Adobe Systems Incorporated

Effective search marketing campaigns

Adobe turns to Adobe Media Optimizer to reduce costs and drive double-digit and triple-digit returns on SEM campaigns

As a global leader in digital marketing and digital media solutions, Adobe provides software and services that enable customers to change the world through digital experiences. From creating and delivering groundbreaking digital content to measuring and optimizing that content across media and devices, Adobe solutions empower corporations and creative professionals worldwide to transform digital engagement and maximize returns with high-impact content.

Needing a powerful search engine management (SEM) solution, Adobe deployed Adobe Media Optimizer along with the Adobe Analytics solution within Adobe Marketing Cloud. “With integrated Adobe Media Optimizer and Adobe Analytics solutions, we could leverage built-in bidding algorithms and real-time analysis for incredible insight and control over our search campaigns,” says Jeff Julian, senior search engine marketing manager at Adobe.

Boosting brands in competitive markets

By using Adobe Media Optimizer for Search, Adobe search marketers can spend substantially less time calculating bids and have more time to optimize the direction of marketing campaigns. When bidding on keywords for Google and other major search engines, for instance, search marketers usually calculate maximum bids based on key performance indicators (KPI) such as cost per lead and estimated performance in terms of conversion.

Rather than manually reviewing backend data to calculate bids, marketers can use Adobe Media Optimizer for Search to automatically aggregate and evaluate keyword performance and calculate the optimum spend on keywords across ad groups. “The advanced, built-in algorithms track performance across keywords for each campaign and automatically distribute the marketing budget to efficiently invest more spend into high-performance keywords,” explains Julian.

In particular, the automated spend optimization enhances tail management by tracking and calculating performance for the many lower-performing keywords that get overlooked in less automated campaigns. While time limitations often force search marketers to regularly cull keyword lists, the automated campaign management enabled by Adobe Media Optimizer for Search enables marketers to manage more keywords than ever. More keywords add agility to the search campaign, empowering marketers to react to changes in performance and the market by repositioning bids as needed.

While the bidding algorithms improve keyword performance across the board, one area where Adobe Media Optimizer for Search has proven especially effective is in managing bidding for non-branded keywords. “Looking at our search engine marketing campaigns, we will always see strong performance for well-known, branded keywords, like Acrobat, Photoshop, and PDF,” says Jay Middleton, director of Global Search Marketing at Adobe. “The challenge can be trying to establish an Adobe presence for new products, new markets, and generic keywords where we face more competition.”

By automatically optimizing campaign spend, the Adobe Media Optimizer solution makes it easy and effective to manage large numbers of non-branded keywords. For example, when launching Acrobat online services, Adobe faced competition from many smaller vendors. Although Adobe Acrobat is an established brand, many customers were unaware of the cloud-based services, which include the ability to create and export PDF files, create online forms, or take advantage of a complete online contracting solution supported by eSignatures.
Using Adobe Media Optimizer for Search, the search marketing team worked to improve Adobe's standing for generic keywords such as "online forms" and "survey tools" to build awareness of the new services. "Through optimized bidding, we decreased the cost per acquisition by 30%," says Julian. "Overall, using Adobe Media Optimizer for Search helped us raise visibility for Acrobat online services and increase orders by 300% compared to the previous year."

Translating analysis into automated bidding

With the integrated Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions, Adobe drives further returns on its SEM campaign activities. Combined, Adobe Analytics and Adobe Media Optimizer for Search provide marketing managers with a wealth of information about visitor behavior, far beyond what any other bid management solution can achieve. Seamlessly integrating components of Adobe Marketing Cloud gives the team access to real-time analytics to react quickly and change strategies as needed.

The SEM campaign processes are enhanced further with integration of the Adobe solutions with data from the company's customer relationship management system Salesforce.com. For example, Adobe Media Optimizer for Search can track keyword performance down to micro-conversions. Using this data, search marketers can target specific types of performance, such as certain types of leads. In addition, the powerful Adobe Media Optimizer algorithms can calculate bids based on multiple KPIs for greater returns. This enables search marketers to create more complex bidding formulas, such as campaigns that target both customers who purchase a product and those who participate in a trial.

Navigating bidding across channels

While primarily focused on Adobe Media Optimizer for Search, the Adobe SEM team is also taking advantage of the expert bidding management system for social media, Adobe Media Optimizer for Social. Using similar advanced algorithms, Adobe Media Optimizer for Social helps navigate volatile social media advertising markets. According to Julian, it's not unusual for advertisers to suddenly join or leave a market, driving bids up and down accordingly.

"Real-time bid optimization with Adobe Media Optimizer for Social helps prevent us from being locked out of the advertising space due to underbidding or wasting our budget by overpaying for bids," says Julian.

Recent changes to bidding at search giant Google make the automated bidding algorithm even more critical across channels. The consolidated bidding system enables campaigns on all devices, with additional weighting determining desktop versus mobile advertisements. For advertisers who want to focus a campaign on one channel or adjust spend across channels, weighting will become an essential part of the bidding process. With automated bid optimization, Adobe Media Optimizer enables search marketers to adapt to the new bidding system with ease.
Lifting responses while decreasing spend
By optimizing keyword bids for ad campaigns, Adobe search marketers are decreasing spend while increasing responses, particularly for the growing Adobe Marketing Cloud brand. Over a four month period, search marketers used the Adobe Media Optimizer solution to optimize ad campaigns for the Adobe Analytics solution. As a result, marketers reduced the cost per inquiry from $123 to $60—a 51% reduction—while increasing total inquiries 81%.

In another example, optimizing a campaign for the Adobe Experience Manager solution resulted in a 19% decrease in total spend and 46% decrease in cost per response while increasing weekly responses 48%. "For some IT products, the ideal cost per action (CPA) is below $100," says Julian. "We initially had a CPA well into the triple digits, but by working with the Adobe Media Optimizer solution, we reduced it to about $75 for Adobe Experience Manager in only a few months."

Integrating search with Adobe Marketing Cloud
Full integration across Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions provides the Adobe Media Optimizer solution with functionality unmatched among search engine marketing products. Data from Adobe Analytics drives even richer insights for better campaign planning, while Adobe Social further enhances search campaigns with specialized analysis in social media environments. Through Adobe Media Optimizer integration with Adobe Target and Adobe Experience Manager, Adobe even gains the ability to optimize landing pages or dynamically insert keywords for greater performance and conversion.

"With Adobe Media Optimizer automating monitoring markets and calculating bids, our search marketers are free to spend more time establishing goals and refining campaigns," says Julian. "By spending our time optimizing campaigns and not on more routine bid management, we can focus on achieving bigger performance gains with less spend across the board."

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