

KEO Marketing MARKETER'S GUIDE



HOW TO LEVERAGE A STRATEGIC MIX OF SEARCH AND DISPLAY ADVERTISING FOR MAXIMUM ROI



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Once upon a time, search and display advertising campaigns each lived in their own kingdoms, happily inhabiting their separate territories far away from each other. Those days are now a distant memory, with the domains overlapping, and effective tools and tactics mixing together to accommodate both.

Consider these statistics:

- **Search for related brand terms** saw an average lift of **278%** among consumers exposed to display advertising. (Specific Media) 
- **Almost as many internet users respond to display ads**
 - ...by performing a search on a search engine **27%**
 - ...as those who click on the ad itself **31%** (iProspect)
- **A study conducted by Microsoft** found that display drove nearly two-thirds more Top-of-Mind Awareness than Search, while Search was better able to provide more “meaningful information.” When combined, Search + Display delivered optimal results. (Microsoft)



Aligning Forces

For B2B marketers, this meeting of search and display should be viewed not as an invasion of territories but as an aligning of forces. Each channel can offer valuable benefits to businesses, but the channels must be used in different ways and with tactics tailored specifically to that venue. Smart marketers will develop a strategy that involves the calculated use of each in ways that offer the best ROI and most efficient use of time and resources.

The goal is to achieve a balance that perfectly blends display and search, allowing each to support the other while together they power your successful online engine strategy.

This synergy of search and display doesn't happen all by itself. You need to put the pieces in place, and that takes some planning and careful execution.

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Working Together to Convert

Blending search and display in a strategic way lets you capitalize on the strengths of each channel while minimizing the shortcomings that each alone might present. For example, timing can be tricky when it comes to search, particularly in the business-to-business (B2B) realm, where the conversion journey tends to move slowly. Potential customers who see your ad may need to consult with others involved in the decision-making process. So even though they may be interested in your product or service at that moment (as evidenced by their search for relevant keywords), they may not be able to actually take any action immediately.

Display ads can then step in to ensure that your brand stays at top of mind, so you are the first name those users think of when they are able to take action. Marketers are realizing that display ads can actually serve as a valuable tool in the lead conversion process, especially because smart ad placement can help you time the appearance of your ad to coincide with where particular users are in the buying or decision-making cycle.



New Opportunities with Search

In the past, search operated in a simple fashion. Users typed in some keywords, and they saw ads that matched that text. Today, search and the systems that power it have expanded and grown more sophisticated.

Search Can Now Consider Intent

The basic core of search has always been keywords. The more specific the better, in terms of matching them to relevant ads. But just because someone was interested in that topic doesn't necessarily mean they were ready to buy at that particular moment. Advertisers can now use audience data to delve deeper into intent. Data management platforms are a valuable resource in obtaining this information. By taking the foundation of relevant keywords, and adding in insights about how likely a person is to convert, advertisers can now use search campaigns to target buyers who are interested and ready to take action.



Visual Elements are Now an Option

Traditionally, search ads consisted of pure text. This was a big challenge for marketers to overcome, as even the best wordsmith can only do so much without the aid of images to tell the story or grab the reader’s attention. B2B advertisers who sell products or equipment to other businesses are no longer limited to text-only search ads, as the door is opening to allow for ads featuring images, in outlets such as Google Shopping results. This has opened up a whole new world of possibilities for advertisers, as they explore image-based campaigns.

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Improve Efficiency

Increased Efficiency with Display

While display offered much greater creativity, this channel wasn't necessarily all that efficient because advertisers were forced to take a scattershot approach, throwing lots of assorted content at the audience and hoping something caught their eye. The display ad universe has made major advances in the past few years, and now encompasses systems that offer greatly increased efficiency and ROI.

LinkedIn Offers Expanded Targeting Options

LinkedIn specifically has opened up a wealth of new opportunities for online advertisers who want to connect with specific targets. As a result of its acquisition of B2B digital marketing company Bizo, LinkedIn now has the ability to integrate a variety of data and insight into its advertising programs. Advertisers can now target ads across the web using LinkedIn data to target a specific audience. Businesses can also connect with target customers via those users' LinkedIn wall or through the InMail messaging system.



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More Data for Improved Relevance

From the start, one of the major advantages search could offer was relevance. It had the ability to perfectly match ads to an audience that would be most interested in them. By the nature of search ads, users obviously had an interest in that topic, since they were looking for information related to those keywords. However, this advantage really only mattered if your ad received prominent placement. Without good visibility, your ad may as well be invisible because it will get few, if any, clicks.

By contrast, display could offer visibility but wasn't always so successful at determining relevancy. Advertisers running display campaigns lacked access to keyword-type data that would give them insight about what particular users may have been seeking. That's no longer a problem, as advertisers now have access to search intent data.

Specialized vendors have served as a catalyst for great strides in the availability of data for advertisers. Thanks to vendors such as Quantcast and Trade Desk among many others, advertisers today also have access to keyword-level data, allowing for display advertising campaigns that target users based on past search history. Meanwhile, a vendor specializing in retargeting (such as AdRoll) offers the ability to do custom retargeting that incorporates audience data. Google Analytics also offers the ability to customize segments of traffic to launch very targeted retargeting campaigns within Google Adwords without requiring another 3rd party level to be involved.



This expanded availability of data used in conjunction with retargeting gives advertisers the ability to be surprisingly effective at showing users relevant and useful content.

Display Gets Programmatic

One of the things that made search campaigns so time-efficient and budget-friendly was the ability to take advantage of an auction-based process, in which advertisers could use bidding strategies to get the most bang for their advertising buck. This approach has begun to expand over into the display side of the fence, with an increasing number of marketers embracing a programmatic, auction-style approach to buying display advertising. While it takes a period of adjustment to become comfortable with this process, it offers a way to buy a higher volume of advertising in a quick, efficient way while stretching the budget as far as possible.





Retargeting Changed the Game

It is no exaggeration to say that retargeting was a game-changer in the online advertising world. Retargeting shifted the balance of power between search and display. It essentially took away one of search's major trump cards.

Search offered a simple and clear-cut way to figure out what people were interested in, since they literally spelled it out in the search box. Retargeting is the process of tracking people's online actions and behaviors, and then using that information to show them ads that are specifically matched to their interests and concerns.

This gives marketers the ability to sharpen the focus and distribution of their ads, targeting people who would be most likely to have interest in that specific content.

Retargeting with both search and display is also a great tactic for boosting brand awareness, as it lets you connect with people who need your products or services and perhaps have even checked out some of your competitors but may not necessarily be familiar with your company.



**Track users
who have
already
converted.**

**Become
comfortable
with a
view-through
conversion
mindset.**

**Start with a
single
provider.**

Another big annoyance to your audience is when they see ads for items they have already bought from you. Combining tracking with coding allows you to “turn off” ads once a user has already converted. Of course, it would be smart to then show them ads for upgrades or complementary products or services instead.

As many marketers already know, click-through rates generally aren’t the best barometer of display ad success, especially in the B2B realm where conversions tend to happen more slowly over a period of time. Instead, success here can often be viewed on a view-through basis, where conversions stemming from an initial view are tracked over a set period (which typically can be anywhere from 24 hours to 30 days or more).

If your campaign is spread out among a number of different providers, it will be more challenging for you to implement controls such as frequency caps. It will also be tougher to accurately analyze and track the impact of each specific campaign.



Same Goal, Different Approaches

The good news for marketers who want to do both search and display campaigns is that you can now use them in tandem to get the maximum ROI for your efforts. Rather than creating two totally different campaigns, you can build upon the same basic content. This is much more efficient, and helps you save time and resources.

There's a big caveat, however. Just because you start out with the same foundation doesn't mean you can use identical content and tactics for both. After that initial starting point, you must tailor your advertising according to the needs of people who will see it via a particular channel.

People who see your search ads have very different motivations and are at a different place in the buying cycle than those who see your content via display ads, so your messaging needs to reflect that. While some of the information can be used for both channels, the way you present the message must reflect the audience and what is most likely to engage them at that time. In addition, with display advertising in particular, you can target an audience based not just on where they are in the buying cycle, but also according to their specific role in the organization.



Keep a Close Eye on Your Campaigns

With both types of online advertising campaigns, it is essential to keep a close eye on metrics related to those campaigns as they progress. With all campaigns, monitor metrics related to conversions, segment campaigns and audiences as necessary.

With display, you want to pay attention to where your ads are appearing. The sites that Google thinks are the best options may not turn out to be ones where you feel your content is most relevant. For display advertising, you will also want to look at metrics that measure post-impression activity, such as a lift in search (particularly branded), and post-impression clicks and conversions.

For search, you often find that you need to tweak your keywords or focus more attention on certain keywords that are performing well.



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ABOUT KEO MARKETING

KEO Marketing Inc., a leading business to business (B2B) marketing agency based in Phoenix, Arizona, develops and implements strategies to help clients significantly increase leads and sales.

The company's solutions include marketing strategy, brand positioning and messaging, inbound marketing, search engine marketing and optimization, website development, social media, pay per click and display advertising, local and mobile marketing and more. Some of the world's largest brands have depended on KEO Marketing for marketing programs that deliver tangible and substantial results.

For more information and to request a complimentary marketing audit visit keomarketing.com



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