

# Top 5 Mistakes to Avoid in Search Engine Marketing

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# Intro

Maybe your business has just recently dabbled into search engine marketing (SEM) in Google AdWords, or perhaps you've been doing it for years. Either way, you know that SEM is an effective way to reach your target audience and grow your business.

That is, if it's done correctly.

The digital landscape, and SEM in particular, is becoming increasingly more competitive, which makes succeeding in SEM even more crucial. Are you setting up and optimizing campaigns to their fullest potential in Google AdWords?

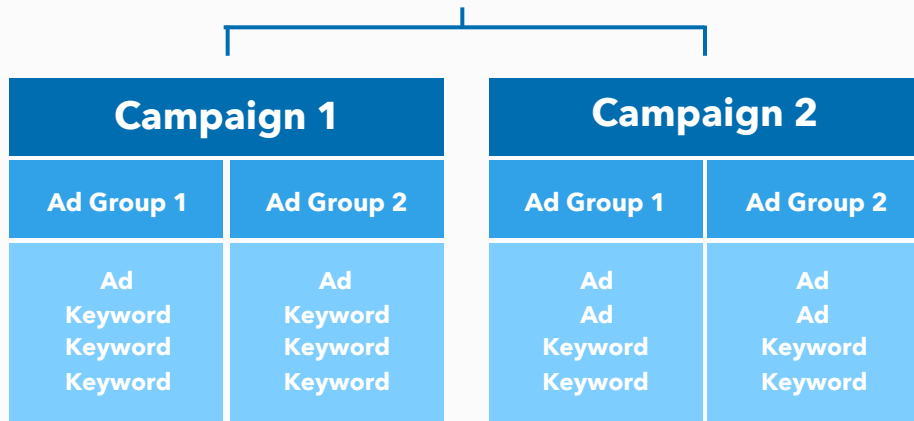
Find out by reading these five common mistakes businesses make in SEM and learn some tips on how you can avoid them.

1.

# Not structuring your account appropriately

Search ads are triggered from the keywords you select. AdWords has Campaigns and Ad Groups to organize your keywords into easy to manage groups. Campaigns are the highest level of organization, and each campaign can have many ad groups that live under it.

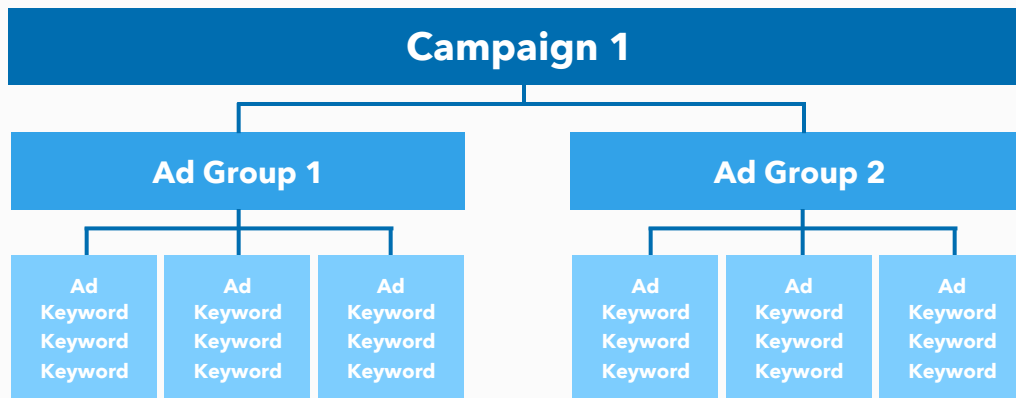
# Adwords Account



Many settings can be changed for search campaigns, but the most effective are:

- Geographic location targeting
- Day and time of day targeting and bidding
- Desktop and mobile device targeting and bidding
- Separate budgets

Besides assigning different settings and budgets for campaigns, campaigns can be used for different objectives, categories of products, or seasonal ads. For example, campaigns can be based on the sections of your website, or short one-time campaign for a new product launch.

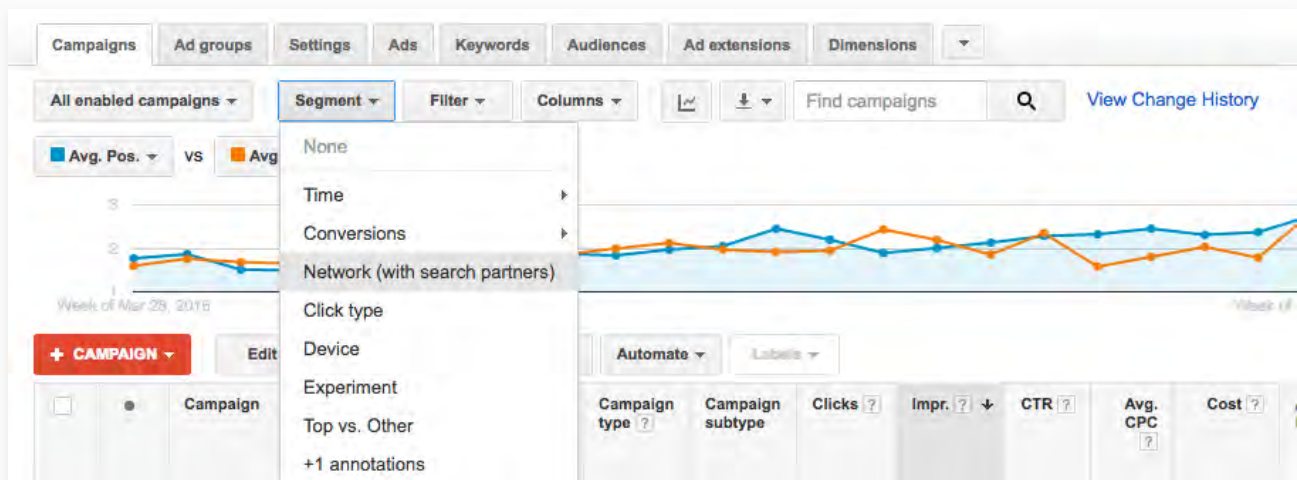


Each campaign should have multiple ad groups. Since keywords are added to ad groups, you can group similar keywords together so that the ad your audience sees is very targeted. Each ad group should only have ads that are relevant to that group of keywords. Don't make the mistake of creating one ad group that is a copy of the campaign name.

## 2.

# Overlooking default campaign settings

As mentioned in the previous mistake, settings can be adjusted per campaign to give you more control of your goals. There are some default settings that are often overlooked. You should always review these settings for every campaign.



## Network

The first setting to review is which networks will show your ads. Google search and shopping are always included, but search partners is another option. Search partners includes other Google sites like Maps and YouTube as well as other search engines. It may be worth adding these to your campaigns or excluding them if they are spending money that would be better used on Google search only. Find out how your search partners' ads have performed in the past by segmenting by 'Network'.

Choose your locations X

Search | Radius targeting | Location groups | Bulk locations

Search: cincinnati 50 mi Search

Click the blue map marker above and select a point on the map. ?

[<< Back to 50.0 mi around Cincinnati, US \(custom\)](#)

Targeted locations	Reach ?	Remove all
50.0 mi around Cincinnati, US - custom	--	Remove   Nearby
25.0 mi around Cincinnati, US - custom	--	Remove   Nearby

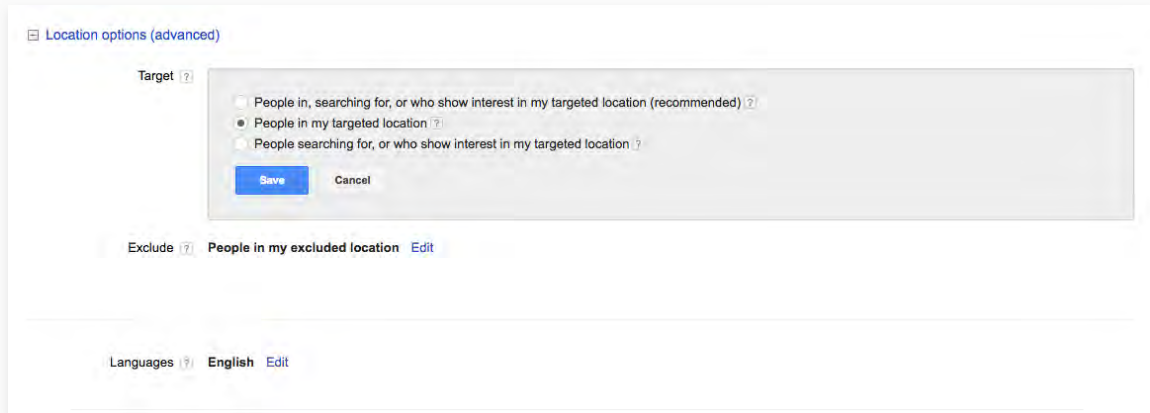
[Hide locations on map ?](#)

Done Cancel

## Location

Be sure to target only the geographic locations in which you want your ads to show. You can target in many ways, including city and state, or even a specific mile radius around a location. It helps to be specific with your locations because you can set bid adjustments for each location. For example, target a 25 mile radius and a 50 mile radius with a decreased bid adjustment for those further from your business.





The part that is often overlooked with locations is the advanced location option. The default option includes people who may be outside of your target location. Google determines if the user has shown interest in the locations you target and will include these users even if they aren't physically in your target location.

Depending on your campaign, this could be a problem. You may be serving your ads to users in other countries across the world. Check to see the performance of your campaign by user location in the Dimensions tab.

IP address exclusion X

**Enter the Internet Protocol (IP) addresses you want to exclude from seeing your ads.**  
Note: You may still get some impressions and clicks from excluded IP addresses if a Google Network site doesn't provide users' IP information. Keep in mind that this list will apply only to ads in this campaign.

**Enter one IP address per line.**

Format: 123.145.167.89

You can use full IP addresses or the wildcard character (\*) in place of the last 3 digits of IPv4 addresses, indicating a block of addresses, or CIDR IP address blocks.

Examples:

- 123.4.5.67
- 123.4.5.\*
- 123.4.0.0/16
- 2620:0:1003:1011:fa1e:dfff:fee6:2711
- 2620:0:1003:1011:fa1e:dfff:0:0/96

Save Cancel

## IP Exclusions

The last setting that many AdWords users overlook is the IP exclusions option. This allows you to exclude users from seeing your ads. This could be internal users of your company that are clicking ads without realizing they are costing you money or business partners and agencies.

You can also get advanced tracking that includes IP addresses and filter out competitors. This could not only save you a few bucks but also hide some of your marketing strategy from your competition.

# 3.

## Creating bad and boring advertisements

If you avoid mistake #1 and structure your campaigns with detailed ad groups, then avoiding this mistake should be a little easier. Remember, having multiple ad groups per campaign will allow you to create specific ads for each group of keywords. Follow these tips to increase your click-through rate (CTR), quality score and conversions.

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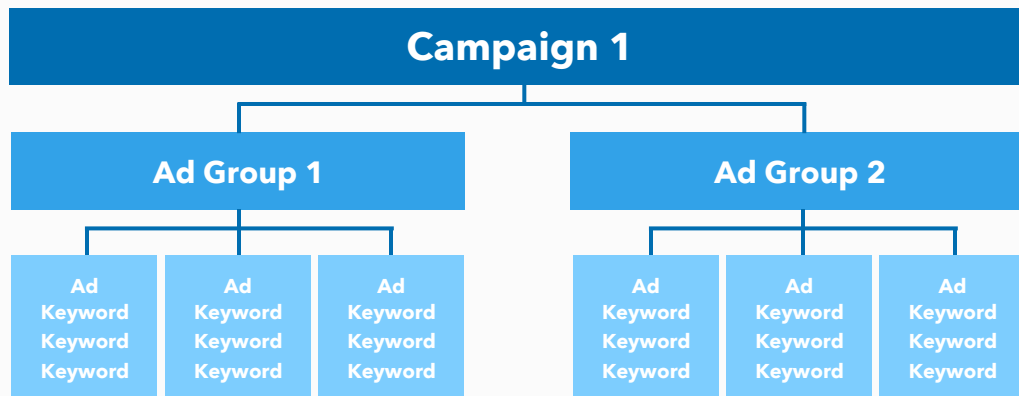
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- Tailor the copy to the audience
  - Since the keywords in each ad group are all very similar, the ads should contain the main keyword being targeted in the group.
- Use bold statements and stats rather than broad statements
  - Check your competition by searching for the keywords you want to target. You will probably find vague, broad statements about their products or services. If so, this is beneficial to you because stating specific facts or advantages will make your ad stand out from the rest. If not, you can still use their ad to create a more powerful statement about your brand.



- Test which ads perform best
  - You've created multiple ad groups in your campaign so you can create specific ads. Now you should create multiple versions of this ad. Hopefully you've come up with multiple bold statements and need to create more ads to use them all. To test an ad, you should change only a small part of the ad so you know why one ad had a higher CTR than another. If you change too many variables at once, you won't know which one had an impact. To get started, test different headlines first, then test your bold statements and stats used in the description.

# 4.

## Never adjusting bids according to results

Once again, strategically structuring your account will help with getting the most value for each click. Each ad group has its own max cost-per-click (CPC) bid or you can edit bids by individual keywords. Whether you are monitoring your performance at the ad group level or by each keyword, you should always look to optimize your bids.

Adjusting your bids is easiest if you add conversion tracking in at least one place on your site or import Google Analytics goals. This will give you metrics to monitor and gauge the success of your keyword or ad group. With conversions and values in place, you can track cost per conversion, conversion rate, and return on ad spend (ROAS). Combining these metrics with average CPC will tell you how much you can afford to pay for the keyword. You can also look at average position to see if increasing or decreasing the bid is more profitable for a specific ad group or keyword. Bidding for each keyword is unique and ever-changing due to competitors and quality scores, so a bid for one group may not produce the same results for another.

**Create rule: Change max. CPC bids**

Automated rules can save you time by operating across your account based on criteria you specify. [Learn how to create rules](#), and [see examples of popular rules](#).  
Rules aren't guaranteed to run in some cases, so we recommend regularly monitoring the rules you set up. [Learn more](#)

Apply to <sup>?</sup> All but removed keywords in this campaign ▾

Automatic action: Increase bid ▾ 10 % ▾  Max. bid <sup>?</sup> \$ 5.50

Requirements <sup>?</sup>

Impressions ▾	>= ▾	100	✕
Conversions ▾	> ▾	0	✕
Cost / conv. ▾	< ▾	\$ 35.00	✕
Avg. position ▾	worse than ▾	1.8	✕

[+ Add another](#)

Frequency <sup>?</sup> (GMT-04:00) Eastern Time: Weekly ▾ Tuesday ▾ 9 AM ▾ using data from Last 30 days ▾ <sup>?</sup>  
day of week hour  
 Note that a rule can start running at any time within the hour you select.

---

Rule name: Change max. CPC bids

Email results: Only if there are changes or errors ▾

---

Preview results: Previewing is recommended before saving

You can also automate bids for keywords using AdWords automated rules. This can be helpful if you have enough history and know what brings the best ROI for your business. Create a series of rules to increase or decrease bids based on your target metrics. Be sure to look at all possible scenarios and preview the results before saving.

If you're not quite ready to automate all bids, you can export your data to a spreadsheet and test your rules there. The AdWords Editor Tool makes it easy to import only the bid changes you want. Once you feel comfortable with the rules you've created you can implement AdWords automated rules for all your keywords.

# 5.

## **Not creating relevant ad landing pages that convert**

One mistake many search engine advertisers make starts outside of AdWords. The ad landing page is an important part of online advertising and should not be ignored. The page should clearly communicate your message and focus on completing a goal. This type of page should already live on your website, but sometimes it is best to create pages specifically for your paid visitors. Be sure that there is a clear connection between the ad and the landing page so that the user who clicked your ad has a seamless experience.



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## Available Listings

These newly constructed, renovated single family homes and condominiums are located throughout Over the Rhine. Browse by selecting a property category tab, or choose from one of our featured properties below.



**10 MERCER STREET**  
10 MERCER STREET

PRICE  
\$650,000.00

BEDROOMS  
3

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**12 MERCER STREET**  
12 MERCER STREET

PRICE  
\$589,500.00

BEDROOMS  
3

[SEE DETAILS ON THIS PROPERTY](#)

**16 MERCER STREET**  
16 MERCER STREET

PRICE  
\$615,000.00

BEDROOMS  
3

[SEE DETAILS ON THIS PROPERTY](#)

When setting up versions of ads to test, don't forget that you can also test your landing pages. Performing A/B tests for landing pages is easy because you can control which pages to send traffic to and analyze which performs best. Look at the bounce rate, pages per session, session length and goals.

# Conclusion

When done properly, SEM can be one of the most effective and cost-efficient ways to reach your audience. If you start by correcting these five mistakes, your business will be in better shape to succeed with SEM and therefore succeed in growing your business.