



Velocity B2B Marketing White Paper

How to PPC in B2B

Five Rules for Effective Lead Generation

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Pay per Click campaigns - those little 'same but different' ads to the side of your search results - are manna for marketers who operate in hotly contested B2C markets like travel, insurance and online gaming. To these guys, PPC is more a direct cost of sale than a marketing ploy. It's a numbers game where cost per transaction is immediately measurable and easy to factor into the bottom line.

But what about PPC as a marketing tactic for B2B companies? Our sales process is so different to the snap-decisions made in B2C - we usually need a real human being to set up and close the sale, plus a bunch of education, persuasion and cajoling in-between.

There are two good reasons to do it, but only one that we'd recommend...

Firstly, PPC can work as an effective driver of awareness (ie, it can acquire traffic for your web site). Secondly, it can be a great lead generation machine (ie, it can encourage people to volunteer themselves into a sales discussion).

PPC for traffic acquisition and driving awareness

We wouldn't recommend using PPC for this objective.

Traffic acquisition is a worthy cause, but in the context of a B2B sales process it's almost impossible to measure in terms of its effectiveness, because there's simply no way that a spike in web traffic can be linked to the closure of a deal three months down the line.

That's not to say that we shouldn't care for traffic acquisition, only that there are better, more cost effective ways of doing it - for example, you can engage with social media and the blogsphere to switch folks on to your site, and you can use affiliate link and ad banner networks to achieve the same result.

PPC for lead generation

If, however, your goal is to generate leads and to contribute in a tangible way to the sales process, then PPC can be the ultimate tool in a B2B marketer's armory.

At a basic level, B2B lead generation with PPC is not rocket surgery. It's an old school tactic involving an ad, an offer, a coupon and a reward. And when executed well, the payoff is twofold: concrete sales leads and the healthy (and obvious) byproduct of increased traffic and raised awareness.

To get great results, we suggest you follow these five rules:

- 1) Set appropriate goals
- 2) Set appropriate conversion points
- 3) Set appropriate metrics
- 4) Set appropriate offers
- 5) Create appropriate landing pages

Here's what they all mean...

1) Set appropriate goals:

A good goal is to kick start a new relationship with prospective customers. A bad one is to try and close a deal via PPC - it's impossible to squeeze your education, persuasion and cajoling into the 80 or so characters that appear in a Google ad plus a landing page or two.... you will nearly always need a sales guy to pick up the phone and/or do a meeting.

2) Set appropriate conversion points:

The only way to tell if your PPC work is directly helping your sales efforts is to set up some conversion points within your campaigns. This means that once people have clicked on your ad it's necessary to ask them to do something that identifies them as a 'volunteer' and a sensible candidate for a sales dialogue.

This 'call to action' is likely to be a web form that asks people to register some personal information with you - something that can be used for future marketing campaigns or for a follow up exercise with one of your sales team (eg a phone number and/or an email address). I'll cover how to do this effectively a little later...

3) Set appropriate metrics:

With some sensible conversion points in place, you ought to be able to measure your campaign effectiveness in terms of the cost of acquiring each piece of volunteer information. In other words you can establish a CPA (cost per acquisition) metric based upon the total cost of your campaign divided by the number of 'volunteers' you acquire.

Note: in PPC for lead generation, all other measurement criteria are pretty much irrelevant (and often misleading) in terms of establishing your success.

4) Set appropriate offers:

People will only click on your ads if you give them a good enough reason to do so. Hence your 'offer' is critical. In a B2C environment this is most usually (and most effectively) a cost-based affair - eg, 'save 50% on flights to the Maldives today'. In B2B we have to work a little harder.

However, if our goal is sensible - to start a discussion rather than clinch a sale - then providing an appropriate offer can be made simple and intuitive. By and large it will be content-related to help with the education, persuasion and cajoling efforts of your sales guys - for example, a white paper, a killer 'vision' article, some research, or a bylined book that you've produced in association with a publisher.

Note: it's extremely important to invest in the quality of your offer, as it's often the only thing that'll distinguish you from a competing army of ads. It's also important to realise that if you don't provide a decent offer then there's very little to persuade people to come and visit your site!

5) Create appropriate landing pages:

This may seem like a no-brainer, but your landing pages for each ad should be directly linked to your ad copy and your offer.... and preferably created from scratch each time to serve the direct purpose of your campaigns.

Think about this from your target's perspective - you invite them to your site with the promise of a rewarding experience. So what do you give them? A standard page in your 'Solutions' section? That's kind of like herding cattle into an empty field - our bet is that they'll just bolt.

Being appropriate is **the** most important concept when it comes to landing pages. Again, your goal is to start a relationship, so immediately throwing a 'WHO ARE YOU, WHAT IS YOUR NAME AND INSIDE LEG MEASUREMENT' web form in their face is not a good place to start. Instead, why not just give them your content and then ask them some complimentary questions in a side bar ('Have you experienced this problem before...?', 'Do you deal with this issue in a different way...?'), or encourage them to post some comments or feedback, whilst at the same time always capturing their email address?

In other words, it's critical that you use this opportunity sensitively. Give them what you promised, show them you care, and then ask for their engagement at the end of the process. This is a great way of screening out the disinterested traffic from the engaged - and these people are the only ones you should care for at the end of the day.

If you can follow these rules, we guarantee that you'll end up with better leads, a happier sales team, happier prospects and **a measurable marketing activity that can be applied to the bottom line.**



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