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PPC TRENDS 2020



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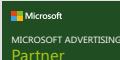
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2019



INTRODUCTION

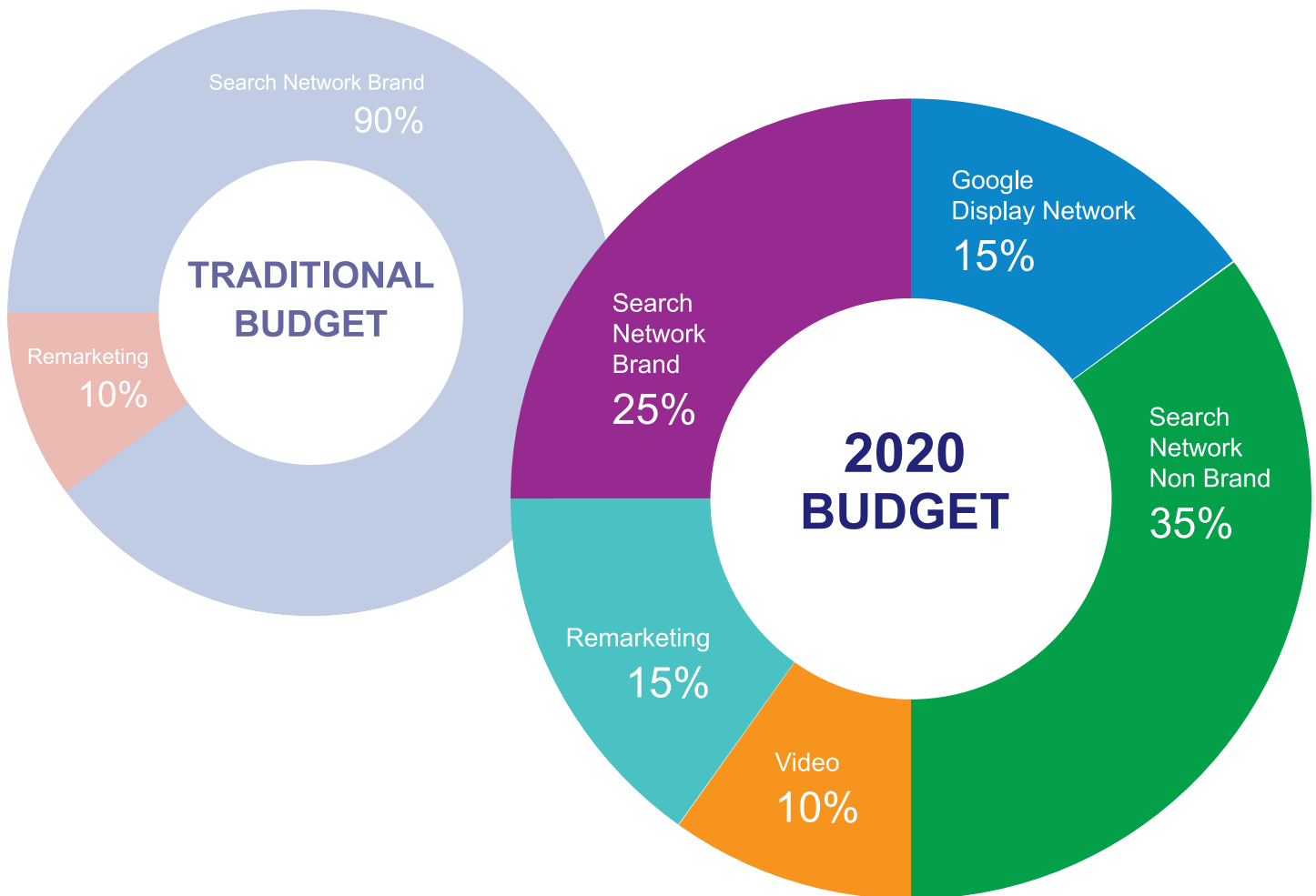
10 Most Important PPC Trends to Watch in 2020

By Danny Goodwin

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Find out why brand awareness is the “dirty secret” of PPC — and get ready for 2020.

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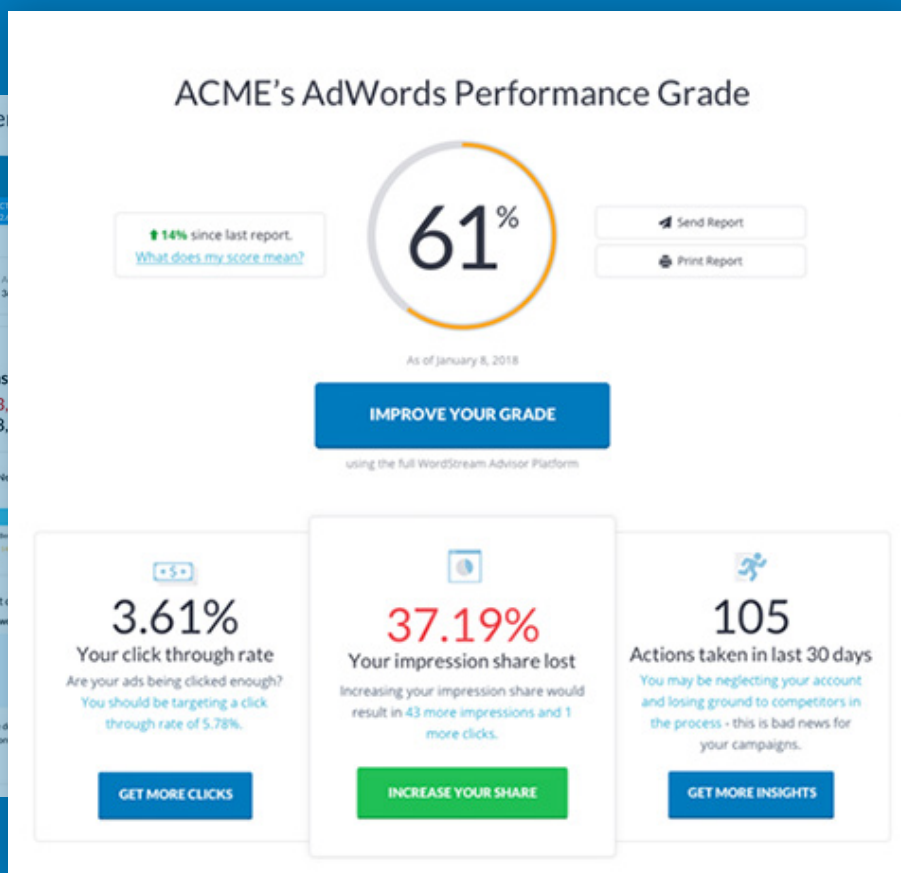
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10 Most Important PPC TRENDS to Watch in 2020

BY DANNY GOODWIN



WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR PPC?

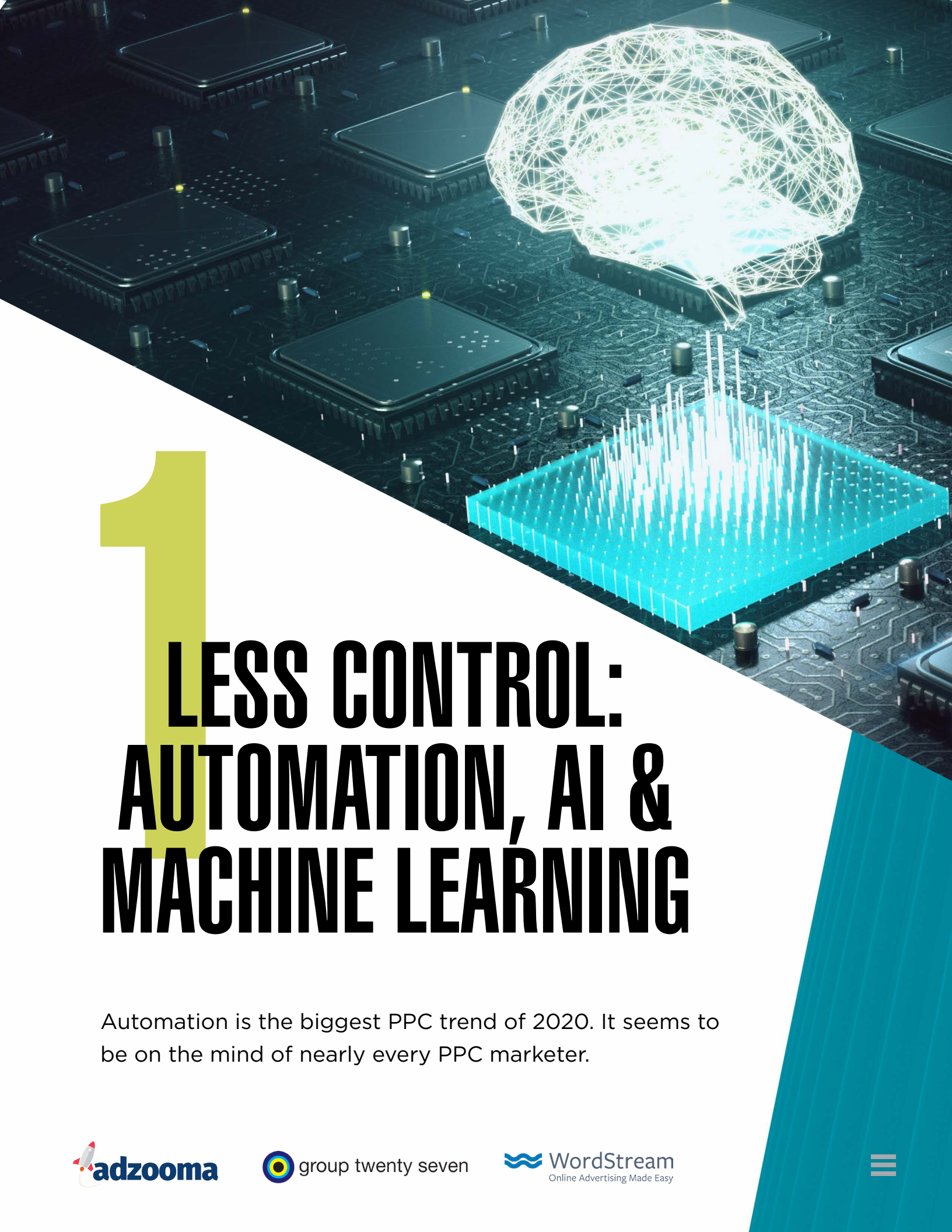
This is a question we ask every year here at Search Engine Journal.

Last year, audiences and automation were just a couple trends PPC marketing experts expected to dominate.

But what will be the most important PPC trends in 2020?

That's the exact question I asked 39 of the top PPC marketing experts.

Here are the top 10 PPC trends you need to know for 2020 – from paid search, to paid social, to remarketing, and beyond – according to the experts.



1 LESS CONTROL: AUTOMATION, AI & MACHINE LEARNING

Automation is the biggest PPC trend of 2020. It seems to be on the mind of nearly every PPC marketer.

Julie Friedman Bacchini, President & Founder, Neptune Moon, thinks the automation and machine learning train will continue picking up speed in 2020.

“The key for paid search pros will be figuring out how to use these tools/features as effectively as possible, while also retaining our value by doing things the machines cannot do,” she said.

Ed Leake, Managing Director, Midas Media, said similar, noting that machines and artificial intelligence can produce judgments and perform routine tasks faster than humans.

“That means if you’re not at least using some form of rules or scripts in your workflow, you’re way behind,” Leake said. “You might have heard of the Eisenhower Matrix. Using that principle, start with the one thankless task you do regularly. In other words, it takes a lot of time and it has a small impact on results. Take that task and find a machine to do it for you.”

Jeff Ferguson, CEO, Fang Marketing, said PPC managers will finally learn their place in the new world order of digital advertising in 2020 – to provide a clean working environment for their robot overlords.

“The role of the PPC manager will not go away for at least another five years, but the days of spending hours tweaking bids are gone,” Ferguson said. “Keywords aren’t going anywhere anytime soon – the robots still need us to speak to the other humans properly; however, whatever can be made into a math problem is now the domain of the machines.”

A couple of experts talked about the loss of control due to automation, and what it means.

Jon Clark, Managing Partner, Moving Traffic Media, expects the trend of decreased control to continue as Google pushes users toward automation and minimized transparency. He speculated that we may even see manual bidding removed entirely in favor of automation.

Also, **Brad Geddes**, Co-Founder, AdAlysis, said:

“We’re going to see Google continue to take control away from advertisers in the name of ‘better targeting & intent’. Unfortunately, Google has not figured out intent in any meaningful way, so these changes will leave you with more work to do in order to keep seeing the same results.”

Some experts expect some pushback against Google’s continued drive toward automation.

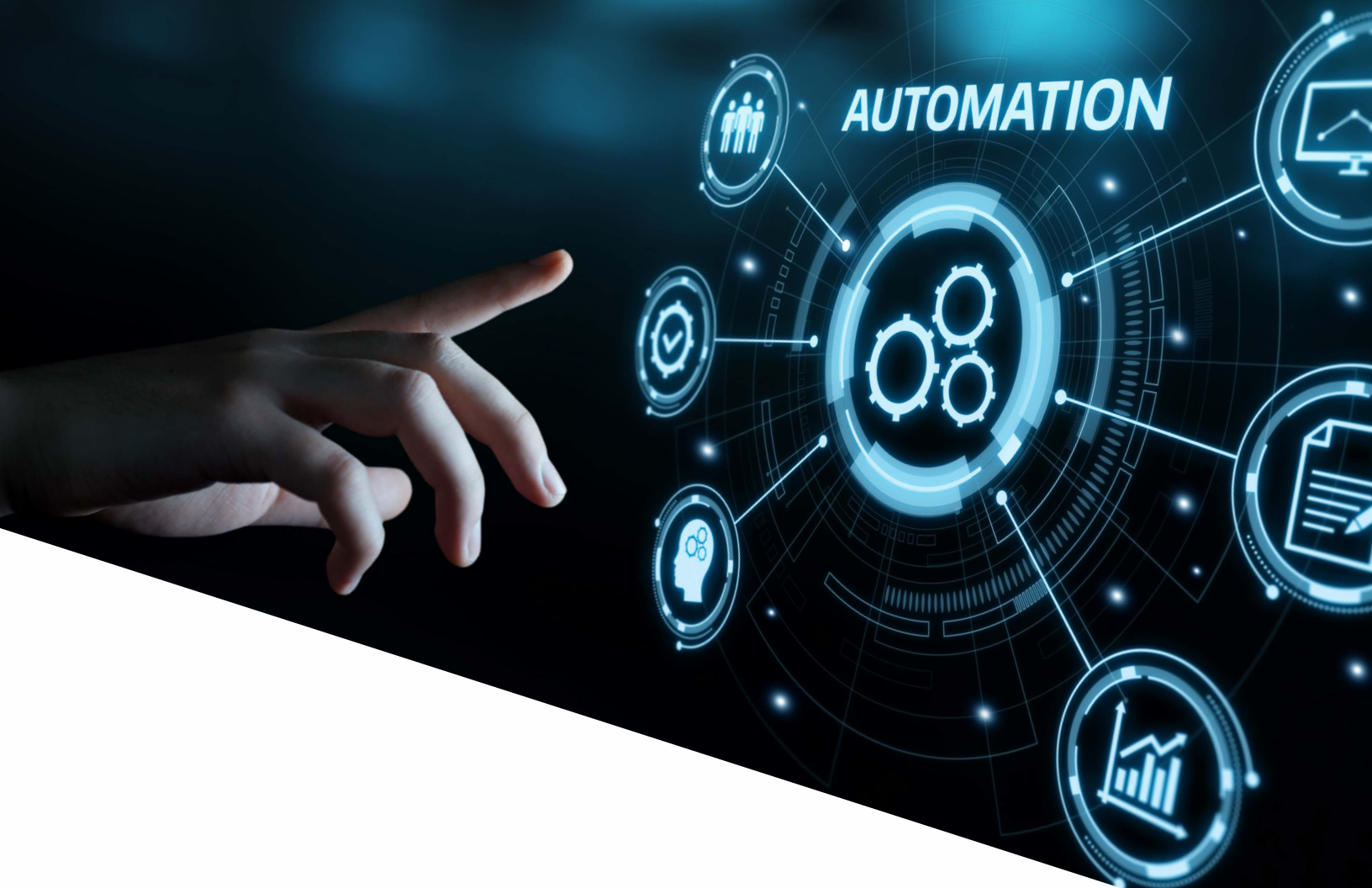
“While Google will introduce more audience capabilities and more automation, advertisers are becoming leery of Google’s automation and won’t as blindly adopt it but rather dip their toes into Google’s new features to see if they really work as intended,” Geddes said. “This will leave more advertisers to create automation on their own or leverage third-party automation and evaluation systems. We’ll see automation continue to rise, however, Google won’t always be the one driving these changes.”

Andrew Lolk, Lead PPC Manager & Founder, Savvy Revenue, said he’s not ready to just hand over accounts to Google’s automation.

“I don’t advise outright rejecting Google’s automation, but knowing its strengths and weaknesses intimately instead,” Lolk said. “By knowing the weaknesses in Google’s automation, you’ll know what to do to beat other advertisers that aren’t privy to it.”

According to **Nikki Kuhlman**, Senior Account Director, JumpFly, it comes down to this:

“What marketers will need to do is be the gatekeepers on whether these automated options are best for the clients or best for Google.”



Aaron Levy, Group Director, SEM, Tinuiti, is hopeful that 2020 will be a year of automation refinement, where the engines and tool partners will take time to get the automation right.

“They want to make sure that us advertisers are set up for success, for growth and to devote our headspace to strategy rather than pushing buttons,” Levy said. “All aided by the help of great data.”

Ilya Cherepakhin, VP, Media Operations, Acronym, highly recommends testing target ROAS, dynamic search ads (DSAs), responsive search ads, max conversion value, and any of the other PPC automation options.

LESS CONTROL: AUTOMATION, AI & MACHINE LEARNING



One other aspect of automation **Frederick Vallaes**, Co-Founder, Optmyzr, discussed is “automation layering,” a concept he believes is the future of PPC.

“The idea is simple... we need to teach, monitor and guide the automations to deliver the best possible results, but instead of devoting more of our already limited human bandwidth to it, we can build lightweight automations using ads scripts, rule engines, alerts, etc. to restore some of the control we used to have before Google, Microsoft and the other ad platforms took over with their artificial intelligence,” he said.



2 BLURRED LINES: PPC & THE BIGGER MARKETING PICTURE

Many of our experts talked about the importance of identifying and appealing to your target audience across multiple channels and platforms, as well as creating cross-channel plans to ensure your campaigns all play nicely.

Search, social, ecommerce? They're all blurring together, said Wesley MacLaggan, SVP of Marketing, Marin Software. He said the rise of Amazon as an ad platform will undoubtedly continue to shake up the ad industry.

What it all means: in 2020, channel integration and diversification will be huge.

Put simply: "If you're not looking to new channels in the coming year, you'll miss out on new business," said **Michelle Morgan**, Director of Client Services, Clix Marketing.

"All marketing works together - no channel is an island," Kuhlman added. "Instead of looking at each channel as a separate standalone entity, advertisers in 2020 will focus on overall, bottom-line results. I know I will be."

Integrated campaigns will be at the forefront of 2020, said **Liam Wade**, Head of PPC, Impression

"Just look at Google's Smart Shopping to see how channels work better together; rolling PLAs, dynamic remarketing and cross-network audience targeting into one," Wade said. "A signal of more to come!"

In 2020, marketers and businesses need a proper understanding of PPC's place in their overall marketing strategy and how that actually works itself into process, said **Kirk Williams**, Founder, ZATO.

"Marketers need to care about all of the ways (even when untraceable) that a business grows in its totality, and then determine how to fit the PPC channel into that overall business growth, including strategy, creative, and reporting," Williams said. "The best thing for PPCers in 2020 may be to blow the dust off those old traditional marketing books."

Melissa Mackey, Search Supervisor, gyro, said we'll also see a further blurring of the lines between paid social and paid search features and targeting.

"We've always seen feature adoption across platforms within search engines (Google Ads, Microsoft Ads) and within social ad channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), but now we're starting to see search engines adopting social targeting, and social channels adding keywords," Mackey said. "Blurred lines between search and social causes one to wonder: who will end up the winner? Only time will tell."



3 MORE & BETTER AUDIENCE TARGETING

Smart marketers and businesses must strategically speak to their target audiences at specific touchpoints along their consumer journey in 2020, according to Ferguson.

“If 2019 was all about audience targeting, 2020 will be the year that we speak to those audiences the right way at the right time.”

The key in 2020 will be your messaging and offering, said **Greg Finn**, Digital Marketer & Partner, Cypress North.

“Instead of cramming a marketing message in the face of others, advertisers need to worry less about the direct sale, and more about how our offerings can help others,” Finn said. “Gone are the days of overpaying for top positions with poor offerings, today we need to embrace helping our customers learn, and grow – even if we have to pay to do it.”

Audiences will continue to be important as Google pushes for more and more audience signals, and rolls out Affinity Audiences for Search and Seasonal Event targeting, according to Kuhlman.

“Where we’re seeing the most exciting results are on the Microsoft Audience Network (MSAN), especially with prospecting using LinkedIn profile targeting and In-Market Audiences, and with fully automated MSAN Shopping campaigns that use the power of the Microsoft Graph,” she said.

Audience targeting will remain as important as ever in 2020, according to **Christi Olson**, Head of Evangelism for Search, Microsoft.

“It’s not audiences or keywords,” Olson said. “It’s audience targeting layered on top keywords.”



4 PRIVACY, TRACKING, FIRST-PARTY DATA & YOU

GDPR, and similar legislation, is restricting tracking capabilities and has catapulted privacy from the “nice to think about” to “an absolute must” for any marketer, according to Cherepakhin.

As a result, **Arianne Donoghue**, Associate Director - Digital Strategy, Edit, said we need to find new ways to track, but we also need to revisit elements of how we approach campaigns in a world that's increasingly data and privacy-conscious.

Until platforms find ways to adapt, marketers need to avoid straying down the path of trying for 100% perfect attribution.

According to **Tim Jensen**, Campaign Manager, Clix Marketing, that means "getting the messaging on point for the right audience" and "tracking the top-level ROI metrics that matter to the business's bottom line."

Purna Virji, Senior Manager, Global Engagement, Microsoft Advertising, said in 2020 it will be all about leveraging all the data without exploiting the people behind the data.

"PPC advertisers have seen successful results with more contextual and demographic targeting options such as In-Marketing Audiences offered by both Google Ads and Microsoft Advertising," Virji said. "We're increasingly seeing new ways to leverage more understandings and insights - while still protecting people's privacy- to connect brands and their customers differently."

The current landscape means first-party data is more important and valuable than ever, according to Cherepakhin and MacLaggan.



“Update your first-party data processes and policies, to meet the latest requirements for regions you target,” Cherepakhin said. “That will position you for success to leverage customer match, remarketing and a growing range of strategies driven by first-party data.”

Added MacLaggan:

“Gone are the days of optimizing to CPA, to get an edge advertisers will need to incorporate customer value (including) lifetime value into their optimization strategy. With offline conversion, it’s already possible to upload offline or follow-on conversions, but expect Google to continue making this easier next year.”



PPC STRATEGY BECOMES MORE VALUABLE

As automation eliminates some of the more tedious tasks, there will be a greater need for PPC marketers who can think strategically, according to our experts.

Amy Bishop, Owner & Digital Marketing Consultant, Cultivative, said that PPC folks who can strategize will have the most success.

“In a changing landscape, strategy only ever becomes more and more valuable,” Bishop said.

Donoghue agreed.

“Focusing on helping clients set strategy, really understanding who our audience is and what it’ll take to solve their problems is going to be key,” she said.

Amy Hebdon, Founder, Paid Search Magic, said leadership in this area is even more important when efficient management is table stakes.

“Leadership requires big-picture thinking. It involves understanding consumer wants and needs, knowing how to target beyond the “local maximum,” and making strategic decisions for clients,” Hebdon said. “Marketing leaders who drive strategy and leverage automation to accomplish their growth goals will have even more success in 2020.”

Similarly, **Mark Irvine**, Director of Strategic Partnerships, WordStream, said you must find where you can peacefully partner with automation

“Whether it’s with software, scripts, dynamic search, automated bidding, ads written with AI/ML, or even various smart campaigns – the time saved on the minutiae of managing fundamental elements of campaigns can be better spent managing the strategic elements – such as audience, targets, and creatives,” he said.



6 GOING BEYOND GOOGLE & FACEBOOK: ALTERNATIVE PLATFORMS TO WATCH

Duane Brown, Founder & Head of Strategy, Take Some Risk, and **Lisa Raehsler**, Founder & SEM Strategy Consultant, Big Click Co., noted that people spent more time on platforms like Snapchat, Pinterest, TikTok, in 2019 – and the revenue at those companies is growing.

That trend will not slow down. So brands will need to go where their customers are in 2020.

“This does not mean you need to be on every ad platform above. It does mean you need to have a better understanding of where your customers spend their time online,” Brown said. “If your audience is on one of the ad platforms above then you should at least test it out and see if you can make it work for your business.”

Clark agreed. He said budgets will be more dispersed than ever.

“From Quora, to Reddit, to Pinterest and, especially Amazon,” he said. “Budget management and keeping a fluid allocation based on performance across platforms will be paramount.”

Akvile DeFazio, President, AKvertise, said ecommerce brands should begin strategizing for Instagram Checkout.

“Though it is currently only available in organic posts, it’s only a matter of time until this new format will be available as an ad,” she said. “Plan now to stay ahead and launch when available for maximum exposure.”

Elizabeth Marsten, Senior Director, Marketplace Strategic Services, Tinuiti, suggested paying attention to the expansion of options in advertising that blur the lines of “paid search” – specifically Amazon and Walmart.

“Their marketplaces have millions of visits a month to their site and searches being performed on those sites, too,” Marsten said. “Additionally, product detail pages that are being built out with robust content like reviews, attributes, video and product comparisons are getting picked up in search engine results and will be competing for eyeballs. Design a strategy or position that addresses that now, rather than halfway through 2020.”

Bottom line?

“While Facebook still has the majority of users, paid ad managers should be closely following these user trends in 2020 to ensure their ads are reaching the right people (or for new opportunities) as they shift platforms,” Raehsler said.



7 A FOCUS ON BRAND AFFINITY, AWARENESS & SAFETY

Pauline Jakober, CEO, Group Twenty Seven, expects PPC marketers to take branding to the next level in 2020.

“More and more, I’m seeing marketers move beyond brand awareness and aim for brand affinity,” Jakober said. “Marketers are no longer satisfied with familiarizing potential customers with their brand. They also want to influence how potential customers feel about it and respond to it.”

Donoghue agreed that brand preference and building relationships will be key in 2020.

Bacchini also hopes to see a return to branding in digital advertising.

“Building a connection to your brand has always mattered, we’ve just largely ignored it for the past 15 years,” she said.

Jonathan Kagan, VP for Search, Cogniscent Media, said brand safety will continue to be incredibly important in 2020 to ensure your ads don’t appear to be endorsing extremist content.

“Advertisers can no longer allow the platforms to ‘do their own things.’ They need to continue to police your ad placements that are operating on automation. Otherwise, you may appear that your brand is supporting a horrific event,” Kagan said.



8 MORE SERP COMPETITION + SEARCH STAGNATION = RISING CPCs

Jeff Allen, President, Hanapin Marketing, said the biggest trend to pay attention to is the lack of search query growth in recent years.

“2020 will see this come to a head due to platforms lacking additional SERP space to monetize,” Allen said. This will result in the continued rise of search CPCs, and a potential for increased CPAs and a lack of growth in sales volume.

Leake agreed, saying that competition will only increase and CPC inflation will continue.

“I’d suggest you adjust your 2020 budgets and expectations to suit,” Leake said. “Not a fun trend, but a realistic one.”

Levy also believes the U.S. search market has become saturated.

“Everybody already searches just about as much as they’re going to. There isn’t going to be 25% YoY query growth anymore,” Levy said. “The SERPs will continue to get more competitive and the CPCs will continue to rise until we reach a saturation point, a point that the next click is no longer profitable.”

MORE SERP COMPETITION + SEARCH STAGNATION
= RISING CPCs

9 CRO IS A MUST DO

While advertisers should have been investing in conversion rate optimization for years, 2020 may be the year it moves from "should do" to "must do," according to Allen.

"Smart advertisers will continue to develop other channels, such as display and social, but the main lift in their sales numbers will come from robust conversion rate optimization programs," Allen said.

But as you're doing CRO, Leake reminds us not to forget about another type of optimization: customer optimization.

"Conversion optimization is lauded, but customer optimization is underrated," Leake said. "You're paying to acquire customers, so make sure you're paying (investing) to keep them, too!"

Levy added that optimizing beyond clicks is essential.

"In the next decade, the biggest wins will come from those who optimize beyond the conversion," Levy said.



10

THE YEAR OF THE TECHNICAL PPC MARKETER!



AJ Wilcox, LinkedIn Ads Expert & Founder, B2Linked Marketers, believes that 2020 will be the year of the technical marketer.

“We’ll see marketers becoming more technical, leading to things like wider adoption and reliance on CRM data in conjunction with their advertising efforts,” Wilcox said. “Marketers will be tracking the lifecycle of leads and will be the ones predicting performance, and not Finance or IT.”

Likewise, **John Lee**, Learning Strategist, Microsoft Advertising, said gaining technical expertise will help you have the ability to manage, optimize, and analyze digital advertising campaigns at scale.

“These skills are fundamental to the use of tools like Google Ads and Microsoft Advertising Scripts or feed-based features like Shopping, Ad Customizers, etc.,” he said. “Let alone how these skills can help you in piecing together data sets in BI tools, etc.”

WANT MORE PPC TRENDS & INSIGHTS FOR 2019?

This only scratches the surface of what you'll find in our new ebook. Ready for more?

You'll get more uncensored and unfiltered insights and tips straight from these PPC experts on how to succeed at PPC in 2020:



JEFF ALLEN



AMY BISHOP



ANNA BLANKEN



DUANE BROWN



ILYA CHEREPAKHIN



JON CLARK



AKVILE DEFAZIO



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PURNA VIRJI



LIAM WADE



AJ WILCOX



KIRK WILLIAMS

JEFF ALLEN

PRESIDENT, HANAPIN MARKETING

The biggest trend has been the lack of search query growth over the years. 2020 will see this come to a head due to platforms lacking additional SERP space to monetize.

This will result in the continued rise of search CPC's, and a potential for increased CPA's and a lack of growth in sales volume.

Smart advertisers will continue to develop other channels, such as display and social, but the main lift in their sales numbers will come from robust conversion rate optimization programs.

While advertisers should have been investing in conversion rate optimization for years, 2020 may be the year it moves from "should do" to "must do."

That means marketing departments may finally be getting the internal and/or agency resources to test, design, and develop user experiences with less friction and more conversions.

AMY BISHOP



**OWNER & DIGITAL MARKETING
CONSULTANT, CULTIVATIVE**

AUDIENCES

There's an ongoing trend in which keyword match types are becoming looser, which can make it more difficult to target specific groups of people with precision. As such, audience targeting has been picking up steam for the past few years and I expect to see that momentum grow in 2020.

Spending the time to analyze your performance across first-party and third-party data to understand more about which audiences perform well and how to improve their performance can pay off in spades.

It's also a good time to consider looking into second party audiences to find additional data sources for your target market.

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING FULL FUNNEL

For most industries, gone are the days where you can find unlimited, inexpensive leads (and sales) through paid search alone. The market is crowded and competitive.

While it's still worth it to compete for as much of the volume as you can, if scalability is your goal, then you have to start looking up the funnel.

Moving up the funnel means understanding how to identify and appeal to your targets across different channels and platforms but also how to create cross-channel plans to ensure your campaigns are all playing nicely, and how to attribute the value of higher-funnel campaigns that may not be the last-click before the lead or sale.

STRATEGY

With more and more competition in the space, constantly increasing CPCs, and an increased trend toward automation, the best PPC folks will be those that can strategize because in a changing landscape, strategy only ever becomes more and more valuable.

ANNA BLANKEN



PPC SPECIALIST, FARAH & FARAH

I think the continued shift toward audience-based targeting will rule the new year.

As Google continues to make changes to keyword match types and introduces more audience targeting options to search, I believe it will be essential to take advantage of the new ways to reach searchers.

Google is already gathering tons of data about user behavior and intent. Why not use it for the betterment of your campaigns?

5 PPC Trends to Get Ready for in 2020

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WILL HASWELL

HEAD OF DIGITAL ACQUISITION



The world of PPC moves fast.

In the last 18 months alone, we've seen:

- The birth of Dynamic and Responsive Search Ads changing the construction of ad copy.
- The pressure to be in the top SERP positions increase with bigger ad sizes.
- The introduction of Smart Bidding forcing more trust in AI.
- The death of the average position and introduction of top of page rate.
- The growth of digital platforms causing an increase in the availability of data.

If you've stayed up-to-date, you'll remember these changes. But how are you supposed to prepare your campaigns for what's next?

We're here to talk about what trends will hit PPC next year and how you can make sure your strategy is ready for them.

1 Audience Segmentation & Remarketing

Without an audience, you're not going to get very far. But reaching them in the right way isn't always easy.

2020 is all about refining audience segmentation and remarketing.

Audience segmentation is the process of separating groups of people based on factors including who they are, how they have interacted with your site, what they are actively researching online and what their online habits are

People are then grouped by this information and targeted accordingly.

However, more and more data is now available to us, so the way we use it needs to change.

In the future, we need to start grouping people into buckets. These buckets will be highly specific and based on questions such as:

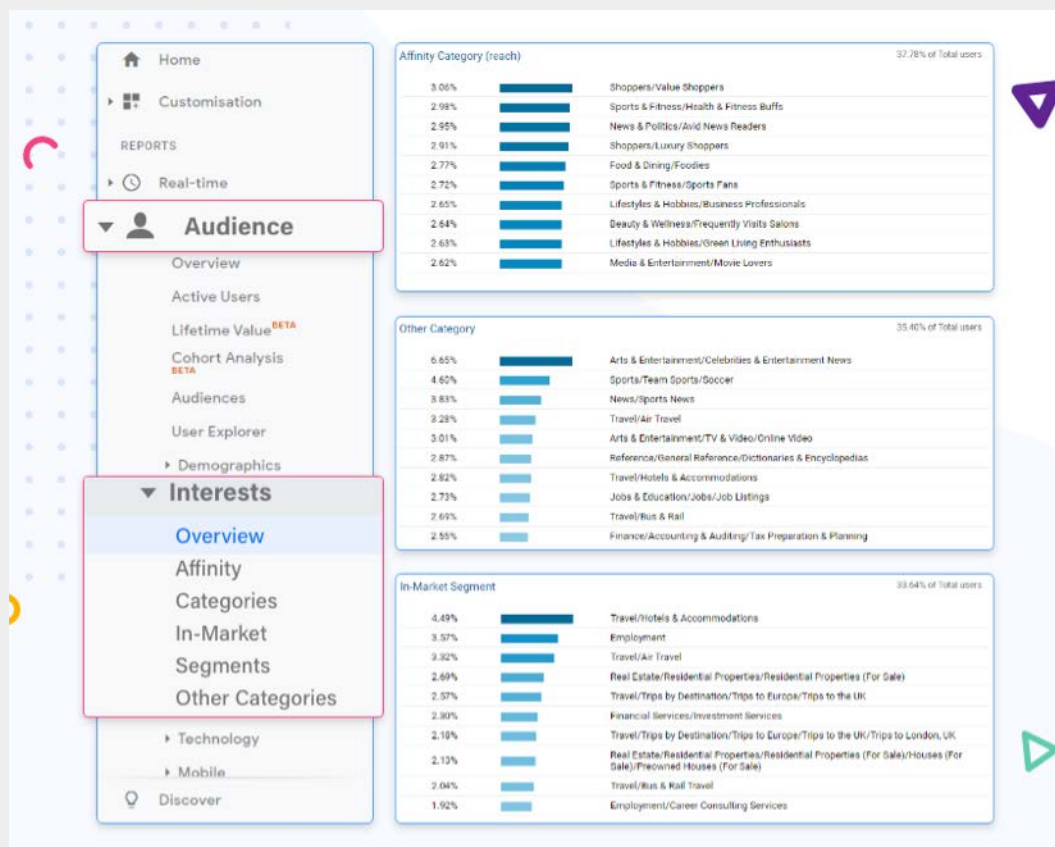
- What type of user are they? Where did they leave your site? Did they purchase something?
- What part of the conversion funnel are they at?
- What are your audiences interested in?
- What age and gender are they?
- Where are they searching and browsing for you or your products? What device are they on?
- Are they coming from other websites? What keywords are they finding you through?
- Where are they in their life? Are they happy? Are they sad? Are they angry?

These segments can then be targeted with more relevant campaigns and messaging to better improve search relevancy and user experience.

To ensure you're making the most of what is available, you should create audience lists in Google Ads. These help to identify which audiences will be most lucrative for your business.

You can then break these down based upon the data points you've got, meaning you can split budgets specifically towards the people most likely to buy.

Google will also look at your accounts audience lists and automatically identify Google Network users who match their search behavior. These 'Similar-To' audience lists are more qualified than the average new users as they are 'lookalikes' of your existing audience.



2 Automation & Account Management

For some PPC experts, automation is already the norm – just look at PPC scripts.

The idea behind them is great: save time on mundane and time-consuming tasks by getting a machine to do them for you.

You can use them to keep an eye on things such as budgets, dead URLs or overall performance. More complex scripts can be used for advanced strategies.

For example, you could trigger bid changes based on changes to the weather if that's something relevant to purchasing habits.

Scripts like this all sound very promising, however, in practice, the convenience of scripts is pretty limited.

The main drawbacks can be summed up as follows:

- They can easily go wrong with the smallest of errors to the parameters.
- If a user's account gets disabled, then the script won't run.
- A decent amount of coding knowledge is needed to edit them.
- They quickly become outdated so you can't set and forget them.

If you're looking to automate aspects of your account to save time, you should start with:

● **OPTIMIZATION** – Are you using technology to easily identify opportunities outside of Google or Bing Ads? Are you doing this manually? Or does it take too much time?

● **ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT** – Are you using rules to govern your PPC accounts? Do you have alerts and rules set up to automate changes to your account in the instance of change?

Take advantage of what automation has to offer, but invest in something that makes things easier rather than needing a lot of attention.

There are a lot of tools out there that utilize machine learning, it's just knowing which features you need to make your life easier.

Adzooma is a digital advertising platform that helps you manage, optimize and automate your Google and Facebook ad campaigns.

It uses automation, alongside management, reporting, and other features, to save you time, budget and to stay on top of the trends and focus on the bigger picture.

3 Voice Search

The number of voice-activated devices is growing. This means the SERPs are more accessible to more people.

For example, those with disabilities, sight problems, or even just those with their hands full can now search the web.

However, things aren't progressing as quickly as it has been predicted to in recent years. If you take a moment to Google statistics for voice search, you'll find one plastered everywhere: by 2020, 50% of searches will be conducted by voice.

This is simply just not true – 2020 is nearly here, and the numbers right now are nowhere 50%. In fact, we'd need billions more to get anywhere near.

However, that doesn't mean it isn't still worth optimizing for because the way people are interacting with technology is changing.

For PPC, this means that the search terms that trigger ads are changing. Keywords will eventually need to be longer and more conversational. Moreover, they'll frequently be question-based.

You are likely to find in 2020 you have two types of datasets: one from text searches and another from voice searches.

As a result, it will be most effective to create separate campaigns so you can study what works for both formats. Each aspect of your ads will need to be tested and ad copy will need changing depending on the search type.

Build your campaigns so that when voice search does eventually fulfill its predictions, your campaigns are ready for it.

4 Visual Search

Search is becoming more visual. Now you can upload an image to a search engine and it will find you other relevant results based on similar images. This means you can take a picture of something you like, and easily find it online.

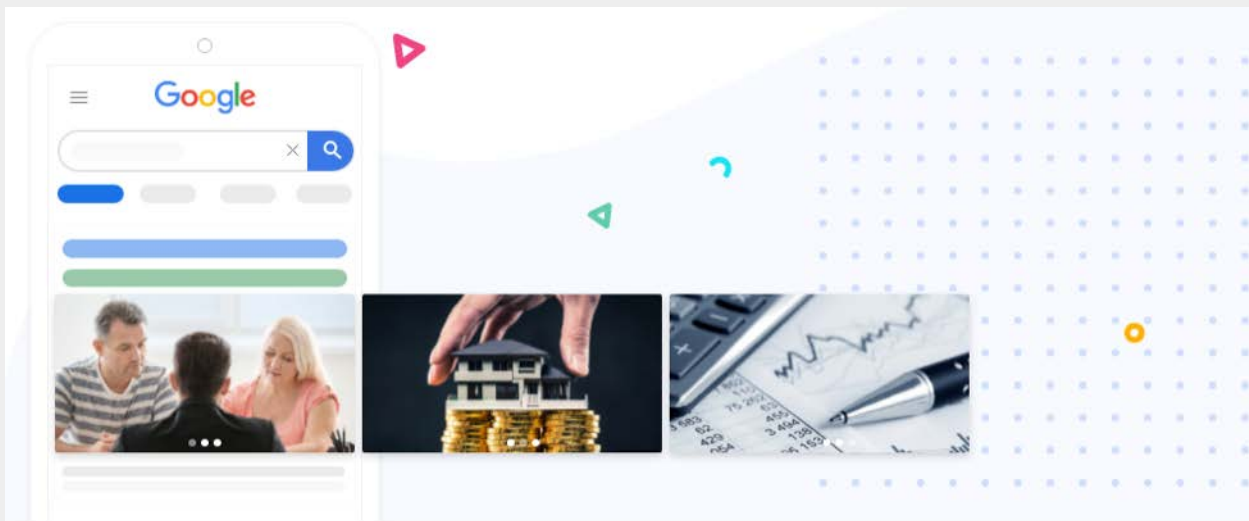
People are going to be searching more with images. Because of this, you should pay more attention to your alt text and tags than ever before so search engines can read and index your website images correctly.

Preparing for the growth of visual search now will make it easier for people to find you in the future.

Better still, Google's introduction of Gallery Ads takes on Facebook's carousel ads and promotes a very visual experience.

Due to come out of beta in early 2020, Gallery Ads will make use of swipeable images to answer people's queries. This will allow advertisers to combine the best features from Search and Display Ads.

Could this be the start of a visual revolution?



5 PPC & SEO Integration

The relationship between PPC and SEO is becoming more important than ever before. Already you can translate a lot of trends seen in SEO over to PPC, and this is only going to become more prevalent throughout 2020, so it's very worthwhile keeping on top of them.

Both PPC and SEO operate in the same environments, so while they require different skill sets and targeting, it's worth monitoring them together.

An SEO manager's focus is ultimately getting pages to rank higher on SERPS and drive traffic to websites. While changes in SEO can take weeks, months or even years to take effect, PPC takes advantage of real-time data to make instant strategic changes.

They're both very different approaches, but they both work in the same environments. So, it makes sense to amalgamate some key aspects to maximize ROI.

Here are four ways you can use PPC and SEO together in 2020:

Keyword Unearthing

Use PPC conversion and CTR data to identify which keywords are performing best, then make a push to get higher in the organic rankings on these keywords, so that you can reduce your PPC spend and re-invest it into other areas.

Efficient Position Strategy

Use bidding technology or data analysis to identify where you are strong organically and where you don't rank highly enough.

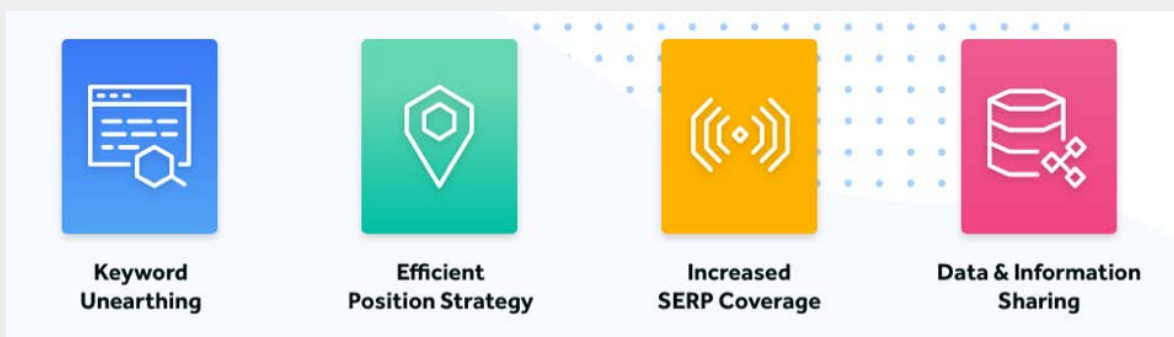
Then, spread your PPC budgets accordingly to pick up traffic where your SEO activity is not, rather than waste budget on generating traffic through PPC where SEO could have picked it up.

Data & Information Sharing

Use PPC real-time data to help mold your SEO strategy by testing any metadata you are thinking of putting in the back-end of your website through ad copy in PPC and then analyze the data to identify the best performing one, which can then be used in SEO.

Increased SERP Coverage

On mobile devices, it's important to be top of page, so you need to be running PPC with SEO. It's also been shown that having both a PPC ad alongside an SEO result increases the likelihood of someone clicking on your link as you cover more real-estate on the SERP.



One Final Note...

Attribution should be the most important measurement tool in your toolbox.

With people interacting with you and your business in more ways than ever, it's imperative to measure where they are coming from, where they are going to, and identify which steps are most important to your user journey to maximize your ROI and brand awareness.

Preparing for the Future

PPC has been a constantly-evolving world ever since its very own big bang, but down the years the complexity has grown tenfold – just look at how many metrics you now need to keep a handle on, compared to say, 10 years ago.

PPC managers personally used to be able to control dozens of accounts at the same time, but in 2019 that is just no longer possible.

A helping hand is needed, be that through PPC scripts or all-encompassing automation tools like Adzooma that ease the manual tasks associated with this now increasingly labyrinthine discipline.

The way we manage paid search accounts will always depend on the updates that get rolled out by the search engine giants. We can't control that.

But, by staying on top of the latest trends, and looking to the future, PPC managers can have a better idea of what is coming, and prepare accordingly for it.

DUANE BROWN



FOUNDER & HEAD OF STRATEGY, TAKE SOME RISK

It'd be easy to say that next year is about brands taking work in-house, or automation across ad platforms. I'd rather take a step back and look at people's behavior. Don't look at what people say, look at what they do. Action speaks louder than words.

As Edison Research [points out](#), more people are spending less time on Facebook. If Facebook didn't buy Instagram in 2012, it would be a larger number of people leaving the Facebook family of apps for other sites.

People are spending more time on Snapchat, Pinterest, TikTok... or at the very least using them more frequently in 2019. That trend will not slow down in 2020. If you are looking to build something long-term and have a real brand, then you need to diversify your advertising spend.

This does not mean you need to be on every ad platform above. It does mean you need to have a better understanding of where your customers spend their time online. If your audience is on one of the ad platforms above then you should at least test it out and see if you can make it work for your business.

It's easy to get complacent and just focus on Google, Facebook, and Instagram. There is a whole world out there and great brands go where their customers are. They don't wait for their customers to come to them. What new advertising platform are you going to test in 2020?



ILYA CHEREPAKHIN

VP, MEDIA OPERATIONS, ACRONYM

It's hard to believe that another year and another decade is about to start. Three areas appear ripe for disruption. I foresee paid search being impacted by trends around privacy, the apps space, and offline to online measurement.

PRIVACY

GDPR legislation catapulted privacy from the nice to think about to an absolute must for any marketer.

More and more places around the world are contemplating similar measures. These trends in personally identifiable information (PII) data management and cookie-based

solutions under growing scrutiny, it's time for paid search and other digital practitioners to start preparing for what may soon be a cookie-less world.

I admit, this does sound daunting. Still, we have a few search engine marketing best practices that can help us prepare for the new normal.

FIRST-PARTY DATA

With third and second-party data increasingly tough to leverage, first-party data will be ever more important.

Update your first-party data processes and policies, to meet the latest requirements for regions you target.

That will position you for success to leverage customer match, remarketing and a growing range of strategies driven by first party data.

AUTOMATION

Many of us tested and benefited from the **automation-enabled optimization features**.

If you have not tested target ROAS, dynamic search ads (DSAs), **responsive search ads**, max conversion value or any of the other PPC automation options, I highly recommend to.

Aside from improving efficiency, these features are not dependent on PPI data and position you well for a privacy first world.

APPS

Focusing more on paid search for apps is a beneficial avenue that more advertisers are likely to pursue.

With 90% of mobile time spent in apps, mobile and tablet traffic surpassing desktop in many verticals, search engine marketing providers are likely to double down on app advertising options.

There are two reasons for that.

- First, this is a long-term growth area. Conversion rates in apps, continue exceeding mobile site conversion rates making them an attractive focus area for the foreseeable future.
- Secondly, search engine advertising solutions recognize that much improvement remains for paid app campaigns. Any enhancement will bring app campaigns to the same level of sophistication as traditional CPC campaigns, automatically paying dividends. Deep linking, GA and Google Firebase analytics integration, audience insights and in-app advertising solutions seem like quick wins with-all around benefits for website owners, advertising providers, and search engines.

Lastly, this is an area where Google and Bing can counter Amazon's threat in share of ad dollars. **Nearly half** of all product searches in the U.S. start on Amazon.

Better app promotion can help users to rely more on them vs. Amazon. And better app advertising options would make it a more attractive ppc investment area.

OFFLINE TO ONLINE

As the new decade dawns, we still watch TV, purchase in brick and mortar stores and call rather than purchasing online for those tricky purchases.

Yes, we are now better at connecting these offline insights to digital efforts. Google's roll out of **in-store visit conversions** was a great step in that direction.

Call analytics platforms are getting more and more accurate with AI powered predictive technologies.

Hopefully, in 2020 or soon after, we will completely close the gap for measuring offline impact from paid search campaigns.

Best of luck with the last days of 2019 and get ready to take your paid search marketing to the next level in 2020!

JON CLARK



MANAGING PARTNER, MOVING TRAFFIC MEDIA

I see three trends likely to come into clearer focus in 2020:

1. With Google's push towards Smart (read: fully automated AI-based) campaigns, the boundaries between remarketing and prospecting campaigns will continue to fade.

An example would be a Dynamic Prospecting campaign that starts with remarketing campaigns and expand to relevant "similar" audiences or the new Targeting Expansion function – all driven by automated bidding.

Rather than opting for the 'easy' automated campaigns, marketers will need to be even more diligent in the time-consuming tasks of campaign setup, organization and segmentation in order to truly have control over the performance.

2. Which brings me to the second trend. Just in the last year we've seen, changes in match type definitions, removal of average position reporting, obfuscation of referral keyword traffic and limits on targeting combinations.

This trend of decreased control will continue as Google pushes users toward automation and minimized transparency to the point we may even see manual bidding removed entirely in favor of automation (see #1).

3. Lastly, the above lack of transparency will push users to try the alternatives that are available, and, expect more options to emerge and improve.

From Quora, to Reddit, to Pinterest and, especially Amazon, budgets will be more dispersed than ever.

Budget management and keeping a fluid allocation based on performance across platforms will be paramount.

What You Need to Know About Brand Awareness in PPC — & Why

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



ALYSSA MACPHERSON

PPC DIRECTOR



I think all PPC pros would agree that performance in PPC is important.

This is why so many of us are obsessed with metrics such as leads, sales, and return on investment.

However, there's a piece of PPC that's foundational to performance but is often overlooked or discounted.

And that piece is brand awareness.

In this article, I'm going to reveal why brand awareness is important to performance and what can happen when you ignore it.

I'll also give you some measures you can use to assess whether you're doing well with brand awareness in PPC – or whether you still have some work to do.

Why Brand Awareness Is Important

As I mentioned, performance in PPC tends to get all the attention.

But it's easy to forget that brand awareness is a major driver of long-term performance.

When your product or service is expensive and/or complex, you have to lay a foundation and give potential customers the opportunity to get comfortable with you before you'll get a conversion.

So you lay a foundation with brand awareness – and you eventually get a conversion. Hooray!

But by then, you've forgotten the role that brand awareness played and your performance campaigns get all the credit.

Brand awareness can also play an important role in protecting you from competitors. If a competitor decides to bid on your branded keywords or act as an unauthorized reseller of your products, brand awareness can help mitigate the impact.

Yet, even when marketers understand these arguments, brand awareness is still easy to discount. When you cut brand building campaigns, you usually don't see an immediate drop in revenue – which makes them an easy target for budget cuts.

In addition, most marketers wildly overestimate the level of brand awareness they have. THEY know their brand inside and out, and they start to think that everyone else does as well.

What Can Happen When You Ignore Brand Awareness

Hopefully I've convinced you of the importance of building brand awareness in PPC. But let me underline the point by giving you a few "real world" examples of what can happen when you ignore it.

1. THE BUDGET CUT

We had a long-time client in a super competitive industry. Over the years, we'd steadily built up brand sales.

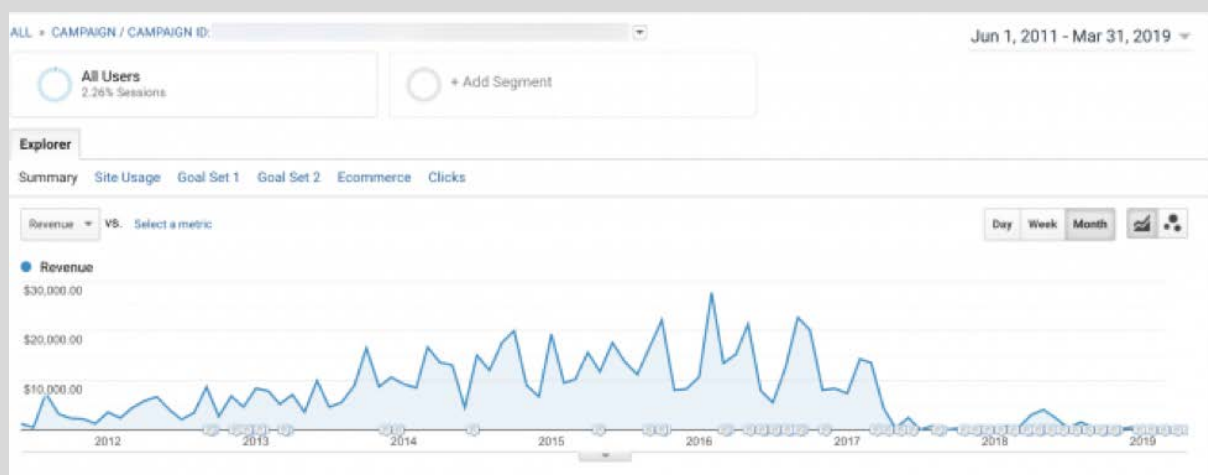
But in 2017, the CEO became more budget conscious. He decided to switch to an automated solution for the overall management of the account.

Unfortunately, the automated solution didn't work out. Eventually, the client brought us back in to manage the account – but with even more aggressive goals than before.

And the only brand building activity he was willing to continue was bidding on the company's name (which isn't brand building because it's driven by people who already know your brand).

As a result, brand awareness fell off the table.

By mid-2017, branded sales fell off sharply and would never recover:



Nothing else changed within this campaign. It was just a straightforward search campaign bidding on their name.

By December 2018, we were no longer working with the company. Last I heard, the CEO had paused all his PPC campaigns and was trying to get the company back on track.

2. THE NAME CHANGE

Two years ago, a client decided to rebrand his company with a new name.

At around the same time, he asked us to pause remarketing because he didn't like the ROI we were getting from it.

We pushed back on this decision. A rebrand would make brand awareness even more critical.

This was especially true for this client. He was selling services to the conference industry, and a good portion of his customers were recurring. Would past customers be confused by the name change? Would they even find the company under its new name?

But unfortunately, the client's sole focus was performance metrics. He didn't see the value in putting any budget behind brand awareness.

Fast forward two years and the company's revenue is flat. Could brand building have made a difference here? I strongly believe so.

3. THE COMPLEX SERVICE

We've been running PPC campaigns for a client who operates a specialized seniors' care facility.

If you were to look only at the leads we're getting from these campaigns (a performance metric), you might question their success. But, in fact, there are other factors to consider.

First, for technical reasons, the client hasn't been able to set up phone call tracking. So it's very possible we're getting more conversions than we know. Because if leads come in over the phone, we can't quantify them.

Second, our PPC campaigns are still their best marketing channel. So there's that.

Third, think about the nature of this client's "product." Moving a loved one to a care facility is a big, complex, expensive decision. It requires a lot of research and thought.

It's unlikely that someone will be moved by an online ad to "buy."

When your product is complex and expensive, you need to lay the groundwork with brand awareness.

Here's a screenshot from Google Analytics for this client:

Page	Source / Medium	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances
		835 % of Total: 11.99% (6,967)	787 % of Total: 13.84% (5,685)	00:02:35 Avg. for View: 00:01:18 (100.39%)	772 % of Total: 25.02% (3,085)
1. [redacted]	google / cpc	300 (35.93%)	268 (34.05%)	00:02:42	268 (34.72%)
2. [redacted]	m.facebook.com / referral	172 (20.60%)	169 (21.47%)	00:01:38	169 (21.89%)
3. [redacted]	google / organic	25 (2.99%)	21 (2.67%)	00:07:09	18 (2.33%)
4. [redacted]	(direct) / (none)	20 (2.40%)	15 (1.91%)	00:00:26	11 (1.42%)
5. [redacted]	[redacted] / referral	16 (1.92%)	14 (1.78%)	00:01:02	13 (1.68%)
6. [redacted]	google / cpc	5 (0.60%)	5 (0.64%)	00:00:21	0 (0.00%)
7. [redacted]	(direct) / (none)	3 (0.36%)	1 (0.13%)	00:00:32	0 (0.00%)
8. [redacted]	l.facebook.com / referral	2 (0.24%)	2 (0.25%)	00:00:00	2 (0.26%)
9. [redacted]	[redacted] referral	1 (0.12%)	1 (0.13%)	00:00:00	1 (0.13%)
10. [redacted]	[redacted] / referral	1 (0.12%)	1 (0.13%)	00:00:21	1 (0.13%)

As you can see, the average time on page for this client is impressive. Over 2.5 minutes! That's a clear sign of engagement.

The number of page views also looks good.

So it looks as though our brand awareness campaigns are working.

Fortunately, this client understands the value of these brand awareness campaigns and is willing to put budget behind them.

Unfortunately, not all clients are so willing.

How Are You Doing With Brand Awareness?

As you can see, ignoring brand building in PPC can have dire consequences.

But how do you know if you're doing enough?

Fortunately, there are a few metrics that you can look at. They won't give you the whole story, but they will give you some idea of how you're doing.

1. % NEW VISITORS

New visitors means new business. You want to see a good percentage of new visitors coming to your site to learn about you. Look for a slow, steady increase.

If you're only getting returning visitors, it might be time to increase your brand awareness budget.

2. DIRECT TRAFFIC

Direct traffic happens when people type in your URL or reach it via a browser bookmark. In other words, they're already familiar with your brand.

Therefore, steady growth in direct traffic can reflect steady growth in your brand awareness.

3. NUMBER OF VISITS FROM YOUR BRANDED CAMPAIGN

If people are finding and clicking on your ads that featured your branded terms, that could be a sign that your brand awareness campaigns are working. They're getting to know your brand, so they're more willing to click on your ads.

Again, you'd like to see steady growth here.

4. PAGES PER SESSION

The more pages people visit per session (on average), the more engaged they are. It's a sign that they're interested and want to learn more.

5. AVERAGE SESSION DURATION

Similar to the above, the amount of time each visitor spends on your site is another good indicator of engagement. The more time they spend, the more engaged they are.

6. FORM COMPLETIONS

Most people think of form completion as a performance metric – and it is. But it can also be a brand awareness metric.

Sometimes, we'll find that brand awareness campaigns help to drive up form completion numbers. So not only are you building brand awareness, you're also getting new leads as a bonus.



Don't Forget About Brand Awareness!

Of course, performance metrics such as leads and ROI are important. But don't forget the importance of brand awareness as well.

Because brand awareness can help sustain and improve your brand's performance for the long term.

And without it, you leave yourself vulnerable.

AKVILE DEFAZIO



PRESIDENT, AKVERTISE

Instagram; many components of this rapidly and perpetually growing channel will present opportunities for marketers to expand their efforts and drive results. While organic News Feed posts and paid ads are still finding success, Stories has been captivating more users.

If you haven't done so already, develop and execute advertising campaigns using ephemeral content via Instagram Stories to visually narrate your brand's story, showcase your products, especially with carousels, and drive target audiences to your website to learn more while tagging visitors with the Pixel for future remarketing.

Another thing to begin strategizing for that will be a big hit in 2020 is Instagram Checkout for ecommerce brands. In March of 2019, Instagram launched Checkout to about a dozen brands and since then, more accounts have been invited to the beta.

Given early successful feedback and shopping efficiency for users, we can expect this will continue rolling out to more accounts, so begin those conversations with your team or your clients to strategize which products you will want to create posts for that can display your products and make them easy to shop.

Though it is currently only available in organic posts, it's only a matter of time until this new format will be available as an ad. Plan now to stay ahead and launch when available for maximum exposure.

ARIANNE DONOGHUE

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR - DIGITAL STRATEGY, EDIT

Building on the past focus on audiences, I think a huge trend that PPC marketers need to consider is going to be how we track and store user data, particularly for anyone operating within Europe.

There are some changes coming down the road that impact the use of cookies for tracking, which could put an end to tracking on an individual level as we know it.

If that happens, not only do we need to find new ways to track, but we also need to revisit elements of how we approach campaigns in a world that's increasingly data and privacy conscious.

Rather than focusing on targeting individuals, we could look at using all the benefits of our digital tools to follow a "mass one to one" approach that's being used successfully by companies such as P&G, which emphasises the use of context, and people's desire to identify as part of a "tribe" to successfully target them.

It'll be really interesting to see how platforms such as Google and Facebook account for these changes within their tech and how this filters down to the way we manage campaigns.

Automation is going to continue to be a key trend into 2020 and beyond.

We have no idea how automated things are going to get over the coming months, so my suggestion should be for marketers to focus on the areas where they will continue to be able to add value as the role of a paid specialist continues to change.

Our jobs are going to be less about the specifics of “how”, and more about the “why”.

Focusing on helping clients set strategy, really understanding who our audience is and what it'll take to solve their problems is going to be key.

As the machines will increasingly take over the role of purchasing items on behalf of their consumers, it's going to come down to brand preference and building relationships – something our colleagues in traditional marketing have been doing for years.

We need to learn from them and apply some of these skills in our own approaches, as we're moving from an age of being knowledge workers, to focusing on the emotional side of what makes us human.

NICOLE FARLEY

CEO, WEB SPROUT



(USER GENERATED) CONTENT IS KING

One of Amazon's greatest features is the vast amount of customer reviews. Google's introduction of user generated images in product review feeds is a late, but necessary, feature.

Customers want to see exactly what they're getting, with real people similar to themselves. This builds trust and reassure buyers that what they see is what they get.

If you run ads for any ecommerce business, use Google's customer reviews along with user generated images to give customers a more enhanced shopping experience.

PROGRAMMATIC NATIVE VS. DISPLAY ADS

Content platforms Taboola and Outbrain have announced their merge, giving advertisers a leg up and an audience of over 2.6 billion.

If your aim is brand awareness, you might want to stick to display ads since they have a better chance of standing out against the crowd.

If your aim is clicks and engagement, native is where it's at. Content platforms like Taboola do a great job of camouflaging their sponsored posts by making them look like native content.

Come up with a catchy headline and make sure your article provides value to your customers.

IMAGES & CONTENT

Long gone are the days where businesses have to spend a fortune on stock photos or hire models for their ad images. Customers want to see real people, using real products, experiencing real emotions.

I've noticed that the more native my Facebook ad client's images are, the more positive feedback we receive (in sales or engagement). Anyone can buy a stock photo. But build trust with your demographic and show them who your company really is.

Before you hire a film crew, pick up a smartphone and snap a few photos. Just make sure you have good lighting, and permission to use any photos you take with people in them.

KNOW THY CUSTOMER: Mapping Messaging Across Channels

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



NAVAH HOPKINS

SERVICES INNOVATION STRATEGIST



Ads represent the rare opportunity to deliver a perfectly crafted message to exactly who the group who needs to hear it. We have targeting based on interest and intent, past behaviors, location, and more.

According to [HubSpot](#), “83% of people agree with the statement “Not all ads are bad, but I want to filter out the really obnoxious ones.”

Yet most see ads as annoying: “91% of people say ads are more intrusive today than two-three years ago.”

Part of this is the historical blitz campaigns big brands would run, souring the general good opinion on ads. But we know that blitz campaigns don’t work—there’s no way to engage with everyone. Instead, as marketers, we need to focus on reaching our specific audience and focus on engaging our customers and our buyer personas.

Going into 2020, it is crucial that we do better.

Not only for the good of our brands, but also for the good of our prospects and customers. They deserve an amazing experience from us at every stage in the buying and commitment cycle (marketing doesn’t end once they’ve opened their wallets).

So let’s give it to them. Here are five ways to make sure you have customer-focused messaging and targeting so that you can make that will enable more profit for you and your eventual customers!

1 Keep Messaging Cross Platform — Creative Likely Needs To Adapt

One of the most heart-breaking things I see in ad creative is the misalignment of channel.

An ad that would perform beautifully on **Facebook** (an attention grabbing image that directs the user towards the call to action button or video that snags attention spans) would suffer on the **Google Display Network** (GDN).

On a similar note, the videos that do well on Instagram (impulse purchase paradise), fall flat on YouTube's branding and educational platform.



While the core messaging for all these ads may be the same, it's important to adapt the creative so it honors the unique mechanics of each network.

As a rule, the networks tend to have the following jobs:


- **SEARCH** (Google, Microsoft): The salesperson taking the order after the prospect has figured out what they want, or at least that they have a need.
- **SOCIAL** (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn): The community manager and brand evangelist, exciting and educating prospects, occasionally inciting impulse behavior.
- **VIDEO** (Youtube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok): The educator who knows how to pivot from elevator pitch to full on demo without losing quality.
- **DISPLAY** (GDN, Microsoft Audience Network): The grass-roots champion who can be sent on broad or targeted messaging missions, as well as recouping lost prospects.


If you try to make the same creative work across all the channels, it will probably fail. Here's an example of a brand carrying their core brand/message across all channels:

Aleh Barysevich likes Brandwatch.

 **Brandwatch**
Sponsored · 

Consumer Fit organizations make effective decisions based on a deep, real-time understanding of their consumers and buyers, competitors, and the market.

 Brandwatch





 GUIDE

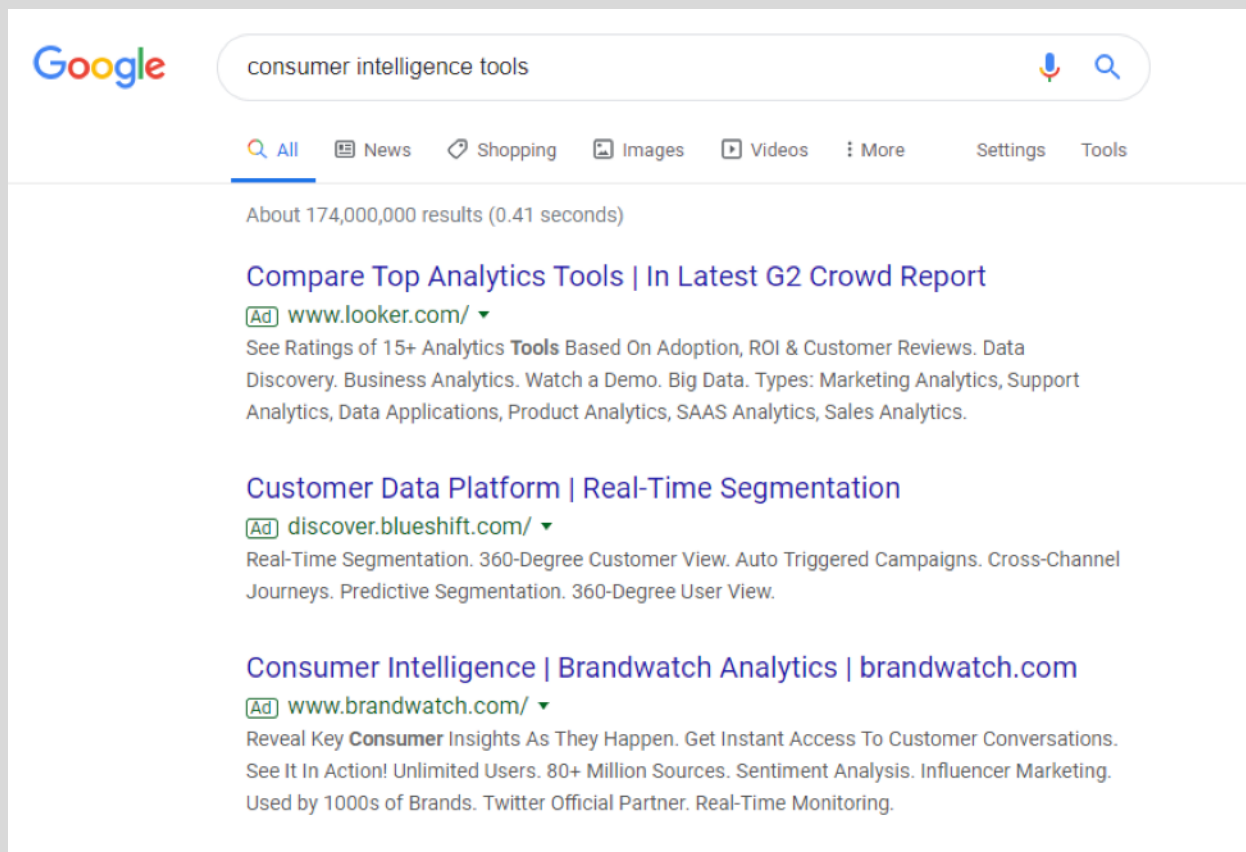
The Guide to becoming Consumer Fit

Brandwatch | A New Kind of Intelligence

BRANDWATCH.COM
Get Instant Access To The Guide [Learn More](#)

To compete in this world, businesses must be Consumer...

 Like  Comment  Share 



In this example, Brandwatch does a great job matching style of reach out (Facebook is used for a whitepaper/guide, whereas Google search is used for feature-focused solutions. Yet the actual creative (in my opinion) misses the mark.

The Facebook ad assumes I know what they mean by “consumer fit” and have already bought into an internal nomenclature.

The Google ad is formulaic in the headlines and hides all the excitement and value in the descriptions.

By contrast, check out these ZipRecruiter ads:

**ZipRecruiter**
Sponsored · 

This year try ZipRecruiter for Free! The smartest way to hire. 80% of employers who post on ZipRecruiter get a quality candidate through the site within the first day.

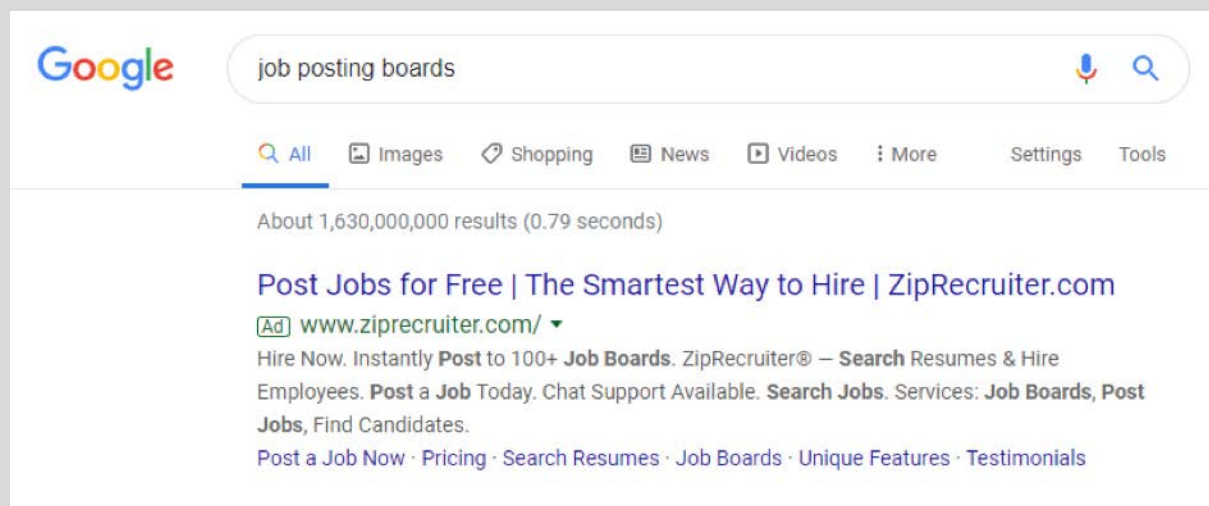


WWW.ZIPRECRUITER.COM/POST-A-JOB
Post Jobs For Free. Find Great Talent Today. [Learn More](#)
ZipRecruiter learns what you're looking for, identifies peo...

 197

38 Comments 43 Shares

 Like  Comment  Share 



The core messaging is the same – “Post Jobs for Free” – but the rest of the content and brand personality are adapted to fit the marketing medium.

In the Facebook ad, a bold image grabs the user’s attention and guides them to look up at the additional information or down to the gentle call to action “Learn More.”

By contrast, the Google ad puts calls to action and empowering the user to see themselves as smart for choosing ZipRecruiter as their vendor.

2 Use Audiences for More Than Remarketing

Audiences aren't anything new – almost every channel has had some degree of grouping prospects based on abandoning/completing a desired action, demographics, or affinity.

Yet, audiences often are relegated to recovery operations. Salvaging a prospect, rather than prequalifying marketing spend.

The beauty of in-market audiences is a brand can exclusively target folks who have already displayed interest in the products and services they offer (profiting from competitors investing in your leads).

Ad customizers allow you to adapt messaging to factor in audiences, but sometimes truly new creative is needed.

By accounting for intent/interest, you'll be able to speak directly to the pain points of prospects, empowering them to see you as the solution that “gets them.”

Facebook and Instagram ads all but require you to layer in some degree of interest or intent into the targeting.

Edit Audience

Saved Target Group
Mother's day list

Locations

INCLUDED LOCATIONS
United States
All United States

EXCLUDED LOCATIONS
United States
Hawaii
Alaska

Add a country, state/province, city, ZIP or address

Everyone in this location

Age
27 - 60

Gender
All Men Women

Relationship Status
Married

Choose relationship statuses
Browse

More Demographics

Connections

All
Advanced connection targeting

Include people who are connected to

Enter your Page, app, or event names..

Exclude people who are connected to

Enter your Page, app, or event names..

Include people whose friends are connected to

Enter your Page, app, or event names..

Languages

Enter a language...

Interests

Additional Entries
Parent
Family and relationships
Marriage

Potential Audience
Potential Reach: 290,000 people

Targeting Details

Location:
United States

Exclude Location:
United States: Alaska; Hawaii

Interests:
Marriage, Motherhood, Parent or Parenting

Behaviors:
Online buyers

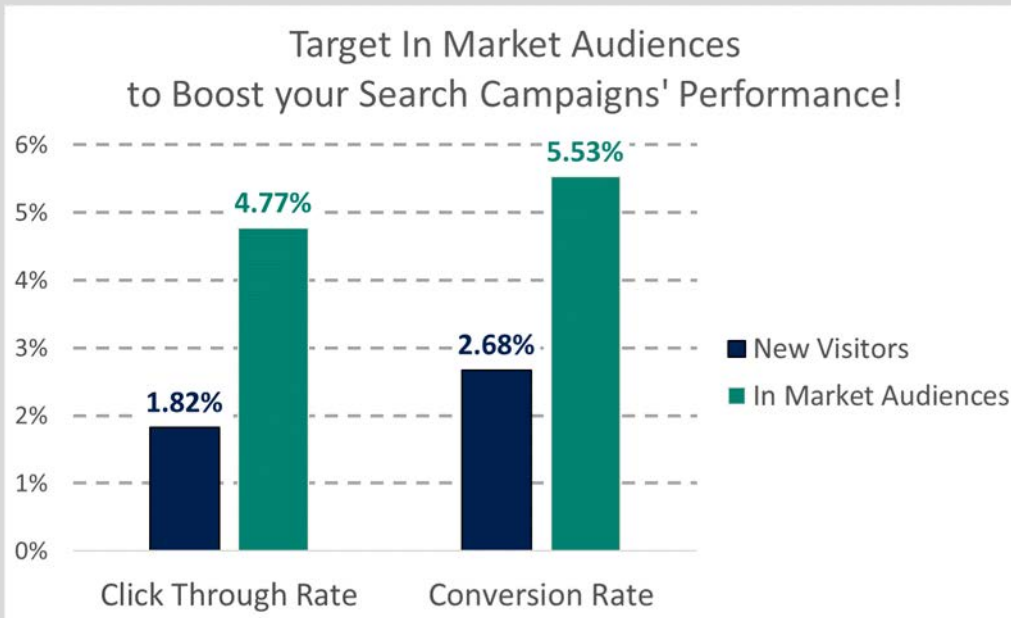
Relationship Status:
Married

Age:
27 - 60

Gender:
Male

Placements:
on News Feed and right column on desktop computers or News Feed on mobile devices

Audiences can be used to motivate impulse purchase, take care of an adjacent need, and inspire new “needs” that prospects never knew they would have. And you know what? This gets you results.



3 Tailor Your Content for Each Stage in the Funnel

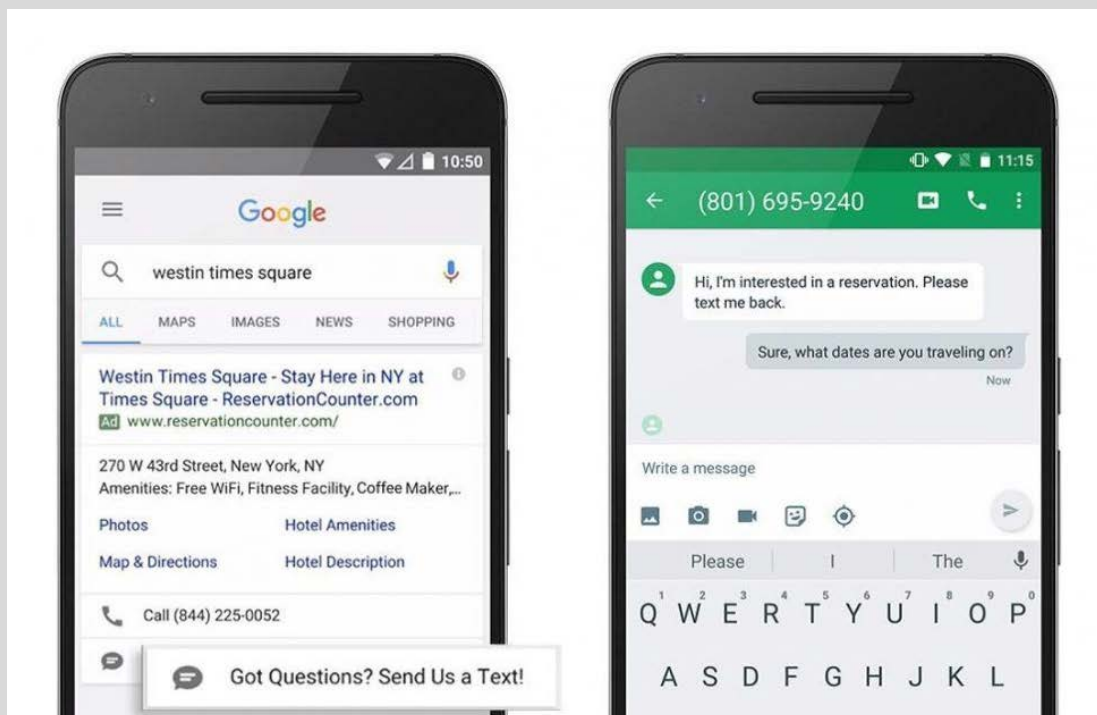
A big part of message mapping is knowing what style of messages will land via each marketing channel, but it's also important to factor in how prospects interact with each channel during their unique purchasing and retention cycle.

If the sales cycle is longer, most prospects like to research vendors and solutions via search (potentially catching a webinar or two off social channels), whereas shorter sales cycles get direct calls to action.

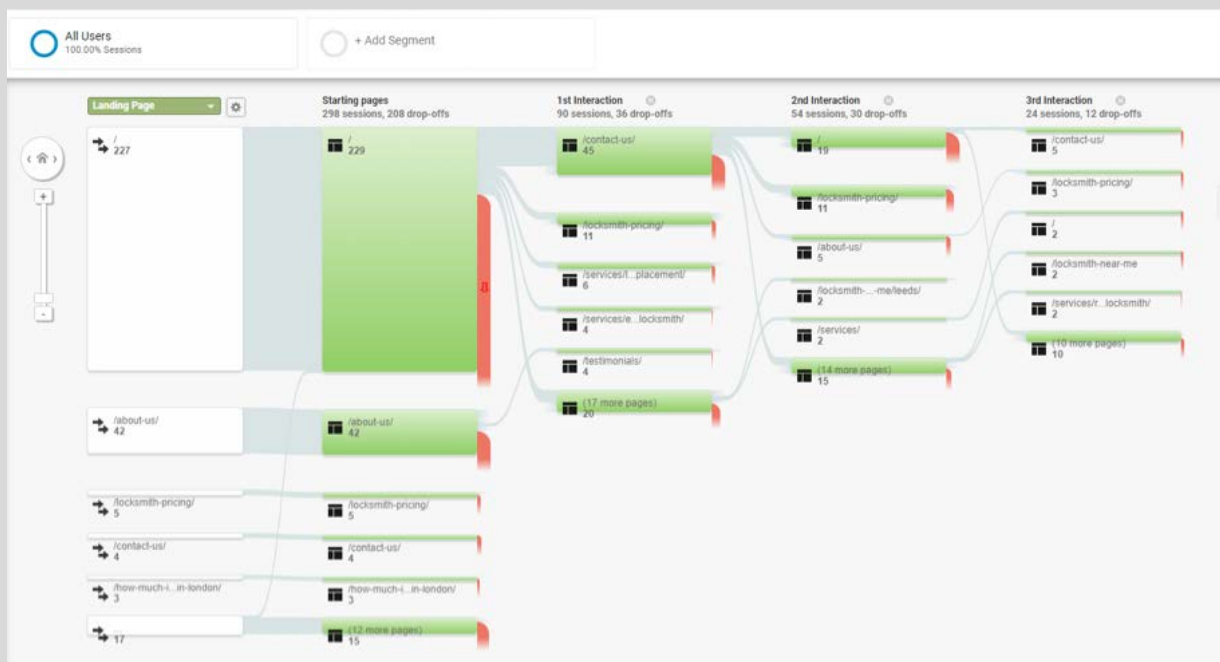
Yet if we look at the content we serve prospects (or customers in the retention cycle), we tend to assume they are self-selecting how they want to consume content based on the channel they're visiting.

Someone who is in research mode might very well want a whitepaper, webinar, or both – they may also want to talk to a human being for a 15-minute consult.

While it's easier to build the framework for messaging delivery for existing customers (in theory you already have some insights on how they want to consume content), taking advantage of adapting content delivery will help your prospects see you as meeting them where they are.



Part of how you'll be able to solve for this is looking at your analytics user-flow, seeing where prospects have dropped off.



Check your analytics user behavior flow – it will help you see if the main issue is lead quality, content quality, or both.

4 Exclude Irrelevant Audiences

While this is less of a strategy and more of a reminder to adopt a best practice, excluding audiences to ensure messages are relevant is a must going into 2020!

Just like we're able to prequalify prospects by requiring they belong to specific audiences, we can also exclude users who stand no chance of representing profit.

Here are the main use cases for excluding audiences:

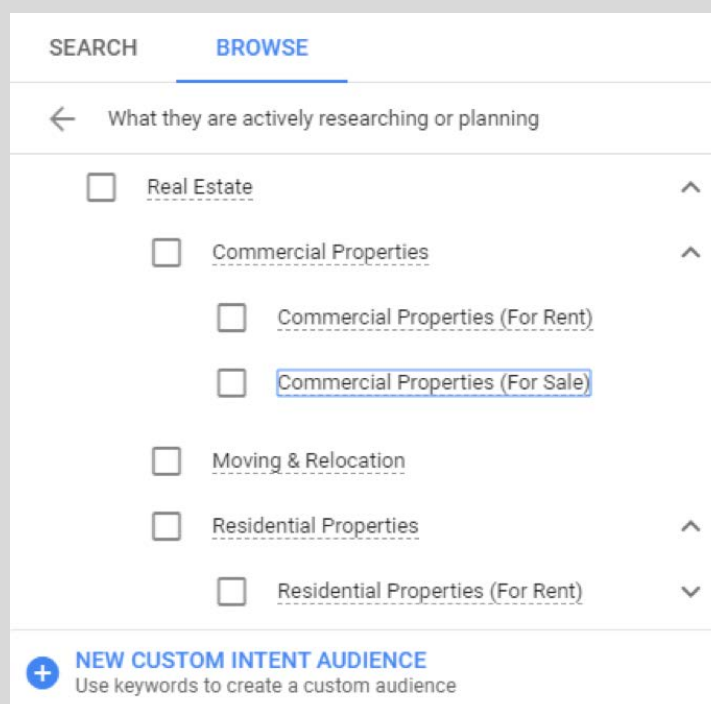
B2B VS. B2C

Nothing upsets bosses more than unqualified leads clogging up the pipeline (either because of value of sale or scope of project).

Yet B2B auction prices can also cause problems for B2C marketers: as a rule, the more expensive the product or service, the more expensive the auction price of the keyword/placement.

If a brand serves both B2B and B2C, be sure to split those buyer personas into different campaigns and add the corresponding audience exclusions.

For example, a real estate firm may handle both commercial and residential deals, but they wouldn't want those leads getting routed to the wrong agents.



The language you use for a B2B deal will be very different than a B2C purchase. Being able to speak to profit, investment ROI, and scope of project is far more important to a brand selecting a vendor than an individual looking for a single product.

Conversely, the feel-good emotion that a brand can inspire will fall on deaf ears in the B2B world if there isn't profit to back it up.

CONVERTED/ORGANIC TRAFFIC

Nothing turns a happy customer into a jaded ex-customer like over saturating their internet experience with your brand.

Excluding existing customers is a great first step if your products and services tend to be “one and done.”

Exclude audiences

Exclude audiences to define who should not see your ads

Exclude from
Campaign ▾ | Educating wellness

SEARCH	BROWSE	None selected
← How they have interacted with your business		Select one or more audiences to exclude.
Combined lists ▾		
Website visitors ▴		
<input type="checkbox"/>	All Users	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	All converters	35
<input type="checkbox"/>	All visitors (Google Ads)	440

SAVE CANCEL

<input type="checkbox"/> Excluded audience	Type ↑	Excluded from	Level
--	--------	---------------	-------

If your brand represents a subscription service or a product that needs refreshing every few years (car/computer/phone/etc.), you may want to allow those folks to be eligible to see “renewal” ads, but those audiences should be kept separate.

This is one of my favorite use cases for ad customizers:

AdWords	Google Search
Headline 1: Running Shoes	Audience = cart abandoners
Headline 2: 1 Day Shipping	Running Shoes - 1 Day Shipping
Description: The Best Selection of Shoes on Earth! Free Return Policy. Weekend Deal! {=IF(audience IN(Cart Abandoners), 15% off your order!):10% off your order!}	Ad www.example.com/shoes The Best Selection of Shoes on Earth! Free Return Policy. Weekend Deal! 15% off your order!
	Other audiences
	Running Shoes - 1 Day Shipping
	Ad www.example.com/shoes The Best Selection of Shoes on Earth! Free Return Policy. Weekend Deal! 10% off your order!

Analytics segments can be imported into Google Ads as audiences for targeting and excluding. This means you can either “protect” your branded campaigns (or any campaigns for that matter) from traffic you would have earned anyway or directly address the reason the traffic didn’t convert.

ADMIN

USER

Property

Create Property

http://www.motorcyclegoodies.com

Property Settings

Tracking Info

PRODUCT LINKING

AdWords Linking

AdSense Linking

Ad Exchange Linking

All Products

Audience Definitions

Audiences

Dynamic Attributes

Custom Definitions

Custom Dimensions

Custom Metrics

Data Import

Audiences

Create audiences to engage with your users through Google's Audience marketing integrations, like Remarketing Lists for Search Ads and Remarketing on the Google Display Network, or with users who return to your site with Google Optimize 360. [Learn More](#)

Search

<input type="checkbox"/>	Name	Description	Date created	Last modified	Membership	Type
<input type="checkbox"/>	MCO Smart List	Google managed audience	Feb 27, 2015	Apr 23, 2017	Open	AdWords
<input type="checkbox"/>	General visitors (system-defined)	ecommerce_pageType: is not one of "product, cart, purchase"	Mar 26, 2016	Apr 23, 2017	Open	AdWords
<input type="checkbox"/>	[Engagement Pack] Visited last 7 days	Page: matches regex ".*"	Apr 17, 2015	Apr 23, 2017	Open	AdWords
<input type="checkbox"/>	[Engagement Pack] Visited last 1 day	Page: matches regex ".*"	Apr 17, 2015	Apr 23, 2017	Open	AdWords
<input type="checkbox"/>	[Engagement Pack] Visited >60m	Session Duration > 3600	Apr 17, 2015	Apr 17, 2015	Open	AdWords
<input type="checkbox"/>	[Engagement Pack] Returning Visitor	User Type: "Returning Visitor"	Apr 17, 2015	Apr 17, 2015	Open	AdWords
<input type="checkbox"/>	[Engagement Pack] Page depth >5	Page Depth > 5...	Apr 17, 2015	Apr 17, 2015	Open	AdWords
<input type="checkbox"/>	[Engagement Pack] Page depth >10	Page Depth > 10 Screen Depth > 10	Apr 17, 2015	Apr 23, 2017	Open	AdWords
<input type="checkbox"/>	[Engagement Pack] New Visitor	User Type: "New Visitor"	Apr 17, 2015	Apr 17, 2015	Open	AdWords
<input type="checkbox"/>	[Engagement Pack] Conversions > 0	Goal Completions > 0...	Apr 17, 2015	Apr 17, 2015	Open	AdWords

5 Get Feedback on Ad Creative from Existing Customers

Nothing helps you grow your customer base like harnessing the power of your existing customers.

Provided you're taking care of them and delivering on promises made, they will be invested in helping you do even better (and appreciate that you're trying). Before you set up new creative or explore a new channel, ask your customers if it would be effective/if they frequent that medium.

Ideally, you'll be able to reward them for this feedback. Set up a survey and offer a discount. Create a focus group and give away some gift cards.

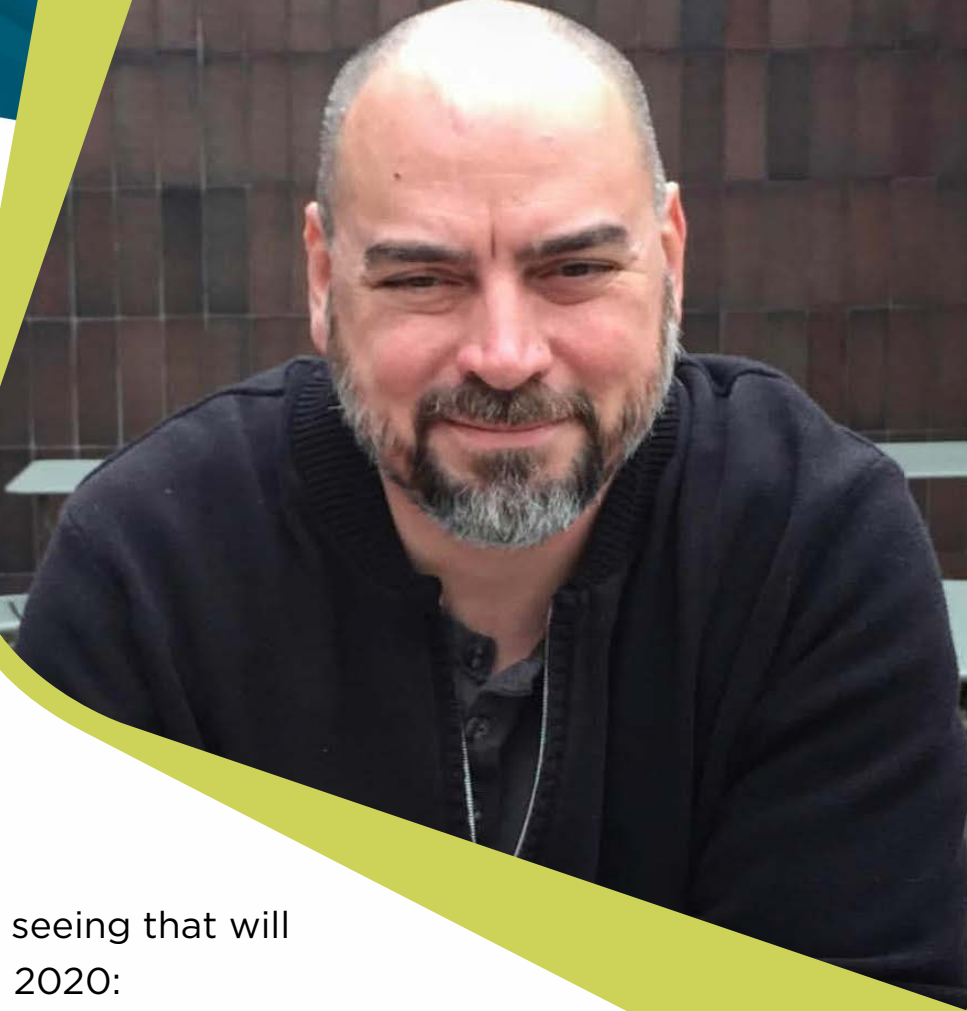
Feedback from current customers is worth the investment: It can be especially helpful in weeding out false positives/negatives in campaigns. It can be frustrating to see high CTR and conversion rates, but sale values/real world conversions not match-up.

While it's true there is value in getting the sales/customer success organization's take on the ads, the best insights will come from your customers.

Let's make 2020 the year of intelligent, customer-focused message mapping so brilliant creative has the best chance to secure our best customers!

JEFF FERGUSON

CEO, FANG MARKETING



Some big ideas on trends I'm seeing that will most likely come to a head in 2020:

PPC EMBRACES THE CONSUMER JOURNEY

The days of the various PPC based mediums (search, social, shopping, etc.) being used as a blunt marketing object are coming to an end.

In 2020, I expect to see the smart marketers/businesses moving away from just adding search and social to their marketing plans like they're adding ingredients to a stew, but using it strategically to speak to their target audiences at specific touchpoints along their consumer journey.

If 2019 was all about audience targeting, 2020 will be the year that we speak to those audiences the right way at the right time.

ENTERPRISE GOES ALL IN-HOUSE

Enterprise-sized companies pulling aspects of digital advertising in-house is nothing new, but I think 2020 will be the year that agencies working with big corporations really dries up.

All of our enterprise-level clients these days are looking for consulting and education for their internal teams (even if they claim otherwise in the beginning). Luckily, the SMB market still has plenty of opportunities.

AUTOMATION

In 2020, PPC managers will finally learn their place in the new world order of digital advertising - to provide a clean working environment for their robot overlords.

The role of the PPC manager will not go away for at least another five years, but the days of spending hours tweaking bids are gone.

Keywords aren't going anywhere anytime soon - the robots still need us to speak to the other humans properly; however, whatever can be made into a math problem is now the domain of the machines.

GOOGLE CLEANS UP ITS AD ACT

Google has spent the last couple of years adding pieces to search ads like a kid with an unlimited supply of LEGO bricks.

In 2020, I see the wobbly structure finally toppling over and Google will streamline the ads down its tightest elements.

ALTERNATIVE PLATFORM'S WILL FINALLY GET THEIR SHOT

Facebook and Google aren't going anywhere anytime soon, but there are a few players, new or not so new, that will finally get their day in the sun:

PINTEREST

Pinterest going public finally got them to get their advertising support act together.

We get better agency support services from Pinterest than we've ever seen from Facebook and without the high-pressure sales tactics we get from Google.

2020 will be the year that brands finally realize that Pinterest is a solid touchpoint at the beginning of the consumer journey.

TIKTOK

Every new client discussion right now has someone in the room asking about TikTok.

While it will never get as large as Facebook or Instagram, TikTok will finally go mainstream in 2020 and make some real advertising revenue... if one of the other social media platforms doesn't completely rip them off.

OTT

More streaming channels means more streaming ad inventory. You may not be able to buy this channel on a PPC basis, but any marketer that isn't adding OTT to their marketing plans 2020 is going to be left in the dust.

GREG FINN

**DIGITAL MARKETER & PARTNER,
CYPRESS NORTH**



EMBRACING (NOT SO) SMART BIDDING

As the engines move towards migrating users to smart bidding, there is more of a need than ever for skilled advertisers to avoid looming pitfalls.

To the layman, Smart Bidding appears rather, well, smart. It is not.

The knowledge comes at the behest of the operator. Setting up Maximize conversions with your maximum budget may be a nightmare.

Targeting an unattainable Target ROAS won't work. Us advertisers need to adopt Smart Bidding but work with it to find what methods work for each account.

BENEFIT TO OUR AUDIENCE

The paid marketer has had to evolve substantially over the years to differing ad formats and sizes.

As ad platforms are becoming more seasoned, our messaging and offering are more important than ever.

Instead of cramming a marketing message in the face of others, advertisers need to worry less about the direct sale, and more about how our offerings can help others.

Instead of forcing high friction conversions, the focus should be to create helpful mid-funnel content that addresses the needs of customers, especially on the B2B side.

Gone are the days of overpaying for top positions with poor offerings, today we need to embrace helping our customers learn, and grow – even if we have to pay to do it.

JUSTIN FREID

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, GROWTH
AND INNOVATION, CMI/COMPAS**



AI-DRIVEN NEXT BEST ACTION

While each consumer journey is different, one common theme is the fact that they are multitouch.

Determining what message to deliver next is almost as much of an art as it is a science. But the science aspect of journey orchestration will continue to grow and become even more essential.

Many of us old school PPC marketers have now become full stack biddable media managers, operating across search, social and programmatic.

With programmatic now having the ability to reach potential customers across display, video, online radio, digital out of home and addressable TV, using AI and machine learning to deliver the next best action will provide immense value.

With this trend heading full steam into our daily lives, we'll see the use of AI helping us determine the customized experience needed to drive a user to convert.

Applying data and insights from on human behavior from behavioral economics, we'll be able to better understand how we can prime potential customers, so when they give us the right buying signals, we can prompt them to choose your brand.

Apply some dynamic creative to the equation and you'll have a continuously optimizing path to conversion.

JULIE FRIEDMAN BACCHINI



PRESIDENT & FOUNDER, NEPTUNE MOON

If recent news is any indicator, I am hopeful that one of the trends we start to see in 2020 is a return to branding in digital advertising and less of a focus on everything being hyper trackable.

The pendulum has swung too far in making people think that digital advertising is all-knowing in its ability to track exactly what made a person make a purchase or become a lead.

Building a connection to your brand has always mattered, we've just largely ignored it for the past 15 years.

I also think that the automation and machine learning train is going to continue to pick up speed. The key for paid search pros will be figuring out how to use these tools/features as effectively as possible, while also retaining our value by doing things the machines cannot do.

Thinking about where you, as a human, really adds the most value to the process is going to become more and more important as the tech marches forward! (Hint – the platforms don't play nicely with each other, but you're under no such constraints!).

BRAD GEDDES

CO-FOUNDER, ADALYSIS

The targeting options are going to continue to evolve that gives Google more control and advertiser's less control over ad serving.

We've seen this with smart display and smart shopping campaigns. It has occurred the last two years with the changes to match types.

This year, we're going to see Google continue to take control away from advertisers in the name of 'better targeting & intent'. Unfortunately, Google has not figured out intent in any meaningful way, so these changes will leave you with more work to do in order to keep seeing the same results.

We're also going to see a bit of pushback from advertisers on automation. We've seen a lot of disappointed advertisers regarding RSAs, smart campaigns, and match types.

While Google will introduce more audience capabilities and more automation, advertiser's are becoming leery of Google's automation and won't as blindly adopt it but rather dip their toes into Google's new features to see if they really work as intended.

This will leave more advertisers to create automation on their own or leverage third-party automation and evaluation systems. We'll see automation continue to rise, however, Google won't always be the one driving these changes.

Some of the best innovation this year is going to come from companies building platforms or creating in-house automation.

Be prepared to hear some exciting stories from others on how they are automating and scaling their accounts and make sure you are leveraging this type of technology yourself.

DANIEL GILBERT

CEO, BRAINLABS

With the way things are going, 2020 is going to be all about data integration.

Bidding algorithms have gotten really smart, but they still can't do everything on their own. The better your data, the better your model.

If you put the wrong data in, or simply not enough, you can point the algorithm in the wrong direction and end up with the wrong result. More than ever before, marketers need to make sure that they're feeding these algorithms with the best possible data, from as many data points as possible.

Obviously, tracking online activity has also been massively affected by regulation like GDPR as well as ITP, and it might only be the beginning.

A huge portion of the internet is now in the dark because of cookiegeddon, and PPC experts will have to come up with savvier solutions to tackle these challenges, on top of building a solid data architecture to measure attribution.



ANDREW GOODMAN

PRESIDENT, PAGE ZERO

Don't discount the power of Responsive Ads.

Every few years, the assumptions and technology undergoing PPC ad creative – specifically, which ads to show to which users – undergo a significant rework. We're at the very beginning stages of yet another fundamental shift.

Unlike many advertisers, I've tinkered with multivariate ad testing using large datasets. The logic would be similar to landing page testing that tries to find the best combination of elements, possibly collecting data on hundreds, thousands, or tens of thousands of page permutations to find the one that converts the best. (Substitute “ad” for “page” and that's multivariate ad testing in a nutshell.) Almost inevitably, that degree of brute force testing would surface some winning combinations.

But until recently – given the limitations of ad serving and available knowledge about users – no serious attempt has been made in the platform architecture to show “just the

right combo” to “just the right person.” We were essentially showing the “least bad ad” to “everyone in that subsegment of users.”

Personalization has been a digital communications buzzword for 20 years now, but “showing the least bad ad in the aggregate” clearly isn’t personalization.

With Responsive Ads functionality available for both Display and Search Ads, ads will increasingly be personalized to the user (not just their device type or browser settings). But progress is still incremental. Targeting nirvana is some ways off. And if you watch the movie Groundhog Day, you might learn that no amount of data, no level of guile, can reverse-engineer love. True love may well be guileless. But I digress.

Take this example: does an ad that refers to “no additives, parabens, or GMO’s” perform better than the one that touts “all-natural ingredients”? Up until now, experts might lecture us: “the simpler verbiage is more likely to convert.” Or “just test.” But why should it be either-or?

The more nuanced answer: show the right ad to the right type of consumer. That’s not easy today. But as our predictive powers improve (as these systems approach some level of AI), ads will adjust to subtleties like this – reading level, novice vs. “expert,” enthusiast vs. snob, etc.

As always, remember: garbage in, garbage out. I imagine even very advanced technology fueled with drivel would lose to a particularly well-crafted ad showing to an aggregate of consumers.

AMY HEBDON

FOUNDER, PAID SEARCH MAGIC

It's always been "on brand" for Google Ads to push automation and machine learning, but every year it gets more aggressive.

Increasingly, automation strategies conflict with or even replace tactics that marketers have been using for account management, and we frequently see marketers worry about their job security.

Smart marketers focus on account leadership, not account management. Automation can now handle the time-intensive build outs and busywork we used to do manually. Leadership becomes even more important when efficient management is table stakes.

Leadership requires big picture thinking. It involves understanding consumer wants and needs, knowing how to target beyond the "local maximum," and making strategic decisions for clients.

Marketing managers who can only offer micro, manual changes will continue to play defense. But marketing leaders who drive strategy and leverage automation to accomplish their growth goals will have even more success in 2020.

MARK IRVINE

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, WORDSTREAM



The PPC industry is certainly thriving, growing, and healthy. There's no shortage of new ad types, campaigns, or networks to get the attention of marketers. But while the industry is healthy, many PPC experts have unhealthy habits built into their work ethic.

In a [recent survey](#) of PPC agencies, nearly a third said their biggest challenge in their agency was around time management. Many more still plan to take on even more work in the coming year.

As our industry continues to grow but our days stay the same length – smart marketers will have to grow comfortable with automation, if not embrace it.

The troupe of a “control freak” PPC manager is neither healthy or scalable in 2020 and smart marketers will have to understand and have a healthy relationship with different “Smart” solutions.

Whether it's with software, scripts, dynamic search, automated bidding, ads written with AI/ML, or even various smart campaigns – the time saved on the minutiae of managing fundamental elements of campaigns can be better spent managing the strategic elements – such as audience, targets, and creatives.

That's not saying that manual management doesn't have a time or place – but when 80% of traffic comes from about 20% keywords, dedicating the same time to manage every element of every campaign is a fool's job.

Finding where you can peacefully partner with automation should be an ongoing task for any smart marketer in 2020.

PAULINE JAKOBER

CEO, GROUP TWENTY SEVEN

I predict that PPC marketers will take branding to the next level in 2020.

More and more, I'm seeing marketers move beyond brand awareness and aim for brand affinity. Marketers are no longer satisfied with familiarizing potential customers with their brand. They also want to influence how potential customers feel about it and respond to it.

To build this kind of affinity, marketers will continue to focus on performance while also investing in long-term relationships with customers using a slow and steady approach.

As a result, Google Ads tools that contribute to brand building will see a resurgence in importance, such as Remarketing, video ads, Custom Intent and Affinities.

I predict that this shift in awareness will put an end to the once-predominate "display marketing doesn't work" argument. Marketers will recognize that display marketing is a different beast than search marketing – and will assess it by the appropriate metrics.



TIM JENSEN

CAMPAIGN MANAGER, CLIX MARKETING

In 2020, I believe we'll see a growing focus on how to approach tracking in an increasingly privacy-focused internet landscape.

Over the past couple of years, we've seen GDPR and similar legislation restricting tracking capabilities, backlash toward Facebook causing them to drop some targeting parameters, and browsers integrating more aggressive cookie-blocking tech.

Platforms will find ways to adapt, but in the meantime, marketers need to avoid straying down the path of trying for 100% perfect attribution.

Of course, you should set up tracking to the best of your capabilities, but advertisers that win will be those who maintain focus on good old-fashioned elements of marketing:

- Getting the messaging on point for the right audience
- Tracking the top-level ROI metrics that matter to the business's bottom line.

JONATHAN KAGAN

**VP FOR SEARCH,
COGNISCIENT MEDIA**

THE KEYWORD IS JUST ABOUT DEAD

While this has been cited in the past, it is becoming more and more prevalent, but audiences.

Between MSAN, Smart Campaigns, Local Campaigns, Discovery Campaigns, elimination of keyword targeting in GDN, the loosening of match types and the continued survival of Yelp, it is becoming clearer that the engines don't care for us to decide what we should show for. Therefore, cultivating your audience lists has taken utmost importance. If you aren't prospecting with a similar audience, then you just aren't doing it right.

THE ROBOTS ARE COMING FOR OUR WORK

Piggybacking on the reality of engines entering into a keywordless world, the fact that automated/smart/AI bidding is being pushed by every platform out there.

Where you choose to use them is up to you, but one should no longer be surprised that if they want to opt into any new ad beta, there will be little to no control over them (i.e., Discovery Ads, Smart Shopping, Local, etc).

The best thing any search marketer can do is understand how they operate, and if they are right for them.

BRAND SAFETY IS MOST AND FOREFRONT

From Smart campaigns to YouTube, and GDN, relying on Google by themselves to ensure your ads don't appear to be endorsing extremist content has come to the forefront... again.

Advertisers can no longer allow the platforms to “do their own things”, they need to continue to police your ad placements that are operating on automation.

Otherwise, you may appear that your brand is supporting a horrific event.

NIKKI KUHLMAN

SENIOR ACCOUNT DIRECTOR, JUMPFLY



The push for automation and reliance on artificial intelligence will continue as Google continues to push hard for automated bid strategies and fully automated “smart” campaigns like Smart Display and Smart Shopping.

What marketers will need to do is be the gatekeepers on whether these automated options are best for the clients or best for Google. (They also need to keep pushing back at Google in particular for their lack of transparency around these campaigns types.)

Audiences will continue to be important as Google pushes for more and more audience signals, and rolls out Affinity Audiences for Search and Seasonal Event targeting.

Where we're seeing the most exciting results are on the Microsoft Audience Network (MSAN), especially with prospecting using LinkedIn profile targeting and In-Market Audiences, and with fully automated MSAN Shopping campaigns that uses the power of the Microsoft Graph.

I foresee Microsoft pushing more volume through this channel in 2020 and beyond.

Video will continue to gain ground as a more legitimate source of advertising, and not just for branding, but for driving revenue as well.

We saw excellent results during back-to-school time for an ecommerce client using Trueview for Action campaigns, which produced 3+ Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) for a prospecting campaign with significant volume.

As these campaigns mature, there's a lot of value to be had, particularly as the videos can be used across multiple channels like Facebook and Verizon Media (formerly Yahoo Gemini) Native ads.

This leads us to my final prediction, or maybe just wishful thinking.... Marketers and advertisers will start looking more holistically at their overall bottom line instead of hyper focusing on individual channel results.

All marketing works together - no channel is an island. Searches on Google and Bing feed Amazon sales (we've done tests where pausing Google Ads campaigns causes 30+% decreases in Amazon sales).

Attribution is the big issue here and I don't see that being solved anytime soon.

Cross-device tracking is an imperfect science, and the continued iterations of Apple's Intelligent Tracking Prevention (currently on version 2.3) are affecting mobile-heavy advertisers.

Instead of looking at each channel as a separate stand-alone entity, advertisers in 2010 will focus on overall, bottom-line results. I know I will be.

ED LEAKE

**MANAGING DIRECTOR,
MIDAS MEDIA**



I'm not convinced there is a single PPC thing we should be looking at. I am, however, convinced we need to be more willing to embrace automation.

Machines and artificial intelligence can produce judgements and perform routine tasks faster than you or I.

That means if you're not at least using some form of rules or scripts in your workflow, you're way behind.

You might have heard of the Eisenhower Matrix (nothing to do with Neo or Agent Smith). Using that principle, start with the one thankless task you do regularly. In other words, it takes a lot of time and it has a small impact on results.

Take that task and find a machine to do it for you. Then relish in the human and machine harmony, for now.

Next, I can see the Groundhog Day headlines already: "Organic is dead". But I fear it's actually for real this time – you should be prepared.

We know that Organic results are under the crush of ever expanding paid results. This crush is only going in one direction.

That means competition is ever increasing and the inflation of CPC, is only going up.

I'd suggest you adjust your 2020 budgets and expectations to suit. Not a fun trend, but a realistic one.

In addition and to protect from any fallout, look at bolstering your 1st party data, audiences and channels such as email. You should also be refining your client/customer experience.

Conversion optimization is lauded, but customer optimization is underrated. You're paying to acquire customers, so make sure you're paying (investing) to keep them too!

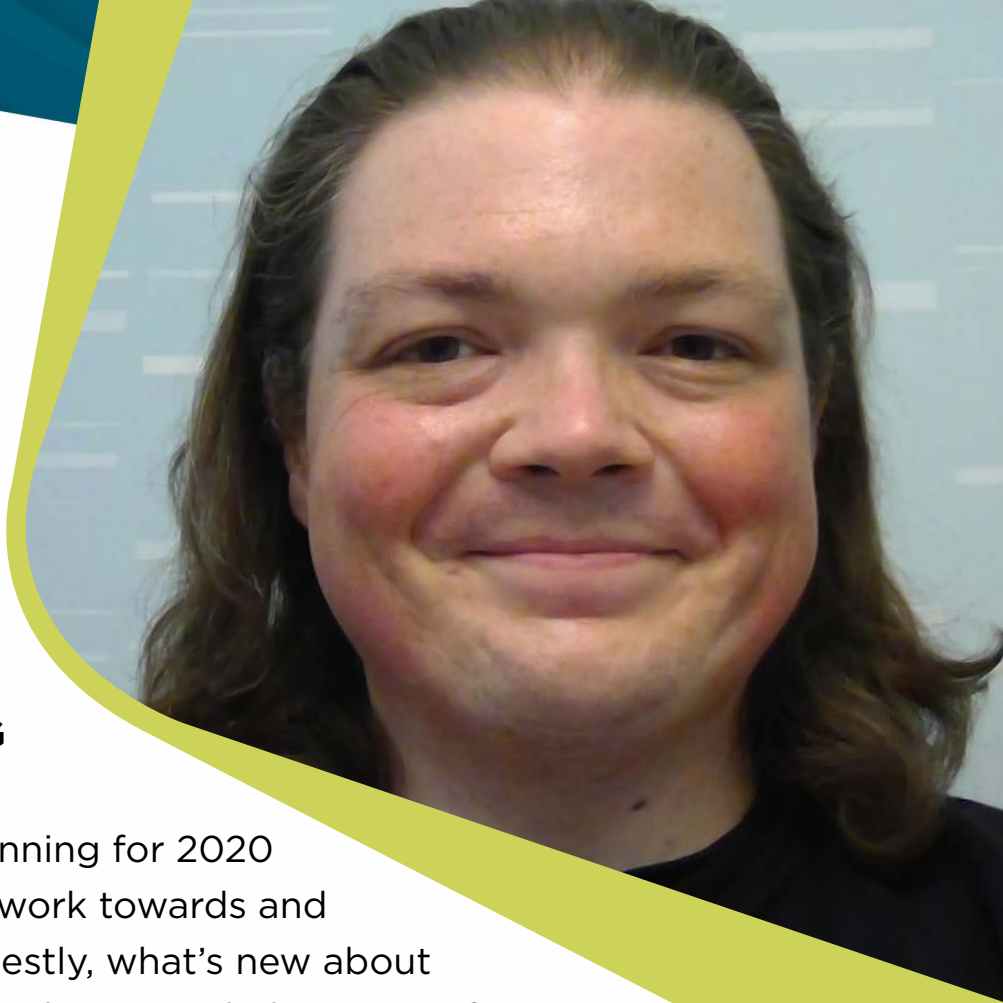
Finally, with people using YouTube in audio mode for listening to music and the like, Google has sniffed another revenue opportunity. Google will push 'digital radio ads' in 2020.

Consider how you can get a snappy message out to your audience and jump on the trend nice and early.

Just like radio ads, remember the rule of 1: one message, to one person, for one reason. You could argue that applies to all advertising, but it's good to be reminded sometimes.

JOHN LEE

LEARNING STRATEGIST, MICROSOFT ADVERTISING



Digital advertisers planning for 2020 have a lot to plan for, work towards and generally KNOW (honestly, what's new about that?!? I digress...). That being said, there are a few areas I believe should be focus areas:

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

What do I mean by this? To me, technical expertise is having a working knowledge of programming (HTML, JavaScript) and logic.

These skills are fundamental to the use of tools like Google Ads and Microsoft Advertising Scripts or feed-based features like Shopping, Ad Customizers, etc. Let alone how these skills can help you in piecing together data sets in BI tools, etc.

Gain technical expertise and you gain the ability to manage, optimize and analyze digital advertising campaigns at scale. Period.

AWARENESS OF ALL THE MOTION IN THE DISPLAY/ NATIVE/AD TECH SPACE

There have been announcements coming out left and right here in the final months of 2019.

Taboola and Outbrain?

One company, Roku (yes, the video streaming Roku), bought an ad tech company to streamline how they serve video ads on their platform.

And these moves are but just two in a sea of activity.

Even Microsoft Advertising's nascent Audience Network is poised for a bigger splash in the coming months and year.

While awareness may not impact your campaigns' bottom line, it will save you in understanding the advertising ecosystem and where/how you can buy the right ads targeting the right audience.

Here's to a great 2020!

AARON LEVY

GROUP DIRECTOR, SEM, TINUITI

2020 will kick off the decade of data in PPC. The years of mobile, automation and people have come and gone. While PPC automation is still in its infancy and not without its flaws, there's no doubt it's the wave of the future.

For Google/Bing/Facebook automation to truly succeed, they need real data. I'm talking customer data, lifetime values, RFM, favorite power rangers... everything!

Search is finite – it's my belief (and it seems Google's as well) that the search market has become saturated in the U.S.

Everybody already searches just about as much as they're going to. There isn't going to be 25% YoY query growth anymore.

The SERPs will continue to get more competitive and the CPCs will continue to rise until we reach a saturation point, a point that the next click is no longer profitable.

Google has placed a renewed emphasis on its tech stack over the past few years.

You can take a look at the announcements made at Google Marketing Live last year and see that very few (if any) of the announcements were on search alone.

They were all around data and the passing of customer information – about predicting what the customer will want before they say they want it.

I believe this will be a year of data innovations, whereby it's much easier to pass information between channels to have a complete picture.

Any good PPC marketer knew that optimizing beyond clicks was (and is) essential. In the next decade, the biggest wins will come from those who optimize beyond the conversion.

That said, I expect the wave of automation will slow in order to improve the product and increase adoption.

Google, Facebook and Microsoft all released a slew of automation tools over the course of the year last year.

When they worked as designed, they performed admirably. When they didn't.... results were catastrophic, leaving a horrible taste in most marketers' mouths.

Take keywords and match types; I'm a firm believe that they will (and should) be diminished as long as the tools can figure out true intent signals. Thus far, the signals have been muddled and match type changes heavy handed.

Advertisers rebel, and write their own scripts to preserve what they always had.

I believe 2020 will be a year of automation refinement, where the engines and tool partners will take time to get the automation right.

They want to make sure that us advertisers are set up for success, for growth and to devote our headspace to strategy rather than pushing buttons. All aided by the help of great data.

Oh, and keywords are mostly dead. So are match types

ANDREW LOLK

**LEAD PPC MANAGER & FOUNDER,
SAVVY REVENUE**

AUTOMATION

Automation from Google will continue to grow, and for professional PPC'ers this is a massive opportunity.

As more and more average advertisers double-down on Google's automation without skepticism, the rest of us need to find new ways to find performance boosts.

In 2010, the name of the game was long tail keywords. Find all the long tail keywords, and you could buy highly relevant clicks for cents.

In 2020, I'm not ready to just hand over accounts to Google's automation. I don't advise outright rejecting Google's automation, but knowing its strengths and weaknesses intimately instead.

By knowing the weaknesses in Google's automation, you'll know what to do to beat other advertisers that aren't privy to it.

That means, you can't just sit back and say "Google's Smart Bidding is like the fox guarding the hen house" anymore. You need to use it. Test it. Find its flaws. And then attack.

ON FACEBOOK ADS & YOUTUBE

If Google finds a way to solve their image issues with YouTube (pedophilia, recommendation engine, etc.), then I believe Facebook has set up YouTube for success.

The biggest challenge with advertising on YouTube is the creative. Already back in 2013-2014 Google started paying for advertisers' creative production to get more advertisers on YouTube. That's 7 years ago.

What has happened since then is that the increasing competition in the Facebook/Instagram advertising ecosystem has forced advertisers to invest in better creative.

So now, the biggest advertisers on Facebook have great content teams/agencies and produce better creative consistently.

Making the move into YouTube is therefore no longer as big a step as it used to be. Advertisers are used to producing high quality video content, and I predict YouTube will continue to grow off the back of Facebook's success.

MELISSA MACKEY

SEARCH SUPERVISOR, GYRO

The biggest trend I see for 2020 is that the lines are blurring between paid social and paid search features and targeting.

We've always seen feature adoption across platforms within search engines (Google Ads, Microsoft Ads) and within social ad channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), but now we're starting to see search engines adopting social targeting, and social channels adding keywords.

Microsoft led the way a year or so ago with the addition of LinkedIn targeting. Now, Google Ads is starting to offer more options for search targeting, such as demographic targeting and intent audiences – targeting that in years past was only available in the Google Display Network, and in paid social.

In October, Google Ads **announced** Affinity and In-Market Audiences for Search, allowing advertisers to target based on user interests or browsing activity. This is a huge move toward reaching a specific audience in search – a feature previously owned by paid social.

By the same token, rumors have surfaced that Facebook is planning to add keyword targeting – a direct shot at paid search. The feature hasn't launched yet, but leaked screenshots indicate it could be a game-changer for Facebook in closing in on user intent – traditionally the domain of search.

Blurred lines between search and social causes one to wonder: who will end up the winner? Only time will tell.

WESLEY MACLAGGAN

**SVP OF MARKETING,
MARIN SOFTWARE**



SEARCH WILL BE MORE VISUAL

As Google continues to evolve the SERP page for a mobile world, expect to see more ad formats incorporating images or videos.

Shopping Campaigns have been around for a while, expanding to Showcase Ads this year. Expect to see the rise of Dynamic Image Extensions in 2020.

Will we see video on the SERP page? Maybe.

Of course, devoting more space to the image will increase the importance of being in the Absolute Top position.

IMPORTANCE OF FIRST-PARTY DATA

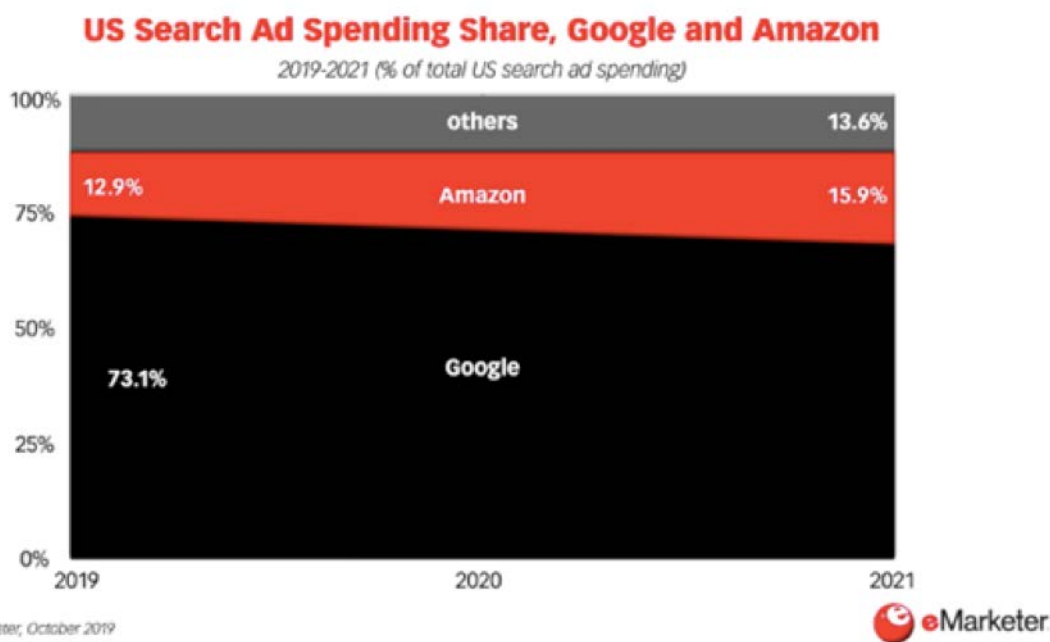
Gone are the days of optimizing to CPA, to get an edge advertisers will need to incorporate customer value (including) lifetime value into their optimization strategy.

With offline conversion, it's already possible to upload offline or follow-on conversions, but expect Google to continue making this easier next year.

CONTINUED GROWTH OF AMAZON

The rise of Amazon as an ad platform has blurred the lines between search, social, and ecommerce, which will undoubtedly continue to shake up the ad industry.

With Amazon Attribution providing more insight into conversions that are happening on Amazon, look for brands to test sending more of their paid search traffic directly to Amazon.





ELIZABETH MARSTEN

**SENIOR DIRECTOR, MARKETPLACE STRATEGIC
SERVICES, TINUITI**

I know it's been talked about a lot, but still has to be said – pay attention to the expansion of options in advertising that blur the lines of "paid search" specifically Amazon and Walmart.

Their marketplaces have millions of visits a month to their site and searches being performed on those sites too.

Additionally, product detail pages that are being built out with robust content like reviews, attributes, video and product comparisons are getting picked up in search engine results and will be competing for eyeballs.

Design a strategy or position that addresses that now, rather than halfway through 2020.

The other focus – programmatic, especially with Amazon’s DSP offerings. While they participate in some of the same exchanges that Google does, they have a lot of first party data that enables them to monetize on their own owned and operated.

They know what you bought, when, with what, how much and how often and can bucket you into very accurate lifestyle and in market audiences, quickly.

You’ll be tempted to say “I can do that!” to it all, but consider the complexities of those unique platforms before you get too deep and ask for some help.

MICHELLE MORGAN

DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES, CLIX MARKETING



EXPANDING CHANNELS

The internet is constantly expanding and users are spending their time different places than they used to. I think many companies are going to have to look beyond their coveted cash cow channels to find growth to be sure, but also to maintain the profitability they've seen in the past.

The two biggest channels for most companies are Google and Facebook and those platforms are only getting more crowded and expensive. If you're not looking to new channels in the coming year, you'll miss out on new business that won't have found its way into your evergreen campaigns.

PERSONALIZE MARKETING WHERE YOU CAN

Next year's shoppers, whether B2B or B2C, are savvier than this years. They learn more every year and they're not going to tolerate being treated like everyone else.

Take the time to determine what actions on your site warrant a different retargeting audience. Learn what messaging works best for the personas you've developed and cater to their needs.

Pay attention to where someone is in the buyer journey and present them with useful information to move onto the next stage.

If you're not customizing your marketing to cater to the segments within your audience, you can be sure your competition is.

INVEST IN GOOD CREATIVE

It's one of the most expensive parts of marketing, but it couldn't be more important.

Whether it's image ads or video, and you should definitely be doing video, get good creative. It doesn't have to be great. It doesn't have to look like a highly polished Nike commercial. But it can't look like something that was made with MS Paint either.

With the cameras that are being rolled out on our phones there's no excuse for bad creative and creative is the portion of your marketing that catches the user's attention. It could not be more important.



SAMANTHA NOBLE

FOUNDER, BIDDABLE MOMENTS

I think we are going to see more platforms become pay to play.

We have already seen adverts creeping into placements such as Maps and Images on Google, the Explore Feed on Instagram and the Search Feed on Facebook; 2020 I don't think is going to be any different.

The advertising platforms need to find more ways of monetizing their platforms and it makes sense to start with the unused real estate they currently own.

Will Bing start to monetise Maps?

Will Google Maps becoming a fully paid for service?

Are ads going to start appearing on WhatsApp?

It is also important for advertisers to not just focus on the well known and adopted platforms. They need to look at the platforms their target audience are using. Tik Tok is a good example of this.

Since its launch in 2017, the platform has grown exponentially and more and more brands are starting to test the advertising arm of the platform.

It is certainly on my list of advertising to try for some of my clients next year.



CHRISTI OLSON

HEAD OF EVANGELISM FOR SEARCH, MICROSOFT

The next trend that I think marketers will start to embrace the flywheel model, which puts customers at the heart of everything we do. (As opposed to the funnel which focused on the product/lead.)

This means that we need to understand the customer journey and start to map out the various steps our customers take so we can use audience targeting to engage with and move customers along the journey.

Data fuels the flywheel and marketers have data in droves – this year we'll start to see sophisticated PPC marketers take the data to create new audience segments to get to the heart of intent and actions behind the keywords through layering of audience data. This means

Audience targeting still remains as important as ever. It's not audiences or keywords, it's audience targeting layered on top keywords.

The audience targeting capabilities continue to get better and better (think in-market audiences, LinkedIn targeting, audience ads, in addition to the traditional RLSA), and when you merge these targeting capabilities with features like ad customizers you can start to create highly relevant and targeted messages.

This also means more inclusive paid search marketing efforts that allow marketers to achieve the balance between providing value (as close to the click as possible) and delivering on personalization through data-driven onsite experiences.

In addition, I think we'll see more features coming in the near term that allow us to provide more context to images used in paid search so that devices like screen readers can interact better with visual ads like product ads.



BROOKE OSMUNDSON

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PAID SEARCH,
NORDICCLICK INTERACTIVE**

INTEGRATING AUTOMATION & HUMAN STRATEGY

It's no secret that Google (and Bing) are pushing for machine learning, specifically around fully automated bid strategies. That being said, us marketers need to not only embrace the automation but fully understand the reasoning and strategy of automated bidding.

Switching your campaigns to an automated strategy can wreak havoc without understanding the implications. If there is no strategy behind a setting change, your campaign performance could suffer. Bottom line – machine learning is smart, but there needs to be smart humans behind the strategy to support the learning.

IT ALL COMES BACK TO CONTENT

Additional ad space has its benefits – who wouldn't want to own more real estate in the most competitive market?

However, if your website or landing pages are lacking enough content to support expanded text ads and responsive ads, your ad quality could suffer.

Marketers (whether you're agency or in-house) need to work together with their respective teams to make ensure that their marketing strategy is supported with proper content.

Redundant phrases and keywords will only make a user lose interest quickly.

LISA RAEHSLER

**FOUNDER & SEM STRATEGY
CONSULTANT, BIG CLICK CO.**



AUDIENCES CAUSING ADS SHIFTING

Audience targeting is in full swing and we are beginning to see actual shifts in the composition and search behavior of the audiences that can impact our ad targeting.

For example, eMarketer reports that ad revenue share for sites like Amazon, ebay, Pinterest, and other retailers is increasing as they become a first stop for product searches.

In another example, Facebook is seeing declines in users, mostly of younger users shifting to Instagram, Snapchat, or Tik Tok.

While Facebook still has the majority of users, paid ad managers should be closely following these user trends in the 2020 to ensure their ads are reaching the right people (or for new opportunities) as they shift platforms.

FREDERICK VALLAEYS

CO-FOUNDER, OPTMYZR



Automation from the engines is slowly but steadily taking over more of the work digital marketers used to do.

But because their automations tend to solve very specific problems a lot of what we do in 2020 will be about making these tools deliver better results by overlaying some of our human judgment.

Automation layering is a new concept but I believe it's what our roles are evolving to.

The idea is simple... we need to teach, monitor and guide the automations to deliver the best possible results, but instead of devoting more of our already limited human bandwidth to it, we can build lightweight automations using ads scripts, rule engines, alerts, etc. to restore some of the control we used to have before Google, Microsoft and the other ad platforms took over with their artificial intelligence.

PURNA VIRJI



SENIOR MANAGER, GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT, MICROSOFT ADVERTISING

Did you know? **54%** of consumers have stopped doing business with a brand due to poor customer experience, according to eMarketer research.

Advances in technology have led to major shifts in consumer expectations as well. As consumers, we are increasingly unwilling to put up with poor customer experiences, rather we're expecting the brands we interact with to deliver personalized and convenient experiences.

And that's the main trend I am excited about for 2020 – the increased emphasis on putting the customer and their experiences first in our PPC campaigns.

I see this manifesting in two core ways.

First, it's about the new avenues we have for reaching people that extend beyond the SERPs.

PPC isn't just about the 10 blue links and the ads above them anymore. We see our reach being extended and further amplified through offerings like Native now, such as with Microsoft Audience Ads or Product Ads for example.

The best part is that it can all be managed within the same UI as the regular text ads, so there's no new interface to keep up with.

Imagine this.

Rather than buying a display ad on the home page of MSN.com that shows to anybody and everybody who visits the page, why not instead extend your remarketing campaign's reach by being able to now still serve ads on the home page of MSN but have them show only to people in your remarketing audience?

Fewer irrelevant impressions, and more chances to convert.

With the ever-increasing competition, being given additional chances to show ads to relevant audiences and demographics gives you more opportunities to earn the conversion.

Second, it's about leveraging the data without exploiting the people behind the data.

PPC advertisers have seen successful results with more contextual and demographic targeting options such as In-Marketing Audiences offered by both Google Ads and Microsoft Advertising.

We're increasingly seeing new ways to leverage more understandings and insights – while still protecting people's privacy- to connect brands and their customers differently.

The one I am really excited about is **LinkedIn Profile Targeting** offered exclusively from Microsoft Advertising. This feature that's currently in open beta allows you to layer in professional demographic data to your campaigns and ad groups and adjust your bids accordingly.

The current professional demographic offerings are company name (e.g., Microsoft, Samsung), the industry (e.g., retail, education) as well as job function (e.g., marketing, legal.)

Here's an example use case: Let's say you own a company that sells marketing swag items, you'd then want to layer on people who work in the job function "marketing" and increase bids for them as they are likely a more relevant audience for you.

Microsoft internal data around the U.S. pilot performance data for using "bid only" targeting from Jan-March 2019 showed that ads shown to LinkedIn Profile Targeting audiences saw up to a 42% greater conversion rate (CVR) than the same ads shown to non-audience targeted users. Pretty cool right?

The best part that it can be set up in just minutes. Easy for you, and a better, more relevant experience for your customers.

So, here's to a happy 2020 with an increased focus on the long-term engagement, through new ways to reach people and create value.

LIAM WADE



HEAD OF PPC, IMPRESSION

2020 will be the year the industry stops relying on the "conversion" as the holy grail.

You'll hear the word "incremental" so much during next year that it'll stop sounding like a real word, as advertisers begin to focus on the impact of combining channels.

Apple is continuing to be tougher on tracking, with continued improvements to ITP this year, and I expect that others will follow suit.

Marketers will have to get used to measuring incremental change, producing dynamic models to fully assess channel performance and ROI.

Integrated campaigns will be at the forefront of 2020.

The diminishing role of the keyword combined with better understanding of incremental change and attribution will naturally drive marketers to take prospecting and brand awareness more seriously.

Just look at Google's Smart Shopping to see how channels work better together; rolling PLAs, dynamic remarketing and cross-network audience targeting into one. A signal of more to come!

2020 will also be the year of Microsoft Advertising. The rebrand announces them as continuing to take their advertising offering very seriously, and they've made great strides in 2019.

Their growth (particularly in the U.S.) has been phenomenal and whilst they continue to roll out new features, there's a lot of improvement happening to their solutions that not everyone is aware of – we see this in performance.

Add to this that users are seeking out new search engines to try which are bolstered by Microsoft Ads. Ecosia, for example, is rising in popularity for the environmentally conscious.

AJ WILCOX

**LINKEDIN ADS EXPERT &
FOUNDER, B2LINKED**



I think we'll see a convergence around retargeting in 2020. When cookies are no longer accepted by browsers, advertisers will turn directly to the ad platforms themselves, and rely on their tech for nurturing their traffic. Facebook will continue to win the retargeting game.

I think we'll see LinkedIn ads becoming a larger part of the PPC conversation in 2020. Costs have always been high, acting as a deterrent to marketer exploration. But with Facebook costs rising so significantly, we'll probably see a lot of Facebook advertisers diversifying into LinkedIn.

2020 will be the year of the technical marketer! We'll see marketers becoming more technical, leading to things like wider adoption and reliance on CRM data in conjunction with their advertising efforts. Marketers will be tracking the lifecycle of leads and will be the ones predicting performance, and not Finance or IT.

KIRK WILLIAMS

FOUNDER, ZATO

I think the greatest trend PPC marketers and businesses running PPC need to focus on in 2020, is the proper understanding of PPC's place in their overall marketing strategy and how that actually works itself into process.

PPCers have begun to look more like engineers in the past few years, and that's understandable because PPC is a technical industry.

However, this has also had a negative impact on our industry by helping to encourage channel silos and by fighting for PPC budgets based on faulty understandings of attribution and topline metrics.

Good PPCers are great at the technical details of PPC and how they can build ecosystems within their channel to do a host of optimizations: bidding, ad testing, audiences, or whatever else they might want to do with the excellent PPC data they get... but that's engineering, not marketing.

Marketers on the other hand, need to care about all of the ways (even when untraceable) that a business grows in its totality, and then determine how to fit the PPC channel into that overall business growth, including strategy, creative, and reporting.

Tactically, this will look less like caring about specific Channel ROAS / Revenue growth targets as the primary metric (though they can be helpful secondary metrics to track, just like any process has a primary objective and secondary goals to achieving the primary objective), and looking instead to overall business metrics.

This gets complex of course, but that's the point.

Engineers love tangible things they can count, whereas marketing is... well complex and sometimes not countable and we've got to become more invested in pursuing a marketing strategy within PPC even at the expense of tracked results.
Gasp at the expense of tracked results?!

Believe it or not, but the best thing for PPCers in 2020 may be to blow the dust off those old traditional marketing books. We've apparently come full circle, and that's okay.