



THE MFS GUIDE TO B2B PPC

A Strategic Approach to B2B PPC



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRO	01
WHY B2B PPC AND WHY NOW?	02
THE ROLE OF PPC IN B2B MARKETING STRATEGY	05
B2B PPC FOUNDATIONS	07
B2B PPC BEST PRACTICES	09
CHOOSING THE RIGHT PPC PLATFORM	12
SETTING UP YOUR FIRST PPC CAMPAIGN	17
B2B PPC METRICS	23
CLOSE	26



INTRO



PPC - unlike some other B2B marketing channels - has actually grown more effective over the past number of years. Users now have more data points, more platform options, and, in terms of Google's search results page - more real estate to bid for. Compare PPC to areas like organic SEO which - in an environment shaped by AI, no-click searches, and increased competition - has become increasingly challenging. Our all-powerful tech overlords seem to be pushing the modern day B2B marketer away from organic discovery towards a paid environment - and, for the most part, it seems to be working.

While those other marketing channels like SEO, outbound, etc. still have a role to play, PPC is growing in importance and, even for companies with smaller budgets, PPC can generate very healthy returns. The key is using PPC cleverly and in a way that fits in with your broader marketing strategy.

Our goal in this guide is to pinpoint the precise role PPC can play for B2B companies today. We will also cover some basic set up tasks, PPC fundamentals, best practices, metrics, and more. If there is one key theme running through this guide it is that a PPC program must be closely aligned with a company's core strategy. Luckily - or unluckily, depending on how you look at it - there is an abundance of data points available that can help companies ensure PPC campaigns stay on track and are tied in with revenue.

The danger - as is often the case - is getting lost in a sea of information and focusing on unimportant metrics. Ultimately, the priority is revenue and figuring out how your PPC program is impacting the bottom line - this revenue-focus will be a recurring theme throughout our guide.

From initial setup to analysis and review, we will cover the B2B PPC journey and help you to place PPC within its correct strategic context. Over the past 15 years in the B2B environment, we have learned many PPC lessons along the way and we aim to share them with you in this guide. We hope there is something of value here for you. If you have any feedback or would like to book an initial consultation with us, feel free to reach out anytime.

WHY B2B PPC AND WHY NOW?

As you begin your PPC program, it is worth asking yourself the question why are you considering PPC and why now? You may well have your own reasons that are unique to your company and your current priorities - but, generally speaking, there are a number of benefits PPC can bring and we will outline some of them below.



1. QUICK SETUP

B2B PPC campaigns can be set up in a matter of minutes. If you are familiar with the setup and the various platforms, you can get going really quickly. In general, we would recommend that you plan your PPC campaigns strategically - but if you are looking to test out an assumption about a particular audience, you can set up a small PPC campaign in no time at all. You could then use the results of this pilot campaign to inform your broader strategy.

Furthermore, in comparison to other channels such as organic SEO for instance, you could be waiting many months for visibility on Google's search results page, whereas with a Google Ads PPC campaign, you can get top of the results visibility as soon as your campaign has been launched.

2. ADVANCED TARGETING OPTIONS

The audience targeting options will vary depending on which digital platform you choose to run your PPC campaigns on. However, such is the myriad of data points that the various digital platforms hold on their users today that you will be able to hone in on a very specific audience. Take LinkedIn for example, you can run some PPC campaigns on LinkedIn and build an audience on specific criteria like job title, company size, industry, seniority, and more.

In a world where getting in front of the right person at the right time is proving increasingly difficult, the advanced targeting options PPC provides can prove invaluable. Indeed, it is hard to replicate this level of targeting with many other marketing channels - making PPC an increasingly attractive option for B2B companies looking to get their message in front of the right audience.

3. BUDGET CONTROL

While the cost of PPC campaigns can quickly spiral, each platform comes with strict spending controls and you can set your budget as low or as high as you like. This element of budgetary control helps companies to stay on track and ensure there is no scope creep. Again, that is not something you can always say about other marketing channels.

4. AWARENESS BUILDING

Similar to the above point about audience targeting, PPC can be a really great way for B2B companies to build awareness of their company or product. If, for instance, a company is launching a new product or is looking to break into an existing market, then a PPC campaign where you start appearing on top of relevant searches on Google is a very effective way of building awareness. Add in some retargeting options - as provided by Google - and you can maneuver a situation where your PPC ads will target your chosen audience across various channels such as Google Display Network, Google Search Network, YouTube, and Gmail. Compare this situation with the lengths you would have to go through to build up this level of awareness organically and it becomes clear why PPC budgets continue to rise for B2B companies today.

5. CROSS-CHANNEL REACH

B2B buyer behavior is evolving. The number of stakeholders involved in the buying decision continues to rise and buyers are taking on much more independent research before engaging a sales rep. As a result, the cross-channel reach of PPC becomes even more appealing to B2B companies looking to get their message - and keep their message - in front of the buyer. PPC lets companies retarget potential buyers who have visited the company website. This retargeting functionality helps B2B companies stay front of mind as prospects continue their research beyond the company website.

6. MEASURABILITY

With PPC, there is a huge number of data points available. Everything can be tracked, analyzed, and improved upon. This is invaluable to B2B companies and can be used to test out assumptions and inform - or even tweak - a go to market strategy.



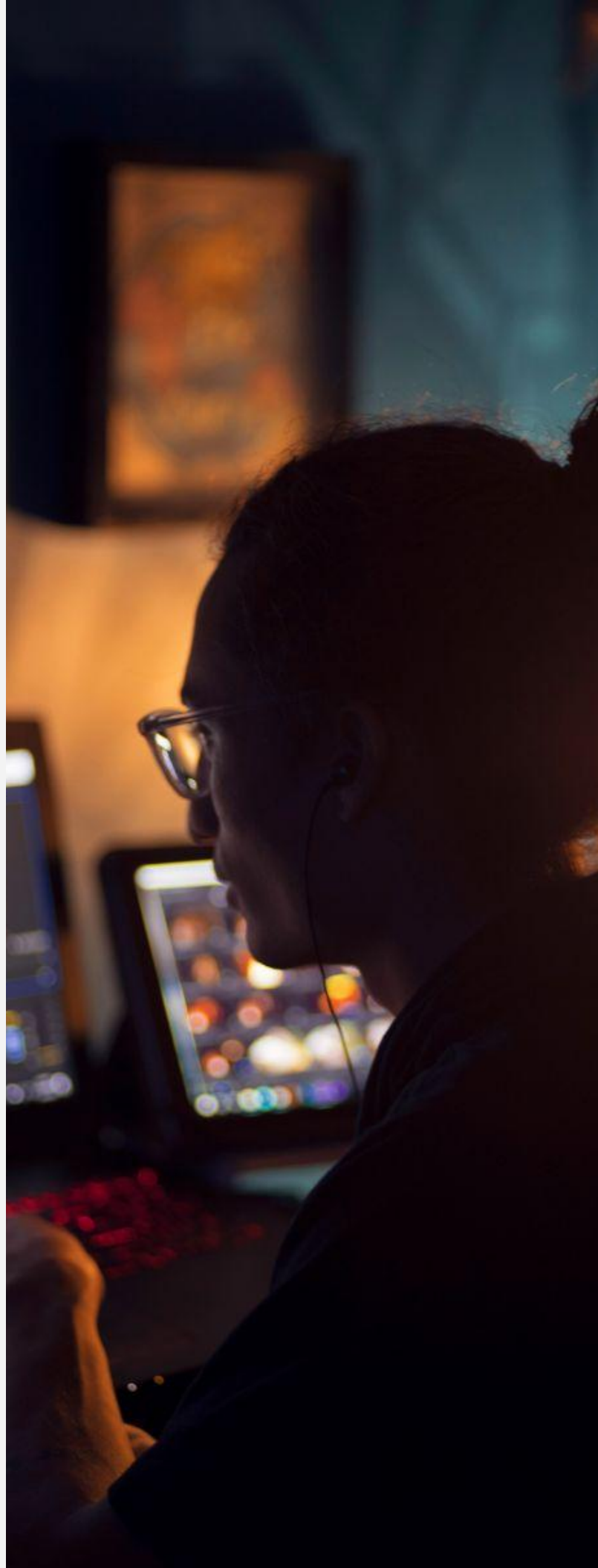
7. EVOLVING MODERN ENVIRONMENT

We live in a deeply capitalistic world. That there is no doubt. The modern B2B landscape has shifted considerably over the past decade to be highly weighted in favour of paid strategies over organic. Early stage Twitter and LinkedIn had much more organic potential than what we are witnessing today. There was less noise and the hope of going viral or relatively viral within a particular niche was more real. These changes are understandable in many ways. Early stage Twitter, for example, was hemorrhaging cash while platforms like Google+ crashed and burned.

Additionally, the front page of Google continues to devote more and more real estate to paid results. Add in an AI summary and you begin to see why organic SEO efforts become increasingly difficult. B2B companies today can only play the hand they are dealt - and, in today's environment - there is no doubt that external conditions are certainly pushing companies towards PPC.

8. LEARNING

The final point to make here in terms of "why PPC" is that it is a channel that offers B2B companies huge learning potential. As the motto of the famous MMA coach John Kavanagh goes - "win or learn". This motto is highly applicable here. Every PPC campaign can bring with it huge value - even those that do not succeed from a revenue standpoint. Failed PPC campaigns - although, you don't want to have too many of them - can provide B2B companies with the feedback and industry insights they need to correct course and hone in on a more suitable strategic direction.



THE ROLE OF PPC IN B2B MARKETING STRATEGY

Step one - in our experience - is to take the time to figure out how PPC will fit in with your broader marketing strategy. There are many technical considerations and tactics that will be important throughout your PPC program - but strategy needs to be your starting point.

Before you launch your PPC campaign, consider the following questions:

- What do you want to get from your PPC campaign?
- How does PPC dovetail with your other marketing initiatives?
- How do you envisage a PPC campaign helping you achieve or get closer to your strategic goals?

There is nothing wrong with taking a couple of minutes to consider the above questions - grabbing a coffee and taking a few minutes to think strategically about the whole process is a very good use of time. In fact, in a world where efficiency gains seem to take priority, it is the strategic concerns that often get overlooked. Taking the time to understand and articulate the role PPC will play in your broader marketing strategy is a fundamental step that should not be skipped.



One of the biggest advantages of PPC and its ever-expanding set of capabilities is that there are many B2B use cases that are ideally suited to PPC.

Testing - If you are looking to test out some assumptions on your go to market approach, then setting up a quick PPC campaign is probably the best route forward. Quick to set up and with in-depth visibility into progress and results, PPC provides B2B companies with invaluable market data that will help to inform strategic direction.

Lead Generation - PPC is also one of the most effective lead generation channels in B2B marketing today. As we outlined earlier, PPC campaigns can be relatively quick to launch in comparison to other marketing channels. Many digital platforms today also come with in-built form functionality so you might not even need to bring the visitor to your website if you are purely focused on generating leads.

Competitor Strategy - PPC can be an important component in any B2B competitive strategy. Take Google search results as an example. Here we have started to see the somewhat absurd situation where many companies are bidding on their own name so they appear on top of the paid results when someone searches their company on Google. The reason being, many competitors are also targeting searches of the company name. This example is just one of ways companies are using PPC as part of their competitor strategy. Others include companies targeting search terms that are related to competitors such as "company alternative". Another possible option here is to go down the route of paid ads on directory websites so that a company can get in front of prospects who are researching related tools.

New Product Launch - Launching a new product comes with a multitude of marketing tasks - as evidenced by the growing importance of the product marketing manager. One of the key marketing channels for product marketers today is PPC. For many product marketing managers, they may well be tapping into a new audience so the in-depth targeting options available makes PPC a really suitable channel around new product launches.

Account Based Marketing - ABM - a subject close to our hearts at MFS - is another area where PPC campaigns can prove really valuable to B2B companies. ABM is based, essentially, on treating target companies as a market of one. Instead of targeting an industry, companies would treat a large enterprise company it wants to sell to as its own market. Doing so requires considerable effort on behalf of the selling company, but the rewards can be significant. ABM is ideally suited to companies looking to make the transition into enterprise level sales that come with annual dollar values in the 6 or 7 figure range. PPC again, with its in-depth targeting and retargeting options, can be an important component of an ABM strategy as companies use advanced filtering to hone in on key decision-makers.

Above are just some of the most common PPC use cases in B2B today. There are many other use cases and each company will have their own unique reasons to include PPC in their marketing channel. What is important here is understanding precisely how PPC fits in with your company's greater strategic goals.



B2B PPC FOUNDATIONS

For this guide, we will use the term B2B PPC broadly to cover paid ads on any online digital platform. Before we delve into any tactics or technical set up items, it is worth taking a moment to go over some foundational B2B PPC activities. All PPC campaigns need to be built on solid foundations and you should address the following considerations before launching any campaigns.



1. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

One of the biggest advantages of PPC for a B2B company is the in-depth targeting options most platforms now possess. Digital platforms allow you to hone in on a particular audience, but they won't choose your audience for you. Some platforms will offer features like auto expansion of an audience to personas with similar characteristics to your selected audience and you may even learn from an initial test that some of your previously-held audience assumptions were not entirely correct, but you will still need a starting point. PPC might help you refine an audience, but - before launching any PPC campaign - you - as a strategy leader - need to take the time to identify your target persona. Attributes to think about here include company size, location, job title, interests, and online activity. Targeting options will differ by platform, but you can do your part by nailing down your target audience.



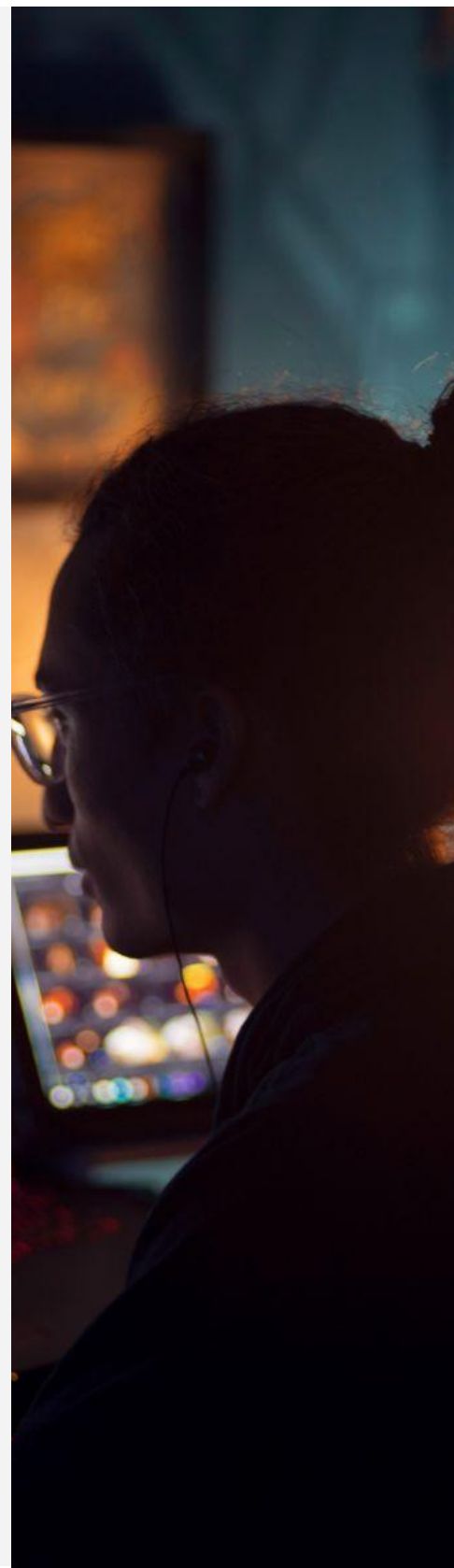
2. ASK YOURSELF WHY PPC

Ask yourself why you are choosing to go down the PPC route. Do you have an assumption about your audience that you want to test out with an initial foray into the PPC world or is PPC a channel that has worked well for competitors in your niche? Whatever your reasons are for embarking on a PPC campaign, it is important that they are clear and defined. By taking this step, it will be easier to set some goals and figure out the success or otherwise of your PPC campaign.



3. PINPOINT WHERE PPC FITS YOUR SALES CYCLE

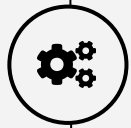
B2B sales is an entirely different beast than its B2C counterpart. Sales cycles are growing longer and the number of stakeholders involved often goes as high as 10 or more. As you begin your PPC program, it is worth considering what part of the sales cycle you plan to target with your ads. Are you in the early stages of your company and primarily focused on awareness or is it a situation where you are looking to move prospects through the sales cycle with more targeted PPC content? It might be a situation where you want to target each stage with separate ads, but whatever your situation is, it is important to have this clarity before you begin your PPC campaign.





4. SET YOUR PPC ROI TARGET

One of the main questions to consider is around ROI and what would a healthy ROI look like. You will have to consider factors like your average deal size, length of sales cycle, cost per lead, etc. By making this calculation, you can track the success or otherwise of your PPC program. Perhaps one factor to keep in mind here is that you will generally be working towards a situation where you are lowering your cost per click (CPC) as you iterate and improve on your PPC campaigns by refining keywords, ad copy, headlines, and more.



5. SET UP YOUR SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

As you get set up on your various chosen digital platforms, you will need to build out the materials you need to support your PPC campaigns. The basics here are web pages, ad copy, graphics, case studies, and testimonials. Additionally, you should be clear on your value proposition and the type of messaging you will use to target your buyer persona or personas.

With these basic foundations in place, you will be in good shape to move onto the next step in your B2B PPC journey.



B2B PPC BEST PRACTICES

Before we get into the detail of setting up your PPC campaigns, it is worth outlining some B2B PPC best practices that you should keep in mind.

1. Every day is a learning opportunity - We mentioned the “win or learn” mantra earlier on in this guide and it will be extremely relevant throughout your PPC journey. It is unlikely that every PPC campaign you run will be a rip roaring success, but every campaign will present invaluable learning moments. Take the time to assess each campaign or analyze active campaigns periodically from a strategic standpoint and consider what insights you can glean. Consider what you are doing well in PPC, what you could do better, and what you would like to change for your next campaign. Additionally, you should consider how your PPC program aligns with your overall company direction and do so on an ongoing basis. Ask yourself if there is anything you have learned from your PPC campaigns that could be used to inform or update your broader marketing strategy.

2. Always be testing - One of the most important aspects of B2B PPC is testing. All the main digital platforms come with A/B testing functionality which you can use to increase the effectiveness of your ads on an ongoing basis. You can run tests on different aspects of your ads like headlines, copy, image, and CTAs to improve key metrics like cost per click (CPC), cost per lead, etc. These tests are staples of the modern PPC pro.

3. Think about keyword intent - As you weigh up the keywords you want to target, you need to consider the intent behind each keyword search. Think about why someone might type a particular keyword or phrase into google and what they would most likely be looking to achieve. Some search terms will come with a high volume and will quickly eat through a Google Ads budget. If the intent of the user is informational or unrelated to your product, this ad would be a total waste of expenditure.

Some of the keywords with the highest level of user intent will be long tail keywords - those longer searches that will be lower in volume but higher in relevance to your product or service. There will be an element of intuition in figuring out user intent - it is not an exact science. There are some tools however that you can use to help you analyze keyword search intent. SEO tools like Semrush come with keyword analysis features that categorize keywords into one of four keyword types namely commercial, informational, transactional, and navigational. Some other clues on user search intent can be found on Google’s Keyword Planner - where you can see the competition and average CPC associated with a keyword. Additionally, your campaign data will give you valuable insights into user intent - a high number of clicks that eat up budget but don’t turn into leads or opportunities is a telltale sign that keyword search intent is unrelated to your product.



4. Fine-tune your targeting - While the targeting options vary on each digital platform, they are all relatively in-depth and will give you ample opportunity to fine-tune your audience selection. Taking what you know about your ideal customer and persona as your starting point, you can then build out the targeting criteria for your ads. Most platforms will also give you the option to include negative keywords so you can ensure valuable budget is not being wasted on ads that are irrelevant to the user. Similarly, you will be able to review your analytics to see that your ads are only being shown to the right audience. LinkedIn ads, for instance, will give you an overview of the job titles that are clicking your ads. If there are job titles in there you do not want to target, then you can update your negative filtering to make sure they are excluded.

5. Leverage social proof - Marketing tactics might come and go, but social proof remains all powerful. If you can share some relevant customer case studies or quotes in your ads, they can be a powerful way to pique the prospective buyer's interest. Nobody wants to lose ground to competitors and if a target company finds out that a competitor of theirs is benefiting from your product, they may well want to learn a bit more about your company.

6. Add some data points - Again, if there are some relevant data points or statistics you can share, that can be a quick way to grab a prospect's attention. Remember, with PPC, you will only have a headline and a small amount of text to get the prospect's attention. If there is a particularly interesting data point that you have on hand, it is well worth a shot including it in some of your PPC ads.

7. Speak your buyer's language - Following on from our previous point about catching your prospect's attention - it is important to use tailored language that is specific to your target buyer. With PPC, the opportunity window is relatively small - so it needs to be maximized. Test out various headlines and ad copy to see what resonates and remember to tailor your message to the target buyer persona you have selected in the ad set up.

8. Use a clear call to action (CTA) - Think about what you are trying to achieve with each of your ads and add a clear CTA. You can test various elements of your CTA too to improve the effectiveness of your ad - trying out different button colors and CTA text.



9. Select your digital platform wisely - PPC continues to expand and there are many platforms for B2B companies to choose from. Deciding which platform or platforms to target is a considerable task in itself and you should take the time to try and learn which platforms your target buyers use. Google - given its ubiquity - is a relatively safe bet. In a B2B context, LinkedIn is a good option - you can literally see if your target buyers have a presence on the platform. Elsewhere, Reddit continues to give more prominence to ads and has seen ad revenue soar. Depending on the nature of your product, other social media sites like X, Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok, Snapchat, and others have advanced advertising capabilities and may be suitable for your situation.

10. Plot your buyer's PPC journey - We hear a lot of talk about the famous buyer's journey today, but in this instance we are only concerned with the buyer's PPC journey. Our advice here is not to run ads in isolation. Instead, you should plot out the exact route you see your buyer taking. Do you want to bring the prospect to your website to help build awareness of your product, or do you want to turn the prospect into a lead and get them on a sales call? You may well have different journeys in mind for different ads, but it is important you work out exactly what you want to achieve with each ad and how you plan on achieving it.

11. Focus on the key metrics - PPC is an area within which you can quickly get lost in a sea of data. Digital advertising platforms today all come with significantly detailed analytics and you will be able to track important metrics such as conversion rate, cost per click, click through rate, and more. But, the ultimate metric is revenue and you will need to go beyond the platform-specific metrics and assess your own sales data to really understand the success of your PPC program. Some of the key metrics to focus on here will be PPC ROI (the return on investment of your PPC program) and PPC cost per acquisition (what it costs to acquire a customer via PPC). Metrics such as clicks, impressions, etc. will give you some visibility into the early stages of the buyer's PPC journey, but unless you can link these to successful closed won opportunities, they will be of little interest to anyone on the executive team.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT PPC PLATFORM



Keeping those best practices in mind, it is time for you to decide which digital platforms you want to focus your PPC efforts on. Broadly speaking, there are five main categories of paid ads - and each one is a viable route for B2B companies. Some however will be more suitable than others.

- **Paid Social** - Digital ads displayed on social network platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, etc.
- **Paid Search** - Ads that display on top of search results as seen on Google, Bing, and other search engines.
- **Paid Review** - Companies - particularly in the software space - will be very familiar with the paid review space. These are the ads shown on review listing sites like Capterra when users are searching for a particular type of software solution.
- **Programmatic** - These ads are ads distributed all across the internet - appearing on a variety of websites and platforms. Google Display Network is an example of programmatic advertising, but is only one part of a greater programmatic landscape.
- **Sponsorships** - One growing area of note is sponsorships which now includes sponsorship of newsletters, podcasts, influencers, and more. One of the advantages here for B2B companies is that sponsorships can help you get in front of a ready-made and highly targeted audience.

You may very well choose to focus your PPC efforts across a number of the categories outlined above or hone in on one particular platform. It is also worth bearing in mind that the continuous testing we associate with PPC will inform and help you plot out the direction of your PPC program. But, you do need a starting point and, to help you figure this part out, we will go through the various options available - and each platform's general suitability to B2B PPC.

GOOGLE ADS

Google Ads is the ubiquitous PPC leader and realistically it is the first port of call for B2B companies beginning a PPC program. Google is the default search engine for 92% of internet users worldwide. One potential drawback here is that competition is fierce and audience targeting wouldn't be as in-depth in terms of job titles and other work-related criteria as you see on LinkedIn, but, if you can identify keyword searches that lead to web visitors, leads, and, ideally, closed won opportunities - and do so with a healthy ROI - then Google Ads will become an important part of your marketing activities.

The other point to make about Google Ads is that it is a lot more than just PPC search ads. Google Ads now includes ads on Google Maps, Google Shopping, Google Search Partner websites, Google Display Network, YouTube, Gmail, Google Play, and local ads. You can choose to focus on a single channel like search or you can broaden your campaigns to include other channels via Google's Performance Max Campaigns.

LINKEDIN

One of the main advantages of LinkedIn ads for B2B companies is that you can quite literally see that your audience is active on the platform. Additionally, the targeting options around company size, name, job titles, etc. mean you can really hone in on your target audience. There are different ad types you can run on LinkedIn including sponsored content, text ads, video ads, lead gen forms, and more. You can build campaigns on LinkedIn to suit your current goals - whether that is building awareness or generating leads, there are plug and play recipes on the LinkedIn Ads platform that can get you up and running very quickly.

MICROSOFT ADVERTISING

While PPC is synonymous with Google, Microsoft should not be overlooked. Microsoft offers a full ads platform that is similar to Google Ads and includes search ads, display ads, shopping campaigns, video ads, and more. Similarly, the broader Microsoft Advertising Network spans to include Bing, Yahoo, AOL, DuckDUckGo, Outlook, Microsoft Edge, Xbox, and, also, LinkedIn.

Some of the main considerations here for B2B companies deciding which PPC channels to focus include the fact that 10% of the global desktop market use Bing and research has shown that Bing users are - on average - both wealthier and older than Google users. Depending on your target customer, there may be a use case for Microsoft Advertising.

YOUTUBE

YouTube is a part of the Google ad network but, such is the enormity of the platform with over 2.7 billion active users, that it requires a separate entry. There are a number of different ad types companies can run on YouTube including video, in-video, overlay, and display ads. While YouTube ads might traditionally be seen as more B2C-oriented, research has shown that YouTube is a growing B2B ad channel in terms of budget allocation. Additionally, the targeting wouldn't be as precise as it is on LinkedIn, but users can run intent-based ads based on video searches that can be extremely relevant to a B2B product.

YouTube will probably never be the first port of call for B2B companies investing in PPC, but it can be a valuable addition to a cross-channel PPC approach for companies who possess the capabilities to produce video ads that resonate and can also figure out a way to hone in on the most relevant YouTube searches.



X

A number of years have now passed since Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter. In spite of the many doomsday predictions, user numbers on the platform, since rebranded as X, remain high and now reach 550 million each month. For B2B companies planning their PPC program, X should certainly be considered. Ad audiences can be built on criteria such as user interest, keywords, and follower lookalikes.

While nowhere near as in-depth as LinkedIn, X does have the advantage of coming at a much lower average cost per click and users are more likely to be engaged into the evening and beyond the classic 9-5 work routine.

Another advantage of X is that many industry conferences today will be active on X during the event and an X PPC campaign can be a quick and effective way to build up awareness of your product to a highly targeted and engaged audience.

DIRECTORY LISTINGS

Online directory listings can be really important to B2B companies - particularly if you are just launching a product or targeting a new industry. Apart from PPC, directory listings come with a level of validation and the more reviews you can get for your product, the more visible it will be on the directory. In the software space, for instance, directory sites like Capterra or G2 can help you target buyers who are actively searching for a solution.

One issue here however is that ranking high on these directory sites organically requires a considerable effort and involves generating a higher number of reviews than your competitors. One workaround is to run a PPC campaign - as offered by directory sites - and, while the costs are not low, it will get you in front of qualified buyers.

REDDIT

Reddit is another left field option that can - in the right circumstances - prove worthwhile for B2B companies. In terms of targeting, Reddit won't give you the in-depth audience criteria options we see on LinkedIn, but you can target by subreddit - the Reddit term for online community. If you can find a subreddit that is relevant to your target buyer, then Reddit might be a suitable PPC route for you. Indeed, research has shown that the cost per lead on Reddit can be significantly lower than LinkedIn and, another statistic to keep in mind particularly if you are targeting a niche audience, 44% of Reddit users aren't active on other social media platforms.

SPOTIFY

Such is the changing nature of PPC and, indeed, the B2B environment, that Spotify is now a growing ad channel for B2B companies. The backdrop to this growth is that millennials - who increasingly hold decision-making roles in B2B companies - are more likely to blur the lines between their home and work lives - listening to various work-related podcasts throughout their day.

Spotify has behavioral targeting options around the types of playlists and podcasts consumed by listeners giving B2B companies a way to get their message in front of these millennial decision-makers. The targeting is not as in-depth as LinkedIn and some other PPC channels, but it is worth considering as part of your PPC mix if you can hone in on particular listening behaviors that are linked to your target market. There are a number of ad types to choose from on Spotify including audio, display, video takeover, sponsored playlists, podcasts, and a digital experience playlist generator.



INSTAGRAM

With a user base of over 2 billion active monthly users, Instagram is another platform worthy of B2B consideration. Additionally 32% of users are in the 25-34 age range - which also represents a growing cohort of B2B decision-makers. The question then turns to targeting and the type of ads B2B companies can run to reach their target audience. In terms of targeting, Instagram ads can be set up on the Meta Ads Manager which comes with in-depth targeting options including job title, interests, company, industry, and more.

B2B companies that have made a huge success of their Instagram ads include WeWork, Accenture, and FedEx. Many of these B2B companies are focused on sharing insights on their culture, thought leadership, and general brand-building. Depending on the specific situation at your company and what part of the sales cycle you are looking to address, Instagram can be a very worthwhile PPC route to take. There are options around business profiles, content promotion, and audience insights that can help you generate awareness and share relevant content that can move prospective buyers through the sales cycle.

SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is a non-traditional B2B PPC route - but, with over 161 million daily active users, it should not necessarily be overlooked. If you are really trying to hone in on a younger audience, then Snapchat ads can be worth the investment. You won't get the in-depth targeting you see on some of the other platforms mentioned, but there are options around localization, sponsored lens, snap ads, and geofilters. If you are trying to build up some business locally, Snapchat is well set up for that particular use case.

FACEBOOK

While Instagram continues to grow its user base, Facebook is still the big brother in the Meta family. While more associated with B2C PPC campaigns, Facebook has plenty to offer B2B companies here too. With over 3 billion active monthly users, your target market is almost certainly on there somewhere.

As is the case with Instagram, Facebook comes with significantly detailed targeting options that will help B2B companies hone in on the target audience, and there are many ad types available - including image ads, videos, carousels, collection, dynamic, and even lead-gen forms. Whether it is awareness, consideration, or even the decision stage you are targeting, Facebook has PPC options available to target each.

TIK TOK

Tik Tok is another non-traditional B2B route that is probably still more suitable to B2C brands, but there are some B2B use cases to consider. If - as we have mentioned before - you are trying to engage with younger decision-making cohorts, then Tiki Tok is one place you can connect with younger demographics.

Additionally, if you are looking to make a foray into short-form video content, then Tik Tok could be the place for you. B2B companies have, in the past, leveraged Tik Tok to showcase their brand and company culture. You won't get in-depth targeting options, but with options around demographics, behaviors, and interests, you can get close enough to building relevant B2B audiences.



QUORA

Quora was set up in 2009 as a platform that would answer nuanced or more in-depth questions in a way that a Google search result at the time could not. The platform now has over 400 million active monthly users and now comes with sophisticated B2B PPC capabilities. Quora's targeting functionality is such that ads can be honed in on an industry or even to the account level - meaning there is also an ABM use case here for B2B companies to consider. Additionally, there is the potential for CRM integration, and the PPC ROI tracking and analytics is suitably in-depth.

In terms of the type of ads a B2B company might focus on, there are a few options including text ads, image ads, video ads, promoted answers, and even lead generation forms. Possible PPC use cases to consider here include promoted answers that share company thought leadership, and, another option, is to build awareness with regular text and image ads placed alongside Quora questions that are relevant to target buyers.

PINTEREST

Pinterest is another potential B2B avenue that has a lot to offer. With 500 million monthly active users, the platform continues to grow and B2B companies like HubSpot have found some success by building and advertising their presence on Pinterest. In terms of targeting, audiences can be built on criteria like keywords, demographics, interests, and website visitor data.

Additionally, there is a decent organic use case on Pinterest which acts as something of a visual search engine. There is an opportunity here for B2B companies to reuse some existing content or tweak written materials like blog posts into graphics.

Other features for B2B companies to note include a Google Analytics integration, in-app direct selling, and in-depth PPC ad analytics. The types of ads available include video ads, carousel ads, and even app install ads.

The above list is not exhaustive by any means, other PPC platforms exist and - depending on the use case - can be very effective in a B2B context. But, the important thing to note here is that B2B PPC is an evolving landscape and some of the PPC platforms we have mentioned above may well be worth incorporating alongside - or even in place of - the classic B2B PPC channels of Google Ads and LinkedIn.



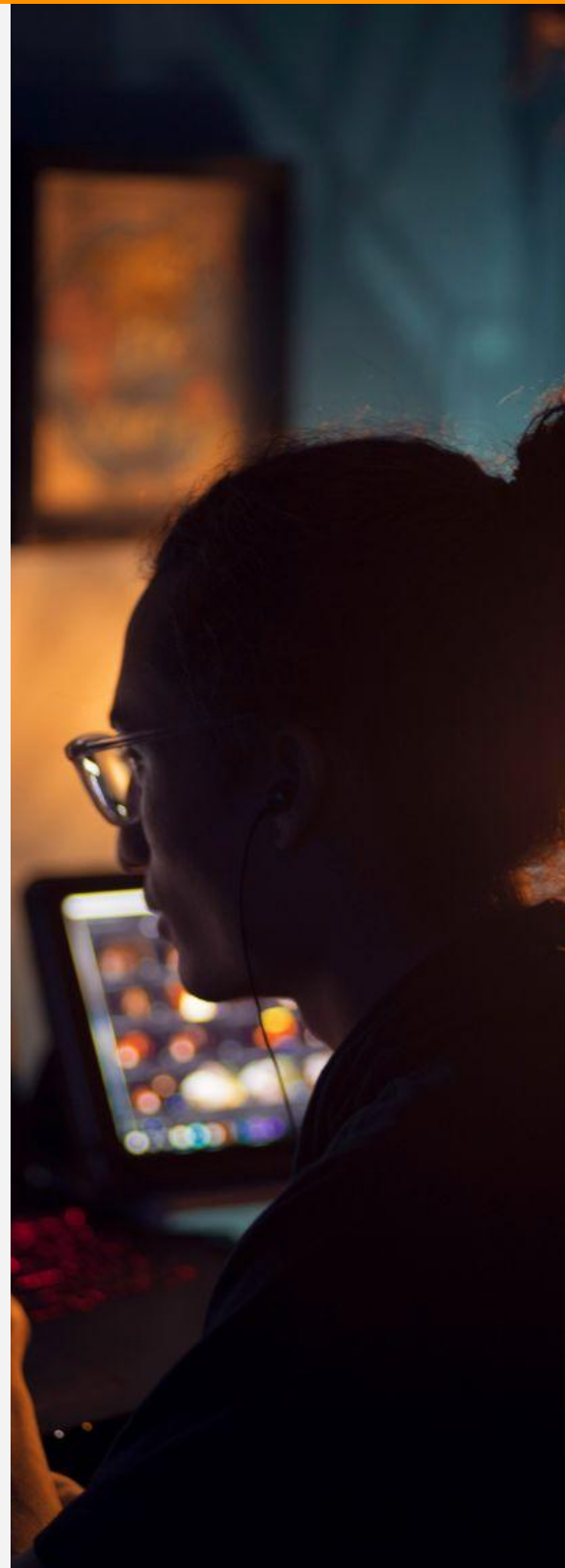
SETTING UP YOUR FIRST PPC CAMPAIGN

Each digital platform will come with their own set of technical set up instructions - and, in general, they are getting easier and easier to implement. However, setting up your first PPC campaign involves more than the technical steps. To help you get the most out of your PPC foray, we have outlined 12 essential steps to take.

1. Finalize Your Buyer Persona - All the best ad copy, testing, and headlines in the world will do very little for your company if your ads are directed at the wrong audience. Each platform comes with different audience filtering options as we have seen, but you must own the starting point here and understand the exact persona or personas you want to target with your PPC campaign. There may be some audience assumptions you want to test out with your PPC campaign, but even still, you will need a clear picture of your buyer persona as an initial starting point that can be tweaked and iterated on as you progress through your PPC journey.

2. Hone Your Value Proposition - The messaging you use in your PPC campaigns in terms of headlines, ad copy, etc., will come from your value proposition. Starting your messaging from scratch is a big mistake. It may well be that you have an internal or possibly external ad specialist running your campaign, but you need to equip this person with the materials they need to develop ads that are truly relevant to your target audience. Whether you as a marketing or business leader are executing the campaign implementation yourself or are handing it over to a PPC expert, the value proposition and how it relates to each buyer persona or personas should be clearly articulated and documented. From this point, the PPC campaign specialist can adapt and tweak the value proposition to the various ad formats required.

3. Set Your Goals - Next, you should be clear about what exactly you are looking to achieve with your foray into PPC. Are you trying to build awareness of your product, generate leads, or eat into some of a competitor's market share? Ultimately, you will be looking to grow your revenue, but you should lock in on the exact way you intend to do so via PPC - whether it is nurturing a warm audience or getting the attention of a high value target account.



4. Decide Your Budget - With your high level PPC goals locked in, then you can set your budget. Try to figure out what kind of ROI would make your campaign a success. Once your campaign is up and running, you can delve into more in-depth metrics around cost per click, cost per lead etc. which will help you adjust your budget as you go on. The other factor you might want to weigh up here are industry benchmarks and what kind of budget companies similar to yours are investing in PPC.

5. Conduct some Competitive PPC Research

- Competitor research is an important part of your PPC setup. If you are making your first foray into the PPC world, there is an opportunity here to take something your competitor is doing and try to make it better. There are ways to track what ads your competitor is running and has run in the past - by analysing these changes, you should be able to leverage what your competitor has learned and apply them to your own ads - with whatever tweaks you need to add to ensure the ad is in line with your messaging, value proposition, and branding.

Paid tools like SEMrush, SpyFu, and Ahrefs Ad Explorer will give you deep insights into competitor PPC campaigns and display things like ad history and budget changes on a single dashboard. Elsewhere, free tools such as LinkedIn's Ad Library, Google Ad's Transparency Center, and Meta Ad Library provide databases than can be searched for competitor ads.





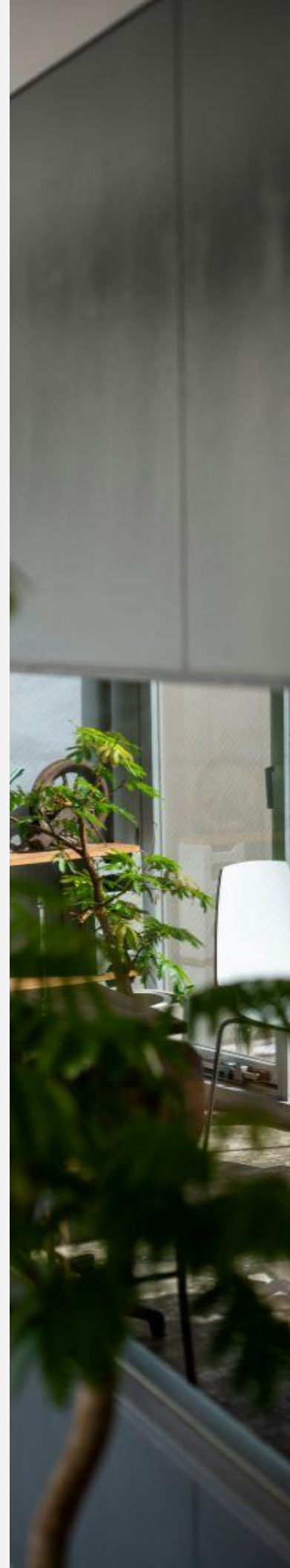
6. Choose Your Digital Ads Platform - In the last section, we went through the leading digital ad platforms and their suitability in terms of B2B. The number of ad platforms continues to increase as does the level of sophistication around audience targeting, retargeting, testing, and AI-powered audience expansion. There may well be platforms outside of the leading B2B PPC platforms that are suitable to your use case, but, in general, Google Ads and LinkedIn would be considered your safest bets for an initial foray into B2B PPC. While ad costs may be higher on these platforms, you can be sure your target audience is active on both platforms and - with the targeting options available - you can make sure you get your message in front of them, albeit at a premium cost.

7. Set up Tracking - Each digital platform will come with their own set of technical set up instructions that usually involve adding a pixel somewhere on your website to track traffic from your PPC campaigns. This step can be done manually, but with some of the bigger platforms like Google Ads, you should be able to use a plugin - provided you are working off a Wordpress website. The key step here is integrating your ad channels with Google Analytics so you can track the full PPC journey of your prospective buyers. You may also want to consider setting up some UTM tracking that will attach a tracking code to the end of your URLs so you can separate out your traffic on Google Analytics. UTMs can give you traffic info on source, medium, campaign, keywords, and content type.

Another step to think about here is setting up goals in Google Analytics by creating conversion events that are tied to your PPC campaigns on Google ads and other channels. Once you have performed the technical setup for each of your digital ad channels, you should run a few tests to ensure everything is being tracked the way it should. Remember, the built in metrics on each platform will give you important insights, but - to get the most out of your PPC campaigns - you want to give yourself a unified view into how they are all performing. That is where Google Analytics comes into play and the task here for you as the PPC leader is to ensure tracking is set up in a technically correct way for each of your target PPC channels.

8. Perform Some Keyword Research and Target Audience Building - You are now ready to move onto audience targeting. With your buyer persona clearly defined, you will be in good shape on platforms like LinkedIn that let you build audiences by job title, industry, seniority, and more. However, some platforms like Google ads will give you the opportunity to bid on keyword search terms that are relevant to your target audience. Figuring this part out will require some keyword research which involves a number of key steps.

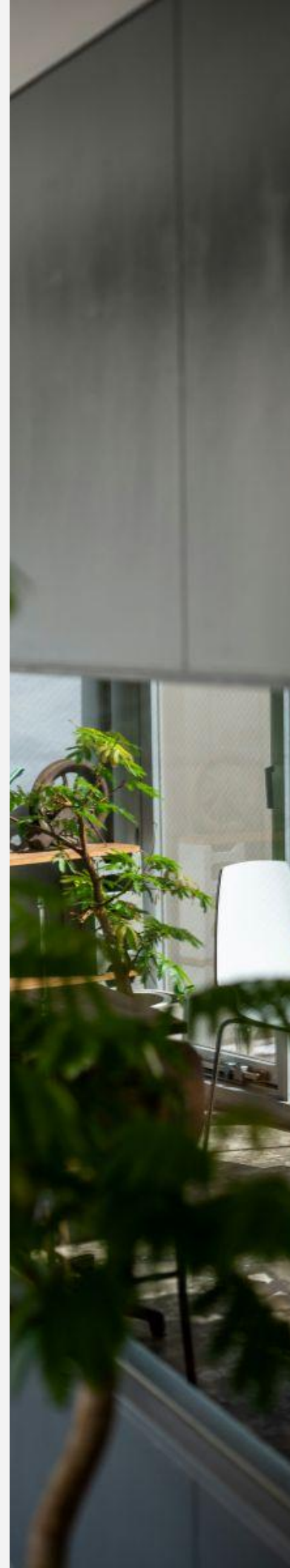
- **Keyword Brainstorming:** Before you start using any keyword research tools, you should do some brainstorming around the type of words your buyer persona is most likely to search for on Google and other tools. Start off with a long list of the main keywords you can think of. Think about intent - The next step is to think about the intent behind each keyword search term. Ask yourself if the keywords you have outlined are very broad in potential scope or would the intent behind the search be more focused. There are four main categories of search intent: informational, navigational, transactional, and commercial. Figuring out which category each of your chosen initial keywords lies in is an important step. One way - in addition to your own acumen - that you can understand search intent is by using some of the keyword research tools available today.
- **Keyword Research Tools:** There are a number of tools - both free and paid - available to help you analyze your chosen keywords. Additionally, these tools will provide suggestions of related terms that could be worth incorporating into your keyword target list. The best starting point here is the free resource of Google Keyword Planner, while some of the leading paid keyword tools include Ahrefs, SEMrush, and Moz Keyword Explorer. These tools will also give you insight into keyword search volume, competition, and cost per click estimates.
- **Competitor Keywords:** Earlier we mentioned that competitor research can be an important part of B2B PPC and, as you finalize your keyword targeting, it is worth considering which keywords your competitors are bidding on to make sure there are no valuable terms you are missing out on. Additionally, some companies bid on terms that are specifically related to their competitors such as "competitor alternative" and other similar terms. This approach can be valuable in a situation where a direct competitor has a high customer churn rate and there is an opportunity to generate some real sales opportunities.
- **Long-tail Keywords:** Finally, it is worth considering the impact long-tail keywords can have in PPC - these are the more specific, longer phrases that will generally cost less to bid on, be lower in volume, but higher in buying intent and can help you increase qualified leads.

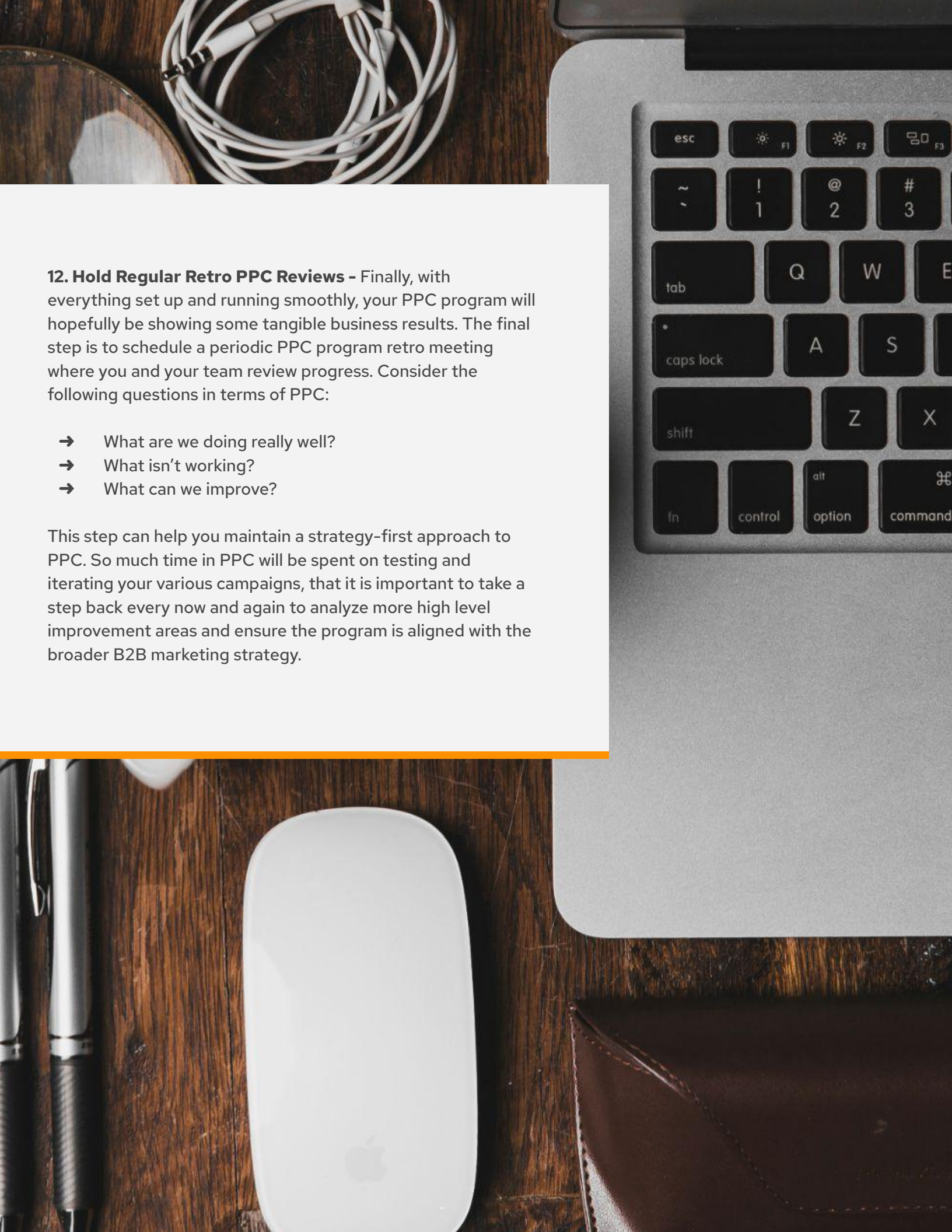


9. Plot Out Your Buyer's PPC Journey - Having established your audience, keywords, and completed your technical setup, it is worth taking the time to map out and fully understand the PPC journey or journeys you would anticipate your buyer to take. If, for example, you are using a LinkedIn lead gen form, the journey will simply be to fill in the form and someone on your team will follow up and try to arrange a meeting. If you are running an ad that brings the prospect back to your website, you should be clear of your intentions here. Do you intend on converting the website visitor through a form and subsequent follow up call or are you just interested in increasing web visitors? Whatever your intended journey is - you should take the time to map it out and - as time goes on - figure out ways to make it both more efficient and effective.

10. Create Your Ads - The next step is about getting into the real PPC ad specialist work of developing headlines, copy, images, videos, landing pages, and whatever other materials you need for your ads. It is at this point that PPC ad skills become invaluable as various aspects of your ads will be tested out and improved over time, helping you get more out of your PPC campaigns. It is our contention that these PPC skills are vital - but only vital when they are used in the correct context of the broader marketing strategy and after the steps above have been completed. Too many companies dive head first into ad creation without really establishing the strategic foundations necessary to make the campaign a success.

11. Identify Key Metrics - With PPC you will not be short of data points to analyze. Each digital ad platform will come with their own set of in-depth analytics giving you information on impressions, click through rates, cost per click, and more. These metrics are all valuable, but the key for you is to figure out which metrics to focus on. You do not want to get bogged down in impressions if your campaign ROI is way behind where you need it to be. Instead, you need to hone in on some key data points and - if you are running ads on multiple platforms - you ideally want a unified view of your PPC campaigns as a whole. This step might involve a bit of customization on your CRM and there are other paid tools available that can help you achieve this level of PPC visibility. The ideal state is a live dashboard showing your sales pipeline and what percentage of pipeline is generated by each source be it PPC, organic, email marketing, events, etc. Remember, all the various metrics involved in each of your PPC campaigns will help you hone and improve your various PPC campaigns, but the overall PPC program should be measured in terms of revenue impact.





12. Hold Regular Retro PPC Reviews - Finally, with everything set up and running smoothly, your PPC program will hopefully be showing some tangible business results. The final step is to schedule a periodic PPC program retro meeting where you and your team review progress. Consider the following questions in terms of PPC:

- What are we doing really well?
- What isn't working?
- What can we improve?

This step can help you maintain a strategy-first approach to PPC. So much time in PPC will be spent on testing and iterating your various campaigns, that it is important to take a step back every now and again to analyze more high level improvement areas and ensure the program is aligned with the broader B2B marketing strategy.

B2B PPC METRICS



The danger with PPC metrics is that there are so many data points available to you, possibly spread across multiple platforms, that it is very easy to lose focus on what ultimately matters - namely revenue. It is our contention that there are two key principles to keep in mind regarding B2B PPC metrics.

1. **Maintain a Revenue Focus** - The more in-depth metrics around impressions, click throughs, etc. are important and will help you optimize your campaigns - but they are only important when considered in the correct revenue context. For example, if you are spending time working on a way to increase impressions on a PPC campaign that is breaking down further along your sales process - you will not generate any extra revenue by increasing impressions. Alternatively, if you have a campaign that is resulting in a good number of closed won opportunities, then improving impressions and clicks can generate an increase in revenue.
2. **Create a Unified View** - Presenting PPC metrics in isolation is a very quick way to lose the attention of the C-suite. If - as is the case in many companies - you are running PPC campaigns across multiple channels, you should be looking to set up metrics that measure and present all PPC campaigns in a single dashboard. You should also have the lower level metrics that measure cost per click etc., ROI, etc. from each platform - but, when presenting and measuring your PPC progress, stick to the initial high level and unified PPC metrics - and, in particular - revenue-related metrics.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of metrics to consider as you set up your B2B PPC dashboard:

- **B2B PPC Business Metrics** - These are the higher level PPC metrics that specifically relate to business performance.
- **B2B PPC Program Metrics and KPIs** - These are the metrics that are specifically tied to the performance of the company's PPC program. Honing these lower level and more in-depth metrics can lead to improvements in the higher level PPC business performance metrics.

B2B PPC BUSINESS METRICS

Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) - ROAS is your fundamental B2B PPC metrics and is a very simple but important metric that shows you the return you are getting on every \$1 spend on PPC. The calculation is **total ad revenue / total ad cost**. Any ROAS greater than 1:1 means your PPC program is returning a profit. For more in-depth analysis, you can compare your ROAS with other marketing channels like email marketing, SEO, etc. to see how valuable a channel PPC is for your company. You can also break down your ROAS by each digital PPC channel to see if certain channels are working better than others.

PPC Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) - PPC CAC divides the total amount of money spent on PPC by the number of sales aka acquisitions. The formula is straightforward: **Total Campaign Cost / Number of Acquisitions = CAC**. Again, this metric is valuable in that it will help you analyze the success of your PPC program and how it compares to other marketing initiatives.

PPC Average Deal Size - Track how PPC average deal size compares with other channels with this metric. Formula = **Total value of all PPC closed won deals divided by number of closed PPC deals**.

PPC Win Rate - The percentage of PPC opportunities that you successfully convert into paying customers. This is calculated by **dividing the number of won deals by the total number of opportunities coming from your PPC program**.

PPC Sales Cycle Length - Track how long it takes PPC customers to move through your sales pipeline: **Total Days to Close All Deals / Total Number of Closed Deals**.



PPC Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) Payback Period - This metric will help you track how many months it takes to recover your PPC costs. The formula involves the PPC CAC which we showed how to calculate above and monthly gross profit per customer which is calculated with the following formula: **Monthly Gross Profit Per Customer = Monthly Revenue Per Customer - Monthly Variable Costs**. The CAC payback period can then be calculated with the following formula **CAC Payback Period = CAC / Monthly Gross Profit Per Customer**. This metric will give you some insight into company cash flow and how your PPC program is impacting it.

PPC Customer Lifetime Value (LTV) - This metric is calculated by **multiplying the average revenue per account that comes from your PPC program by your average PPC customer lifespan**.

B2B PPC PROGRAM METRICS AND KPIS

CPC (Cost Per Click) - How much you pay, on average, each time someone clicks your ad. This metric will vary per digital channel but will help you gauge performance and is something to work on lowering it as you iterate and test your various ads. The formula for CPC is **Total Spend ÷ Total Clicks**.

Cost per 1,000 Impressions or cost per mile (CPM) - CPM shows how much it costs for every 1,000 times your ad is shown. The formula for CPM is **(Total Spend ÷ Total Impressions) × 1,000**. Your CPM will give you some insight into the success of your ad headlines, copy, and images.

Ad Relevance / Keyword Quality Score - This metric is one offered by certain digital platforms and is worth tracking as you iterate on your ads. Examples here are Google who provides a keyword Quality Score out of 10 and Facebook's ad relevance diagnostics.

Website Metrics from PPC Visits - The goal of many PPC ads is to bring prospects back to the company website. As a result, it is important to track website performance as part of your PPC metrics. In particular, you want to focus on the segment of web traffic that PPC is directly responsible for and how it compares to other traffic sources. The metrics to track here are:

- Bounce Rate = **(Single-page sessions ÷ Total sessions) × 100**
- Avg. Time on Site = **Total time on site ÷ Total sessions**
- Pages per Session = **Total pageviews ÷ Total sessions**
- Conversion Rate = **(Conversions ÷ PPC sessions) × 10**





CLOSE

Thank you for downloading the MFS Guide to B2B PPC - we hope you have found some value in our analysis and lessons we have learned over the past 15 years in the B2B environment. If you are launching a PPC initiative or looking to take an existing program to the next level, then we wish you all the best with your next steps.

If you are looking for some additional B2B PPC expertise or resources, please feel free to reach out and set up an initial conversation - we would be more than happy to hear from you and see if there is a way we can add value.



Email

info@moveforwardstrategies.com



Website

moveforwardstrategies.com