

AOL UK trebled its new customer acquisition with Google AdWords



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Hannah Evershed
Diffiniti Search
Account Manager



www.aol.co.uk

With more than 2.4 million UK members, AOL is the leading online interactive service provider to the UK. The company offers a range of services including dial-up, broadband and voice, as well as more than 20 channels of online content ranging from Entertainment and News to Parenting, Shopping and Money. AOL (UK) Limited is part of AOL Europe, a business unit of America Online Inc., the world's leading interactive services company, with more than 28 million members worldwide. AOL UK's digital marketing partner is the Isobar Communications agency Diffiniti, a leading provider of integrated digital marketing services.

Challenge

As part of an integrated marketing strategy for many of its clients, Diffiniti has a long history of managing search advertising including Google AdWords®. The agency also uses affiliate programmes, email and web ads, and special promotions in a strategic mix.

Since September 2002, the agency has worked with AdWords on behalf of AOL UK. Hannah Evershed, the lead Diffiniti Search Account Manager, says there are two primary goals in undertaking a Google AdWords campaign: to increase customer acquisition and to lower the cost of acquiring or converting new customers.

Results

“Our primary marketing objective was – and continues to be – to create advertising programmes that reach and acquire new AOL customers in a cost-effective manner,” said Evershed. To achieve this the Diffiniti search team “made the most of Google’s ability to categorise keywords and phrases into Ad Groups. We optimised Ad Group performance against real-time reported customer acquisition data and then re-categorised keywords where necessary. We also used Google’s maximisation capabilities to expand and refine our keyword lists and copy, and rotated multiple descriptions per keyword category to test response. Ultimately, these all helped to improve the programme’s performance.”

As a result of this effort, “we met all expectations, and, in fact, exceeded them” said Evershed. “We doubled, and then trebled, the number of new customers. Over the course of a nine month campaign, monthly customer acquisition growth averaged 52 percent.”

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In reviewing the campaign Evershed says that to compare keyword advertising with other online advertising methods “is like comparing apples with oranges.” She adds, “It’s our view that online display advertising, e-customer relationship management (eCRM) efforts, print, broadcast, other offline media campaigns and

GOOGLE ADWORDS

Google AdWords is currently used by thousands of businesses worldwide to gain new customers in a cost-effective way.

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.

Advertisers can take advantage of an extremely broad distribution network and choose the level of support and spending appropriate for their business.

MORE INFORMATION

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

search engine marketing initiatives are intrinsically linked. They are co-operative, they are collaborative. It is our focus on integrated marketing communications that helps us fully understand and develop the value that our Google AdWords® investments contribute to AOL's business growth in the UK."

Overall, says Evershed, "AdWords® has been 'very effective' at driving customer visitation, increasing sales, saving costs and converting customers. The option to have multiple descriptions in rotation per keyword is a unique selling point, and one that benefits Diffiniti clients. For these reasons, Evershed says the agency will continue using Google keyword advertising in the future, for AOL UK and other clients."

