising?
- How often do you talk to your sales team or call center, and what types of things do you discuss?
- What is the ideal relationship between the pre- and post-click experience of a user? What types of things should a user see within the pre-click experience vs. the post-click experience?

What to Look for in Their Responses:

- It's encouraging to find search managers who at least understand that paid search isn't the only answer. Make sure your candidate conceptualizes the entire marketing mix and the role that paid search plays as a component to the overall strategy.
- Working with your sales department is a must these days. You can learn which types of questions your potential customers are asking, as well as understand the researching process they go through so you can ensure their experience is consistent from start to finish. If your manager isn't thinking about the entire customer experience, they're not thinking "big" enough.

- Finally, a manager that understands the pre- and post-click relationship is something to watch for. This shows a holistic way of thinking and illuminates a “team player” attitude in the sense that they understand that pre-click paid search is only the beginning.

Conclusion.

So there it is, the 5 qualities to look for when hiring a paid search manager. It's a difficult process, but remember that making the wrong hire will cost you time, money,



and frustration. The negative impact on an AdWords account, a sales team, or your executive management team can take months -- if not years -- to fix, and sometimes perceptions can never be changed. The person managing your account is going to be responsible for your brand name in the spotlight of Google paid search, so make sure you're comfortable handing over the reins.

If in the end, you've gone through all of these questions and are still stumped as to whether or not to make the hire, there is one final question you can ask yourself: “Would you ever want to go out for a beer with this person after work?”

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