

Technology

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Pay-Per-Click Easy as 1-2-3

By this point, I'm sure you've at least heard of pay-per-click advertising, or at least Google Ads (quite possibly by its better-known former name, Google AdWords).

If you've been thinking about employing PPC for your funeral home or want to better understand how it works, now is as good a time as any. The information in this article will help you decide about using it for your death-care business.

Before we get started, here are a few ideas to keep in mind: keywords are deeply important, quality is more important than quantity, and content remains central to advertising offerings.

The Basics

You've likely seen PPC ads represented as sponsored ads on search engines or social media sites. To

accomplish this, a business paid a particular price to display its ad when people search for a keyword (or keyword phrase).

The goal is to spend no more than necessary to generate as much traffic as possible. When PPC ads fail, it's often because the keywords were too vague (people aren't searching for them) or too competitive (too many other businesses are using those keywords).

I want to help you understand how to use PPC ads so you don't fall into the same traps. PPC advertising requires substantial planning and doing research on your potential audience.

Consider the innate values of PPC advertising:

- **Feedback:** You need to know how effective your efforts are. PPC advertising is essentially real-time feedback on how well your outreach is working.

- **Testing:** The speed with which you can create and amend advertising campaigns lets you test different audiences and keywords. You can then optimize what works best for your funeral home.

- **Flexibility:** You can run any variation of keywords you wish. This sounds like a wondrous idea, but there's also an inherent danger in it: you could leap too quickly to

something new or overspend for the sake of testing.

Before we dig into the nuts and bolts, let's talk about some ways to minimize future mistakes.

Words of Caution

PPC advertising can be very expensive, even deceptively so. You might look at the dime or quarter per click and not think much of it at first, but it can add up quickly. You want to make sure that what you're spending is translating into new clients. Here are a few ways to not overspend or miss your target altogether:

- **Keep your budget small:** By establishing a set price before you begin, you can make certain not to overextend your advertising budget on keywords that aren't working for your funeral home. There's no set amount; it is dependent on what you want to spend. My suggestion is to be thrifty in the beginning.

- **Shorten your timeframes:** Instead of letting ads run forever, consider shorter bursts of two to three days to test whether or not a particular keyword (or keyword phrase) is worth committing to. This might sound counterintuitive, but think of it like test-driving a vehicle before purchasing it: You want to make sure it is what you want and need.

- **Research keywords:** Do your homework and make certain you have enough high-performing long-tail keywords. (Remember, a long-tail keyword just means a keyword phrase of a few words.) The instinct might be to use *funeral homes* or *death care*, but the keywords that perform best might be several words that form a commonly searched phrase. Spend some time researching what keyword phrases are best for your goals.

- **Split testing:** There's always more room to test, so don't be afraid to continuously change up your keywords to find homeostasis in your PPC advertising. Split testing is as

simple as creating two versions of an ad with only one difference, and then observing which version works best.

- **Analysis, analysis and more analysis:** It's important to stay on top of your reporting. Doing so lets you see what works and what doesn't.

If you can keep these five points in mind as you begin to use PPC advertising for your funeral home, you'll see it pay off over time. Before creating your first ad, you'll want to compile a list of high-performing long-tail keywords.

Creating a PPC Ad

The first step is to *create your ad*. Regardless of the platform (Google, Amazon, Facebook, etc.), you'll want to create an ad in your dashboard. If you haven't already done so, you should create an account with the platform of your choice. Let's call that step zero.

(Of course, the most popular PPC advertising platform is Google Ads, and it always makes sense to start there. But you don't have to be limited to Google for PPC.)

When you go to create the ad, you'll have to fill in a number of fields. You'll need to create a headline. It might seem like a good idea to stuff keywords here, but avoid that instinct.

Depending on the platform, you'll have a few additional lines to highlight the benefits of your funeral home. Finally, you'll have the opportunity to use the website URL of your choice. A good ad will be targeted, as well as offer specifics and benefits about your funeral home.

The second step will be to set the parameters of your ad. Here, you'll specify how long the ad will run, its budget and the location of the ad. As I noted earlier, it's important to run a short ad with a clear budget for your first foray into PPC advertising.

Next, select your keywords. Ideally, you'll already have done your

keyword research and have those ready to go. If you don't, you can use the keyword search tool in the platform's dashboard. Be sure to use targeted long-tail keywords that will generate lots of traffic.

Finally, as I touched on earlier, you'll want to implement split testing. That's as simple as changing a small detail to see how it might affect traffic and conversions. Its utility is often understated, but in order to have better-performing ads, you need to test at every possible turn.

Analyze This

Analysis is incredibly important to being successful at PPC advertising. You must consider a variety of metrics as you determine whether to continue with a particular ad or launch a new one:

- **Cost per click:** This lets you know how much you spend (on average) each time someone clicks on the website link you provided. This is an important statistic because it informs how well an ad is doing from a volume perspective.

- **Click-through rate:** While not as important as your conversion rate, this statistic represents the percentage of people who click and actually visit your site.

- **ROI:** You know this one, but for the record: Your return on investment, of course, is the amount of money you make compared to how much you spent.

- **Conversion rate:** This is by far the most important of the trackable metrics. Knowing the number of people who actually purchased a death-care service determines how well you are doing.

You can see that the numbers associated with your PPC advertising are important to the overall success of your funeral home's digital marketing plan. Without monitoring, you could end up throwing money down the drain. To be successful, have a plan and stick to it. •