

Process Outline

Using Google PPC to Research SEO Keyword Strategy

Knowing what phrases to optimise your website for



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Introduction

It's all very well wanting to be No. 1 in Google, but it's key to know for which phrases you should be top for. Compare the following real live numbers for one calendar month :-

| Search Phrase | Searches |
|---------------------------|----------|
| solicitor bristol | 2,400 |
| divorce solicitor bristol | 73 |

We have developed the following strategy to using Google PPC to research which keywords a law firm's website should be optimised for.

Note that this strategy is aimed at firms interested in acquiring work from clients within a specific geography local to where their offices are based. We have concentrated on this "local approach" as the majority of our clients are sourcing work locally. Yes, some firms are on insurance/mortgage company panels, but this work is "fed" to them, not "sourced" locally. Most clients, when asked, acknowledge that the majority of clients they source themselves are within a defined local geography.

There are always exceptions to these rules, and if you fall into that category then this might not be an effective strategy for you.

This strategy has been refined over the last three months and has proved to be a robust tool to evaluate which phrases are searched on the most by potential clients.

Why do we like this approach? The key thing is that it's practical, but also it's cost effective. In our case it's particularly quick to set up, as we have tools to help us speed up the setup of this structure.

For our clients it is cost effective as the money they are spending on the "test" (i.e. the ad budget) only gets spent if people click on their ads. If they do click on their ads then they get a real benefit in the form of clicks through to their website.

Google do not release the search volumes on particular keywords so we have found in the past that doing traditional "search engine audits" are really not appropriate for most law firms. Our new approach gives fast results that appear (from our experience) to be robust and valid.

The Strategy in Detail

The strategy we have developed calls for the creation of a very specific structure of AdWords Campaigns and AdGroups. This section outlines the approach in enough detail that you can just sign up an AdWords account and do-it-yourself if you choose.

The first step is to set up two campaigns called :-

- Solicitor + Location
- Services + Location

Under each campaign create an AdGroup for each of your "locations" (i.e. towns and counties), for example:-

- Reading
- Maidenhead

- Windsor
- Berkshire

This list can be as extensive as you wish.

So far you will have two campaigns, each with four AdGroups each.

1.1 Solicitor + Location

In each "Solicitor + Location" AdGroup you will add the combination of the following phrases, plus the location name (e.g. for the Reading AdGroup):

- law firm reading
- solicitor reading
- lawyer reading

In our experience these are the three most common expressions search engine users use, to describe a law firm. You repeat this same pattern for each of the four AdGroups under the "Solicitor + Location" campaign.

1.2 Services + Location

For each " Services + Location" AdGroup you will add the combination of all the different services you offer plus the word solicitor, plus the location, e.g. :-

- divorce solicitor reading
- conveyancing solicitor reading

This list should be quite extensive - you should have at least 30-40 phrases here depending on your style of firm (i.e. whether you deliver consumer and business services).

In our experience, there is no need to repeat these phrases using the words "law firm" or "lawyer". Our results show that these are not words that users enter when searching, but feel free to try and see if you get a different result.

Timeframe

We recommend a short time frame for this test. The key is to ensure that the timeframe you use gives statistically valid results.

We typically find that running the ads for a two week period will give some robust data. Some clients actually find that they like the results of the test (i.e. more traffic to their website and more enquiries and keep the ads running).

Budget & Cost Per Click

This is where it's hard to give generic advice in a whitepaper like this. The reason is that different geographies will require a different budget. For example executing this strategy for a firm in London is very different than for a firm in Cornwall. The bottom line is that the higher the population density in your locations, the bigger the budget you will need.

However, the ratio of the budget between the two campaigns is fairly consistent. When doing Google PPC advertising, you assign budget at the campaign level, so you can assign

different budgets to the two campaigns described above. We recommend that you assign your overall daily budget in the following proportion

| Campaign | % of Budget |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Solicitor + Location | 66-75 |
| Services + Location | 34-25 |

The Cost Per Click (CPC) rate is important as we need to make sure that the ads run as close to position one as possible. By doing this, we ensure that the ad will be shown EVERY time someone searches on the keywords we are using. By doing this we can be as sure as possible that we are counting the total number of searches available.

The key is to set a CPC rate that means that Google will want to show your ad as often as possible, as they (Google) can earn more money. This does not always work as it's a function of the CPC and the average Click Through Rate (CTR) (i.e. Google wants to maximise its income so an ad with a lower CPC but higher CTR could show higher than an ad with a higher CPC but lower CTR!) Confused? Try these numbers

| | Max CPC | Ad Impressions | CTR | Google Income |
|---------------------|---------|----------------|-----|---------------|
| Advertiser A | £1.00 | 1000 | 10% | £100.00 |
| Advertiser B | £1.50 | 1000 | 5% | £75.00 |

If this were a real case it is likely that Google will show the ad from Advertiser A more often than Advertiser B as a) Google says it is more "relevant" with more clicks and b) oh, by the way we (Google) happen to make more money!

If your ads are continually showing at position six or seven ON AVERAGE then it's hard to be sure that they were visible ALL of the time.

The Results

What you should find is that there are more searches for the Solicitor + Location ads than for the Service + Location ads.

The following table shows some actual results from a number of projects we have worked on for our clients using this strategy. We have pulled together data from three different projects to show you the degree of consistency that we have seen with this strategy.

| Search Phrase | Search Volume | % |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------|
| solicitor bromley | 469 | |
| divorce solicitor bromley | 7 | 1.5% |
| solicitor milton keynes | 512 | |
| divorce solicitor milton keynes | 42 | 8.2% |
| solicitor salisbury | 185 | |
| divorce solicitor salisbury | 3 | 1.6% |

As you can see, as soon as you add a "service" word such as divorce to the search phrase, the volume of searches drops significantly.

You should expect to see something similar, although the absolute values will be different based on your geography.

What Next?

Hopefully you have enough information here to actually give this as go, so basically you have three choices :-

- a) do-it-yourself
- b) nick our approach and give it to your existing web design agency
or our preference of course
- c) give us a call

As they used to say in Blind Date....."The decision is yours!".

Enjoy.