

INDUSTRY
Non-profit

SOLUTION
Growth Services

PRODUCTS
SEO, SEM

CLIENT STORY

Non-branded keywords and clusters reduced search costs and generated more sales.

American Management Association Makes the Most of Its Keyword Long-tail Trail

Roman Godzich, director of eMarketing at the American Management Association (AMA), knew that search marketing was a crucial piece of his team's marketing strategy for training seminars. But it wasn't an impulse buy. Customers typically had to get their supervisor's approval, which meant a longer research process often involving multiple searches and comparison of options. Yet Godzich's team recorded most of its search-generated conversions from branded keywords or direct navigation.

"We started to realize that the conversation we have with customers [before purchase] becomes more and more important," says Godzich.

The team wanted to understand which non-branded keywords played a role in the research and education process, and how those search terms drove the eventual, branded searches that led to sales. It undertook a methodical testing and measurement process to determine which generic search terms played the biggest role in driving branded search and ultimately, conversions. Once it could attribute more conversions to non-branded search terms, the team adjusted its Pay Per Click advertising budget to favor terms that delivered the best return. Here are the five steps of the initiative:

Step 1. Implement technology to track visitors from entry search to conversion.

Step 2. Establish groups of non-branded keywords to test.

Step 3. Track search activity to determine which keyword groups assisted conversions.

Step 4. Adjust keyword bids according to assist value.

Step 5. Track impact of bidding strategy changes.

Proper conversion attribution and keyword optimization delivered significant improvements. Cost-per-acquisition for non-branded search terms decreased 25.6 percent, and sales from non-branded search terms increased 15.2 percent.

"We're happy in two ways: We not only increased sales, we also reduced costs," says Godzich. "During a recessionary period, that's a gift."

The data helped the team identify and remove some 20,000 non-performing non-branded terms. Although it did not have to significantly increase bids on the strongest performers -- non-branded budgets increased from 70 percent to 75 percent -- the ability to weigh that spending toward the highest-performing clusters delivered the gains the AMA was seeking.

RESULTS

Cost-per-acquisition for non-branded search terms
decreased 25.6%

Sales from non-branded search terms
increased 15.2%

The team scrubbed 20,000 non-performing, non-branded terms from its original list of 50,000,
increasing the value of its search budget.

*Note: This case study was originally published by MarketingSherpa at <http://www.marketingsherpa.com/article/case-study/5-steps-tooptimize-bids#>