



# EXPERT ARTICLE

## 4 ways to make the most from your Search Engine Marketing in tough times.

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Armed with the right strategies and tactics, marketing and acquiring new customers in an economic downturn presents huge opportunities for savvy business owners and marketing managers.

Now more than ever consumers and business buyers are turning to the Internet for help in finding value and making purchasing decisions.

I've raided my Search Engine Marketing 'war chest' for the top tips to help you prosper in today's economic climate.

### Tip 1 – Know what your customers are looking for.

Who are your customers? What are they searching for online? What makes your existing customers buy from you? These are all questions that need to be answered before starting any Search Engine Marketing campaign.

A great place to start looking for answers is Google Insight for Search, a free tool that enables you determine what trends are happening with the way customers and prospects are searching for information and which message will resonate best with them.



Generally, consumers today are looking for great value. As an example, I compared 3 search terms for the mobile phone industry: “best mobile phones” vs “cheap mobile phones” vs “mobile phone deals”.

As can be seen from the data there has been an upward trend in consumers searching for “mobile phone deals”.

You can also see the areas within Australia where more consumers are more likely to be looking for deals on mobile phones with Queensland and Victoria showing the strongest trends.

You can use this information as a starting point for your keyword research and developing your keyword list.

If you already have a website and are using Google Analytics this is another great source of information and insight for how your customers are getting to your website and can be used to identify trends in which keywords they are using (and not using) to find you.

### **Tip 2 – Keep your ad copy relevant and focus on value.**

Now that we know that today’s consumers are looking for great value, and we have an idea on the type of keywords that will work best in finding your audience, we now need to ensure we get them to click on your ad and visit your website.



Keeping your ad copy contextually relevant to the keywords that triggered your ad is paramount. If people are looking for value then your ad copy needs to focus on value. Including specific offers or savings is a tactic we are seeing work very well.

Including the search term in the headline of the ad is a great tactic for increasing Click Through Rates (CTR) and will potentially help with where your ad ranks on Google’s search page by improving your Quality Score (QS).

In the example I’ve also included value terms like ‘Save 10%’ and created a sense of urgency by stating the offer is available ‘This week only’. These are all techniques for improving your CTR and getting more qualified customers to your site.

### **Tip 3 – Make your landing page relevant and easy for them to take the next step.**

Getting the right audience to click on your ad and land on your website is only half the equation. Once you have them there, it is critical you convert the vast majority into taking action.

A landing page is the first page a website visitor ‘lands on’ when clicking through from your Search Engine Marketing ads.

When arriving on your landing page, visitors spend just a few short seconds evaluating your site and scanning it for relevancy to their needs. If you can’t grab their attention and make it very clear what they need to do next in order to move through the buying process they will leave, most likely never to return again.



In our example there a few techniques I have used that will help to optimise your conversion rates.

Firstly the page heading "Best Mobile Phone Deals" matches the title of our ad and the context of the keyword that brought the user to the page.

Secondly the content on the page is actually about a mobile deal, a simple concept hey? But its amazing how many landing pages I see that don't have content that matches the keywords that the user searched for.

Thirdly we've made it very clear what the user is supposed to do next, click the BUY NOW button.

#### Tip 4 – Track your performance and allocate your budget based on results.

If you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

With the wealth of data available through Google Adwords and Google Analytics there is no excuse not have a firm grasp on which keywords and ads in your search engine marketing campaign are performing and which ones are not.

If you have a website and haven't already got Google Analytics tracking code installed, do it today. It's free and is a simple matter of pasting a few lines of code in the template of your web pages.



The next step is create 'actions' in your Google Adwords account so you can accurately track and measure which keywords are converting to sales and what your Return On Investment (ROI) at a keyword, ad group and campaign level.

In this example we have set-up an action to track a sale when a visitor purchases a mobile phone.

We also know from our sales history that an average online sale is worth \$99 so we have attributed a value of \$99 to each action.

Now the action is set-up, Google automatically generates some tracking code which you can copy and paste on the order confirmation page of your website.

Within a few hours you'll start to see data coming into your Adwords account which you can now use to determine which keywords and ad groups are performing the best and to allocate more budget to.

A recent example from Google's Top Tactics for Tough Times article demonstrates this point perfectly. By being smarter about how to allocate your marketing budget, you are able to generate exponential returns without having to spend a single cent more on advertising.



So in conclusion, while events like the GFC (global financial crisis) force us to look harder at the return on investment from our marketing, it's always a good time to be marketing smarter and acquiring new customers in the most profitable manner.