

A travel marketer's guide:

Using micro-moments to increase PPC conversions

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As people take more complex paths to booking holidays and related services, the travel marketer's challenge is to keep them motivated about your brand and ensure they don't book elsewhere.

Luckily, micro-moments can help you capture leads at different stages of the buying process, identify how far along they are and understand what it'll take to move them onto the next stage. The idea is to nurture leads, from even the most casual interactions with your brand, until they show serious buying intent and ultimately become your next customer.

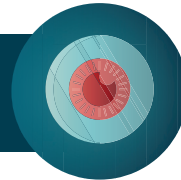
What we'll be looking at today

In a recent webinar, we had Henry Carless, one of our PPC specialists, explain how travel brands can use micro-moments to transform their PPC results. We also had Trustpilot's Neil Bayton tell us how customer reviews fit into the same consumer journey – both before and after people make a booking with your brand.

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**If you want to watch the original webinar,
Click the link below**

Watch the webinar



However, we'll be running through the same points in this guide today, so you can read through everything at your own pace. As for the main points we'll be covering, they are:

- **What are micro-moments?**
- **How to make micro-moments useful**
- **Using micro-moments and PPC to increase bookings**
- **Trustpilot on the role of reviews in online travel booking**

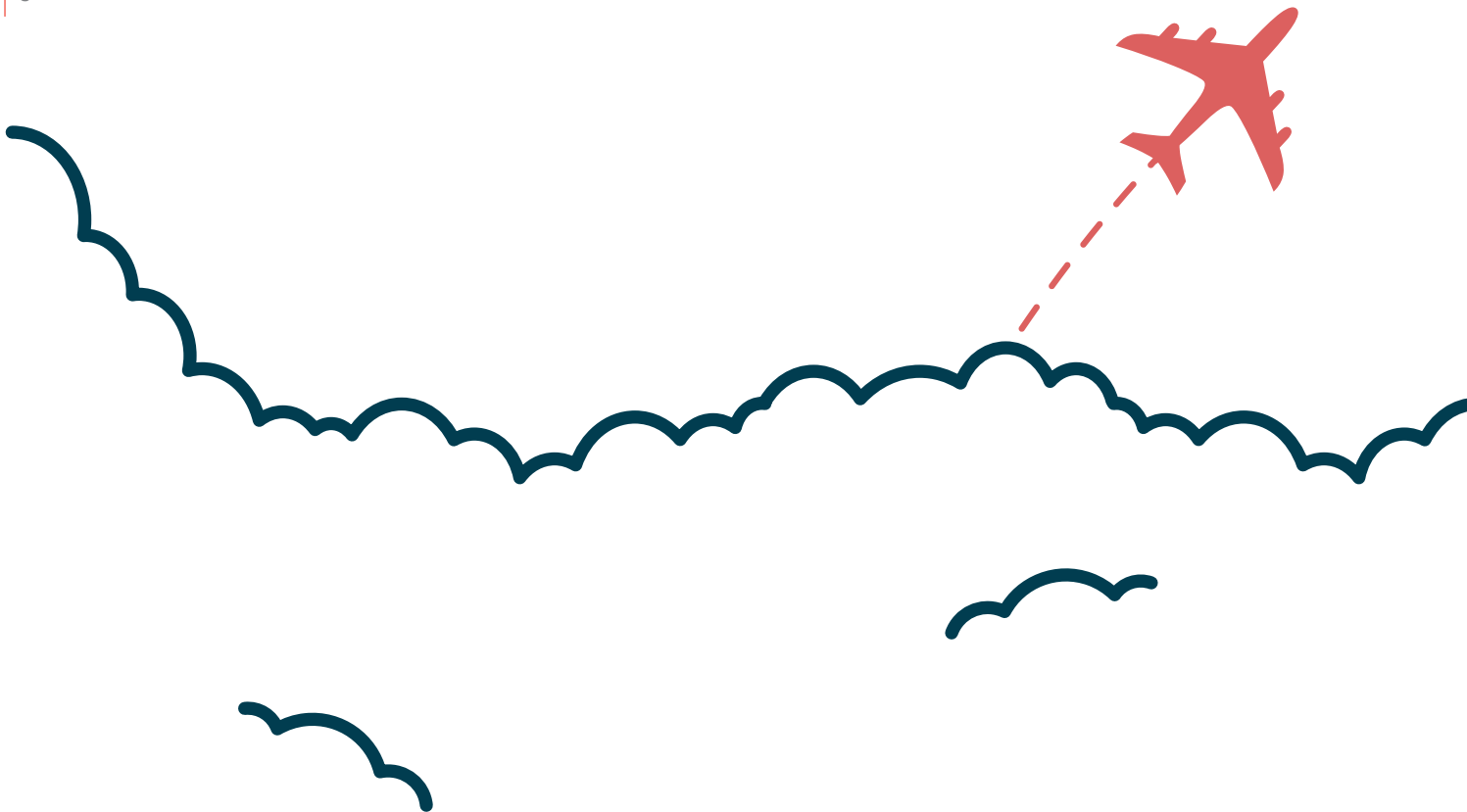
What are micro-moments?

Micro-moments are the small actions people take between first discovering your brand and making the final purchase. We can use these to pinpoint where users are along the buying process, what they need to take that next step and target them with marketing messages that inspire them to do so.

The thing is, we can't simply look at one of these micro-moments and suddenly know what people are thinking. Individual users take very different paths along the buying process and interact with brands in very different ways. Even if you pick two users who click the same ad and end up booking the same holiday package, the journey they take between those two points could be poles apart.

Instead, what we need to do is group these micro-moments together so that we can take insights from them.

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How to make micro-moments useful

Before you can turn micro-moments into actionable marketing strategies, you need to understand which stage of the sales funnel each interaction belongs to. This is what we mean by grouping micro-moments together and the exact groupings will vary depending on your business.

Here's a typical sales funnel for many travel brands:



In that funnel you've four distinct stages of the buying process:

- **Inspiration:** People want to get away but aren't sure where or even when.
- **Consideration:** People who are looking at specific places, times, prices, etc.
- **Ready to book:** People who know where they want to go but might still be swayed by another brand/deal.
- **Booked:** People who have made a booking.

So now you're ready to group your micro-moments into each stage of the sales funnel:



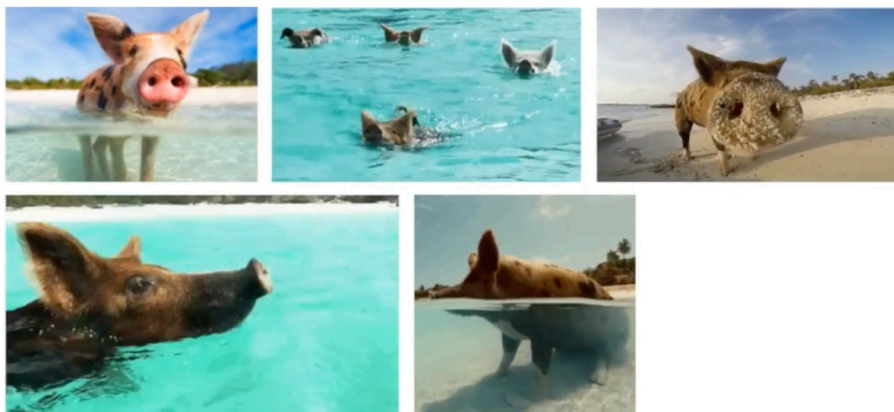
The goal in all of this is to move people from left to right, of course – from those early moments of inspiration to completing a booking with your brand. To do this, we're going to create audience segments in Google Analytics (remarketing lists) for each stage of the sales funnel. Then we're going to fill these lists with users who take any of the actions (micro-moments) that we grouped under them earlier.

5 Once we do this, our grouped micro-moments act like a radar, flagging up users when they complete a certain action and telling us which part of the buying process they're at. Best of all, we can use these audience segments to target them with highly focused marketing messages, designed to move them on to the next stage of the sales funnel.



Guiding people along the buying process with AdWords

Let's imagine someone casually going about their online business until a blog post captures their attention. This is precisely what happened to our PPC specialist Henry Carless recently, when he discovered a blog post about swimming pigs in the Bahamas.



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This blog post inspired the traveller in Henry, which put him at the first stage of the sales funnel we looked at earlier.

Now let's imagine Henry is your lead in this example - how do you go about moving him along the buying process? Well, you've already got him on your remarketing list because he read your wonderful article on swimming pigs, which is one of the micro-moments you identified for your 'inspiration' audience.

So now you can target Henry with ads reminding him about the Bahamas, swimming pigs and all things tropical. Your ads will want to be generic (if you can call swimming pigs generic) because Henry isn't fully committed yet. He's certainly not thinking about specific hotels or restaurants and there are no guarantees the Bahamas will be his next destination.

Your goal at this stage is to keep him thinking about the Bahamas, get him back to your site and make your brand discoverable.

At the inspiration stage keep your ads generic

To improve your chances, use an AdWords feature called remarketing lists for search ads (RLSAs). This allows you to increase the bids on your search keywords for people on your audience lists only. You can increase your bids by 10% using RLSAs and the next time Henry triggers on of your keywords, your ad features more prominently because he's on your 'inspiration list'.

Use RLSAs to increase bids to your audience

Inspiration	Consideration	Ready to book	Book
Read a blog post	Emailed to a friend	Read reviews	Sale
Download city guide	Viewed Photos	Enquired	
	Viewed offer	Shortlisted	
	Checked availability	Printed details	

Remarketing: **Generic**

Search: **Bid +10%**

Once Henry's back on your site and looking at your holiday packages, he's now in the 'consideration' stage of the sales funnel. He's got Bahamas on the brain thanks to the gentle reminders of your remarketing ads over the past couple of weeks and now he's genuinely considering the possibility of going.

This is where you want to change your messaging to make it more specific to Henry's interests. Instead of promoting the islands as a whole, you might want to focus on specific landmarks, activities or hotel offers, for example. Once again, it's a good idea to increase your bids using RLSAs for the people who have upped their interest in your packages.

At the consideration stage make your ads more specific

Inspiration	Consideration	Ready to book	Book
Read a blog post	Emailed to a friend	Read reviews	Sale
Download city guide	Viewed Photos	Enquired	
	Viewed offer	Shortlisted	
	Checked availability	Printed details	

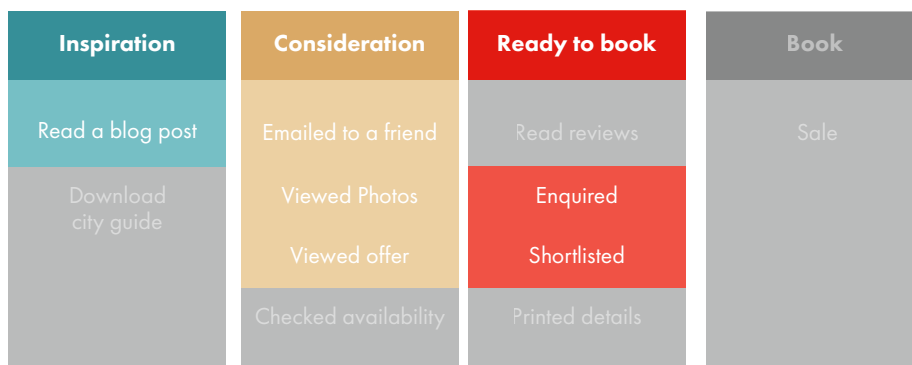
Remarketing: **Generic** + Specific & Dynamic

Search: **Bid +10%** x **Bid +10%**

Another feature worth using now is dynamic remarketing which allows Google to dynamically change the content of your remarketing ads to match the pages, products and packages users have looked at on your site (e.g. specific hotels, tours, etc.).

Use dynamic remarketing to re-promote visited pages

Remember your goal here is to encourage people to take one of the actions on your 'ready to book' list. For Henry, this was when he started shortlisting some hotels in the Bahamas and sent over some enquiries for more information.

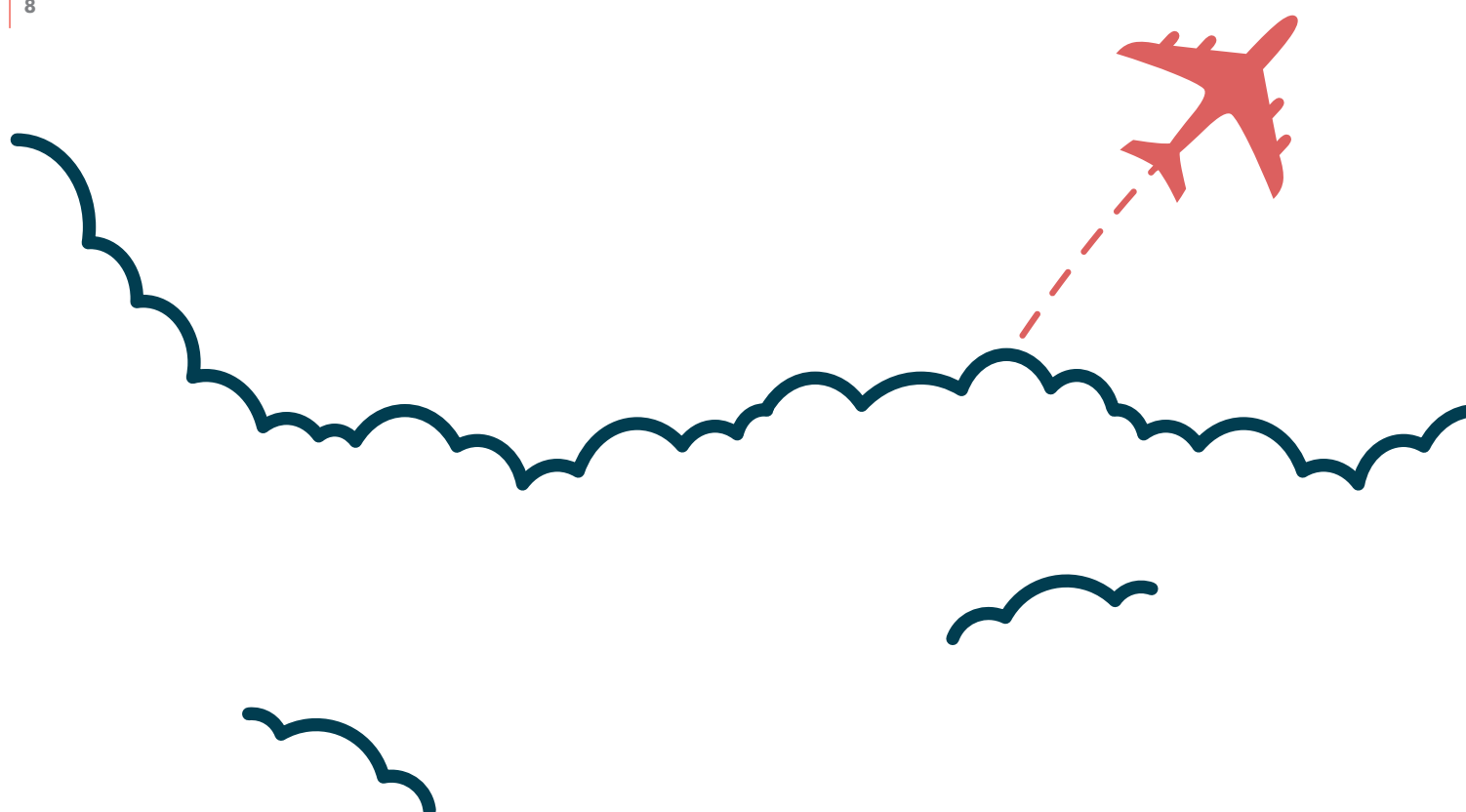


Remarketing: **Generic** + Specific & Dynamic + Time critical & Trust

Search: **Bid +10%**

x **Bid +10%**

x **Bid +30%**



In terms of your ad messages, they'll still be specific, but you can create a sense of urgency by using time critical content. Switching to 'book now' in your ad copy or targeting Henry with special offers that end soon will give him extra incentive to book. At the same time, you'll also want to work on gaining his trust through reviews, testimonials and other signals that give Henry confidence to hit the book button.

At the ready-to-book stage create urgency in your ads

Your goal now is to get those bookings and people on this list should be close to taking the final step. So, bid aggressively on your search keywords via RLSAs to make sure your ad appears on every relevant search for people on your 'ready to book' list.

There's also a clever feature you can use with RLSAs, called target and bid, which allows you to create campaigns for generic keywords but only for people who have recently visited your site. Let's say Henry types the keyword 'weather' into Google soon after visiting your site; he may only be checking up on the weather back home, but you can target him with an ad to remind him that sunnier pastures are only a booking away. Likewise, if he's searching for the weather in the Bahamas, there's your ad giving him extra incentive to book there and then.

Use 'target and bid' to create campaigns for generic keywords

Once users confirm their booking, your main objective is complete, but there's still more work to be done. Next, you want to turn this customer into a repeat buyer, brand advocate and someone who continues to contribute to your marketing efforts.

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Trustpilot on the role of reviews in online travel booking

Trustpilot's Neil Bayton has some valuable insights on how reviews influence travellers' buying decisions. He says high value purchases like holidays always come with increased risk, which requires more trust to be earned by brands and this is reflected in the rising cart abandonment rates for travel brands.

"With travel websites, abandonment rates are at an all-time high of 81.6%," Neil explains – which makes them the second worst performer in all industries. The good news is you can use these abandonment rates to your advantage, which is precisely the point of micro-moments, and a strong profile of customer reviews is an invaluable tool at various stages of the buying process.

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Online shoppers need to feel like they're getting genuine, impartial feedback from previous customers who have bought into the same experience they're about to. Simply put, people want to buy with confidence and more than 33% say reviews are the single biggest influence in their buying decisions.

There are two kinds of reviews you'll receive from customers:

- **Those you ask customers to leave**
- **Those you don't ask customers to leave**

77%

Consult online reviews

79%

Trust reviews as much as personal recommendations

25%

Use technology to find suggestions from previous travellers

+33%

Say reviews influence their booking more than anything

13.76%

Book holidays based on online recommendations

It's usually a negative experience that motivates people to leave reviews by their own initiative, but if you ask your customers to leave reviews, you're far more likely to get the kind of positive response that encourages other people to buy in the future.

As you may already know, Trustpilot is one of Google's trusted review sources and this gives you several reasons to build a strong profile on the review site. As things stand, Trustpilot is working on three core areas to help brands increase sales online:



**Drive more traffic &
improve cost efficiency**



**Increase conversions &
grow revenue**



**Improve visibility in
organic search**

The first of these is to increase traffic, which brings more leads to your site and improves the performance of your ads (Quality Score, cost-efficiency, etc.) For this to happen, you want to have a strong profile on Trustpilot and use seller rating extensions on your AdWords ads.

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Hotels in Spain - Search and Book Now - booking.com

Ad www.booking.com/Spain/Hotels

4.5 ★★★★★ rating for booking.com

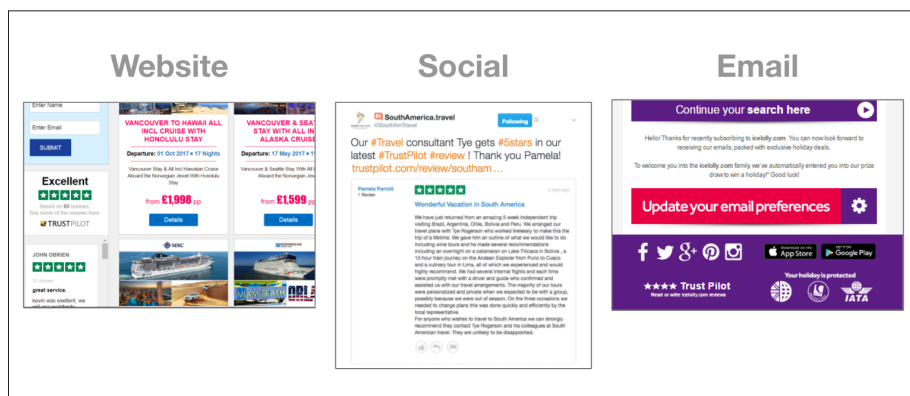
Book your Hotel in Spain online. No Reservation Costs. Great Rates.

Free Cancellation · Best Price Guarantee · We speak your language · Get Instant Confirmation

Ratings: Selection 10/10 - Website 9/10 - Travel info 9/10 - Prices 9/10 - Fees 9/10

With those magic stars on your ad, people get instant verification that you have a history of providing great travel experiences. You've built an element of trust in these users before they even land on your site and this makes it easier to bump them along each stage of your sales funnel.

You can place reviews on other digital assists, too, such as your website, Facebook page and emails, to encourage more conversions. Embedding reviews on your site can also boost your organic search ranking because Google loves user-generated content from high-authority sites.



Third-party reviews are a key player in peoples' buying choices during the latter stages of the consumer journey and this is particularly true for travel bookings. It's no coincidence sites like Google Maps, TripAdvisor, Airbnb and just about every brand in the industry relies on a review system to instil buyer confidence. Make this one of your priorities because it's often the deciding factor in where people choose to make their travel bookings.

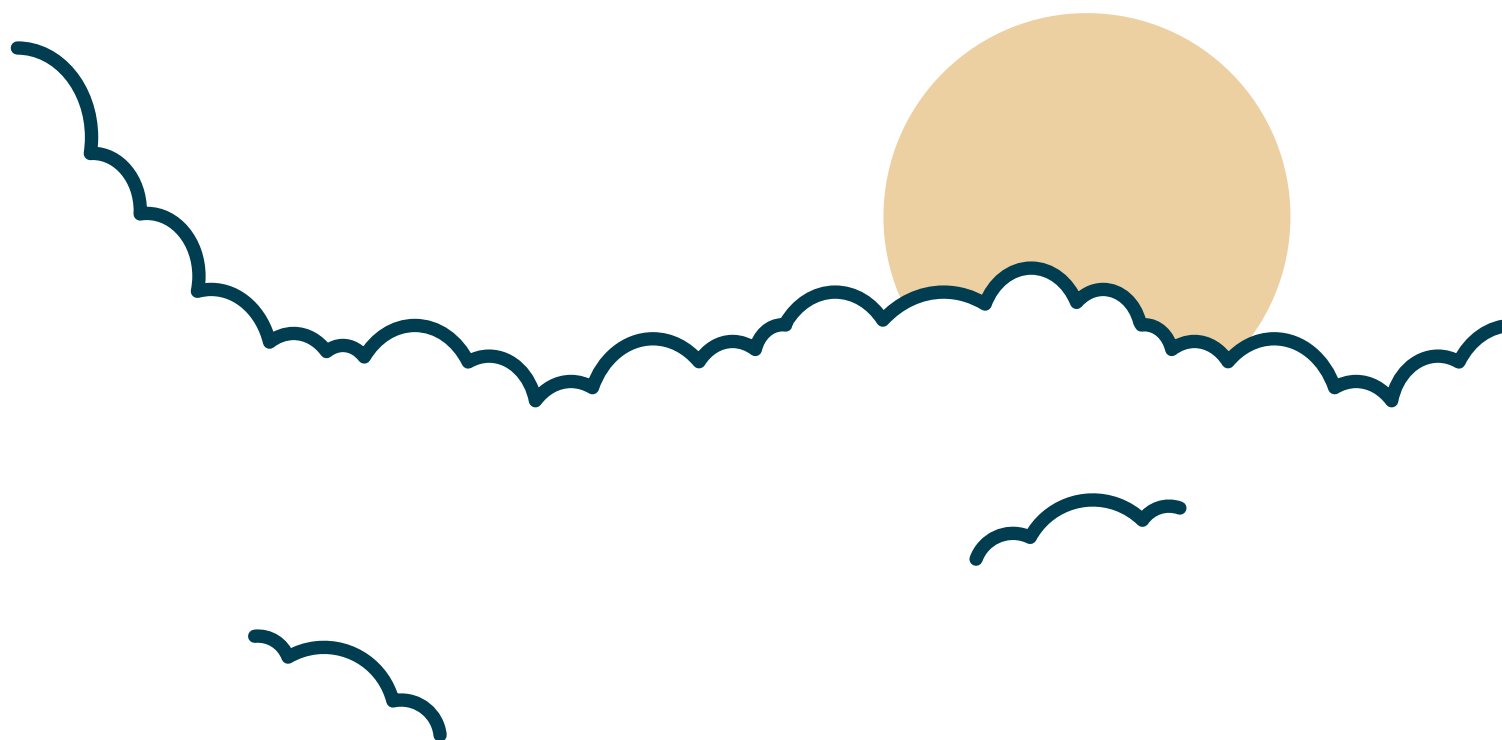


Summary

To sum up the points we've looked at today, here's a quick run-through of the steps you want to take next:

- 1. Use micro-moments to move users towards a sale**
- 2. Group micro-moments to build segmented audiences**
- 3. Target each audience with PPC (messages to match their needs)**
- 4. Gather reviews from users after they book**
- 5. Use reviews to build trust and increase future sales**

Get this process right and you'll be turning the most trivial of leads into paying customers on a regular basis and using their reviews to convince even more people to book with your brand.



Talk to us about your PPC marketing

If you'd like to discuss how to make your PPC campaigns
more efficient and effective, contact our search
marketing experts

023 9283 0281
or **info@vertical-leap.uk.**

We're a Premier Google Partner so you'll be in good hands.

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