

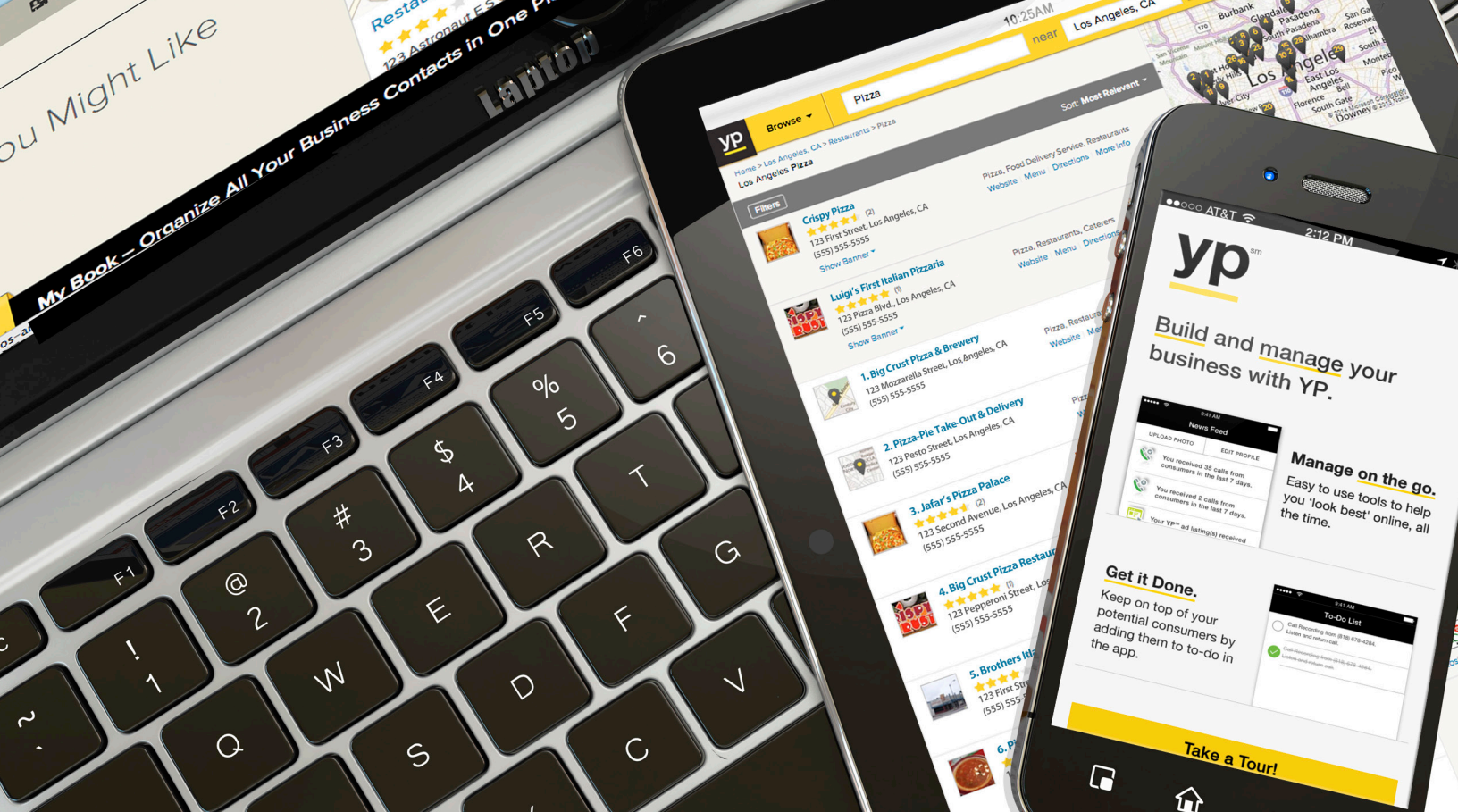
# Search Engine Marketing for Lead Generation



**yp**<sup>SM</sup> marketing  
solutions

**educational ebook**

To learn how YP can help you with search engine marketing call  
888.676.4614 or visit [marketingsolutions.yp.com/win-with-search](http://marketingsolutions.yp.com/win-with-search)



# I. Intro

Do you want to build leads and empower customers to find your business on search engines such as Google, Yahoo! and Bing? If so, search engine marketing (SEM) must be part of your marketing strategy; search is one of the most powerful tools that make it easy for customers to find local businesses.

For 130 years, YP<sup>SM</sup> has helped local businesses grow and thrive. As a digital marketing industry leader, in 2015 we crafted over 500,000 SEM campaigns for small businesses just like yours.<sup>1</sup> That same year, those efforts were acknowledged; YP won an award for being the fastest growing Google AdWords Premier SMB Partner. Additionally, YP is a Yahoo Preferred Partner and a Bing Ads Elite Partner.

Over time, YP has scaled industry best practices to ensure our SEM campaigns are impactful and highly efficient. Now, we've compiled our knowledge of SEM basics, best practices, and lead generation tips into this ebook. We invite you to take advantage of our insight and expertise, please enjoy.

1. Source: YP Internal Data, January 2016

# II. About SEM

Search engine marketing is an acquisition marketing strategy; as such, it is results oriented and allows marketers to engage with online searchers looking for solutions. The process begins with a person entering a “keyword” into a search engine browser to find information to aid in a purchasing decision; advertisers provide a possible solution in the form of search engine advertisement messaging.

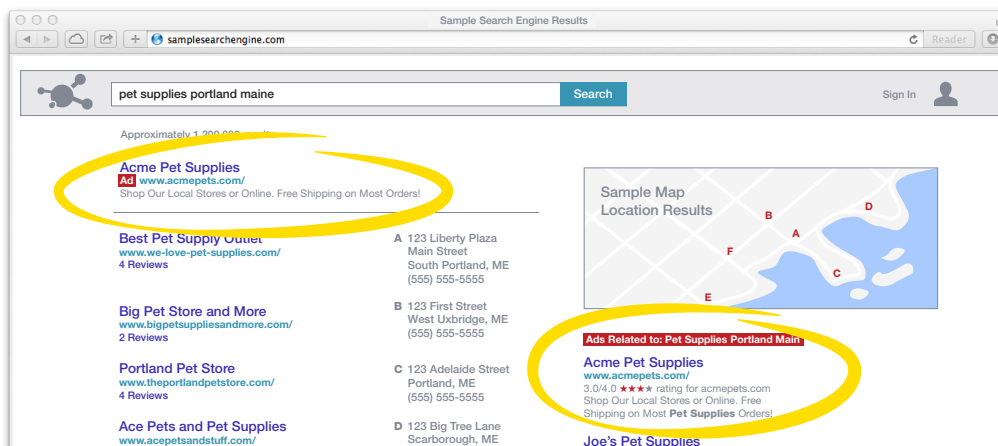
Since the process involves a consumer actively searching for local goods and services, small businesses not visible on search engines or high-value local search sites risk missing those lead opportunities. Implementing a targeted SEM campaign is a way to tip those scales in your favor.

When it comes to search engine marketing:

- Four out of five consumers use search engines to find local business information<sup>1</sup>
- Trillions of searches were conducted on Google in 2014<sup>2</sup>
- YP and the YP<sup>SM</sup> Local Ad Network had nearly 1.5 billion searchers online in 2014<sup>3</sup>
- In 2014, approximately \$11B was spent on local search advertising<sup>4</sup>

When advertisers participate in SEM, they have the opportunity to connect with potential customers by showing their ads in response to the search term queries. Campaign strategies vary. For example, with ypSearch<sup>SM</sup>, YP builds and distributes custom ad campaigns based on a fixed monthly budget across premium search sites to provide customers with leads in the form of calls, emails and form fills. Comparatively, pay-per-click (PPC) advertisers have to pay for each click their ads receive, regardless of the action the consumer takes after clicking. Click or not, SEM still helps businesses build a reputation by increasing general exposure to the public in the form of impressions (the point that an ad is seen or displayed one time).

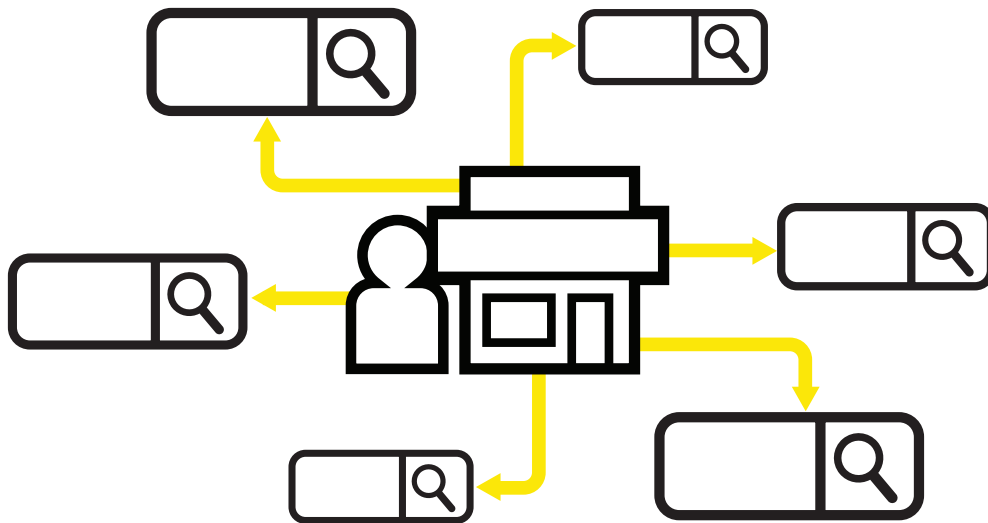
SEM appears simple enough; after a person enters a query into a search box, search engines or local search sites serve ads and organic content based on the keyword(s) provided. A search for “Pet Supplies, Portland Maine” returns multiple results. The SEM paid advertisements usually have premier placement on the top of the page and the right as illustrated below:



1. Source: Google Search Behavior Study, "Understanding Consumers' Local Search Behavior," May 2014
2. Source: Google Trends, <https://www.google.com/trends/>, May 2015
3. Source: YP Internal Data, January 2015
4. Source: BIA/Kelsey, "U.S. Local Media Forecast 2015 Spring Update," April 2015

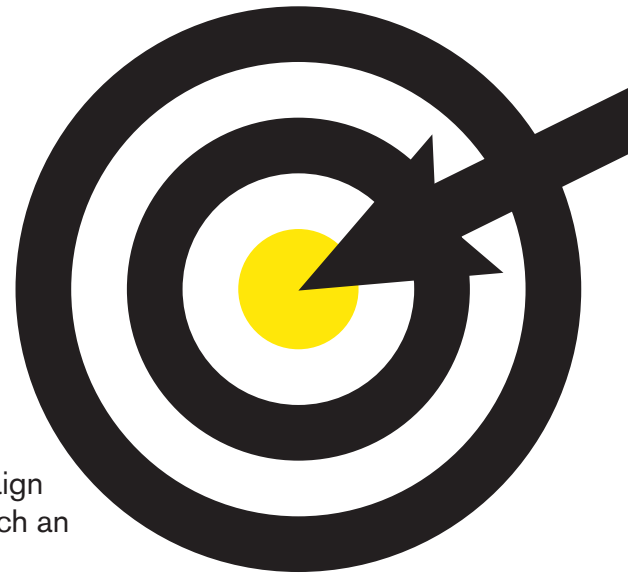
The competition for traffic and premier positioning is fierce, with multiple businesses paying money to get in front of a desired target audience. In order to level that playing field, most search engines utilize a bidding system similar to an auction. In addition to the bid amount, there are other factors that determine where and what ad will appear as part of search results. Website relevancy in relation to the keyword and overall Quality Score, also influence SEM ad rankings. If your small business and website promotes a pizza parlor in Portland, Maine, supporting a paid campaign for the keyword string “Los Angeles, California pet supplies” will be futile. A search engine will automatically thwart the results, regardless of bid amount.

## One More Time – What is SEM?



SEM is a paid, online, advertising strategy allowing advertisers to choose and bid on business appropriate keywords. Search engines deliver ads based on queries conducted by consumers. SEM is an excellent solution for advertisers who want to connect with a consumer while they are actively searching for local products and services. Implementing an SEM campaign can quickly build brand awareness and generate leads.

# III. SEM and Your Small Business



While building a website and managing your business listings are essential strategies for getting found online, an SEM campaign kicks those efforts into high gear. As a solution-oriented approach an SEM campaign will allow you to:

- **Promote Your Business**

With the right campaign design, development, and keyword bidding, small businesses can get included in top search results.

- **Generate Leads in Real Time**

An SEM campaign permits small business owners to capture leads as customers actively seek local products and services.

- **Stay in Budget**

SEM budgets can cap within your means so you can manage your investment based on your particular business needs.

- **Reach a Target Audience**

Using specific keywords will allow you to target customers who are searching for exactly what you have to offer. That will result in attracting the most qualified leads.

- **Build Brand Awareness**

SEM will make you visible to customers looking for the exact goods and services you offer. Even if they do not click through, you are generating impressions and supporting your brand identity.

# IV. Getting Started with SEM

Effort and preparation are required to ensure that the SEM campaign will provide a substantial return on investment. There are seven steps you can take to help you determine the scope and breadth of an SEM campaign for your small business:

## 1. Define your Objectives

Are you interested in lead generation, and if so, how many leads do you want to generate? Perhaps you want to launch a local brand awareness campaign. How many impressions matter to you? When laying out your SEM goal, asking and answering these questions and adjusting the parameters based on your budget will provide the necessary structure to evaluate campaign effectiveness accurately.

## 2. Keyword Selection

When customers search for your business, what kind of phrases will they use to find you? Chances are that they would look for something specific, e.g., “24-hour plumber,” “commercial plumber,” or “licensed plumber.” Imagining how you would conduct a search will provide insight to how your customers would undertake the task.

## 3. Budget

Some keyword bids cost pennies while other words can eat up the weekly budget for a small business advertiser. Using Google’s AdWords Keyword Planner to investigate potential marketing costs will provide some idea regarding pay-per-click bids. Use that information to determine your secret sauce; too high a bid will make your campaign inefficient while too low will equate to missed opportunities.

## 4. Target Limitations

Potential customers conduct searches 24/7; unless your business is always open, running your ad during your business hours of operation is the common-sense way to target active clients and manage budget. If your enterprise is always open and operational, then geo-targeting can enable the most qualified leads to find your company. This strategy relies on parameters such as country, city, ZIP code, radius targeting, and IP address to decide which customers will see your ad.

## 5. Ad Copy

Your SEM ad should include a call to action (CTA); conducting some simple tests will allow you to craft and refine your advertisements to produce the greatest results. Testing involves creating several ads with different marketing messages to determine which one generates the most clicks. For example, an immigration lawyer can promote their services using multiple messages including “Green Card Experts,” “Work Visas,” or “Prevent Deportation.” The ads can be set to alternate during a campaign; the higher an ad click-through rate, the better the messaging.



## 6. Site and Landing Page Relevance

When clicked, each SEM ad will connect a lead directly to your website; you choose exactly where that consumer will go. Regardless of if it is your site's home page or a landing page for lead capture, page content must be relevant, accurate, original, and provide the information customers seek. The wrong search term/landing page combo will only frustrate a potential client and encourage them to look elsewhere.

## 7. Test for Success

Testing and monitoring campaign activity is how small businesses can determine the results of their marketing efforts. The process is complicated, but the results are vital for measuring campaign success. Monitoring ad clicks is one way to gauge the success of an SEM campaign; it is not the only option. Some customers may prefer to discuss business services over the phone; integrating a unique, call tracking number can help distinguish between campaign lead sources.

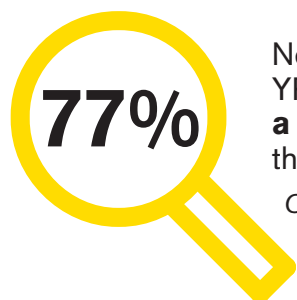


# V. Site Selection and Diversity: The Final Consideration

There is no arguing that Google and Bing are valuable SEM campaign resources, however choosing one over another and ignoring other opportunities limits potential lead generation. Implementing a strategy that allows ad placement on a mix of search engines and local search sites will place marketing messages in front of a variety of consumers and increase the odds of securing leads.

Additional options include yp.com, a top 30 U.S. digital property in 2014<sup>1</sup>, and other platforms including AOL.com, Yahoo!, and Ask.com. According to a comScore study commissioned by YP<sup>1</sup>, YP searchers who initiated a search on yp.com are more engaged and deliver more value than other Internet searchers.

## Those Searchers are More Influenced by Advertising



Nearly 8 out of 10 YP searchers **contact a merchant**<sup>2</sup> after their search

*Compared to **66%** among all searchers*



Nearly 7 out of 10 YP searchers make a **purchase**<sup>2</sup> after their search

*Compared to **54%** among all searchers*

Funding an SEM campaign that will only appear on one platform is equivalent to putting all one's proverbial eggs into the same basket. Platform dependency can negatively impact marketing strategies by limiting potential.

Launching a multi-faceted SEM campaign is challenging because each Internet property has individual rules, prices, and formats that advertisers must follow. Entrusting an agency with proven SEM experience simplifies the task for advertisers.

One example for all inclusive SEM management is ypSearch<sup>SM</sup>. The program's technology relies on automation, machine learning, and reporting. Additional features include call tracking and real-time triggered notifications. That combination allows advertisers to expand from local search sites into a myriad of networks including Google, YP, Yahoo!, and Bing with one ad buy. Plus, thanks to the YP for Business<sup>SM</sup> app<sup>3</sup>, you can monitor leads and calls on the go, so you never miss an opportunity.

1. Source: comScore Media Metrix Multi-Platform (U.S.), Top 2000 Web Domains Report, Average for June-Sept 2014 (across desktop, mobile, and mobile apps)

2. Source: comScore "YP Value Proposition Report," October 2014, commissioned by YP

3. Currently available for iOS and Android users.



# VI. SEM Best Practices, Grow, Scale and Optimize your SEM Program



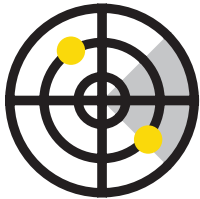
## 1. Keyword Selection

Regarding SEM, keywords are the primary tool responsible for driving consumers to your website or landing page; using the wrong keywords will reduce site relevancy, discourage customers and drive up your costs. Small businesses should carefully select keywords with the goal of driving high-quality leads and converting site visitors to paying customers. There is no need to be bold from the get go; instead starting small and focusing on specific keywords is a more practical solution. While broad keywords that describe your business (e.g., plumber, cat groomer, pizza) are all logical choices, those options can be costly. Instead, developing a strategy based on long tail keywords will lower competition and increase lead quality. Consider “dog groomer,” there are countless dog-grooming businesses bidding on that word combo. Tweaking the keyword with descriptions like “low cost,” or including your location or business name will help lower bid amounts. Regarding keyword selection, include your company name and common variations, long tail keywords, geo-targeted search terms, and misspelled words. That assortment will help minimize bidding competition while focusing on driving quality traffic and the more obvious the combo, the better. By thinking like your customer, not a search engine, you can discover the keywords your customers use to find your business online and lower costs, increase volume, and generate better quality leads from your SEM campaign. If you are not sure what keywords would perform for your campaign, frequently test and measure those results.



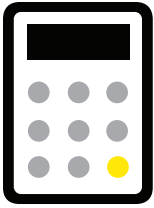
## 2. Writing Effective Ad Copy

Creating engaging ad copy is especially challenging courtesy of search engine character limits. Google caps headlines at 25 characters, display URLs at 35 characters, and two lines of text featuring no more than a total of 70 characters. Populating those ads using dynamic keyword insertion (DKI) allows search keywords to proliferate those fields automatically; it is a smart solution to getting the right message out there. Knowing who your competition is, what they offer, and their keyword strategy can provide guidance so you can fine-tune your messaging and level the playing field. Even when you create a top performing ad, never just “set it and forget it,” as marketing messages can become stale. Instead, use collected performance data to guide the creation of different ads and marketing messages to test your campaign for effectiveness. That will lead to effective SEM campaign management.



## 3. Lead Conversion

An effective SEM campaign will promote your website by increasing your site’s visibility to qualified leads related to search engine results. Not every searcher is a perfect candidate for your business solution, and a search engine marketing campaign allows for targeted efforts enabling the most qualified prospects to locate your business solution quickly. An SEM strategy that uses keywords and messages that speak directly to your target audience will qualify leads based on specific propositions and traits. This will ensure that leads responding to your marketing strategy will have the ability, drive and impetus to take advantage of your business offers. In addition to keywords and messaging, relevant landing page information can improve visitor engagement and customer conversion. When keywords connect with deep linked or customized landing pages focusing on a particular goal, campaign performance related to inbound lead generation is more efficient. Including a call to action such as “Call us today,” “Email us,” or “Contact us,” will prompt customers to contact you directly. It is the necessary step to convert their status from “site visitor” to “new lead.”



#### 4. Budget Management

Search engine marketing can work with any size marketing budget as a campaign can be built and implemented for as little as \$25 per week. Additionally, advertisers with larger budgets can test the effectiveness of SEM before making a significant, financial commitment. Ultimately, how you spend your budget should match your business goals. For example, if you have timed sales goals, i.e., a holiday promotion, a short-term investment makes sense in order to generate a bigger upfront return. However, if you need a constant stream of leads year round, an evergreen content strategy of maintaining constant promotion may be in order. Once you have a goal, there are multiple cost-control strategies. Options include geo-targeting using defined parameters, timing scheduled ad runs ( i.e., only running your ads when your business is open) and decreasing bid amounts during off-peak hours.



# VII. Turn Local Online and Mobile Searches into Leads

Whether your search engine marketing needs are general or specific, YP is a full service marketing partner with the service, expertise, and scale to drive local online and mobile leads to your business. As industry experts, we use a variety of premium lead sources ranging from search engines such as Google and Yahoo! to local search sites including yp.com.

ypSearch<sup>SM</sup> offers a turnkey solution to clients looking to generate more leads for their business, while ypSearch<sup>SM</sup> Pro is available to customers who need a fully customized, boutique-like solution. All of our search solutions are expertly crafted to deliver results so you can focus on your business. Adding additional features such as call tracking or call recording<sup>1</sup>, can streamline the campaign analysis process.



## **Customized Campaign Creation and Management**

Because of YP's status as a Google AdWords Premiere SMB Partner, your YP marketing consultant can develop, build, and design a custom online and mobile search campaign for you. Program consultation, custom campaign creation, monitoring and optimization, and tracking and reporting are all included.



## **Drive Leads**

Generate calls, emails, and online form-fills by strategic placement of your ad campaign. Each option is a lead generation tool that you can test, analyze and track by logging into your account at [marketingsolutions.yp.com](http://marketingsolutions.yp.com) or the YP for Business<sup>SM</sup> app<sup>2</sup>.



## **Enjoy White Glove Service**

A dedicated marketing professional will support your business objectives during your campaign. Your marketing consultant will discuss the program and set-up, and provide performance reviews and strategy sessions.



## **Quality Leads**

Lead generation comes from premium sources including Google, YP, Yahoo!, and Bing; that diversification will help you maximize results.

1. Call recording is not available for certain business categories. Contact your YP marketing consultant for more information.

2. Currently available for iOS and Android users.



# VIII. Easily Launch Your SEM Campaign

Search engine marketing is the leading way to grow your business immediately. Are you ready to roll up your sleeves and launch an SEM campaign? Prepare to invest time and energy; the process requires excellent spreadsheet, analytic, research, optimization and writing skills backed by experience doing performance marketing, conversion, and online customer acquisition.

Fortunately, you do not need to spend hours or have the expertise to reap all the rewards associated with SEM. Instead, entrust YP with the job, so you focus on your business and work smarter, not harder.

Because of our long history and customer insights, YP knows your market and knows about your small business needs. Enjoy the benefits of customized marketing solutions from an agency with the scale of a national brand. Why wait any longer, call YP at **888.676.4614** and start generating leads today!





# Glossary

**Acquisition Marketing:**

Managing and growing customer prospects, inquiries, traffic, engagement, leads, and attention, using tools including online searches, print directories and direct phone calls.

**Bidding:**

When marketers offer a certain sum of money to pay for keywords associated with a search engine marketing campaign. The process is ongoing and along with strategy and analysis, determines paid ad placement in search results.

**Call to Action (CTA):**

A message that encourages a searcher to make a move, for example “call now.”

**Clicks:**

Selecting a search marketing advertisement by pressing a mouse, touchscreen, or another input device.

**Click-Through Rate (CTR):**

The total sum of clicks an ad receives divided by the number of times your ad is shown (clicks/impressions = CTR) and resulting in a percentage.

**Deep Linked Page:**

When a hyperlink is used to connect to a particular piece of website content other than a website’s home page.

**Dynamic Keyword Insertion (DKI):**

A technology supported by ad networks allowing SEM ads to automatically display the exact query entered by the searcher.

**Evergreen Content:**

Search engine optimized content constructed to appear fresh, engaging, or attractive in order to remain relevant to your customers.

**Geo-Targeting:**

The process of serving/showing online advertisements to an audience defined by country, state, city, ZIP code, organization, IP address, or ISP.

**Home Page:**

A website’s main page designed to welcome site visitors and deliver primary business information.

**Hyperlink:**

A dynamic connection from an online document to another location or file.

**Impression (Ad View):**

The point that an ad is seen or displayed one time.

**Keyword:**

A word or search term entered into a search engine and used as a reference point for delivering search results.

**Keyword String:**

A combination of words (i.e., Los Angeles, California pet supplies) used as a benchmark in search engines for displaying search result information.

**Landing Page:**

The web page that appears in response to clicking on online search results; it is instrumental in lead-capturing site visitor information.

**Lead Capture:**

Directing online searchers in a particular direction (i.e., form-fill) in order to gather more customer information including the reason for conducting a search.

**Long Tail Keywords:**

A combination of a range of two to five words that comprise a keyword phrase. The strategy is used to target with specificity.

**Optimization:**

Adjusting SEM parameters including keywords, messaging, and landing pages to make campaign efforts as efficient and effective as possible

**Pay-Per-Click (PPC):**

A marketing strategy that requires advertisers to pay only if a customer clicks on an ad.

**Quality Score (Quality Index):**

A non-static formula used by search engines that impact both ad rank and cost per click. Typically, ad order is determined by the equation  $\text{bid amount} \times \text{quality score} = \text{ad placement or position}$ .

**Radius Targeting:**

Creating market parameters using the customer/advertiser address as a center point to determine a specified area, or radius, for focused marketing efforts.

**Search Engine:**

A website that gathers and reports online information in response to a keyword search.

**Search Engine Marketing (SEM):**

A paid keyword marketing strategy aimed at increasing the visibility of a website in response to an entered search engine query.

**Search Engine Results Page (SERP):**

The view delivered by a search engine in response to a customer entered keyword query.

**Short Tail Keywords:**

A combination of up to two words that comprise a keyword phrase and will deliver generic search results.

# Worksheet: Search Engine Marketing for Lead Generation

Armed with the knowledge from this ebook, “Search Engine Marketing for Lead Generation,” use this worksheet to determine the scope and breadth of an SEM campaign for your small business.

## 1. Define your Objectives:

Think about what goals you are trying to achieve with your marketing strategy and write them down. Are you interested in lead generation? If so, how many leads do you want to secure? If you are using SEM to build local brand awareness, how many monthly or annual impressions matter to you? Asking these types of questions will allow you to get the most from your SEM efforts.

---

---

---

---

---

---

☐ Done

## 2. Site Selection:

Although Google and Yahoo! are popular search engines, they may not be what your customers use. Your SEM campaign should appear on the search engine that your potential customers use most often, so take the time to ask around and write down the feedback you received.

---

---

---

---

---

---

☐ Done

### 3. Keyword Selection:

What kind of phrases will your customers enter to find your business? Looking for a “plumber” is only the beginning. The odds are that customers will add parameters like, “Los Angeles plumber,” “24-hour plumber,” “commercial plumber,” or “licensed plumber.” Imagine how your customers will search for your business online and list your answers below.

---

---

---

---

---

☐ Done

### 4. Budget:

Only you know how much you are comfortable spending on marketing solutions. Begin by investigating potential costs using Google’s AdWords keyword planner. When planning this step, remember too high a bid will make your campaign inefficient while too low will equate to missed opportunities.

---

---

---

---

---

☐ Done

### 5. Target Limitations:

Unless your business is open 24/7, running your ad during your business hours of operation is the common-sense way to generate leads. If you are interested in generating leads based on country, city, ZIP code, organization, or IP, geo-targeting can enable the best results. List your target audience parameters so you can decide which customers should see your ad and when that ad will appear in search results.

---

---

---

---

---

☐ Done

## 6. Ad Copy:

Your marketing message should encourage leads to take action or point out what differentiates your business in the market. Testing ad copy will enable you to craft and refine your ad to produce the greatest results. Write your strongest selling points here.

---

---

---

---

---

☐ Done

## 7. Site and Landing Page Relevance:

A selected SEM ad will direct consumers to a website or landing page. Make sure the ad copy and site messaging synch for relevancy and accuracy. Work it out below.

---

---

---

---

---

☐ Done

Share your results with the small business marketing communities at:



Facebook.com/YPforBusiness  
Twitter.com/YPforBusiness

Ready to learn more about SEM?

Please call 888.676.4614 or visit [marketingsolutions.yp.com/win-with-search](http://marketingsolutions.yp.com/win-with-search)