



Do You Make These Mistakes In Google Ads?

*Learn The Top 6 Mistakes We See In Google Ads Campaigns
And How To Avoid Them*

Updated January 2020

Introduction

Dear friend,

In writing this guide, I wanted to create a resource that was concise & high-value, without rehashing the same tired tricks and basic google-fundamentals I've found floating around online.

This is my attempt to boil down the lessons I've learned through years of advertising in a variety of industries and niches.

It doesn't matter if it's a B2B business looking for six-figure contracts, or a local coffee shop trying to sell their beans online, there are certain mistakes that seem to show their heads no matter what.

My goal is for you to find valuable and actionable information on the following pages that you can use on your own ad account for massive (and measurable!) improvements.

Without a doubt, these are the most common mistakes I've seen in Google Ads.

- 1. Not Planning A Strategy Before Building A Campaign**
2. Conversion Tracking Mistakes (or Not Using It At All)
- 3. Using Targeting That's Too Specific Or Broad**
4. Not Using Location Targeting
- 5. Missed Testing Opportunities**
6. Using Automated Bidding Strategies

Over the next 15 or so pages you'll see detailed breakdowns, along with real-world examples of these mistakes - and how to avoid making them in your own business.

See you on the inside,
Morgan Crozier

Not Planning A Strategy Before Building A Campaign

The first mistake we'll cover here is the biggest one. Make this mistake, and your ad account doesn't stand a chance.

If you haven't thought specifically about WHO you want to see your ads, WHAT those people are looking for, and HOW you plan to convert them into leads or clients, then you're not ready to build your campaign.

You must understand how much a conversion is really worth to you, and make sure your ad campaign is built around those numbers.

The best Google Ads strategy is a deliberate one.

Before you spend a dime on an ad agency or your campaign budget, you need to think about the definitive goals of your campaign, and how it will achieve them.

- What is your conversion goal? Is it a lead, or a sale?
- How much can you spend on a conversion?
- What's the lifetime value of a conversion?
- What is a lead worth to you?
- What specific needs are you serving?
- Do each of these have their own landing page or funnel

Tip: Use our (free) [Google Ads Profitability Calculator](#) to plan out your campaign and determine if it can make a profit. This is step one.

Let's look at how this works in practice.

For example, let's say you sell a \$100 service (with a 100% margin for simple math). It's a personal training service, so breaking even is safe since you expect to get repeat clients.

(You could even run the ads at an initial loss, but the math gets a bit more complicated since you need a stronger idea of average customer lifetime value in order to make safe 'bets' on 'loss-leader' keywords)

Once you've done your keyword research & planning, you'll have a list of keywords to target, all which will have different cost per clicks depending on how competitive they are in the Google Ads auction.

I'll be completely making up some keyword + cost scenarios below to determine the needed conversion rate to break even.

Keyword	CPC	Break Even Conversion Rate
austin personal trainer	\$2.50	2.5%
best personal trainer	\$4.00	4.0%
austin weight loss	\$8.00	8.0%
fitness bootcamp	\$1.00	1.0%
personal trainer near me	\$3.00	3.0%
fitness class austin	\$2.00	2.0%

Looking at the above numbers, a few of the opportunities clearly look better than others.

“**Austin Weight Loss**” is a pretty decent search, but needing to convert nearly 1 in 10 people is a pretty risky gamble compared to the search “**Best Personal Trainer**”, which only needs to convert 1 in 20 clicks, and has a higher buyer intent than the first search.

You'll want to fill in the sheet with your own business details for all of your products and services to get an idea of which ones are appropriate for advertising.

Tip: You can use this information to make changes in your business as well to make it ready for advertising. For example, increasing the prices of existing services to make the numbers work, focusing on certain pages to optimize your current conversion %'s, so they'll be ready for advertising, or even adding new services like a fitness bootcamp because of the good math.

Once you have defined conversion goals and a plan on how to achieve them, you're ready to work on your Google Ads campaign.

“In the modern world of business, it is useless to be a creative, original thinker unless you can also sell what you create.”

- David Ogilvy

Conversion Tracking Mistakes

When reviewing a new ad account, this is one of the first things that I look at.

If your conversions data isn't being tracked accurately, then it's impossible to run your campaign according to the profitability calculator - *isn't that the point?*

For example: A few months ago we received an audit request for a dental office who had been running ads with a rather healthy budget.

For **three months** they'd been running Google's *so-called* "Smart Ads" (more about that later).

\$10,300 dollars later and they didn't a single conversion tracked back to their ads.

Sometimes the receptionist would ask how a new patient found their clinic. This is unreliable at best, especially since it doesn't help a bit when they just say "Google". Have fun digging through "do you know if it was an organic or paid search?".

"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is, I don't know which half."
- John Wanamaker

(If only the original pioneers of marketing and advertising could experience the level of tracking and testing available to us today...)

Using the **basic conversion tracking** that's built-in to Google Ads will cover the bases for most businesses. And if you use a phone - **your call sources need to be tracked** as well.

There's a ton of affordable solutions out there for this, so there's **no excuses**.

If you're not using conversion tracking - **and testing that it's working and accurate** - it's impossible to achieve (and beat) the conversion rate goals we've set.

Your bottom line will thank you.

"The only purpose of advertising is to make sales.
It is profitable or unprofitable according to its
actual sales."

- Claude Hopkins

Using Targeting That's Too Broad or Narrow

This mistake comes with two key issues.

1. **Too broad:** Your ads will show far too often on irrelevant searches.
2. **Too narrow:** Your ads may not show at all.

Let's explore the common causes & results of each of these issues.

For this example, we'll use **an orthopedic surgeon** who runs a private practice **in Austin, TX** who wants to use Google Ads to show their business to likely prospects.

Scenario 1: Keywords Are Too Broad

This account is set up targeting a few keywords in the Austin area.

1. Orthopedic Doctor
2. Orthopedic Surgeon
3. Orthopedic Surgery

This looks fine at first, but let's take a look at just a few of the irrelevant searches that these keywords will show for when broadly targeted.

Search	CPC
orthopedic surgeon salary	\$12.00
what is an orthopedic surgeon	\$8.00
what does an orthopedic doctor do	\$10.00
orthopedic doctor salary	\$5.00
how to become an orthopedic surgeon	\$10.00
orthopedic surgeon job description	\$6.00
average orthopedic surgeon salary	\$2.50

These are clearly irrelevant searches that you definitely don't want to pay upwards of \$12 for.

This is one of the most common mistakes we see, and in certain niches, it will eat up your budget in no time.

There's a simple solution for this problem: Use exact match targeting when you want to target top-of-the-funnel searches like "orthopedic surgeon".

(And then track their performance to make sure they have the necessary conversion rate as the clicks come in!)

While it's a good idea to keep your targeting tight, it is possible to go too narrow with your targeting, which we'll take a look at next.

Scenario 2: Keywords Are Too Narrow

For simplicity's sake, we'll stick with the same keyword targeting as before, except this time we'll be targeting the exact match searches of the below keywords:

1. Orthopedic Doctor
2. Orthopedic Surgeon
3. Orthopedic Surgery

This time, let's take a look at some of the broad searches that the above keywords will now be missing out on:

Search	CPC
orthopedic surgeon near me	\$6.00
orthopedic hand surgeon near me	\$4.50
orthopedic hand doctor near me	\$6.00
orthopedic surgeon foot and ankle specialist	\$4.50
best orthopedic surgeon for knee replacement	\$8.00
orthopedic surgeon knee specialist	\$5.00

There are a few things that stand out here.

1. These searches have very high intent. Somebody looking for "orthopedic hand surgeon near me" likely has an immediate issue that they're seeking a solution for.
2. These cost per clicks are often lower than the irrelevant searches on the previous page. One common correlation with long-tail searches is that they typically will have a lower cost per click.

The combination of higher purchase intent & lower cost per click means that these broad

searches are essentially an advertising goldmine.

So how do you make sure you **target the high value keywords**, while **avoiding the low value searches** that eat up your budget?

Unfortunately that goes beyond the scope of this document...

But this process **basically** boils down to using a deliberate account structure, careful keyword targeting selection, monitoring your search terms reports, and proper use of negative keyword lists.

Using a combination of narrow keywords and broad targeting will let you focus on the most profitable known searches, while leaving some room to test new search opportunities that will appear in your search terms report.

Like always, you'll want to monitor your keyword CPC's to make sure they're in alignment with your profitability calculator.

Next we'll look at another issue that's especially common for local or service based businesses.

“People only buy when they're ready to buy. Not when you're ready to sell”

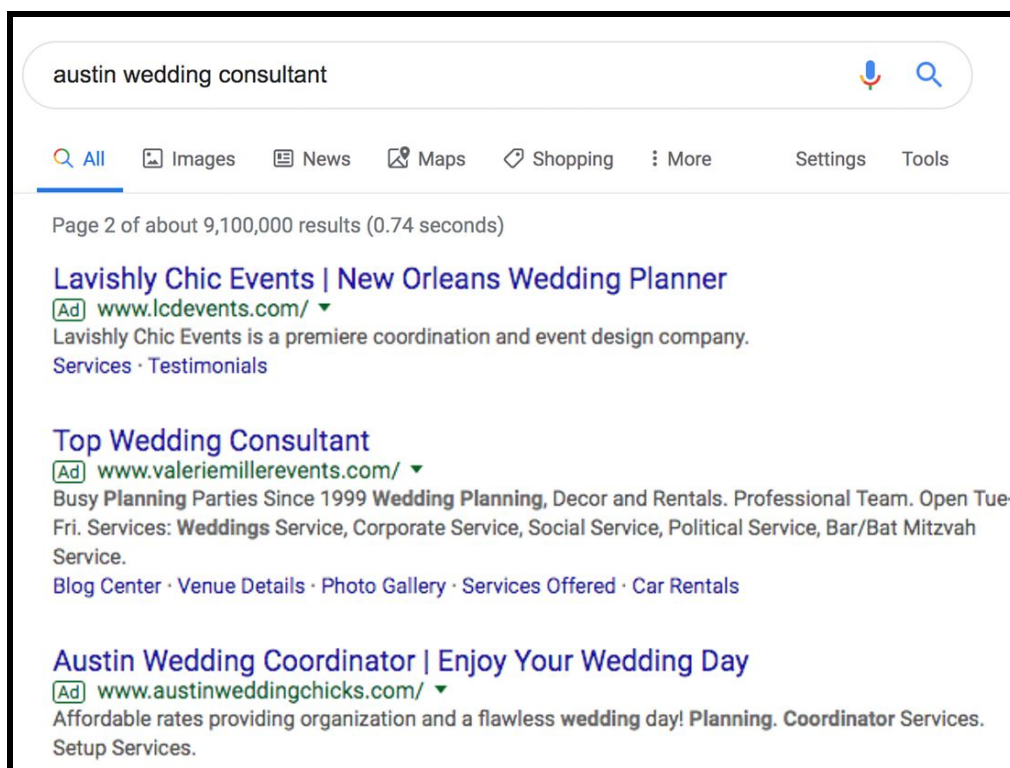
- Drayton Bird

Not Using Proper Location Targeting

Location targeting seems pretty simple to set up at first - but you should know that **Google hides the most important settings** from the main view.

Most accounts ignore these settings and end up showing their ads in locations that are far from where they're targeting - **even so far as other countries.**

For example: Take a look at the top ad in the screenshot below on a search in Austin.

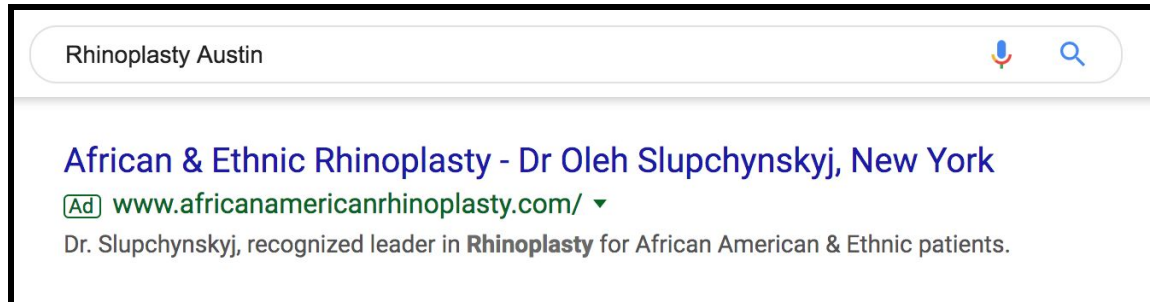


This ad is likely making two mistakes at once: A lack of specific location targeting + using too-broad keywords.

Lavishly Chic Events is mostly likely targeting the keyword **“Wedding Consultant”** as a broad term.

This search is just fine to target, but **only if you're specifically showing ads in the intended service area.** Otherwise you're likely to waste your ad budget on irrelevant searches.

Now that you're tuned into this mistake, you'll probably notice it quite often in your own local searches, as it's unfortunately an extremely common (and costly) mistake due to the important settings being tucked away inside of the campaign settings.



This error spares no victims. It impacts businesses of any size, since everyone has some sort of preferred location targeting.

While the above examples are for local businesses, this also have an impact on national campaigns.

For example, ecommerce businesses tend to ship within their own country.

Shipping to other countries is possible, sure, but the odds of you getting a conversion drops as the shipping cost rises, especially as free shipping become increasingly popular & even expected.

So to avoid wasting your ad budget, you want to be sure you're specifically targeting countries that you ship to, otherwise your ads could end up triggering in locations that are unlikely to convert.

Tip: Make sure to select the correct Location Targeting option under your Campaign Settings for your business. This is under **Settings -> Locations -> Location Options**.

“An idea can turn to dust or magic, depending on the talent that rubs against it.”

- William Bernbach

Trusting Google's Automation & Assistance

Look, I don't want to completely knock Google's Ad Reps - In fact I've found that they're very willing to help with any technical issues you come across.

They can be quite helpful if you hit a brick wall in any parts of setting up your account, or when helping to **diagnose minor tech issues, or get a false-flagged disapproved ad reverted.**

So when you're thinking of asking a Google support rep for help, keep this in mind.

They are trained on the technical aspects of working with Google Ads - NOT the complexities of running a profitable ad campaign!

In the PPC communities, there are countless discussions about the negative impacts from Google Support Reps. Dr Brogbo describes the typical experience in a Reddit comment.

DrBrogbo · 16 points · 4 months ago

That's a very in-depth explanation. I usually say something along the lines of "they're the lowest of the low-paid Google "employees", contracted out to a 3rd-party company in some foreign country with low cost of living. Their goal is to get you to spend more money, and rather than taking any amount of time to understand your business or your needs, they run everything off of a script, and I have never seen any of their recommendations actually benefit my clients. We can discuss their recommendations if you want, but my advice is to ignore them completely. You'll have a new "rep" in just a few months recommending entirely different things anyway. I've been in this business for years, and every single time a client has insisted on taking the Google rep's advice, their account has suffered measurable, long-term damage."

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

Relying on Google's Automation or their support reps is too often a recipe for disaster, which can be avoided by simple and deliberate planning, building, & management of your campaigns.

If you know your target **CPA** (Cost Per Acquisition) and your average conversion rates, you can specifically set your **CPC** (Cost Per Click) bids in a range that's profitable.

That's why we made our proprietary [Google Ads Profitability Calculator](#) in order to figure these numbers out before spending a dime.

And if those numbers don't add up to a profit, you know exactly what you need to work on to make a profit in your business. (Your **Target CPA & Average Conversion Rate**). No amount of automation or support tweaking can improve these backend numbers.

With this in mind, it's clear why Google's support reps most likely won't have much to contribute to your campaign's success.

They aren't even *thinking* about the cost per conversion you need in order to stay in business.

It's safe to assume their main goal is to keep you using Google Ads and to spend more with the platform.

Same goes for the automated bidding strategies.

Google's Partner Program is actively incentivizing agencies to use the automated bidding strategies, however independent testing has shown them to be a waste of budget.

After all, **why rely on an automated bidding strategy** when **you've already figured out your key metrics** before even starting your campaign?

Some people will make a case for automated bidding strategies. After all, it makes things easier to **manage**. But do they increase your bottom line?

With a little searching, you'll find plenty of articles that discuss the pro's and con's of automated bidding strategies, [like this](#).

Typically they focus on vanity metric improvements like click count and CTR, but we've yet to find a compelling study about **improving profits**.

In my experience, testing automated bidding strategies hasn't improved the performance of accounts I manage.

Perhaps these automated strategies are more suited for accounts that aren't following such a deliberate setup & bidding process as described through this document.

But if you're following a deliberate strategy along with the profitability calculator, you should be in good shape without them.

It's worth the effort.

“Genius is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration.”

- John Carlton

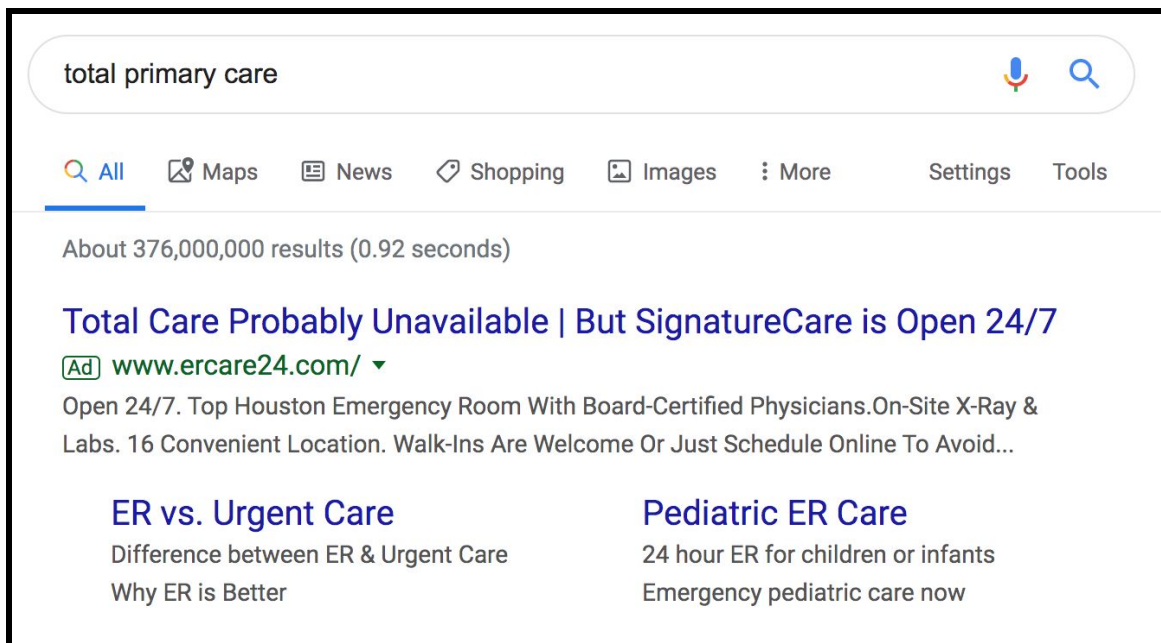
Brand Term Bidding - To Use It Or Not?

Your brand term can often be seen as a goldmine for other advertisers, so you need to keep an eye on who is advertising for it.

Make sure you perform occasional searches for your brand term to see who else may be bidding on it...

Otherwise you could end up in a similar unfavorable position, like in the screenshot below.

Total Primary Care is an urgent care center. Take a look at the ad their competition is running for their brand keyword.



Bidding on competitor's brand terms is a viable way to get in front of their audience at a low cost.

Typically brand terms have low CPC bids in the auction because there are generally fewer advertisers bidding on them.

If you try this out for your own brand or your competition, make sure you keep an eye on your conversion costs to be sure it makes sense for your business.

When bidding on brand terms, you'll want to keep a few things in mind:

Are you also bidding on searches with lower buyer intent? For example, “[**Competitor Brand**] **customer support**” isn't likely to bring you a lead.

Are you spending a ton of money on your own brand term & irrelevant searches?

For example, if your competitors aren't bidding on your brand, you could end up spending ad budget on clicks that would have gone to your organic result (*you are ranking #1 for your own brand, right?*).

Lastly, considering using your own brand-keyword ads to put specific promotions or landing pages in front of prospects who are searching for your brand.

Since you can't change which page people see or land on from Google, using an ad for brand keywords is the only way to these searches the specific page or offer you want when they're looking for your business.

“Every single element in an advertisement – headline, subhead, photo, and copy – must be put there not because it looks good, not because it sounds good, but because testing has shown that it works best!”

– John Caples

Final Thoughts

While important, these 6 items don't even come close to making a complete list of all the things that can go wrong inside of Google ads.

I hand selected these issues specifically so that you should be able to make actionable changes based on how they relate to your own ad account.

If you'd like to learn even more or need some one-on-one help with your advertising, you have a few options.

1. **Enroll in my Google Ads training.** You'll notice there isn't a hyperlink there - because this training doesn't exist yet. Stay subscribed to the Analytic Advertising email list, and you'll be the first to know about it. There might even be a 'founding subscriber' discount.
2. **Get Google Ads Consulting.** This is the simplest way to get the best results out of your advertising. These one-on-one sessions will focus on maximizing your advertising results with realistic and actionable steps that we'll discover on recorded screen-shares. Get more information here: <https://analyticadvertising.com/consulting>
3. **Google Ads Management.** This is the hands-free way to get the most out of your advertising. Clients are accepted on an individual basis, and availability is limited. Get more information here: <https://analyticadvertising.com/management>

If you're not looking for any of the above, then you can hang tight and stay tuned for more free resources in your inbox in the future.

If you have any questions, comments, feedback, additional ideas, or requests, email me at morgan@analyticadvertising.com - I'd love to hear from you.

Happy advertising,
Morgan Crozier