



Select-a-Room.com uses AdWords regional targeting to penetrate niche markets in the travel services industry

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Steve Penney
Chairman



ABOUT GOOGLE ADWORDS

Google AdWords is the world's largest search advertising programme, currently used by thousands of businesses to gain new customers cost-effectively. AdWords uses keywords to precisely target ad delivery to web users seeking information about a particular product or service. The programme is based on cost-per-click (CPC) pricing, so advertisers only pay when an ad is clicked on. Advertisers can take advantage of an extremely broad distribution network, and choose the level of support and spending appropriate for their business.

For more information visit
www.google.co.uk/ads

www.select-a-room.com

Select-a-room.com provides a range of travel services for the public from its offices in the UK and throughout the world. With a particular focus on Central and Eastern Europe, it has been a pioneer in the growth of tourism to the former Soviet Union following 70 years of severe travel restrictions. It turned to AdWords as it looked to expand its reach online in an effective and targeted way.

Select-a-Room.com began thinking about its own online presence in the mid-to late-1990s, and later heard about AdWords through word of mouth. When the company was looking for additional distribution channels, it found AdWords was “a good way of getting the message out there”, according to Chairman Steve Penney. “We’ve looked at lots of other online pay-per-click models, and to be honest we’ve not really liked any of them,” says Penney. “What AdWords gives is real control, right down to the geographical location that we’re advertising in. We’ve been able to target particular market sectors, in particular countries, for particular destinations.”

This geotargeting feature of AdWords – setting up ads to show only in certain countries, or regions of countries – allows Select-a-Room.com to run specially localised and targeted campaigns for niche markets. This is important when certain destinations become saturated, but it can be a useful approach for one-off international events, such as soccer matches, too. If, for example, explains Penney, Scotland have a fixture against Germany in Berlin, AdWords provides a simple, direct way of going after the market of Scottish fans that might be looking for a flight, or a hotel, or a complete travel package.

“Another great thing is you can change it whenever you want to,” says Penney. “We’re constantly going in and changing the ad text to reflect special offers we have. We can tell people quickly and effectively. Then, we can set the amended text to a date-defined parameter, meaning it stops showing as soon as the offer runs out.” Ads remain relevant to the product, and potential customers don’t feel misled by out-of-date offers, helping to improve trust in the company.

As well as running more specific campaigns, Select-a-Room.com uses AdWords to maintain its brand exposure by placing ads on Google’s network of content partners. “It’s been useful in bringing in people who are interested in our destinations,” says Penney, “but not necessarily looking to book straight away. We use that for brand awareness, for reaching a wider audience.”

The programme has helped the company discover and develop new markets. “Google gives us the wink – we get enquiries coming in from places we don’t expect, for all sorts of activities,” says Penney. “AdWords is a starting point because it can give you some idea of how many people are searching on the key phrases you are looking to promote.” If several similar enquiries come in, setting up a trial campaign to test a potential market is quick and easy – and, because AdWords advertising is pay-per-click, risks are minimal. “We are committed to staying with AdWords,” Penney concludes.