

## Google Adwords for Law Firms

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In the ultra-competitive field of legal marketing, **Google Adwords** has become an integral part of the online presence of many law firms. Unlike traditional marketing mediums such as print, radio and television, AdWords allows a firm to target a specific type of prospective client based on search queries. In short, you know that the person seeing the ad is actively looking for a service that you provide. AdWords also allows for client targeting across multiple platforms and devices, meaning that your ad will be seen by those browsing on the computer, as well as the busy executive who does most of his web searches on the go on his smartphone.

Additionally, AdWords allows for precise tracking of the **Return on Investment (ROI)** of your advertising dollar. The flexibility to adjust campaigns in real time ensures that your firm will be able to keep up in a rapidly changing marketplace. Adwords has several tools to aid in planning and executing an effective marketing plan within your firm's budget, no matter the size of that budget.

One example of this would be the ability to increase your ad bids for searches within a certain geographic location. For example, say your firm is targeting businesses in the Washington, D.C. metro area, and you would like a high rank for the long tail keyword "Washington business attorneys." It is possible to set a higher bid for those keywords for searches in and around Washington D.C., while reducing the bid for outside areas that might get some of the same long tail searches, like someone in Seattle who happens to use the same keywords. Why show your firm's ad to someone 3000 miles away? Delivering your ad to only the most relevant searchers will greatly increase the likelihood of clicks and conversions.

Another example of the way AdWords can make online advertising more simple is the keyword tool, which can help select effective keywords to target, as well as negative keywords to avoid wasted impressions for your ad. In this example, let's say your firm is looking for businesses who are interested in drafting a non-compete clause for all of their employees. Some logical keywords to target would be "non-compete," "business," and "attorneys", but then your ad may be shown to a person who searches for the phrase "attorney to beat a non-compete agreement." By utilizing negative keywords for your campaign, such as "fight," "beat," or "overturn" you will greatly reduce the number of false impressions of your ad, as well as reducing the chances of wasted clicks and wasted money.

All of this makes AdWords seem as if it is a dedicated and time-consuming process - and it is. Even if you think you can just buckle down for a week, learn the material, and get your account set up the

way you want it, bear in mind that AdWords is not a set-it and forget-it service. Between the Display Network, Search Network, mobile search, reporting, analytics, and a host of other topics - adhering to ever changing AdWords policies is comparable to hitting a moving target. If your firm has the resources, consider hiring a marketing specialist to oversee all marketing endeavors, including AdWords. If adding another member to your firm's staff is out of the question, consider outsourcing AdWords account creation and management to a legal marketing firm.

In addition to the increased complexity of AdWords itself, the competition among campaigns has drastically increased in most markets. According to a recent WordStream study, the keywords "attorney" and "lawyer" are both among the top six most expensive keywords in the AdWords universe, each with a top **Cost-per-click (CPC)** that exceeds \$40. The word is out that AdWords is one of the most effective ways to reach customers, and Google has begun to favor larger corporate advertisers with more money to spend. This is not to say that AdWords is a lost cause for smaller outfits who cannot keep up with high CPC payments. For example, ads with a higher Quality Score will be shown more frequently and for a lower CPC on the Search Network. Why spend over \$40 per click on an ineffective ad with a low conversion rate when you could spend far less and generate more leads.

Finally, it is important to consider the fickle and ever-changing nature of Google's algorithm, adherence to which drives success across all of the companies offerings. Even if every rule is followed to the letter, an ad could wind up suspended by Google if even the slightest change is made to that all-powerful algorithm. If a representative from your firm is not able to dedicate the time and resources to understand these changes and keep your ads and campaigns in compliance, your marketing plan could be stopped dead in its tracks.

AdWords can be a tremendous resource to drive traffic to your site, and ultimately gain clients for your practice, but only when utilized in the proper way. Trying to go blow-for-blow with firms willing to spend nearly \$50 per click can be the fast track to exhausting your marketing budget with little to show for it. By being creative, and understanding all the various tools that AdWords puts at the disposal of your firm, it is possible to carve out an effective marketing strategy that drives clients to your practice and still operates within your budget.

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