



## **Paid Search Marketing vs. Natural Search Marketing: Why Your Business Should Focus on BOTH**

### **How *Paid Search* and *Natural Search* Bring New Sales to Your Company**

**Paid search marketing** is a strategy whereby you develop a list of “keywords” that are relevant to the products and/or services your business offers. Actually, the best keywords and not single words at all, but rather *phrases* that describe your business. *Relevancy* is absolutely critical when building this list of keywords.

With your list of relevant keywords you must then choose an online search advertiser who will display your advertisements when users perform searches using one or more of the keywords in your list. The three main search advertisers are *Google*, *Yahoo!*, and *MSN (Microsoft)*. Each of these advertisers offer an advertising program referred to as a *Pay-Per-Click*, or **PPC**.

A PPC advertising program works like this: You take each one of the keywords in your list and find out what the current “bid price” is for those keywords with the online advertiser you've selected. Let's say that you're using Google's *Adwords* PPC program for your online advertising and one of your keywords is “portable blue widgets”. A research tool in *Adwords* will tell you, among other things, how many searches were performed last month using the keyword “portable blue widgets”. The tool will also tell you what you would have to “bid” on this keyword to insure that your Google advertisement (which you'll write later on) will appear on the all-important first page of a search result *for that keyword*.

Suppose the current bid price for “portable blue widgets” is, say, \$1.00. Your bid should be something greater than \$1.00 to make sure your ad shows up on the first page of a search result consistently. So, you bid \$1.15 to start. You then write a few small text ads promoting your business which include a link to a relevant page on your website.

Once you've written your ads and bid on your keywords *the fun begins!* Google rotates your ads on their system and within minutes of launching your PPC campaign your ads start to appear for searches relevant to your keywords. Up to this point you haven't paid Google a thin dime – not even for opening an *Adwords* account. However, the moment someone uses one of your keywords, notices your Google ad, and then *clicks* on your ad taking them to your website you pay Google for that visit. What you pay is your bid price for the keyword that was used to land that visitor on your website. If your bid is \$1.15 then Google charged your *Adwords* account for that amount of money.

Using a *paid search* program like Google's *Adwords* PPC program offers you a way to get your advertisement *on the first page* of a Google search result for a relevant keyword almost instantly. Plus, you only pay for *click-thru's* to your website. If you've written your ad properly these click-thru's will represent qualified prospects.

This may all sound pretty easy – but it's actually very complex. In fact, we believe it is so technical that we DO NOT encourage our clients to get started on their own using a PPC strategy for one very important reason: PPC campaigns can drain your bank account faster than the U.S. Congress can spend a billion dollars!

On the other hand, a professionally managed PPC campaign can generate more business for your company than you ever dreamed was possible with *any* form of advertising. That is a fact. Our own company has seen a dramatic rise in leads and new business as a direct result of using PPC to market our services.

### **Disadvantages of Paid Search Marketing**

- Requires a high degree of technical expertise to master and use effectively. Users must thoroughly understand the concepts involved with valid keyword research, ad writing, ad testing, target marketing, and more.

### **Benefits of Paid Search Marketing:**

- Immediate first page search result ranking for relevant keywords.
- Highly-trackable results for each keyword and each ad.
- Offers fast, reliable testing of headlines, keywords, product interest, and more.
- Offers ability to control advertising costs on a daily basis.
- Offers ability to conduct geographic target marketing (geo-targeting).
- Offers ability to select which online ad mediums (search, content, mobile, etc.) for ads to appear.

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**Natural (Organic) search marketing** is different from paid search marketing in that you do not pay an online search company such as Google whenever someone clicks-thru to your website from a search result page. Your website earns its ranking “naturally”, or “organically”, as a result of having highly valuable content on the site itself.

Is it easy to achieve a consistently high natural search ranking? **No**, and it is getting harder all the time as the number of online competitors increases.

Is it worth the time, money, and resources to achieve a high natural search ranking? Well, it depends on how badly your company wants to stay in business. After all, online marketing is probably how your competitors are finding (and keeping) their new business.

Finally, surveys have shown that a natural search ranking converts visitors to paying customers about 30% more frequently than paid search.

### **Disadvantages of Organic Search Marketing**

- Requires a high degree of technical expertise to master and use effectively. Businesses must continually add valuable, original, relevant, and compelling content to the site to achieve and maintain a high organic search ranking.
- Achieving a high organic search ranking is not immediate. Results from executing an effective organic search marketing campaign require a minimum of 4-6 months on average before they are realized.
- Less of a direct connection between resources invested in organic search marketing and results realized.

### **Benefits of Organic Search Marketing:**

- Achieves a higher conversion rate on average.
- A high organic search ranking is not reliant on competitive keyword bidding. Organic ranking is more stable and predictable over a longer period of time (assuming the site is kept current with fresh content).

## **Is Natural Search Marketing Better Than Paid Search Marketing?**

Many times our clients ask us *“Can we stop paying Google once our site achieves a high organic search ranking?”* There is a debate going on about this among online marketers, but we look at this issue purely from the standpoint of onscreen *real estate*.

The onscreen “real estate” on a Google search results page is limited to only 23 possible listings – both paid and organic. The more places you can get listed the more likely your competitor will be relegated to the next (and far less important) page of a search result. If your listing appears in *both* the *Sponsored* areas of the results page as well as in the organic listings you are viewed with greater *authority* by consumers and other online searchers (*“Geez! This company is listed everywhere – they must be really good!”*)

## **Conclusion**

Search marketing is quickly becoming a *very* popular way for businesses to market their products and services in a highly cost-effective manner – especially compared to most other forms of traditional advertising. Each type of search marketing strategy, whether paid or organic, plays an important role in a business' overall online marketing strategy.

Now is the time to start moving your ad dollars over to search marketing and become much more competitive in the your particular market space.



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