

ROI Marketing News is about using the Internet to build relationships for online marketers, published periodically by Rapport Online Inc. Feel free to forward this newsletter in its entirety to a friend or to link to the archived copy. See the end of this message for information about subscribing or unsubscribing.

Greetings from Sedona! Although the deciduous trees are bare with buds set for spring, daily temperatures between 50° - 70°F make for lovely hiking weather. -- This is my kind of January!

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Converting Your Yahoo Search Account

Aargh! We usually embrace change, but after converting our two largest Yahoo Search accounts to the new Panama interface we have two account messes. If anyone has sailed through with a well organized account before and after, I would like to hear how it is done.

Here's what we have tried so far. Client A has geographically targeted campaigns, so we requested early conversion to take advantage of the Panama's geotargeting. We have basically three variants of the ads, which we organized according to the desired geotargeted campaigns prior to converting the account. We expected to see one ad group in each campaign on the new interface. No such luck. When we opened the account in the new interface we found that, although the title and description was the same for most or all of the keywords in a campaign, Yahoo, seemingly arbitrarily created several ad groups, goofed up the ads and, somehow, managed to get keywords that belonged to different geographic areas mixed up. We spent about a day sorting it all out on the new Yahoo interface.

Client B is a retailer, so we did not want to mess with the interface during the Christmas buying season. We waited to convert until the first week in January. This time we decided to outfox the Yahoo conversion tool by downloading the account, organizing it and uploading using Yahoo's bulk upload tool. Spreadsheet maven that I am, I downloaded the account and tried to reorganize everything for bulk upload. Aack! The upload template is so complicated with so many fields it took even longer. I threw up my hands and settled for "ok, that will work" rather than working to achieve perfection.

If the only pay per click interface you have ever used is Yahoo, the new interface will probably be confusing and inconvenient. As we predicted, it is very much a Google look alike, but a few years behind in sophistication.

Benefits of the new interface include:

Geographic targeting - allows us to use broader keywords to a targeted city or state without incurring a lot of useless clicks.

Multiple ads for one ad group - allows A/B testing of titles and descriptions to determine which one will perform better in terms of clicks and/or conversions.

Bidding position predictor - When working on the bid for a single key phrase, Yahoo projects a bid range to put your ad in the top spots above natural search results. Unfortunately it cannot take into consideration advanced bid keywords that will show up on the same key phrase.

Yahoo highlights the ability to insert the search term into the ad title, description and destination url. Nifty!

What we miss from the old interface:

Remember how easy it was to move a keyword from one category to another on the old interface? You just click on the keyword and use the "edit category" button. We have not found a convenient way to move a keyword from one ad group to another, although it is easy to move an ad group from one campaign to another.

No link to the old Keyword Selector Tool! If Yahoo eliminates this, I'm going to cry crocodile tears! A far superior tool to Google's method, which Yahoo has adopted in my opinion!

New Tools for Competitive Analysis

From time to time someone comes up with a nifty new tool for figuring out where you stand vs. the competition. Check out SnapShot at Compete.com for example. This free tool allows you to compare your site with others on the Web. Over the past three years we have noticed that Yahoo Search advertising has lost significant market share to Google AdWords. This snap shot shows part of the reason. <http://snapshot.compete.com/yahoo.com+google.com+> Notice that while Google is closing the gap for people using the site, the "stickiness" (amount of time spent) of the site continues in Yahoo's favor.

We talk about Google Page Rank a lot, because it is an important factor in how Google ranks pages in search results. If you use Fire Fox browser, you see the page rank for each site you visit in the lower right hand corner, but for the 90%+ of Web surfers using Internet Explorer, here's a site with page rank checker.

http://www.mypagerank.net/service_google_pagerank_index

Another site tries to determine your homepage page strength using several criteria, including Google Page Rank. <http://www.seomoz.org/tools/page-strength.php>

Updates to ROI Calculator

Speaking of tools, we have recently updated our own Calculator tool for determining your Cost per Customer Acquired and helping to set goals for keyword bidding. <http://www.roi-web.com/calculator.shtml>

Click on the links to the right of the calculator to pop-up instructions for doing the various calculations. Feedback regarding usability will be welcome.

Planning for 2007

If you do not already have your online marketing plans together for 2007, here are a few things you might want to consider:

Improve your site's conversion rate. If your online store is seeing a conversion rate of less than 2% (less than 4% for a well known brand) this is an important area to attend to. If you can simply double your conversion rate, it is the same as doubling your advertising, but a lot less expensive! A good how-to resource for improving the performance of your "landing pages" is Marketing Experiments <http://www.MarketinExperiments.Com>. They have done many landing page A/B tests and have reports with examples and recommendations for almost any kind of retail.

Take stock of where you are relative to competitors. Using the many good competitive analysis tools that are available, many of them free, analyze where your site ranks in comparison or request a Web Visibility Report from us. Take a look at what your competitors are doing with their sites and how they are using email or blogs - you might get good ideas.

Review your site's promotion plan. Every year things seem to change online. People are constantly working to try to improve our ability to find things on the Web, technology allows more

and more capacity and more people from more countries are using the Internet for information, entertainment and to express themselves. Keep up to date on opportunities for your marketing.

Have a happy and prosperous 2007!

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