



## Got search marketing in the bag?

As a leading women's lifestyle portal, handbag.com reaches over 1.5 million readers every month, delivering fresh editorial content on fashion, beauty, celebrity gossip, and much more. The brand has gone from strength to strength since it was set up in 1999 and continues to lead the market. handbag is an expanding online business with ambitious growth plans and has worked with Greenlight for over a year to develop a clear and focused paid search strategy aimed at increasing page impressions and reaching new audiences cost effectively.

A series of highly targeted PPC campaigns combined with strategic consultancy on key editorial and online issues, have led to an astounding 410% rise in the number of page impressions. Cost per click on all keywords has dropped by 42% on average and the ongoing fine tuning of the campaigns means that the cost per click is now far lower than targeted.

Greenlight's account team is fully immersed in the online publishing environment and has a complete understanding of the page impression business model and its possibilities for paid search. By fostering a more consultative approach, the relationship has progressed from the standard agency-client setup, to Greenlight becoming an extension of handbag's marketing department.

“ Greenlight has really helped us to improve our month-on-month PPC activity. The campaigns have resulted in a sharp increase in page impressions and low CPCs. Greenlight has provided thorough account management and the agency's overall understanding of our requirements coupled with its knowledge of our market has been the key to success. ”

Claire Higgins  
Brand Manager  
handbag.com

handbag  
www.handbag.com



## Objectives

- To increase the number of page impressions by reaching new audiences.
- To drive down the cost per click and maximise ROI.

## About handbag.com

handbag.com is an award winning beauty, fashion and lifestyle website for women with over 1.5 million readers a month. The site was launched in October 1999 and in October 2006, became part of the Hearst Digital Network - the digital publishing division of The National Magazine Company Limited. handbag.com was the first women's lifestyle website to launch in the UK and remains the market leader. Other women's lifestyle sites have sprung up since handbag launched including online versions of print magazines such as Marie Claire and Vogue, as well as online only titles like iVillage. This means that competition for traffic is fierce, making success in online marketing essential. handbag's unrivalled knowledge and experience of female consumers online put them in a unique position to reach new audiences and tap into the increasing number of female internet users. This unique market knowledge combined with Greenlight's search nous presented great potential for PPC success.

## Background

The handbag brand comprises three other websites: gomamatoday.com, allaboutyou.com and getlippy.com. At the time of appointing Greenlight, handbag had just launched *gomamatoday* and *allaboutyou*, having overhauled and segmented content on its own site to serve the different niche groups that had emerged.

Historically, handbag's approach to PPC involved ad-hoc internally managed campaigns, which were mainly used to boost page impressions across all its sites when required. This produced good results, however without a dedicated internal resource for paid search, the activity was becoming harder to manage.

handbag appointed Greenlight to drive PPC into planned and targeted campaigns that would produce the traffic levels they desired, help to grow the number of impressions and produce predictable and consistent results.

## Pre-campaign analysis

Greenlight conducted a full review of handbag's existing PPC activity to uncover new opportunities. The findings revealed that although handbag had a good understanding of how to use PPC, they lacked tactical expertise and were therefore missing out on thousands of searches and potential clicks.

Greenlight was determined to capture this overlooked opportunity and secure wider visibility on the top search engines. To achieve this, Greenlight's PPC experts held in-depth meetings with handbag's editorial team to discuss the site's content areas and to identify primary targets across all the handbag websites. This process brought to light distinct themes which centred around forward features and articles, and Greenlight used these to form the basis of the PPC campaigns.

## Implementation

handbag's previous approach to PPC involved bidding on keywords such as celebrity names or generic topics like 'hair styling', 'fashion', 'horoscopes' and so on. With such generic terms, the cost per click was inevitably high due to thousands of businesses bidding on these popular words every day. Greenlight's strategy was to fine tune the target keywords and form detailed groups on specialist topics. handbag now bids on thousands of keyword variations around each specific topic rather than just bidding on an obvious handful of terms.

Once the campaigns had been set up into the detailed keyword groups, they were rolled out in Google and monitored daily by our dedicated team of analysts. Each campaign was tracked and refined continuously to ensure an optimum level of performance. The campaigns were integrated with handbag's editorial strategy so that as editorial content was refreshed on the site, the campaigns were also updated to reflect this. Greenlight's high level of involvement with handbag at the content planning stages has meant that campaign creative and the timing of ad placements is perfectly in sync with the publishing of new content.

## Results

For the vast majority of online publishers the primary target for search marketing is to increase the number of page impressions. This was certainly the case for handbag.com and Greenlight delivered just that, and in no modest measures. The PPC campaign increased the number of impressions from 48million in Q2 2006, to 245million impressions by Q2 2007 (see figure 1). Another important goal for handbag was to achieve more impressions cost effectively. Our campaigns have driven down CPC to their lowest point, with a reduction of 42% within a 12 month period (see figure 2).

Figure 1  
Page impressions up 410%  
year on year

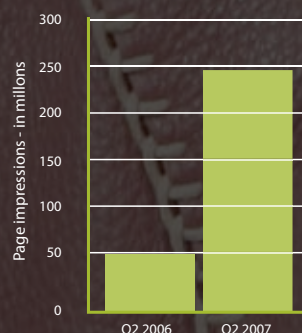
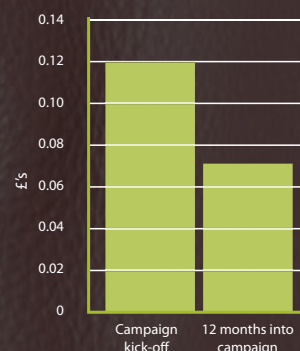


Figure 2  
Cost Per Click down 42%



Greenlight continues to consult handbag on its paid search strategy, managing ever more complex and dynamic campaigns. Our understanding of their market and business model has led to Greenlight becoming an extension of the internal marketing team and the preferred search partner for several other brands within the Hearst Digital Group, including Men's Health and Cosmopolitan.