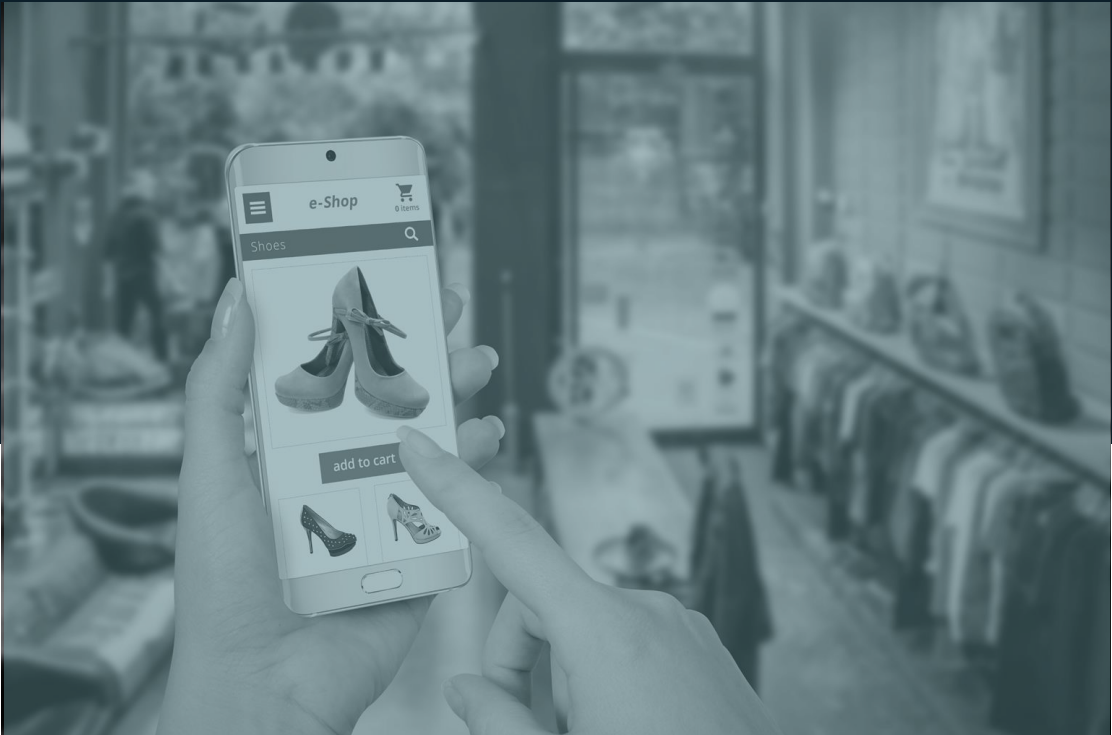


Marketer's guide to full-funnel PPC advertising



**Which type of PPC ads to use
where in the customer journey**



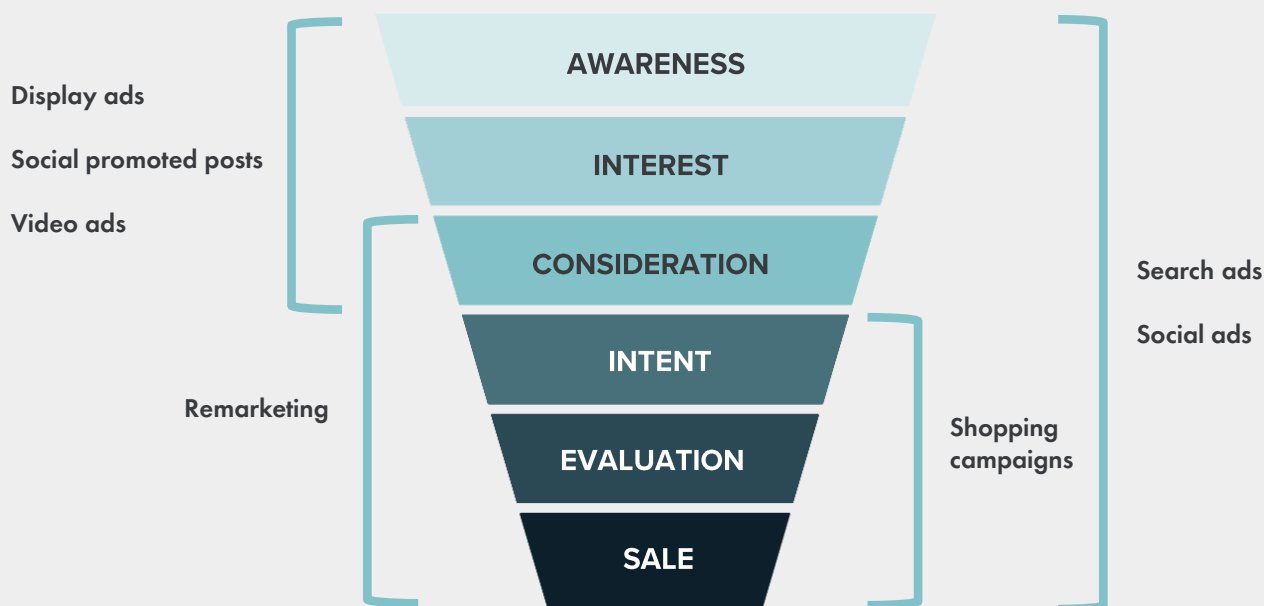


Understanding whether any marketing channel is right for your business requires an understanding of your objectives. Of course, the ultimate business goal of marketing is usually to make more money, but the nature of every industry, market and individual company means that the route to that goal is often achieved in different ways.

To understand this better, let’s begin by returning to marketing 101: the sales and marketing funnel. The clever marketer knows that they need to take a holistic approach to advertising. This means not only going after the low-hanging fruit but also generating new awareness, building relationships and nurturing potential customers through the funnel.



**The clever marketer knows
they need to take a holistic
approach to PPC advertising**



This is particularly important for businesses that need to educate potential customers about the benefits of their particular, often niche, product or service. Once they've generated that awareness, they then need to maintain it, often through long buying cycles.

In an ideal world, marketers would have an unlimited toolbox to promote messages that are relevant to each segment of the process. Inevitably though, the marketing budget will always have the final say on what advertising channels you pick.

Broadly speaking, established PPC channels include the following formats:

- **Search**
- **Display (banners)**
- **Remarketing**
- **Shopping**
- **Social**
- **Video**

Any of these can be used to affect elements of the funnel, although some are more suited to particular parts than others. Above is a typical breakdown of how that might look in practice.

When implemented strategically, with consistency of brand and messaging, a combination of these channels can form a completely joined up campaign, allowing you to encourage users through the entire journey.

A combination of these channels can form a completely joined-up campaign

Search advertising

Before we take a look at what works best where, let's begin with search advertising. It offers a unique opportunity to influence any part of the user journey.

The age-old challenge of marketing is getting in front of the right people at the right time. Users of search engines are the perfect audience as they are telling us exactly where they are in the funnel. E.g. A user at the top of the funnel might use terms such as 'how', 'what is', 'advantages of' etc. A user closer to the end of the funnel will use terms such as 'buy' or specific product details. This makes search advertising an ideal solution for content promotion as well as direct response campaigns.

How search advertising supports your SEO

Google ran two large scale experiments known as the 'Search Ads Pause' studies, which showed that having a search ad is important even when you have great organic visibility. The study showed that even with an SEO result in position one, 66 per cent of ad clicks are incremental, meaning if you removed the ad, they wouldn't be recovered by the organic result. So, even if you have a top organic position for a keyword, a search ad can provide a lot of additional traffic.

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Budget

You'll hear many PPC experts say: "If you put £1 in and get £2 back then budget is not an issue", which is true of any advertising campaign – particularly PPC where ROI is so easy to define. Note, however, that search campaigns often take time to refine and understand where to focus your budget to achieve that level of return. Depending on the volume of traffic moving through your ads, this can take anything from a few months to a year to refine.

An idea to try



One way to reach new customers is to target people who are searching for your competitors. Bidding on competitor brand and product names is entirely legitimate, though you cannot use their brand names in your ads. Competitor brand name keywords tend to require a much lower bid than generic keywords. If you're promoting a service, bid on keywords which suggest the user is unhappy with competitor services, for example '{competitor} complaints'.

Brand awareness

Brand campaigns don't often have a tangible outcome in the short term, so are typically ignored by many smaller businesses. These companies frequently opt to focus on easy wins that point to ROI. However, without brand awareness campaigns, the sales funnel inevitably becomes narrower.

- ✓ Search ads
- ✓ YouTube
- ✓ Display ads
- ✓ Social promotion

Videos

YouTube is the world's second largest search engine. Niche products and services, particularly those new to market, often need a degree of education for potential customers. Video can be a fantastic way to help audiences understand concepts quickly in an engaging format, rather than large technical documents or web pages.

Another huge benefit of YouTube advertising is that it's typically very cheap compared with other channels. This allows you to push your brand message far and wide for a lower cost. Certain adverts on YouTube only charge you if the user has watched 30 seconds or more, allowing you to push your message even further, guaranteeing that you only pay if your message has been seen.



Display advertising

The Display networks allow you to really target your message to the right individual as you can target via demographic, topic and even placement. If your target market is women between 25 and 40 with young children, you're able to control your placements and 'negative out' any that you feel don't quite fit i.e., you would probably choose placements on Ebay or Mumsnet but remove websites for teenagers.

Due to the large number of sites on the display networks, you can build up a large number of impressions at a low cost. Although your click through rates are likely to be lower than on the search network, this doesn't mean that people are not recognising your brand. As you are engaging people when they are potentially not looking for your product or service, this is a branding exercise and one that again allows you to get your message out very cheaply

Certain adverts on YouTube only charge you if the user has watched 30 seconds or more.

Social advertising

Social promotion allows you to be as broad or as targeted in your approach as you wish. For example, with Facebook, you can target by demographic and also by topic or interest. If you were Amazon, you might target people who like John Lewis, as both have similar target audiences. With Twitter you can target via keywords or hashtags and even at times when specific TV shows are on. If your brand was being represented on a programme, you could

look at capturing the multiscreen audience and stream adverts during those slots. Like the display network, Facebook and Twitter allow you to get your message out at generally a lower per-click cost than other channels. You must remember, though, you are showing your message at times when people may not be actively looking for it, so click through rates can be lower. However, with the right message, you can be highly successful using these channels.

Tips from the team



Target current event or trending keywords

Dedicate some budget for brand awareness and measure it using visibility metrics

Use targeting options such as Affinity and Custom Affinity to reach audiences based on their passions and behaviours

Display, YouTube Ads & Facebook Ads are powerful tools for visibility objectives

Target long-tail phrases using the free keyword research tool 'Answer The Public'

Nurturing

If you have a longer sales cycle, or some customers just need more time to complete a purchase or information request, there are various methods to allow you to nurture these prospects.

- ✓ Search ads
- ✓ Remarketing
- ✓ Dynamic ads
- ✓ Customer Match

Remarketing

You can build remarketing audiences in both Google Ads and Google Analytics, though the latter allows you to be a lot more specific with your targeting. With Google Analytics you can specify all sorts of requirements, from source to time on site and bounce rate.

You can show different creatives to different people, depending on the actions they took on the site. If someone only visits the homepage, you might just want to show them a brand message, whereas if they visit the homepage and a category page, you could show them a message from that category. You could also use Dynamic Remarketing Adverts which can show specific products to the individual once they have left your site.

Another good way to use remarketing, if you're a lead generation website, is to use different messages depending upon criteria. For the first week after a user visit, you show them an advert that links to your 'About us' page. If they engage with that advert, you can then show them another that links to case studies. This gives them more information and hopefully pushes them down the sales funnel.

Customer Match

The Customer Match feature in Google Ads, and similarly the 'Lookalike Audiences' feature in Facebook, allows you to target people based on their email address. This is useful if you have a multistage sale, such as offering free samples and attracting samplers back to your website.

You can target the list of sample email addresses, perhaps even directing them back to a page which offers a discount for people who ordered a sample. This will help you guide these individuals down the funnel and will hopefully stop them shopping around if your product is not unique.

Use Customer Match to exclude people too

Customer Match audiences can also be used to exclude those people from your target audience. If you don't want to show certain ads to existing customers, exclude a Customer Match audience. You can also exclude users who have recently purchased or logged in to your website using remarketing audiences.



Closing

One of the best ways to connect with customers who are ready to close a sale is through the search adverts, as discussed earlier in the guide. This is where you can put the targeting methods in other channels to good use. Due to the lower cost per click and impression, they can also serve as effective tools for converting visitors into paying customers.

- ✓ Search ads
- ✓ Remarketing
- ✓ Customer Match
- ✓ Shopping campaigns
- ✓ Social ads

One way to generate leads is to target friends of people who like your service. Virgin Media regularly does this on Facebook as their social team knows that friends are likely to have seen the service or even interacted with it. They know that people who like the Virgin Media social page tend to be customers so may have said good things about the service – meaning the friends should be easier to convert.

As highlighted in the nurturing section, this is where you can start closing customers using remarketing and Customer Match. If you have a multistage cycle, you could change your message to get those customers to convert – maybe through an offer or discount. Using tools such as countdown adverts to create a sense of urgency around the offer may increase the need for customers to act fast.

Shopping campaigns

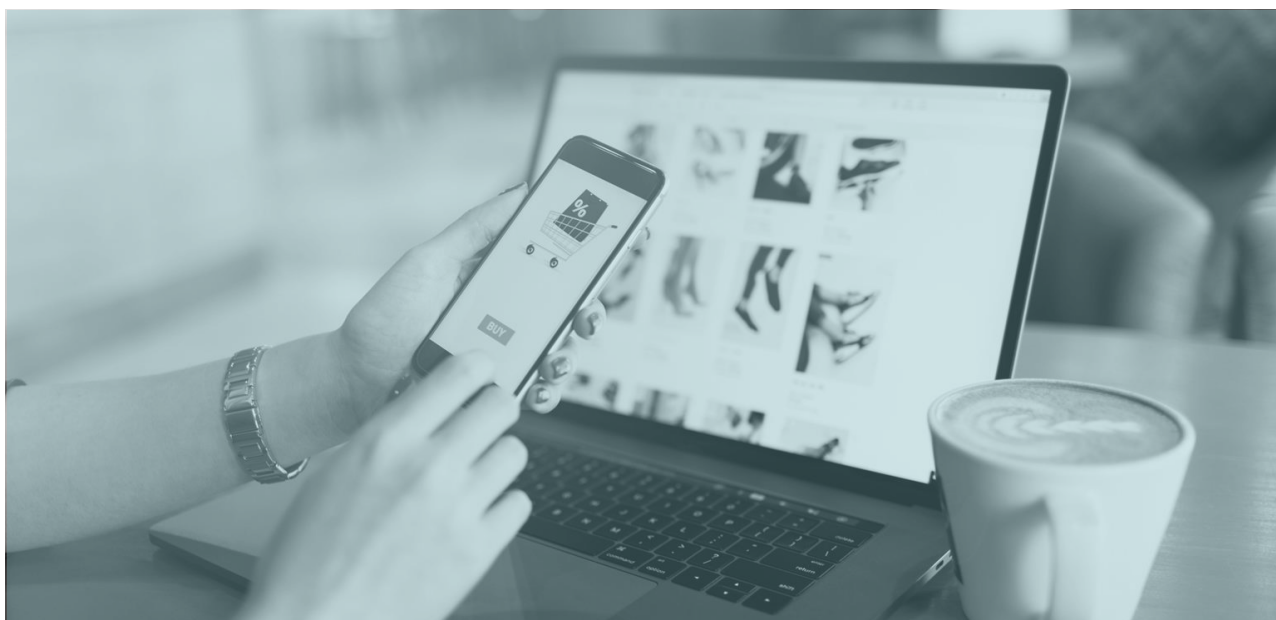
Shopping campaigns use an algorithm to look through a list of products you provide to show relevant results. If someone searches for 'red shoes', it will try and match the search query to products in your feed. It is crucial to manage your feed correctly to ensure you get the best results and avoid wasting budget.

Shopping adverts can be very powerful and, when done well with the correct segmentation, can produce fantastic results. They show up for people with a strong buying intent and are positioned right at the top of the screen.

It is crucial to manage your shopping feed correctly to ensure you get the best results and avoid wasting budget.

A idea to try

Use remarketing on display and social networks to thank customers for their recent purchase and offer them a discount on their next purchase. Don't use this technique for products which are likely to be purchased as gifts though, or you might end up spoiling the surprise!



Next steps

A good first step would be to draw up a list of keywords that you want to rank for. Use a keyword tool to assess your budget requirements and what results you might expect when considering your budget and click cost. This will allow you to assess how it will work for your business and if you need to either scale up or scale down your ideas.

One thing to remember is: don't try and do it all at the same time. Maybe start with a search campaign and then expand into the other areas as your return on investment grows.

Need help?

Whether you're new to PPC and need help setting up your campaigns, or your existing campaigns are under-performing, we can help.

We are a Google Premier Partner which means Google recognises us as a PPC agency that consistently delivers the highest levels of PPC services. We are also certified partners with Amazon, Facebook and Microsoft Ads.

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