



IS PAY-PER-CLICK THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR AN MSP?

Many IT companies tend to put a lot of stock into their Google Ads marketing, but Pay-Per-Click (PPC) isn't always going to directly result in more business in every situation. *Let's look at our findings.*

IS PPC THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR BRINGING YOU NEW LEADS?

Pay-Per-Click seems like a no-brainer for MSPs to generate leads. You pay Google to show your ads, and you watch the leads come in. It sounds good on paper, but in practice, mileage is going to vary. In fact, we've touched on the question of whether a **PPC (Pay Per Click) campaign is right for MSPs** and in the past **we answered a variety of PPC questions** from MSPs considering running a PPC campaign.

The short answer, and we can't stress this enough—PPC is a perfectly fine way to spend your marketing dollars if you have the rest of your house in order. There are even specific scenarios where PPC can outperform most other marketing while you ramp up other efforts. This blog isn't to discourage an IT person and tell them to steer away from PPC, but we do want to be realistic with what you can expect. Let's get that out of the way first.

Here are three reasons why running PPC as the first marketing attempt may not be the most efficient method of investing your marketing dollars:

PPC can be expensive, and if you're struggling to get leads, your investment may go further in a marketing service designed to keep working long after you've stopped paying Google. For example, we have worked with clients who were spending upwards of \$5,000 per month on ads. One rule of thumb regarding how much to spend follows a traditional approach to marketing dollars. Your spending should at least equal how much you would receive a month from a client. So if the average amount per month you receive from a client on a monthly basis is \$2,000, then you should be willing to spend that much on your PPC.

PPC works best if you already have a marketing plan in place and feel you have attracted as many leads as you can acquire using traditional marketing. PPC can expand your reach, by supplementing your existing marketing efforts.

PPC takes time to gain traction, and if you're struggling to keep your business running, you can't afford to wait the three months or invest financial resources waiting for PPC to really kick in. Additionally, there are no guarantees that you will be able to close any contracts, PPC like all marketing only provides the opportunity for leads, not a promise that you will be able to gain any.

Despite these drawbacks, there are times when PPC can be the best option in your marketing plan. One is when your existing marketing campaign has reached saturation and you're interested in exploring more lead generation opportunities. Another is when you're trying to dominate the market or introduce your services in an area where you have little saturation.

HOW CAN PPC HELP AN MSP DOMINATE THE MARKET?

If you're trying to develop name recognition, **reinforce your brand**, or dominate the MSP market in a location that you don't have much saturation, a PPC campaign may be the right option. PPC advertising can follow two tracks, sales (conversions) or branding. While many businesses view PPC as a way to generate calls, forms and conversions, there are times where your goal is to gain exposure for your business. Of course, there can be overlap between the two goals, and each often depends on the other.

However, we will treat them as different goals for this discussion and focus on ways for an MSP to dominate the market. One way Google Ads allows you to do this is with its Target Impression Share Bidding.

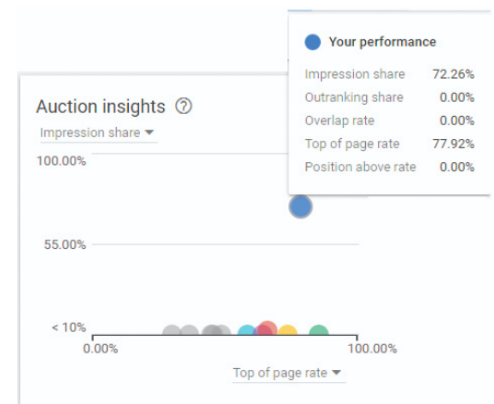
WHAT IS A TARGET IMPRESSION SHARE BIDDING STRATEGY?

Target impression share bidding, as it suggests, provides you with the option to determine the percentage of times your ads will show for a keyword search. FYI, an impression is the number of times your ad is shown as the result of a search query. For example, If you choose an impression share of 70%, then 7 out of 10 times an applicable keyword such as Managed IT is searched for, your ad will be presented. If your ad is shown 70 times out of 100, you're saturating the market. However, this exposure doesn't come without a price.

While it is intuitive to want to choose a 100% impression rate, it will also require a significant investment to provide Google with the budget to do so. Never forget, Google Ads uses an auction system, which means you're bidding against other MSPs. For Google to ensure your ads are the top results 100% of the time, it will require you to have the budget to out-spend all of your competitors.

As with all things PPC, budget plays a significant role in when and where your ads will appear. Take note; Target Impressions Share, like most of Google's "Smart Bidding," is automated, and if you don't manage your budget, Google will spend as much as it takes to get results.

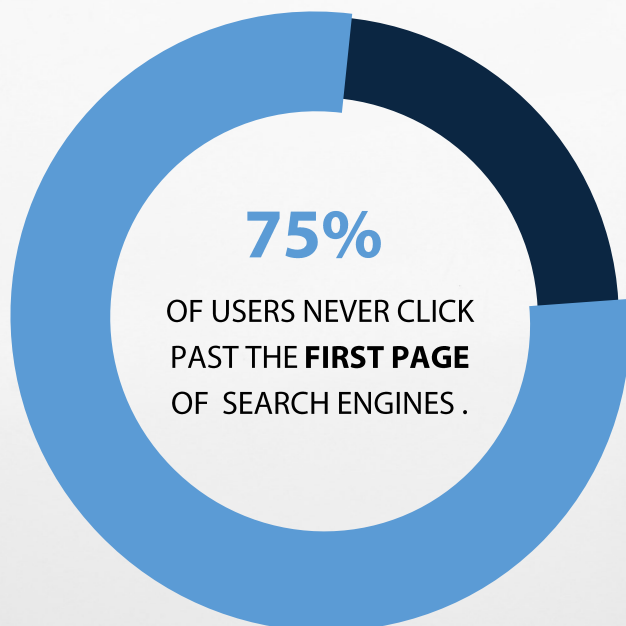
Finally, the goal of target impression share isn't about conversions, as other bidding strategies are, but to increase your name recognition, which can lead to conversions over time. Impression share is designed to have as many searchers see your ads as possible.



DON'T MORE IMPRESSIONS EQUAL MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONVERSIONS?

In theory, yes, but Google Ads' bidding strategies are intent-driven. For example, if you're running a maximum conversion campaign, the goal is to show your ads to searchers who are most likely to convert based on their prior search habits. This, by nature, would reduce the number of impressions because your ads will be targeted toward "qualified leads."

When you adopt an Impression Share Campaign, Google will show your ads to anyone searching for your keywords, regardless of their intent to convert. While this is essential for developing your brand, it could be problematic if your business thrives on quickly turning around leads. However, no one has purchased an MSP service agreement on a whim. As such, having your MSP ads shown on a top page of a search engine result in 70-80% of the time can develop the type of brand recognition that eventually converts over the long term.



HOW CAN AN IMPRESSIONS SHARE CAMPAIGN BENEFIT MY MSP?

To Raise Awareness. Your MSP website is new, and you want to break through the noise of your competition. While SEO is the most effective method to drive traffic, it can easily take four to six months before Google takes notice of your new MSP site or ramps up your presence in a new location. There are specific steps you can take to increase your odds, such as:

ENSURING YOUR WEBSITE FOLLOWS BEST PRACTICES

WRITING INFORMATIVE BLOGS AND OTHER CONTENT

JOINING PROFESSIONAL, HIGH-QUALITY ONLINE GROUPS

DEVELOPING AN ACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

CULTIVATING AUTHORITATIVE BACKLINKS, SUCH AS .EDU AND .GOV

The reality is these SEO steps to increase your rank, and exposure will take some time to gain traction and still require patience. Investing in impression share, PPC can assist in quickly bringing your MSP to the top of your mind until your organic traffic gains a foothold.

To Correct an SEO Error. A common SEO technical error when redesigning your website is not redirecting your existing content to your new site. These are known as 301 redirects. Without redirecting, your existing content is lost, which can seriously affect your ability to be found on search. If you let your established content fall by the wayside, all the authority you developed will also be lost. As such, as far as Google is concerned, you're starting from scratch, and your competitors will swamp you.

While SEO is the best way to repair the damage over the long term, there is a strong likelihood that it will take several months before you will see results. This means that the number of times your website will be shown as the result of a search query will be significantly less than that of your competitors and, as such, reduce your ability to drive traffic to your site. Less traffic means fewer opportunities to generate leads. An impressions share PPC will allow you to get back in front of searchers and your competitors.

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY

It seems we are trying to dissuade you from using PPC for your general marketing, but you need your marketing in order before you can expect success from a PPC campaign. Whether it's having **landing pages**, or the ability to **track conversions** or your **targeted keywords**, being prepared is essential for success. It's important to temper your expectations, too—a lead from PPC will likely cost more than a conversion from other marketing campaigns, with no guarantee of success.

That said, PPC is a valuable tool for getting in front of an audience, and if you run a properly managed PPC campaign, you'll see increased impressions, visits, and, ideally, conversions. In the end, you can't truly control what the user searches for, what they click on, or ensure that they are 100% qualified for your services, which is valid for all types of marketing.

Before you start with PPC, it's best to start with an **SEO** and **PPC evaluation**. An SEO evaluation can show whether or not your SEO is getting your MSP in front of an audience, and the PPC evaluation can determine what it will cost to run a campaign in your area, see what the competition is doing, and decide if it is the best way to go or not.



DEVELOP A MARKETING PLAN FOR YOUR MSP

Ultimately, to drive business to your MSP, you need a marketing plan that combines the various aspects of your services into a coherent promotional message. If you're hesitant to invest in PPC due to the considerable financial investment, PPC isn't your only option, and you can continue marketing. **You can market your MSP on a budget.**

One final thing to consider regarding PPC is that once you stop running campaigns, all the traffic and attention generated by the ads stop dead. If you have yet to develop alternative means to generate traffic, you will be back where you started, out of sight and mind. This is why developing resources marketing outside of PPC, such as SEO, content creation, and social media, is critical.

If you need help with competing with your competitors, getting your message across, or developing your MSP's branding, we can help. We are one of the only marketing agencies specializing in assisting MSPs in growing their business. If everything you have tried so far isn't working, now is the time to try something new.

Call us today to schedule an appointment and learn more about our **lead generation**, SEO, social media, and other marketing solutions designed from the ground up for MSPs.