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Being online is essential for most modern day businesses.

It's where most customers will go to find businesses, to discover solutions to their problems, to research and compare products and ultimately – to buy what they need. Even if a customer buys offline, [Forrester found that 74% of business buyers](#) conduct more than half of their research online before even setting foot inside your store.

After the 2020 pandemic, being online has become more important than ever.

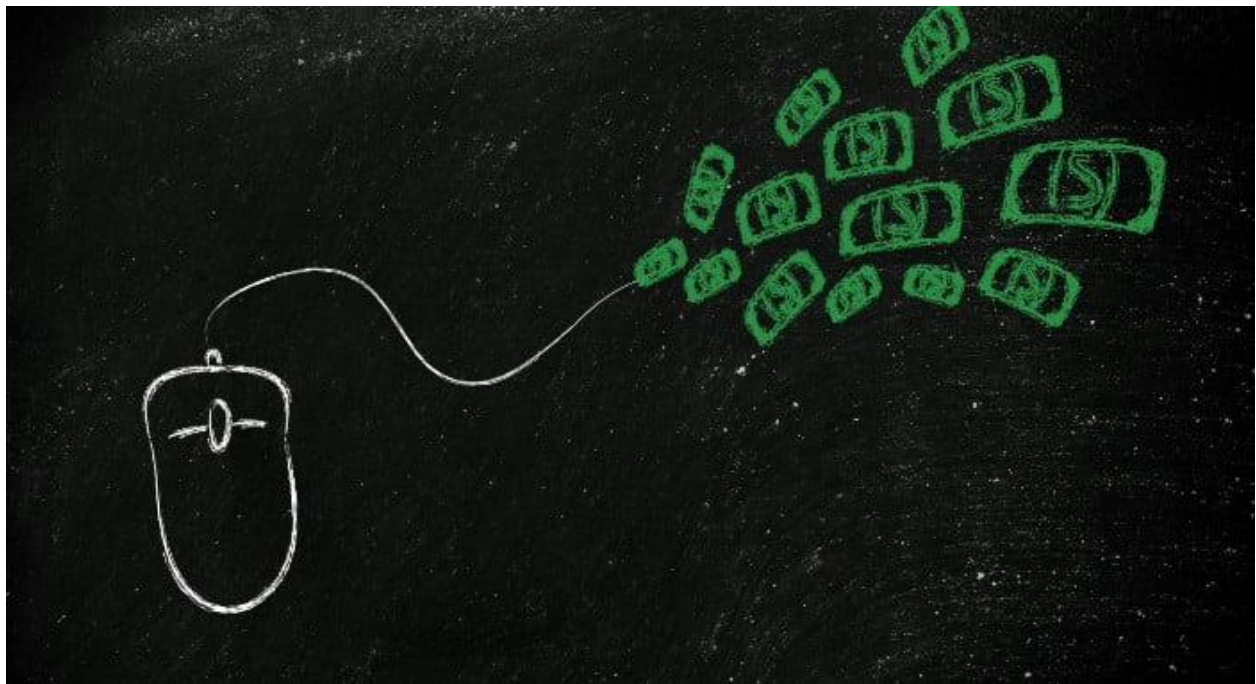
PPC advertising is one method that you can use to attract customers online. If you're new to PPC, or just aren't seeing the results you need, we've got you covered with 7 small business PPC tips that are guaranteed to boost your success.

Shall we get started?

What is PPC advertising?

PPC stands for Pay Per Click. It's a type of online advertising where you only pay if someone clicks on your ad.

PPC advertising is most commonly found on search engines like Google. If you search for something, you'll notice that the first few results on that page will be prefaced by the small bold '**Ad**' text. Some of them may even appear different to normal results, with extra page links or buttons to call now.



These are PPC adverts, designed to get attention and find customers as they're searching for products or businesses like yours. Everytime someone clicks on one of these adverts, the advertiser will pay a fee. But, we'll cover a little more of how that works later on.

PPC adverts aren't just a way to [promote your business on Google](#). **They can also appear on websites that you browse, on YouTube videos or even on social media websites such as Facebook.** However, the core remains the same. Advertisers pay every time someone clicks on (or interacts with) the advert, creating a cost-effective and results-based form of online advertising.

Aren't search engines free though?

Yes, your business website will appear on search engines without any extra cost. But getting to the top of the search results takes a lot of time and effort in it's own right.

This is called SEO (search engine optimisation). You can find out [the difference between PPC and SEO here](#).

For best results, we'd always recommend using both an SEO and PPC strategy. As well as reading the 7 small business PPC tips below, you might want to see these [7 affordable SEO tips](#).

Why should small businesses use PPC advertising?

PPC advertising is all about attracting customers at the right moment.

Let's compare it to a billboard. To advertise that way, you'll need to pay a flat, upfront cost without really knowing what you're going to get back. If you change your mind halfway through, you can't get that money back. You just have to wait it out.

This billboard could be seen by thousands of people. And although that's good for brand exposure and awareness, not everyone who sees your billboard is

going to be your target customer. Worse than that, you have no control over when they see this billboard, meaning it can come at the most inappropriate moment and not when they want to buy.

In comparison, PPC advertising is a completely flexible solution that you can edit and amend at any time. **You set a budget and a maximum spend per day. But you can increase, decrease or stop it at any time that you desire.**



The most important part of PPC advertising is that it only appears for very specific moments. You're not paying for a banner on the Google homepage. You bid on relevant keywords so your adverts get shown to customers who are actively looking for your products or services.

For example, if you bid on the keyword 'plumber near me' your advert will appear whenever someone searches for this phrase. **And if someone is making this search, you can guarantee that they're in need of a plumber.**

The 7 small business PPC tips to know

If you've made it this far down, then you're ready to delve into the world of PPC advertising. How exciting!

To make sure that you get the best results possible from your budget, we've put together these 7 small business PPC tips that you need to know to improve your success.

1. Set an objective before you go any further

You've heard how PPC advertising can help your business. Now, the temptation would be to rush into it, full steam ahead and wait for the results to roll in.

That's not a good idea. Before you do anything, you need to have a think about what exactly you want to achieve and set some objectives for your business. This is one of the biggest, and most important, small business PPC tips that you need to listen to.

So, what is it that you're trying to achieve with your PPC campaign?

- Do you want to drive traffic to your website?
- Do you want to increase sales of a specific product?
- Do you want people to sign up to a mailing list?
- Do you want leads?

Once you've answered that, you can start putting together a plan of how to achieve it and deciding key factors like how much budget you want to set aside, what your target is and the types of campaigns you want to run.

2. It isn't all about Google search



PPC advertising isn't just about appearing on Google Search results. And although there are [3.5 billion searches a day on this search engine](#), that doesn't matter much if your customers aren't there.

There are dozens of search engines and other platforms that you might want to consider, including:

- Microsoft Advertising (which includes Bing, Yahoo!, AOL, Linked In and more);
- Facebook advertising (which also includes Instagram);
- Twitter;
- DuckDuckGo;
- Capterra;
- And more.

But don't get overwhelmed by the choices or assume that you need to be advertising on all of them because that's just not the case. It's about finding out where your target audience is most likely to be.

For example, Bing users are usually more mature and affluent than Google. They have an average age of 45, are college-educated and a third of them have a household income of over \$100,000. If that sounds like your target user, then Microsoft Advertising is definitely worth your attention.

In addition to thinking about where your audience is at, you need to think about what they will engage with. If your business is quite visual, such as artwork or home interior products, you'll be more suited to visual image or video based ads. That means you might want to consider using Facebook or Instagram – or creating display adverts across the Google Search Network.

These tactics can work hand in hand with your own [social media marketing](#).

3. Do your keyword research

Keywords are the foundations of PPC campaigns. Without well selected keywords, trying to have a successful PPC campaign will be like trying to build a house on sinking sand.

To demonstrate how important keywords are, it's important that we give you some more context on how PPC advertising works, particularly on networks like Google.

In order to get your advert shown on search results, you need to place a bid on the right keyword. This means that every time someone searches for that keyword, your business will enter an auction to see which adverts are shown, and in what order.



But the business that wins isn't always the advertiser that pays the most. To protect users, the advertisers that get the top position on Google will have the best Quality Score. This is a metric that is calculated based on:

- Your bid;
- The relevance of your advert;
- The landing page you send users to after they click.

This is to stop people with spam websites from spending a fortune to win every single bid.

The more businesses that bid for a certain keyword, the more expensive and harder it will be to show your advert. That's why you need to select your keywords carefully to ensure that you are using your budget on the best keywords for your business.

There are a number of free tools that your business can use to research keywords, including Google's very own keyword planner. This will tell you how

many people are searching for it, an estimated Cost per Click and how much competition you'll face.

For best practice:

Focus on keyword intent

This is all about understanding why someone is searching for that phrase, and how to use it to your advantage. For example, if you sell hand-made candles, someone searching for "how to make candles at home" are not going to be in the market to buy your product.

Use long-tail keywords

Long-tail keywords are keywords that are made up of 4 or more words. They're often pretty niche and less searched for, which means they're often cheaper and face less competition. What's more, they're often made by people who are closer to buying a product as someone searching for "size 6 womens black heels" is closer to the checkout than someone searching for "shoes".

Don't just focus on volume

It can be easy to be distracted for how many people search for a keyword. But instead of focusing on that, weigh it up against how much competition it has, how much of your budget it will use and how likely your audience will be ready to buy based on it.

4. Capture attention and promote your USP

With PPC adverts, you often don't get a lot of room to promote your business. Which means you need to get used to writing engaging, snappy adverts in little words.

Each platform will have their own character limits and guides, so you need to make sure you know what you're working with before you start. For Google Ads, your search adverts will be limited to:

- 3x headlines at 30 characters;
- 2x descriptions at 90 characters.

For best practice, think about your USP (unique selling point) and what it is about your product/business that customers love. Why should they go to you instead of a competitor? Why might they want your product?

Answer those questions, then write them down in a short and snappy advert.

As a quick example, we've just created this advert copy for a business that sells cat toys.

- Fun Toys Your Cat Will Love! (Headline 1)
- Quality Toys Made To Last. (Headline 2)
- Free Delivery To Your Home. (Headline 3)
- Eliminate cat boredom & protect your furniture with toys your cat will love to play with. (Description 1)
- Hand-made and proven to last. Resistant to the sharpest claws. Order now for free catnip. (Description 2)

5. Set up local campaigns



If you have a physical store, or if you offer services to your local area, location based PPC campaigns will be a great benefit to your business.

To do this, use location keywords in your campaign, like “plumber in Manchester”. Boil it down to exact areas inside a city or region as well.

You can also use location targeting on your adverts, setting it to a certain region or mile radius around a postcode. This means that your adverts will only show up if a user searches for your keywords inside that area, making sure that only customers who are near your business will see your adverts.

You can also make use of location extensions, which will allow you to add the physical address of your business in your advert. So if someone searches for cafes near them while 5 minutes away from your cafe, your advert can show up with directions to your business.

6. Use negative keywords

Negative keywords are keywords that you don't want your advert to appear for. They're really useful at stopping your budget being spent on adverts that aren't any use to your customer, helping deliver a better ROI.

For example, if you sell, and deliver, fresh baked pies to your customers, you don't want to appear for searches like:

- "Bulk buy frozen pies";
- "How to make a pie from scratch";
- "Why do clowns throw pies".

If people are searching for those things, it's likely they don't want to buy your home-baked pie. So, you can add terms like the above, or ones like "free" or "DIY" to your negative keyword list.

7. Always test, optimise and improve

PPC campaigns aren't something that you set up once and they're done. **To really get the best from them, you need to monitor your results, test new adverts and apply improvements to really make the most bang for your buck.**

After all, it's very rare to hit it out of the park on your very first try. It takes time, learning and improvement. Even if your campaigns are performing well, there's always room to be better, to improve and take your business to that next level.

One of the big things here is time. If you haven't got the time to manage your campaigns, then they might not be right for your small business. However, if the budget is there for it, you might want to consider using a PPC agency or freelancer to help run your campaigns for you.

One last PPC tip...

PPC advertising shouldn't work in isolation. It's a part of your overall marketing strategy and should work hand in hand with the other campaigns and disciplines that you are currently operating.

For more marketing ideas and advice, check out [our guides for how to succeed online here.](#)