



Get found!

The small business owner's guide
to search engine marketing

Microsoft Advertising. Intelligent connections.



New rules and new tools for small-business success



“By using [paid search,] we’re able to grow the brand by speaking directly to our existing customers as well as getting in front of loads of new customers.”¹

– Andrew Johnson,
PPC manager, SimplyBe

The day-to-day life of a small business owner is a long and winding journey. You should know. Your to-do list is likely a mile long, with new tasks being added by the minute — from approving the latest round of supplier invoices to managing employees. On top of that, you need to plan and even manage marketing campaigns so you can win new business, which is the lifeblood of any successful business.

You may be using a menu of different marketing channels, such as email, social media and review sites, to capture customer attention. While these channels have value in the modern multi-channel journey, search is the essential marketing link that connects your business to customers when they’re hungriest for information.

It’s estimated that 86% of the US population use the internet,² and mobile device users now

account for roughly 71%.³ Thanks to the power of search engines, your customers have access to thousands — even millions — of options with just a few clicks.

It doesn’t matter what you sell or where you sell it. It doesn’t matter whether your target customers are male or female, young or old, ready to spend or looking for bargains. Today, when people are looking for local businesses, they often begin with online search.

1. Microsoft Advertising (formerly Bing Ads), customer success story, “[Bing and SimplyBe: Empowering women via choice](#),” September 2017. 2. eMarketer, “Internet Users and Penetration in North America, by Country,” April 2019. 3. eMarketer, “Mobile Phone Internet Users and Penetration in US,” April 2019.

Your business needs to be present and easily found at this critical moment in the decision-making journey. After all, search can have the most profound impact when customers are looking for businesses that are nearby.

The art and science of finding and converting customers via advertising on search engines is called search engine marketing (SEM). Like any form of marketing, SEM is a mix of sound strategy, practical tactics and smart budget decisions. Increasingly, effective SEM also means understanding

how platforms like Microsoft Advertising can help you craft compelling ads, find and engage with the right audience, and make the most out of every dollar you invest.

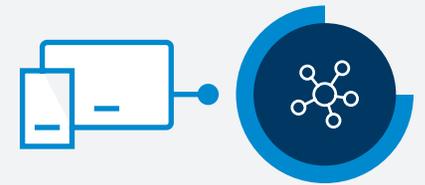
The results speak for themselves: The right SEM mix adds laser-like focus to your marketing campaigns; it can support your business growth goals and reveal untapped opportunities and markets.

We'll show you the SEM basics that will help put your business on

the road to successful search engine marketing. You'll learn what you need to run your own SEM campaigns — or, if you choose to outsource, to communicate and work with SEM pros who can take your search marketing to the next level.

Are you ready to take your small business where it needs to be — and where your customers are waiting? Read on for seven steps to help more customers find your business.

Mobile devices will be used by **73% of all people in US by 2022**, and mobile ad spending will reach **\$131 billion**.⁴



About **3 out of 4 adult U.S. consumers** used a search engine to find a restaurant within the past week.⁵

IN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY:



63% of consumers used online search to find product information;



52% used it to compare or check prices; and



46% used it to find deals in the travel industry.⁶



What's the top media tool for finding a local plumber? You guessed it: online search.⁷

4. eMarketer, "US Mobile StatPack 2018," April 2018. 5. Marketing Bitz/Local Search Association, "Restaurant Insights: How Consumers Find & Select Local Eateries," May 27, 2016. 6. Nielsen, "What are connected shoppers doing and not doing online?" February 3, 2016. 7. Local Search Association, "Pizza vs. Plumbers: Exploring the Local Media Consumer Journey," May 12, 2016.

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SEM fast facts

If you're just getting started on your SEM journey, there are some things you need to know.



Are people still using search engines?

Yes! In fact, 86% of the US population use the internet,⁸ and search engines are the most popular way for consumers to find local businesses.⁹



What's SEM, anyway?

It's easy to get lost in acronyms. While some confuse SEM with search engine optimization (SEO), SEM is much broader. SEM includes SEO, but it also includes paid search opportunities, such as pay-per-click advertising (PPC).



Wait, so what's the difference between SEO and paid search advertising?

SEO bumps up your website's rank in unpaid search results. With paid search — also called PPC or cost per click (CPC) — you set up advertisements on a channel and pay when someone clicks your advertisement.



But why can't I just advertise on social media?

Advertising on social media is an important part of any digital marketing campaign. But by expanding your efforts to also include SEM, you can reach people specifically searching for businesses like yours.



My SEO is great, and my business shows up at the top of search engine results. That means I don't need to pay for ads, right?

While your SEO game may be top-notch (congratulations!), there are several reasons why SEM can help your business be even more successful. For example, you can target specific audiences based on their location, the device they're using and whether they've searched on your site in the past. You can include product and service information, clickable links to phone numbers and directions, and even customer reviews so potential customers can see how great your business is.



Why does it matter if people are searching on mobile devices?

Search queries from mobile devices are outpacing searches from PCs.¹⁰ If your local business is seeking customers, mobile search advertising is a great way to reach them — especially if they're out and about.



Isn't SEM expensive?

With SEM, you're in the driver's seat. You control your PPC spending, and you can set a cap so it fits within your budget.

8. eMarketer, "Internet Users and Penetration in North America, by Country," April 2019. 9. Local Search Association/Marketing Sherpa, "Local Marketing Chart: How do customers search for products and services?" April 14, 2015. 10. Microsoft, internal data. Retrieved from "Reach more with Bing mobile ads," March 2017.

STEP 1

Set your goals and build your budget



The first step on your SEM journey is to assess your overall business goals. Do you want to expand your customer base? Increase customer loyalty and repeat visits? Build word of mouth regionally so you can consider opening a new location? Or perhaps you'd like to boost overall sales, or focus on a particular product or service line.

Then, consider how your current digital marketing mix is helping you achieve your goals. Are you spending money on paid

search, social media advertising or other areas? What were you hoping to accomplish with those efforts? How have these channels performed in the past?

Next, think about how increasing your SEM efforts can improve your marketing results. A well-crafted SEM campaign can help you reach your growth-oriented business goals by placing your brand front and center when customers are searching for information on the products or services you offer.

YOUR SEM CAMPAIGN CAN HELP YOU:

- ✓ Drive traffic to your website.
- ✓ Drive visitors to your place of business.
- ✓ Improve conversions on your website.
- ✓ Boost incoming call volume.
- ✓ Encourage greater ad or mobile app engagement.
- ✓ Design promotions based on inventory.
- ✓ Build brand trust.

Once you've identified your goals, you can determine who you're trying to reach and where they're located. Let's say you own a bakery and want to sell more wedding cakes. Your goals may include targeting people within a certain geographic area to increase awareness of your bakery, driving more traffic to the wedding cake section of your website and using reviews to build trust in the quality of your products.

By defining an audience segment and geographic region, you can home in on keywords that a bride or groom searching for local wedding cake providers are likely to use and integrate those into

your website copy. Next, you can examine the targeting options and rates of various platforms to help you decide on the budget necessary to achieve your objectives. Then you can begin crafting ads that speak to your audience.

One of the great benefits of SEM is that you can track and respond to ad or keyword performance. If something is performing well, you can invest more money. If it isn't, you can adjust your keywords, ad copy or budget, and see how customers respond.

Launch your journey

There has never been a better time to expand your SEM program, and Microsoft Advertising makes it quick and easy. You can upload your Google Ads keywords and

campaigns via the [Google Import](#) tool so you can save a lot of time and effort. You can also discover new keywords and bids using the [Keyword Planner](#) and easily add them to your campaigns.



Understand your audience for better ad targeting

To create successful search campaigns, you need to have a deep understanding of your target customers. Of course, you need to understand their buying preferences and needs, just as you would for any campaign. But when advertising on search engines, you can also take advantage of several other factors, including:

 **Demographics:** Targeting based on the gender and ages of your desired customers.

 **Device type:** Targeting smartphone and tablet users so they have quick and easy access to information like business address and hours of operation.

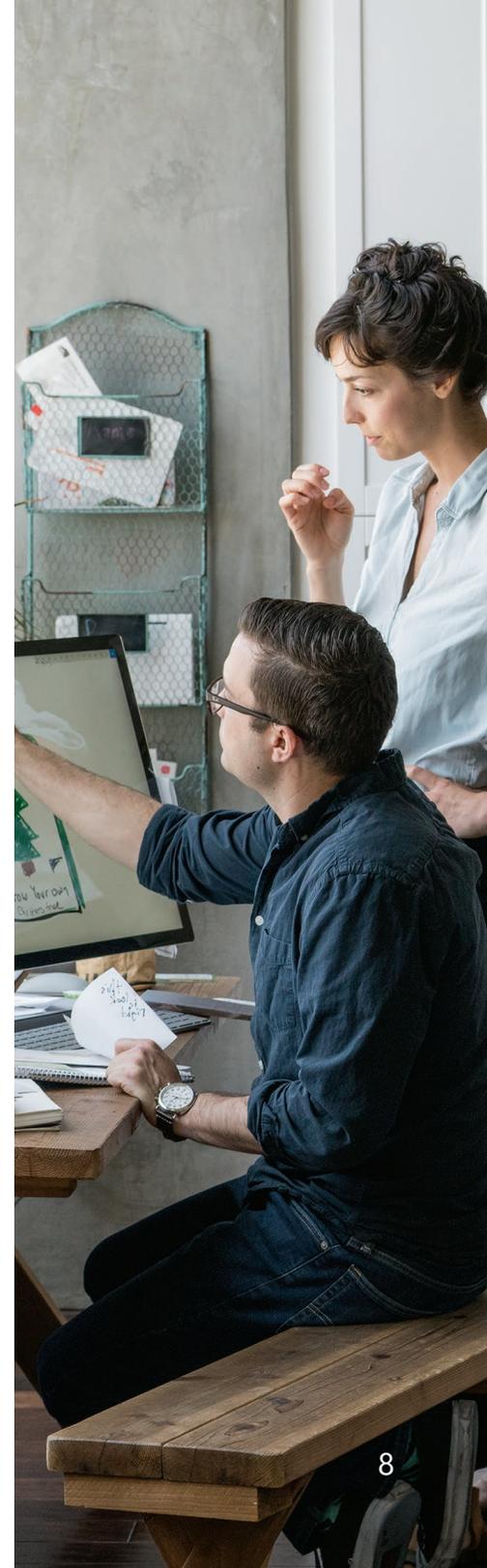
 **Day and time:** Understanding the best day and time to reach your customers.

 **Remarketing opportunities:** Reconnecting with prospects who have visited your website but not taken further action, such as purchasing a product or service.

 **Location:** Showing advertising based on where your target audience is located.

That may seem like a daunting amount of information. But it doesn't take a lot of time or effort to become a targeting pro. Just ask yourself these questions:

- Who am I trying to reach — a specific market, unique customers, top spenders, etc.?
- Where are they located — a specific region or town, or a small radius like a shopping center, college or office park?
- What characteristics matter, such as age or gender?
- What are their interests?
- When do they search, and what devices do they use?
- What content or offers spur the most favorable response among them?



The last question may require some ad testing. Make an executive decision using what you know about your present customers and their responses to other types of marketing campaigns. Then, once you begin to see patterns in behaviors and response rates, you can use them to determine whether your keywords, ads and targeting methods are working. If your campaign stalls out, don't panic. You can make adjustments and quickly get back on the road.

SEM success story: CJ Pony Parts

When Scott Redgate began managing digital marketing for auto parts dealer CJ Pony Parts, he added a Microsoft Advertising presence to expand the company's reach: "Bing's audience is a little bit more targeted than Google's, as well as slightly older and more affluent."

For CJ Pony Parts, Microsoft Advertising outperformed Google Ads with a **124% higher e-commerce conversion rate and 30% better performance, dollar for dollar.**¹¹

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MICROSOFT SEARCH NETWORK: Earn more, spend more

With a 36% U.S. market share, the Microsoft Search Network audience now includes 53 million unique searchers not on Google — or about 6 billion searches per month.¹²

Not located in the U.S.? Bing operates in 37 markets worldwide, reaching 537 million unique searchers via 11 billion monthly searches.¹³

-  **36%**
U.S. market share
-  **125 million**
unique searchers
-  **6 billion**
searches per month
-  **37**
markets worldwide
-  **537 million**
unique searchers

OUR AUDIENCE IS:

-  **EDUCATED**
1/2
have a college degree or higher¹⁴
-  **YOUTHFUL**
47%
are age 45 and under¹⁴
-  **WELL-OFF**
38%
have a household income of \$100K or higher¹⁴
-  **READY TO SPEND**
52%
more online spend than the average internet searcher¹²

11. Microsoft Advertising (formerly Bing Ads), "CJ Pony Parts races for conversions." 12. comScore qSearch (Explicit Core Search), March 2019; includes Microsoft sites, Yahoo sites (searches powered by Bing) and AOL sites in the United States. Data represents desktop traffic only. 13. comScore qSearch, March 2019; includes Microsoft sites, Yahoo sites (searches powered by Bing) and AOL sites worldwide. Data represents desktop traffic only. 14. comScore Plan Metrix, U.S., December 2018; custom measure created using comScore indices and duplication.

STEP 3

Design campaigns that are mobile, local and personal



With a solid understanding of your audience, you can begin to design a campaign that reaches them at the right time and place. But today's digitally savvy consumer isn't going to tolerate anything less than precision. In other words, you need to know what to say to them, as well as how and when to say it. Using mobile, local and personal methods will help your business successfully engage customers where they are in their decision-making journey.

MAKE IT MOBILE



To reach consumers, regardless of where they're located or where they are in their decision-making journey, your website should be mobile-optimized. Having a responsive site that adapts for any screen on which it's viewed is essential for enhancing your site's SEO — and for converting visitors into customers. More than half (55%) of smartphone users in the UK have abandoned a mobile transaction, giving usability

reasons like slow loading times (32%) and difficulty with navigating the checkout process (26%).¹⁶

Then, by thinking about what mobile customers need, you can better meet their expectations. For example, local customers searching on mobile may want your location or phone number to be easily clickable, which you can accomplish by using ad extensions. Those comparing information need mobile-friendly

content that is easily consumed on small screens. Current customers may desire push notifications when their orders are ready or when they're in the area and your shop is having a sale.

More than one in three U.S. consumers look for local businesses via search.¹⁵

15. YP Marketing Solutions/IDC, "Local Search: Unleashing Opportunities for National Advertisers," January 8, 2016. 16. Jumio, "Up to £6bn in Revenue Left on the Table by UK Retailers and Financial Services Last Year Due to Poor Mobile User Experience," August 18, 2015.

KEEP IT LOCAL



Whether they're looking for products, trustworthy service providers or a new place to eat or shop, people love to search to get ideas and inspiration. More than one in three U.S. consumers looks for local businesses via search.¹⁵ To get in on the action, first get found by claiming your company's "real estate," or profile, on search engines and sites such as Bing, Google, Facebook and

others. Check that your business's information — such as your address, phone number and hours — are correct.

Then, make your ads more relevant and actionable for local searchers by using your target audience's location and offering personalized deals. You can also make it easy for searchers to find and contact you: [ad extensions](#) allow you to insert additional information like mobile-clickable

phone numbers or locations with driving directions right into your ad. Not only does this give you more real estate so your ad stands out, it also connects searchers to the next step of their decision-making journey so they're more likely to call or stop by your business.

PERSONALIZE IT



Digital ad platforms give you fingertip access to a wealth of

information about your target customers, their locations and their behaviors. Use this data to your advantage. Create highly targeted and personalized ads by mixing and matching different types of ad targeting. For example, you can send targeted ads to customers based on their location or search behaviors. You can further narrow your focus by adding day or time of day, device type, or age and gender.

STAGES OF THE DECISION-MAKING JOURNEY

What is the decision-making journey? It could also be called the "sales cycle," "buying process" or "shopping journey." For local businesses, understanding this journey is essential to crafting an effective SEM program.



Let's say you want to beef up the lunch crowd at your restaurant. Create a campaign so that your paid search ads are geo-targeted to appear when people are within five miles of your restaurant and looking for a business like yours. Then, to personalize the ads even further, offer local college

students, targeted by age, a special discount two hours before (when stomachs are grumbling) and during lunchtime. You can even use an ad extension to send these searchers directly to a special coupon page on your website.

SEM success story: TaskEasy

Lawn-care and snow-shoveling service matchmaker TaskEasy targets local customers and service providers through more than 100 active campaigns. "For the volume we get with Bing Ads,¹⁷ we have a higher click-through rate and more conversions than with other advertising platforms — all with a lower cost per click,"

says Montana Marsden, online marketing manager at TaskEasy.¹⁸

LEARN MORE



17. Bing Ads is now Microsoft Advertising. 18. Microsoft Advertising customer success story, "Searching for greener grass with paid search," August 2016.

MEET (AND EXCEED) YOUR BUSINESS GOALS

Every business has specific goals when marketing to new and return customers. Are you looking to get more phone calls, increase in-store traffic, boost website traffic or sell more products? Once you combine your goals with your specific target audiences — and choose keywords or phrases

specific to those audiences or goals — you can use the intelligent audience targeting features of Microsoft Advertising to tailor your ads. It's easier than you think to accurately pinpoint your targets.

Here's a guide to how the features of Microsoft Advertising can help address your business's unique needs and goals:

Goal	Features
Win new customers	<u>Shopping Campaigns</u> , <u>demographic targeting</u> , <u>Remarketing</u> , <u>Remarketing exclusions</u>
Drive store traffic	<u>Call Extensions</u> , <u>day/time targeting</u> , <u>location targeting/Location Extensions</u> , <u>Universal Event Tracking</u>
Increase phone calls	<u>Call Extensions</u> , <u>day/time targeting</u> , <u>device targeting</u>
Boost website visits	<u>Call Extensions</u> , <u>Location Extensions</u> , <u>Review Extensions</u> , <u>Sitelink Extensions</u> , <u>Enhanced Sitelinks</u> , <u>Callout Extensions</u> , <u>App Extensions</u>
Sell products	<u>Merchant Promotions</u>

STEP 4

Use the right keywords



After researching your audience and setting your goals, the next step in your journey is keyword planning. It's critical to select and bid on the right keywords, because you want your business to be there when your target customers are looking for a particular product or service, or even researching your competitors.

Brainstorming, researching and managing keywords can be challenging: In one survey, this task was ranked the second most difficult aspect of search engine marketing.¹⁹ So how do you start?

Begin with words that relate to your business, target audience, location, products or services and campaign goals (calls, in-store visits, purchases). If you're using an analytics platform, look at the words people search that bring them to your site.

Then, broaden your reach with more general keywords. Using these keywords can sometimes be challenging, because they're so competitive. You can research to find similar, but more budget-friendly, keywords. You can also test and compare performance to determine whether the higher-

priced keywords make an impact and are worth a share of your budget.

You may also want to consider keyword phrases. There are times when consumers use several words in their search queries. For example, instead of searching for "dresses," a woman may search for "long cocktail dresses." Include phrases to increase your likelihood of getting found.

Next, make sure the landing page your visitors are redirected to after clicking an ad is also relevant to those keywords.

Finally, don't go it alone. Search platforms provide keyword planners to assist you. The [Keyword Planner](#) helps businesses choose the best keywords based on search trends and marketplace competition. For example, you can narrow down your research to see how keywords perform by gender or even search device. And if you already have a menu of keywords in Google Ads, you can easily [import them](#) and optimize them for Microsoft Advertising to deliver additional prospects.

19. WordStream, "Survey Results: The Most Annoying Part of Search Marketing," April 3, 2015.

STEP 5

Craft irresistible ad copy



Online advertising must pack a powerful punch, usually in very little space. Your copy needs to resonate with consumers and clearly let them know what you're offering. Are you filling a need? Do you have a solution to a problem your customers have? Let them know in clear, jargon-free terms. When your prospects and customers are searching, especially on their mobile devices, they want clear, concise information.

Don't get plagued by writer's block. Try these tips to create fun and engaging copy — every time:

- ✓ Use compelling offers, keywords and phrases to capture attention.
- ✓ Be concise! Use one-liners, short copy and bullet points to break up text.
- ✓ Include location-specific information, such as ad extensions with a directions link for locations near targeted customers.
- ✓ Capitalize on quirky holidays, such as National Doughnut Day, to grab customers' attention and create urgency.
- ✓ Highlight incentives and limited-time offers, such as "20% off sale," "free shipping" and "new releases."
- ✓ Emphasize customer reviews — star ratings and reviews capture interest.

HANDS-ON SUPPORT

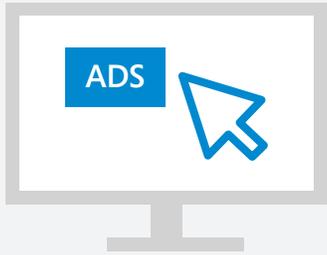
With Microsoft Advertising, you can get the expert help you need:

- by phone at 800-518-5689;
- by chat;
- or via a self-service menu of how-to videos and articles.

[Get started with Microsoft Advertising today.](#)

THE MICROSOFT ADVERTISING CRASH COURSE

Microsoft Advertising offers a variety of advertising solutions you can use depending on your goals. Consider these options to create more relevant campaigns:



Product Ads

Promote your products by featuring an image, a brief product description, your company name and price information.



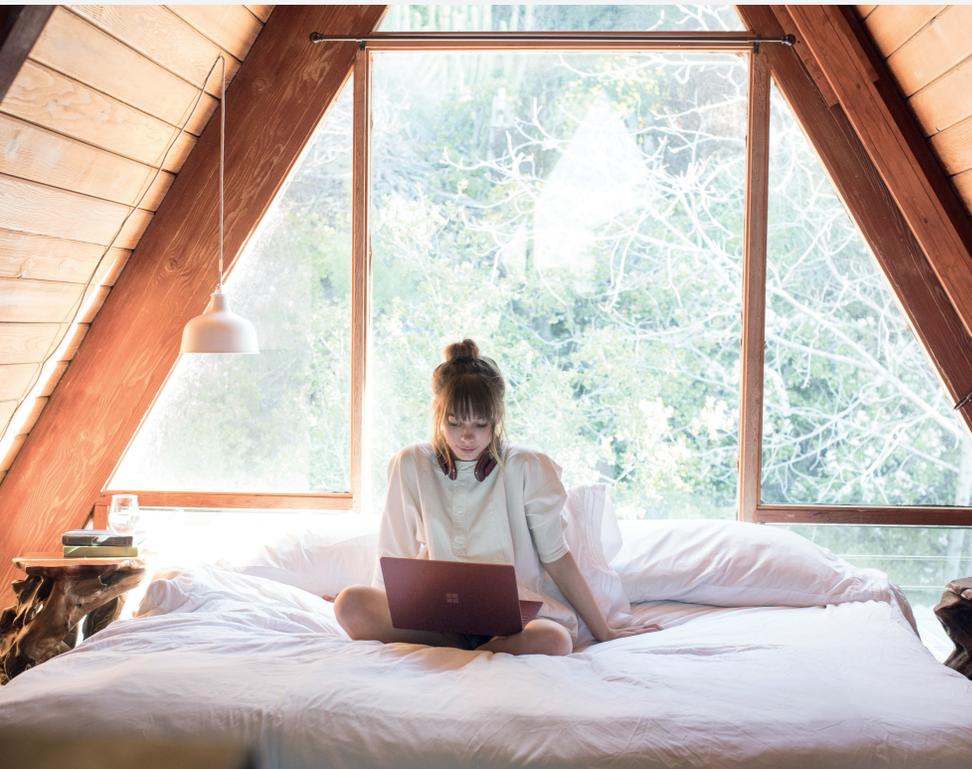
Remarketing

If visitors leave your website or abandon their shopping carts, you can send them subtle reminders and timely incentives through paid search.



Ad extensions

These are optional enhancements that you can add to text ads so they're more relevant and intriguing to your target audience. Allow searchers to call your business, download your app or visit a specific page on your site with a single click.



SEM success story: Reservations.com

Hotel booking website

Reservations.com relies on SEM to get to the next level. With Bing Ads,* the company has achieved a 172% year-over-year increase in traffic with an 18% higher ROI. "We love

the platform. In fact, we want it to get bigger and bigger so we can be a bigger part of it," says Yatin Patel, co-founder of Reservations.com.²⁰

[LEARN MORE](#)

*Bing Ads is now Microsoft Advertising. 20. Microsoft Advertising customer success story, "Room for growth," September 2016.

STEP 6

Use measurement data to improve campaign performance



The Microsoft Search Network allows businesses to tap into [data](#) from 125 million unique searchers in the United States.²¹ Stay on top of consumer and industry trends to create powerful campaigns that can help grow your business.

Search advertising platforms offer advanced analytics. It may sound intimidating, but it's really not! On the back end, you can view what are called key performance indicators (KPIs), or metrics around how your campaign is performing.

By viewing how many people clicked an ad and the action they took as a result, you can see which ads resonated with your target audience. Even better, this data

can provide a great roadmap for improving future campaigns and spotlight ways you can test new offers and discounts to really get the most bang for your buck.

You can also add [customer tracking](#) to your website and integrate it with ads to see if customers are converting once they visit your site. Take note of how people respond to your campaigns, and make adjustments from there. Repeat what's working,

tweak what's not working and put your budget toward the things that will drive results.

21. comScore qSearch, Explicit Core Search (custom), U.S., March 2019. The Microsoft Search Network includes Microsoft sites, Yahoo sites (searches powered by Bing) and AOL sites in the United States. Data represents desktop traffic only.

A QUICKSTART GUIDE TO SEM ANALYTICS

Here are some metrics you should be tracking as you roll out your SEM campaigns:



Click-through rate:

The percentage of people who click a digital ad.



Conversion rate:

The percentage of people who take the action you want them to take.



Conversions:

People who take the action you want them to take, such as purchase, register, download, etc.



Average cost per click:

The average amount you pay per click on your ads.



Average ad position:

How your ad ranks against other similar ads.



Impressions:

The number of people who see your ad.



6 simple things you can do to keep your campaigns on track

To make your SEM campaign thrive, conduct this simple, weekly checkup:

-  **Budget**

Be sure you're staying within your numbers by checking keyword bids and overall spending. Look at whether you need to adjust your bids to stay within your goals.
-  **Measurement and summary**

Use your analytics, such as an increase in conversions or traffic, to determine the overall success of your campaigns thus far. As you measure, take note of what's working and what needs to be tweaked.
-  **Keywords**

Take a few minutes to use keyword-finding tools like the Microsoft Advertising [Keyword Planner](#) to find new keywords to add to your lineup of brand and top keywords. Review keywords that are performing well, and consider adjusting your investment to focus more on those and less on poor-performing keywords.
-  **Ad copy**

Test different copy, offers and visual combinations (such as text-only with different ad extensions or image ads) to see what resonates best with your audience. At the same time, track how your keywords are performing, and always try to incorporate new keywords and phrases.
-  **Targeting**

As you review the performance of your ads, keywords and ad copy, you need to take a close look at which audiences you're targeting. To maximize campaign performance, adjust location targeting via map, radius and ZIP code tools; add ad extensions; micro-target by combining options like device type, day of week, time of day or age/gender; or use Remarketing to reconnect with site visitors who didn't previously convert.
-  **Relevance**

When your keywords and campaigns are working well, you can enjoy better search engine rankings and lower PPC costs. Ensure your landing pages are fresh and optimized, and practice good SEO throughout your site.

Do more with Microsoft Advertising

Start reaching and engaging the right customers so you can grow your business.

By following the previous six steps, you can expand your reach and aim for greater success with your search campaigns. Microsoft Advertising can help. The Microsoft Search Network powers 11 billion searches each month and reaches 537 million

unique searchers worldwide — including millions of exclusive searchers you can't reach on Google.²² There's never been a better time to be on Bing.

GET STARTED
WITH MICROSOFT
ADVERTISING TODAY



22. comScore qSearch, worldwide, March 2019. The Microsoft Search Network includes Microsoft sites, Yahoo sites (searches powered by Bing) and AOL sites worldwide. Data represents desktop traffic only.



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