

Paid Search Case Study: Boutique Hotel Group

Background

The client is a **exclusive booking partner for luxury boutique hotels**, providing its member hotels, marketing, promotional, and online booking services. The client's paper and online directory of high-end hotels represents over 520 hotels in 70 countries worldwide.

Challenge

Historically focused on promoting its member hotels offline in its paper directory, the client has invested significantly in improving its hotels digital presence and driving new bookings through online marketing. Prior to partnering with The Search Agency, the client was investing in paid search marketing, but was dissatisfied with the results. Without a recognizable brand name, they struggled to compete in the highly competitive travel vertical and suffered from a high cost-of-sale of 30 percent. In partnering with The Search Agency, the client sought new strategies for bidding, account structure, and location targeting to improve the efficiency of their campaigns and drive return on investment.

Solution

The Search Agency's eight-person account team immediately set to work overhauling the account structure, introducing more than 20 new international markets to the account, and optimizing bid management.

- **Account Structure-** The client's account team immediately overhauled the account structure, expanding its reach, increasing the number of campaigns, and reorganizing keywords and AdGroups to better target specific geographies and hotels. Previously, the client's paid search campaign exclusively targeted travelers in the United Kingdom. Given the international reach of its hotel affiliation, the account team expanded the campaign to include more than 20 additional countries in North America, South America, Asia, and Europe.
- **Data Integration-** After reorganizing the client's account structure and completing the backend data integration, the account team enabled The Search Agency's AdMax™ bid optimization platform. For each keyword, the account team set the client's cost-per-hotel booking target and began tracking each campaign's performance.
- **Optimized Investment-** With a more precise data tracking system in place, The Search Agency's account team went to work increasing total conversions and reducing the cost per acquisition (CPA) for online bookings. This represented a significant challenge, as the team needed to quickly create separate campaigns for each target market. At any given time, the account team managed over 200 campaigns with 500,000 different keywords across 24 geographic regions. The team leveraged a range of tactics to keep the campaigns on budget and drive measured growth in the account's performance:
 - **Manual Budget Optimization-** The account team vigilantly monitored the success of each campaign, shifting the budget from underperforming campaigns to top performing campaigns on a daily, often hourly, basis.
 - **Introduced international campaigns with geo-modified keywords-** Rather than bidding on general, non-targeted keywords such as "hotels" or "luxury hotels", The Search Agency ran international campaigns on geo-modified keywords (e.g. Luxury Hotel London).

- **Ad Sitelinks-** To accomplish the client's lead generation goals, the account team introduced both Branded and Non-Branded Ad Sitelinks to the campaign. (*Google Ad Sitelinks is a feature of Google AdWords that helps advertisers drive ROI by providing up to six additional links in their paid search ad. With six extra Destination URLs, Ad Sitelinks help to differentiate an ad on the search results page (SERP). Ad Sitelinks also enable marketers to link searchers to deep content within a site, helping to improve the customer experience and helping to shorten the conversion funnel and improve efficiency.*)
 - **Non-branded-** The Search Agency employed non-branded Ad Sitelinks to target a searcher's location both on geo-modified terms, i.e., searches where the searcher has added a geo-modified term like a city or region to their query. Geo-modified Ad Sitelinks direct searchers to deeper, more relevant content in the sitemap.
 - **Branded-** The Search Agency also leveraged branded Ad Sitelinks to occupy more space on the SERP and differentiate the client's ads from the competition.
- **Day-parting-** The account team closely examined the conversion data and found that specific times of the day and year were performing better in different markets. Leveraging this data, the account team targeted ads to high-performing times of the day and week in each specific time zone.
- **Targeted specific markets with unique foreign language copy-** The Team account team works directly with in-house translators to create ad copy in German and Russian. Germany and Russia represent two of the client's top performing markets.
- **Developed new ad creative tied to special promotions-** The account team worked directly with the client's marketing team to include location-specific offers and discounts in the ad copy. This strategy helped to further distinguish the client from its competitors' ads and drive total revenue.
- **Expanded Match Types-** By employing The Search Agency's best practices for expanding match types, the account team was able to reduce the client's reliance on Google broad match and improve overall campaign efficiency. This ensured that all keywords had an exact match duplicated within the same Ad Group.
- **Negative keywords-** The account team added negative keywords to the campaign to avoid wasted spend on users searching and clicking on ads for hotels that are named similarly to the client hotels and for searches that are unlikely to convert.

Results

The client has been very satisfied with the performance of their paid search campaign and continues to invest significantly in the channel. Since partnering with The Search Agency, the client has seen a 6-fold improvement on ROI from paid search. This has afforded the client the opportunity to expand their investment in online marketing, and The Search Agency now manages their English language search engine optimization strategy and execution, as well.

Monthly Cost vs. Cost-of-Sale

