


POINT & CLICK



A beginner's guide to
Green Industry pay-per-click
marketing. BY **SHAUN KANARY**

ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC



In the past, advertising to consumers in the Green Industry was difficult. Limited budgets and a limited potential customer base often caused traditional advertising campaigns, such as television, magazine, billboard and direct mail, to fail. Through these traditional advertising channels, your message gets broadcast to many consumers who may not want, need or even qualify to purchase your services.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could advertise our Green Industry services to only those consumers who have indicated an interest? Better yet, pay a reasonable rate for those who not only have an interest in our advertisement, but who actually want to learn more about our companies? Wait no longer, because this form of advertising does exist. It's called pay-per-click (PPC) advertising. »

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PAY-PER-CLICK



YOU CAN TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE BY TIME, LOCATION AND SPECIFIC DEMOGRAPHICS, WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS.

PPC advantages

The concept of PPC advertising is simple. Search engines such as Google allow users to search for various products and services by matching the user's question or query to a page of results. On the results page are advertisements tied to the search queries by keywords on which advertisers bid.

Which ads appear and in what order are closely tied to the keyword the advertiser used, how relevant it is to the user's search query (referred to as quality score), and how much you as the advertiser are willing to spend for someone to click on it (referred to as maximum cost per click). These two factors multiplied by each other gives Google your Ad Rank Score. The highest "ad rank" has its ad in the first spot, followed by the next highest in order.


You as an advertiser are not charged until a user clicks on one of your ads. At that time, you are charged a specific amount of money for that click. However, you control the amount you are willing to spend on each click, as well as the amount you spend on your campaigns daily, weekly or even monthly.

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In addition to controlling how much you pay for advertising and who sees your message, PPC advertising allows you to change your messaging at any time, testing different offers and ads based on successes and failures. Furthermore, you can target your audience by time, location and specific demographics, which is impossible with traditional marketing methods.

The days of advertising your snowplowing services when it's not snowing are over. With PPC advertising, you're in control of when your ads show, and more importantly, when they don't.

Each major search engine has its own version of pay-per-click marketing and, subsequently, its own separate platform. However, Google's AdWords platform represents 70 percent of the market share, with Bing/Yahoo! (a very similar platform) making up roughly 20 percent of the market share. So for the sake of this article, we'll discuss Google AdWord's platform in depth.

Campaigns

Campaigns are the main groups of keywords that share similar main settings, such as the

location where your ads appear, times when your ads show, which types of devices your ads display on (tablets, phones, PCs, etc.) and daily budgets. These settings are unique and shared by each keyword in your campaign. Let's examine some important settings you should be aware of when setting up your campaigns:

Location. When setting the location of where your campaign's ads will appear, it's most effective to target a metro area, a service radius in miles from your location, and a custom shape on a map. Warning: A person's location is not determined by geography, but rather by where the Internet Service Provider (ISP) is located. For example, in rural areas, a consumer's ISP may be located in a major city many miles away, causing problems with your ad showing in areas you do not serve. Additionally, people often live in the suburbs but work in cities up to 30 miles away. So don't be too limited in your geographic settings; it could backfire.

Time settings. When setting times for your ads to appear for each campaign, keep in mind any times during the day that tend to produce

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PAY-PER-CLICK

weak leads. Also, thanks to the time settings, you can have campaigns that feature an “after hours” phone number and information to supplement your campaigns during regular business hours.

Daily budget. Controlling your campaigns by daily budget is another great feature of AdWords. It allows you to set an advertising budget for a specific campaign and turns off your ads when it reaches that spend. This feature is great for smaller businesses that may not have huge budgets for advertising.

Most Green Industry companies are at the mercy of the seasons. In fact, a majority of our services revolves around them. Separating your services into different campaigns allows you, as an advertiser, to have precise control over each service’s advertising reach, budget and timing. Landscape companies often use different campaigns for their snowplowing keywords (to only show during the winter), their individual locations (if they’re located in multiple cities) or if they have an after-hours call center (showing different phone numbers in ads).

Keywords

Keywords are words or phrases you choose to bid on that could be contained within or match a search query that a potential consumer uses in the search engine’s search box. When a

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Match type tips

When first developing keywords, using broad match terms will help you establish and learn which terms are successful and can be broken out even further. You may pay for some irrelevant clicks, however, you can collect some valuable data on which keywords are effective. As you develop your keywords, you can start to build more groups containing phrases and exact match keywords and begin to eliminate unprofitable broad match keywords.

Not only will using broad match cost you clicks that won’t deliver bids, it also will cost you more for each of those clicks. As we discussed earlier, your ad’s rank is determined by multiplying the amount you’re willing to pay by the quality score for the keyword. If your keyword is in broad match and gets a lot of impressions without clicks, it’ll drive your quality score down, making you bid more to keep your ad ranking high.



ILLUSTRATION: iSTOCK INTERNATIONAL, INC.

PVB LOCK BOX

PVB LOCK BOX

The **P.V.B LOCK BOX** will come in one size 24x24x12 this will fit all wall mounted Pressure Vacuum Breaker units ranging from $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " as you may have seen at the 2012 irrigation show this product is professionally built in the U.S.A. The product is powder coated hunter green, it comes with the four security bolts and lead anchors it also comes with one security key unlocking bit. This unit wholesales for \$319.99 and the manufactures suggested retail price is \$499.00. Our contractors are installing these units at \$600.00 each and the unit installs in less than 20 minutes.



CLOCK BOX

The **CLOCKBOX** will come in one size 14x17x10 this will fit most outdoor irrigation controllers, this unit will also be powder coated hunter green and come with a removable front cover for access to the unit the locking mechanism will be (2) security hex pin locking bolts and will come with two unlocking bits one for the owner and one for the irrigation or maintenance tech. This unit wholesales at \$259.99 and the MSRP is \$439.00. Our contractors installed pricing is \$539.00 and this also installs in less than 20 minutes. By installing this product this assures that no unauthorized person or persons are tampering with the irrigation controller and will also protect it from being stolen.



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GROUP KEYWORDS TOGETHER IN SMALL, TIGHTLY KNIT THEMES OR GROUPS OF WORDS THAT TRIGGER THE SAME AD TO SHOW.

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consumer searches using terms that match your keywords, it triggers the appearance of the ad associated with those keywords.

The most common types of keywords explicitly describe what you do, the services you offer (landscaping, lawn care), the product lines you offer (Unilock, Belgard, Hunter), and problems that could arise (weeds in lawn, broken sprinkler). Or, they're informational in nature, seeking answers to things such as "how to trim a tree." When developing these keywords, keep in mind terms that your customers would use to search for your products or services.

To help control when your keywords are triggered by search queries, there are rules that you as the advertiser can set up, based on how closely the keyword matches the search query:

Broad match. This setting triggers your keyword and its associated ad whenever the consumer uses a search query that's similar to your keyword. For example, if you had the broad match keyword "lawn service prices," your ad would be triggered by the search query "lawn

prices," "lawn service costs" or "lawn costs." The only problem is that Google determines which search queries are similar. This can lead to a lot of search queries triggering your ad that are not relevant to your business. For instance, using the keyword "lawn service prices" in broad match may lead to your ad being triggered for the search query "house with a lawn," "locksmith service" or "prices for shoes online." Therefore, broad match should be used sparingly. (For more on broad match, see "Match type tips" on page 56.)

Modified broad match. With modified broad match, you can tell Google which words in your keyword phrase are important and should be in the search query that triggers your ad. To use modified broad match, simply put the plus (+) sign in front of the important words. So in the example above, making the keyword a modified broad search, "+lawn +service prices" will tell Google to only show your ad to similar search queries that include the words "lawn" and "service."

Phrase match. This match type tells Google that the search query must include your keyword

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in the same order that you have it in your group. For example, the keyword “patio install” in phrase match would trigger your ad to appear for search queries such as “patio install companies,” “quick patio install,” or “patio install tips.” Your ads would not appear for the search queries, “install patio,” “installing patios” or “how to install a patio,” because it does not match the order of your keyword phrase.

Exact match. When using this match type, the search query must match your keyword phrase exactly. Using the above example again, your ads would only appear when consumers use the search query “patio install.”

AdGroups

When developing your keywords, you’ll want to group your keywords together in small, tightly knitted themes or groups of words that trigger the same ad to show. This group is known as your AdGroup. Some common AdGroup themes include product names (Belgard, Unilock, Rainbird), services (lawn care, mowing, patio installation), geography-driven keywords (lawn care Cleveland, Columbus landscaper) or even names of your competitors.

For example, let’s say you have a campaign featuring your paver installation services. If your company handles multiple lines of pavers, you’ll feature different product names in your

campaigns, such as Belgard, Unilock and Pavestone, just to name a few. To make your campaign more powerful, you’ll want to group those keywords into similar groups so you can create very specific ads that mention the product’s name. This way, when someone is searching for Belgard pavers, not only will your ad appear, but by grouping your Belgard keywords together you can create an ad that has the word “Belgard” in it.

Ads

As we learned above, when a searcher poses a question or enters specific words in the search engine box, a series of ads are shown on a search results page. These ads are tied to the searcher’s query through the keyword associated with the ad.

Text ads are the most common AdWords advertisement, consisting of a subject line of 25 characters or less, two body lines each 35 characters or less and a display URL (website address) line of 35 characters or less. The typical ad looks like this:

Stop Crabgrass Early
Keep Your Lawn Crabgrass Free!
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It's important that your ads reflect the user's search query. This cardinal rule is often broken, with advertisers using generic ad text about their company instead of copy regarding the keyword that's associated with the ad. If your ad is connected to an ad group containing keywords about a certain product or service, make sure the ad text has a variation of those keywords in the ad text. This will allow your ad to be noticed by more consumers and improve your quality score, making your ads more relevant and reducing your costs.

Let's take a look at two ads written for the same group of keywords:

AdGroup Example

Keywords: belgard, belgard patio, belgard pavers, belgard landscapers

Ad No. 1:

Jim's Landscaping
From Trees and Shrubs to
Lawns, Check Out Jim's!
www.JimsLandscaping.com

Ad No. 2:

Belgard Paver Installer
Certified Belgard Contractor.
Save 20% Off a Belgard Patio!
www.JimsLandscaping.com/Belgard

Ad No. 1 is a poorly written, generic ad that has nothing to do with the keywords for this AdGroup. With all the keywords centered around Belgard pavers, it's hard to imagine consumers feeling confident that this ad will lead them to find the answer to their search query. Ad No. 2, however, is well written, using keywords from the AdGroup in the ad copy itself. A consumer will no doubt realize this ad will lead him to an answer regarding his search query about Belgard pavers.

Finally, where your ad takes consumers on your website is just as important as the ad itself. Similar to the rules when creating an effective ad, you'll want this page on your website to talk about the keywords contained in that AdGroup and ad. Using the example ad above that talks about Belgard pavers, you should lead visitors to a page on your website that discusses that product and service. Taking visitors to your main page will irritate them and increase the chances they leave without converting into prospective customers.

Expanding your knowledge

As you can see, pay-per-click marketing is a powerful tool that can help even the smallest companies advertise effectively on the Internet. The ability to alter your advertising strategy in real time allows you to test different things, increase or decrease your investment and accurately track the overall success of your advertising immediately.

Additionally, your success with pay-per-click marketing depends on how much time you put into expanding your knowledge on the subject. Many resources on it are available, and most of the good ones are free through Google's AdWords Knowledge Center. The website features tutorials, videos and online seminars that you can use to increase your skill set.

Finally, Google's AdWords team is available during business hours and will perform an audit on your AdWords account at no charge. Google feels that helping you become more successful with AdWords will only encourage you to spend more with them. **LM**

» WEB EXTRA

For more from Kanary, including 5 killer PPC ad tips and an ad copy-writing worksheet, visit the Web Extras section of [Landscape Management.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net).

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