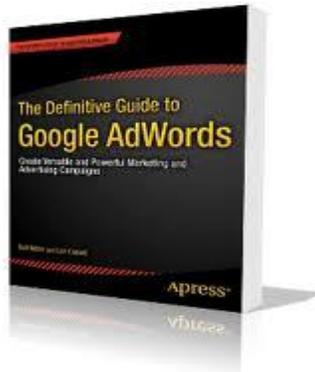




Book Review



The Definitive Guide to Google Adwords

By: Bart Weller and Lori Calcott

Apress, 2012

368 pages, Paperback, \$39.99

Kindle, \$17.59

Reviewed by: Parvin Otoofi, Florida Institute of Technology

The Definitive Guide to Google Adwords is an informative and easy to read how-to /reference book that is designed for readers that have some understanding of computer technology and want to learn how to do Search Engine Marketing (SEM) using Google Adwords. The authors provide a well-planned lead up to this highly technical advertising resource in the beginning of the text and then skillfully mate Adwords with Google Analytics later on. This is important material not only for marketing experts but it is written so that businesspersons can pick up enough understanding about SEM to manage their own Adwords account with confidence or at least to participate meaningfully in the online marketing efforts of their firm. Also, take note that the text is available in Kindle, whose search capabilities enhance the troubleshooting potential of the book for the future.

It appears to be a long read with 368 pages, but much of the page space is filled with screenshots that are designed to familiarize the reader with the look and feel of the various tabs and navigation buttons. This is a good thing because as the function of each option is explained with the required verbiage, an appropriate screenshot is displayed to also lead the way with some visual support. After reading this resource at least once to get started, the visual aids become even more important when something unexpected comes up, and the book is called upon to solve a specific problem. It is reassuring to see that at least that the computer screen and the book's screenshot are the same and the next button that is clicked doesn't take the user toward a completely different pursuit.

The authors of this book give important hands-on tips based upon practical experience working with Google's Adwords system of marketing tools. For instance, in the section detailing ad extensions, the method for finding and executing ad extensions is illustrated with screenshots but also the authors' state: "We've found that ads with ad extensions see higher click-through rates." Not only is "how-to" information given but vital "why-to" tips are also spread throughout

all twelve chapters. Special attention should be given to the bolded “Note” paragraphs because these were found to contain nuggets of expert practical experience. One of these bolded notes warns that “...Selecting HTTP when the page being tagged has SSL security will cause a security warning to display when a visitor reaches the page, which could make visitors question the integrity of your site.” It is true, this book is filled with highly technical information, but it will help readers to avoid complications that could require many frustrating hours of troubleshooting activity.

Setting Up Your First Adwords Campaign

After the terminology is spelled out clearly, a first-timer launch of an ad campaign is detailed with step-by-step instructions that are designed to save time and reduce costly mistakes. An introduction to Adwords Express, Google’s quick-start version for small local firms is offered for those who need only the basics to begin their SEM program. Guidelines are presented that help readers avoid being steered toward wasteful, high dollar Google-centric choices that often pop up in Adwords Express. Also, location-based marketing is an important segment of Adwords and Google Analytics capability that is introduced. Ads can be shown in as little as a 20-mile radius or they can blanket several countries with exclusions allowed even inside the targeted areas.

Choosing relevant keywords makes or breaks the ROI aspect of a campaign so a theme-based method of organizing keyword choices is submitted early-on. In addition, a keyword refining process is laid out so that even when a campaign becomes live, it can be salvaged if certain keywords prove to be nonproductive.

Adwords campaigns are always a work-in-progress, that is, they are never quite complete while they are still running; so there is always some room for experimentation and improvement even while a project is still humming. However, sometimes it is appropriate to make changes to a campaign in theory before actually launching those changes online. The authors lead the way by introducing Adwords Editor, the offline, desktop version of Adwords. Campaigns can be strategized and then saved for later use or submitted via PDF for review and approval by clients.

Measuring the Results Tells the Whole Story

There’s an old adage in the world of business that holds true no matter what methods are used: “If it can’t be measured, it can’t be managed.” It is of paramount importance to set up an Adwords account so that the right things are measured in each unique company. Some of the key ideas presented include: 1) Starting small by launching only one campaign at a time. That way changes are more easily evaluated at the campaign level. 2) Look closely at keywords if the budget will not allow more spending. 3) Be sure to show your Quality Score at the keyword level by customizing columns. 4) When testing ad text, set the ads to rotate evenly in campaign settings. This permits the user to evaluate the winning ad, not Google. 5) Segmenting Adwords data in various ways reveals the click-thru habits of patrons. The right segmentation can show time, conversions, mobile click-to-call activity, by device activity, and even by what experiment was being implemented when an ad is clicked. 6) Filters can be applied that automatically locate keywords that are not causing conversions, or that possess low Quality Scores, and also those that produce low ad positions.

Because of the well-planned lead up to the technical meat inside this book, the reader should be able to digest the material and learn a truly complicated skill set. However, this is not a one-time-read subject so it is recommended that readers plan enough time to go through the material at least twice. If possible, actually do a campaign during a follow-up reading in order to see and understand all of the bells and whistles that are included in the Adwords software. In any event, *The Definitive Guide to Google Adwords* is a book that belongs in the library of anyone whose business position even slightly touches an Adwords campaign.