



GUIDE

11 Quick Ways to Gain & Retain Clients



WordStream

Introduction

Our team is exposed to brilliant agencies and the successful AdWords, Facebook, and Bing accounts they manage every day. Of course, they also see their fair share of tomfoolery, which tends to stem from some combination of overzealous oversight and a simple lack of PPC education.



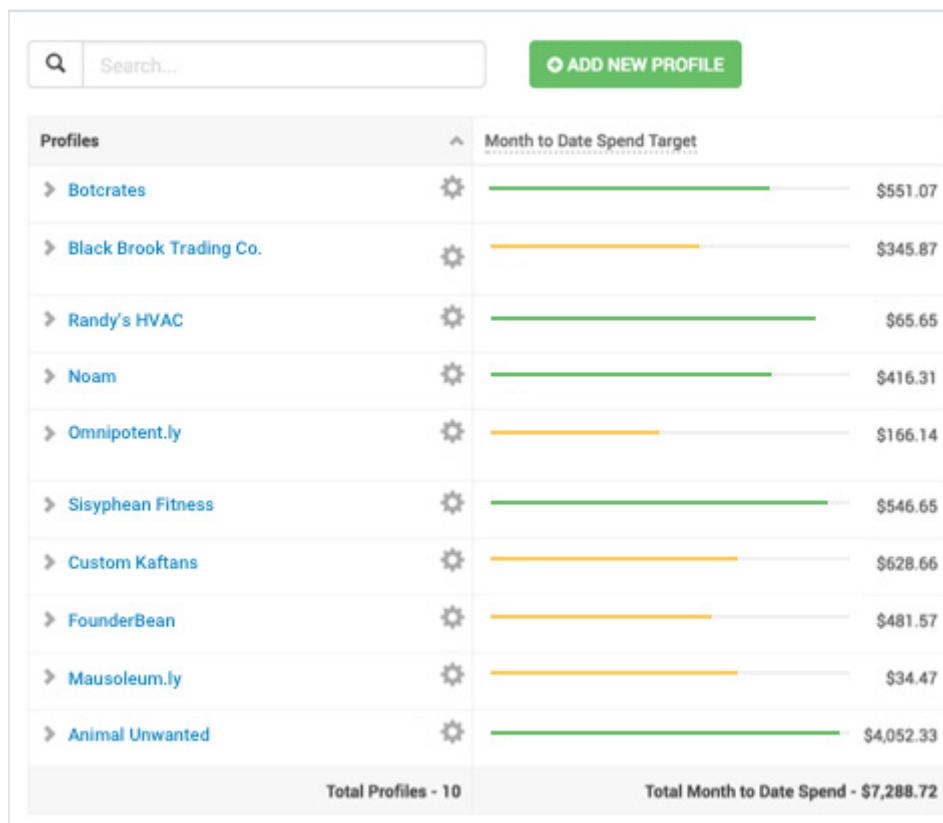
To help you avoid these pitfalls—allowing you to keep your current clients happy while you pursue new ones—we’ve pulled together a list of 11 common mistakes we see agencies make.

Some may sound ludicrous to you, others will be more like light bulbs popping on atop your head. Regardless of [where you stand](#), don’t be embarrassed to open up your MCC or Business Manager and see if you stumble upon any of the issues that follow. Doing so is a great way to identify quick wins for your existing clients so you can spend your time pitching new business.

#1: Create an Individual AdWords Account For Each Client

Managing multiple clients from the same account—no matter the platform—is ill-advised. You don’t want to be on the hook for prepaying ad spend and awaiting reimbursement: clawing that cash back can be a pain and the model scales horrendously. Unfortunately, a lot of fledgling agencies make this mistake.

They take on a rash of local businesses, build campaigns in a single AdWords account for the sake of “ease,” then begin running into a million issues. Account-level negatives and ad extensions gone awry. Billing conundrums. Dayparting disasters. And God forbid one of your clients gets hit with a suspension and it takes your whole account out of commission...



The screenshot shows a web interface for managing client profiles. At the top, there is a search bar and a green button labeled "ADD NEW PROFILE". Below this is a table with two main columns: "Profiles" and "Month to Date Spend Target". The "Profiles" column lists ten clients, each with a gear icon for settings. The "Month to Date Spend Target" column shows a progress bar for each client, with the actual spend value listed to the right. At the bottom of the table, there are two summary rows: "Total Profiles - 10" and "Total Month to Date Spend - \$7,288.72".

Profiles	Month to Date Spend Target
> Botcrates	\$551.07
> Black Brook Trading Co.	\$345.87
> Randy's HVAC	\$65.65
> Noam	\$416.31
> Omnipotent.ly	\$166.14
> Sisyphean Fitness	\$546.65
> Custom Kaftans	\$628.66
> FounderBean	\$481.57
> Mausoleum.ly	\$34.47
> Animal Unwanted	\$4,052.33
Total Profiles - 10	Total Month to Date Spend - \$7,288.72

Save yourself the headache: Use a MCC (short for “[My Client Center](#)”) account to ensure each client you manage has their own ad account. And if you’re managing accounts across multiple channels for multiple clients, you can use a third-party tool like, oh, say, ours. The WordStream Advisor Client Center allows you to track client spend and KPIs in aggregate, eliminating single-account snafus and making it easy to track budgets at scale.

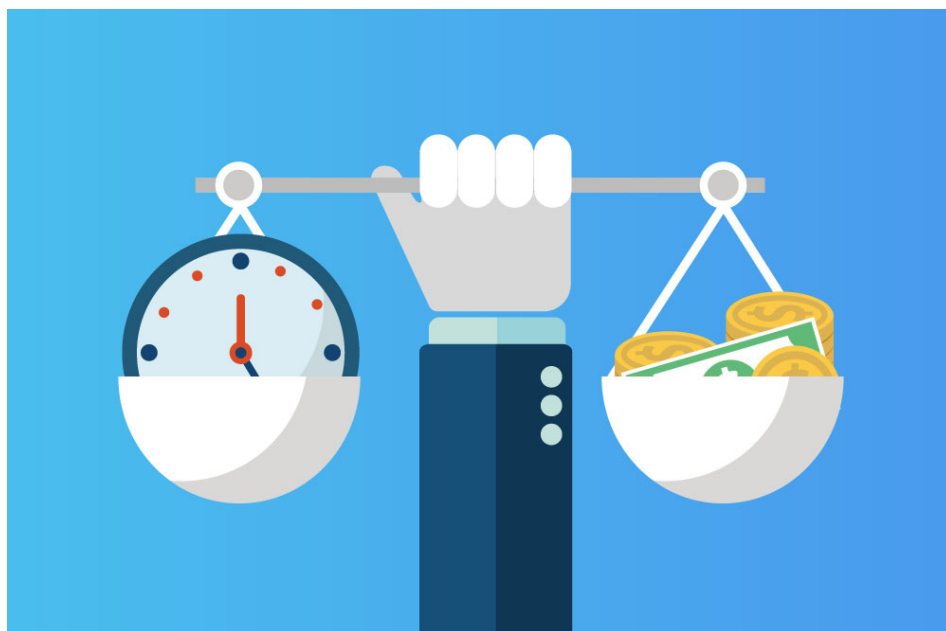
#2: Charge PPC Clients According to Their Ad Spend

Having a [pricing structure](#) that isn’t profitable is a huge problem, especially for agencies pivoting towards paid search and social from another field. Website development and SEO campaigns are time-intensive. In these niches, billable hours or a flat fee make a lot of sense.

For PPC, not so much.

In fact, over the long-haul, you can end up leaving a ton of cheddar on the table if you charge by the hour for AdWords, Facebook, and Bing account management. The work is significantly frontloaded, and too much tinkering—trying to make a living when you're paid by the hour—can even tank performance, especially when it comes to paid search. You might also charge using a results-based model, which has the potential to pay dividends or, you know, zilch.

Instead of trading your workdays for dollars or assuming unreasonable risk, you should consider charging your clients a percentage of their ad spend.



This model incentivizes client growth: the more efficient you can make a client's account, the more they'll spend, the more they'll make, the more *you* make. Since you're providing more value to the client, the percentage-of-spend model fairly compensates you while ensuring good ROI for your them. A literal win-win.

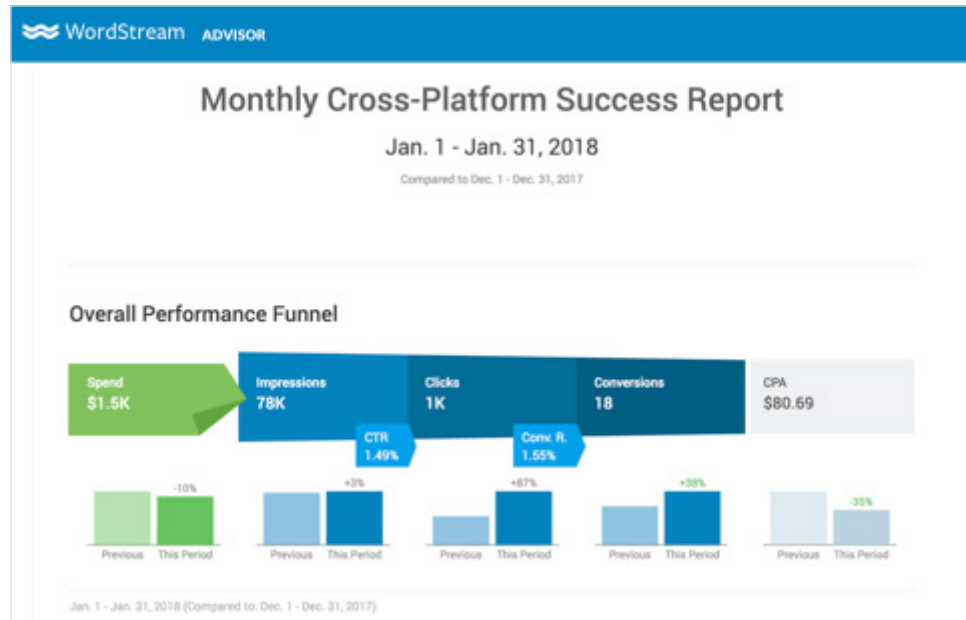
Don't *not* profit when your clients are because it only takes you 20 minutes each week to hit their goals.

#3: Spend More Time Optimizing and Less Time Reporting

Some agencies spend boatloads of time creating intricate reports, often to the detriment of account performance. In fact, according to HubSpot, "agency staffers spend around four or five hours per client each month reporting on digital." This issue is only exacerbated as your clients grow their advertising efforts onto new channels, where KPI go together like lamb and tuna fish.

This isn't to say that reporting is inherently bad.

Solid reporting that clearly conveys pacing towards your clients' goals is key to presenting your impact on their businesses and, therefore, your value. But you can achieve this through some measure of automation without wasting most of your Monday morning tweaking broken Excel formulas. That's time you could be spending helping someone grow their business (or, you know, growing your own).

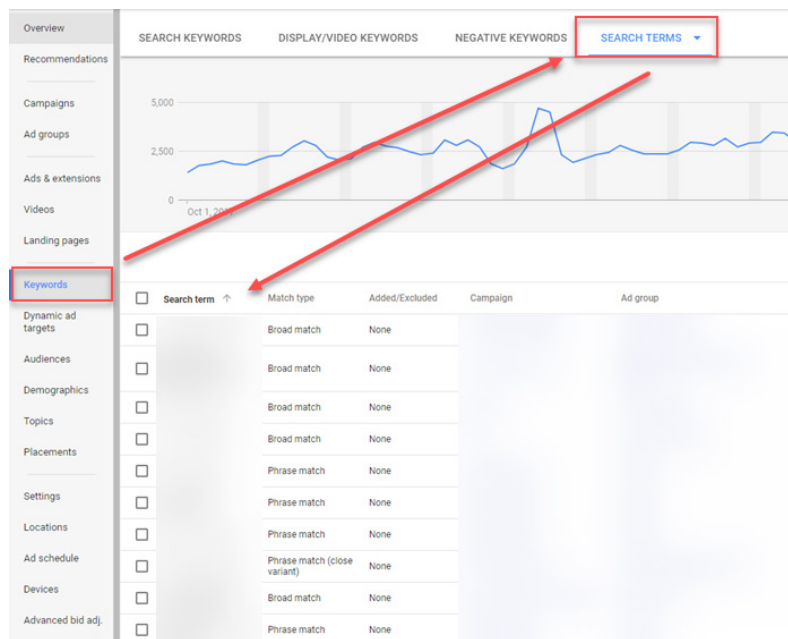


While a gyrating word cloud might be all the rage in some circles, I've never met a client who needed a heat map of their CTR segmented by hour of day and barometric pressure more than they needed a few dozen extra conversions. If you find reporting to be a major hurdle in your workweek, check out our [customizable cross-platform Success Reports](#).

#4: Make Time for Search Queries, Not Just Keywords

Keywords are the backbone of any AdWords account, but what about the queries that trigger them?

Many agencies we speak to diligently sift through their clients' keywords, adjusting bids often and synthesizing SEO research and existing account data to uncover new opportunities in PPC. This is a fantastic use of time, but shouldn't occur at the expense of diving into the Search Terms Report *at least once a week*.



The [Search Terms Report](#) is a tool in the Keywords tab in the new AdWords UI. It allows you to get an idea as to the sorts of search queries that are triggering your keywords and understand which match types are triggered by said queries (particularly important if you're leveraging a tiered bidding structure). It also lets you add negative keywords at the ad group or campaign level, or build lists of negatives that can be added to your entire account.

Don't stop looking at keywords in favor of panning for ludicrous search queries to Slack to your compatriots: fold the Search Term tab into your routine account maintenance to put a stopper in inefficiencies and uncover new opportunities for your clients.

#5: Don't Hire Before You ABSOLUTELY Have To

We get calls each month from agencies who say: "We're taking on more and more accounts. It takes hours in AdWords to manage them. We're going to hire a PPC coordinator." And in some cases, this is 100% the right move.

For most though, it's the powder keg for a fusillade of headaches and time squandered. That's why our agency team takes pride in helping you NOT hire additional staffers.

Think about it: Employees mean overhead.

Add up the costs of salary, health insurance, paid-time off, 401(k), etc. That's before you even begin to factor in training them and ramp-up time and the potential for silly mistakes that might cost your clients (a poorly placed negative here, an overeager bid adjustment there).



"But I'll hire someone experienced, someone autonomous." Great idea, but the bread you save on training will come back to bite you in salary demands. Not to mention the fact that it's shockingly difficult to hire top-notch PPC talent, even in a city like Boston.

Don't take time away from your clients to find help until you absolutely must. Software is much more affordable than a warm body and will make account management more efficient without adding headcount to your team.

#6: Take Advantage of Broad Match Modified Keywords

Casting a wide net inevitably dredges up a ton of junk.

This doesn't make doing so un-valuable; it just takes some hedging. On the Search Network, broad match keywords are the wide net, and negatives are one way to mitigate the wasted spend they incur. Regular broad match keywords are the AdWords default (because, you know, Google is an ad company).

Unfortunately, if you're not diligently checking your clients' Search Terms reports (which, as I mentioned earlier, happens), you can end up hemorrhaging budget on irrelevant clicks. Broad match modified keywords, however, offer the same catch-all utility without as much waste by affording you some modicum of control.

Broad match modifier (example)

Ads may show on searches that contain the modified term (or close variations, but not synonyms), in any order.

- Symbol: **+keyword**
- Example keyword: **+women's +hats**
- Example search: hats for women

To use BMM, simply place a plus sign (+) in front of one or more words in a broad match keyword. **The words that are preceded by a (+) sign must appear in the user's keyword phrase exactly or as a close variation.**

So, if you have a client who sells rugged, manly slippers, bidding on *+mens +slippers* instead of *mens slippers* ensures more of their budget is spent on relevant search queries (the latter would also match out to searches for slippers for women and puggles and whatnot). In addition to saving their money for high-volume, relevant(-ish) searches, BMM keywords maintain your ability to prospect for *new opportunities*.

In most cases, these opps. take the form of long-tail keywords...

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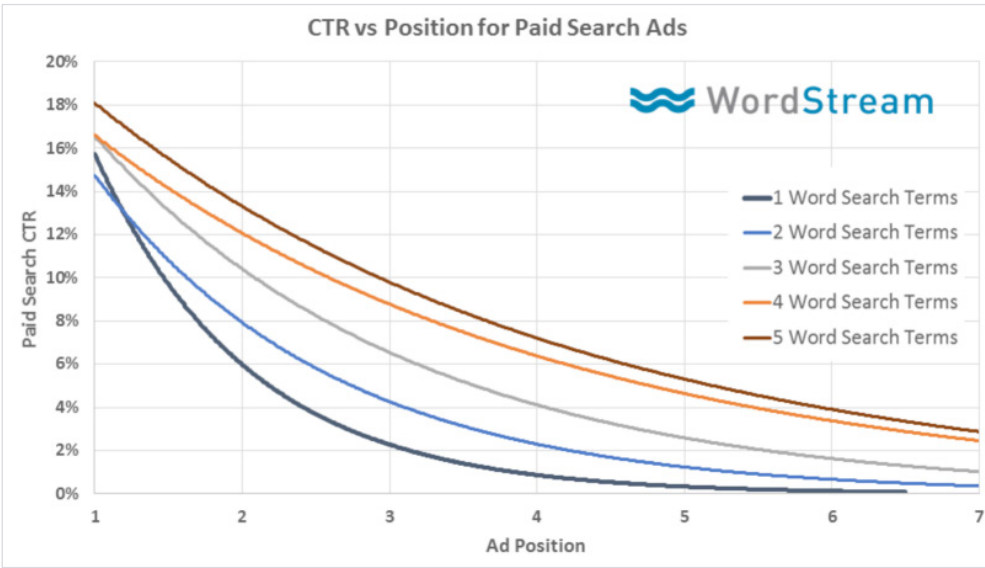
#7: Save Money and Drive Conversions With Long-Tail Keywords

Did you just scratch your head and ask yourself "what's a long-tail keyword"?

You're not the only one!

Many of the AdWords and Bing accounts we analyze tend to be comprised of mostly short-tail keywords, those with a limited number of words and high search volume. This makes them expensive. Everyone in your client's industry is bidding on those terms and most of the time, they aren't converting with much frequency; that's because these short keywords don't tend to signal much commercial intent. Competition, cost, lack of conversion? Not a recipe for success.

Long-tail keywords, however, are the backbone of every great paid search account.



These are keywords—often identified by analyzing search queries or with the help of resources like the [WordStream Free Keyword Tool](#)—made up of multiple words, often conveying some semblance of intent. This allows you to present a different offer based on what the searcher is looking for, improving the likelihood of conversion in your client's account. And because they tend to have less volume and competition, hyper-relevant long-tail keywords can **actually cost less** on a per-click basis than less-relevant short-tail keywords.

Ad group ideas		Keyword ideas			Download	Add all (802)
Search terms	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Suggested bid	Ad impr. share	Add to plan	
furniture	246,000	High	\$1.99	0%	»	
antique love seat	70	High	\$1.00	0%	»	

While uncovering and optimizing for long-tail keywords takes a fair bit of elbow grease, the returns they yield are too good to pass up.

#8: Add Facebook Advertising to Your Repertoire

Facebook is nothing like AdWords, but it's not a particularly scary place either.

It relies on audience definition in place of search intent and the [ads are infinitely prettier](#), but fundamentally it's still just a means by which to fill and nurture a sales funnel in a more effective way than can be done with bench ads and branded toothpicks. If I wanted to target you, for example, I might build an audience that looks something like this:

Detailed Targeting ⓘ INCLUDE people who match at least ONE of the following ⓘ

Interests > Business and industry > Online

Digital marketing

Add demographics, interests or behaviors | Suggestions | Browse

and MUST ALSO match at least ONE of the following ⓘ x

HubSpot

Inbound marketing

Keyword research

Landing page

Pay per click

Perry Marshall

Search engine marketing

Search engine results page

Web analytics

Web traffic

Add demographics, interests or behaviors | Suggestions | Browse

Many agencies—particularly those with a clear expertise in paid search—are hesitant to expand their services to social. Newsflash:

Offering Facebook ad management opens additional opportunities for you to bolster spend under management without taking on new clients.

If you've got a hankering to add Facebook advertising to your repertoire, here's some light reading to help you get the ball rolling:

- [The Last Guide to Facebook Ad Account Structure You'll Ever Need](#)
- [All of Facebook's Ad Targeting Options \(in One Epic Infographic\)](#)
- [Facebook Relevance Score: 4 Key Facts to Know](#)
- [The Beginner's Guide to B2B Facebook Advertising](#)
- [How to Create Amazing Facebook Audiences You Can Actually Sell To](#)

#9: Don't Forget About Clients While Chasing Prospects

Even the most devout practitioners among us, the true technical mavens, can find ourselves blinded by the allure of biz dev. After all, pitching new business is a rush.

Unfortunately, it can be all too easy to focus too much on acquiring new business and neglect your existing client base. This stalls growth entirely, and you end up burning bridges with folks who should otherwise be your agency's best evangelists.

How do you ensure that your clients are satisfied while you chase and convert prospects?

You become more efficient at doing both.



Using the power of the Pareto principle ([the 80/20 rule that governs our own 20-Minute Work Week](#)) to zero in on the activities that represent the most value to your clients and completing them with haste—and accuracy—allows you to free up enough time to research and pursue great new clients without sacrificing the ones you’ve got.

#10: Use Smart Ads Technology to Make Awesome Creative

Not everyone who can whip up a spreadsheet or track event-based conversions is a design wizard.

Unfortunately, clients don’t buy that as a viable reason to avoid the sale-generating value of Facebook and the GDN. At some point, you’ll need to create stunning image-based creative that people actually want to click.

Now, you can lean on resources like [Fiverr](#) or a doe-eyed intern on summer break, but those will only take you so far. You might also use the image-ad creation platform in the AdWords UI; while the tool has come a long way since its inception, it still sacrifices panache in the name of simplicity.

[WordStream’s Smart Ads](#)

technology, on the other hand, uses machine-learning to transform your clients’ existing website images into eye-catching Facebook, Instagram, and GDN-ready ads. By recognizing and zeroing in on the focal point of any image—a smiling parent, a burning house, a swollen 401k, etc.—Smart Ads can help you create compelling image-centric ad content for all of your clients: at scale.

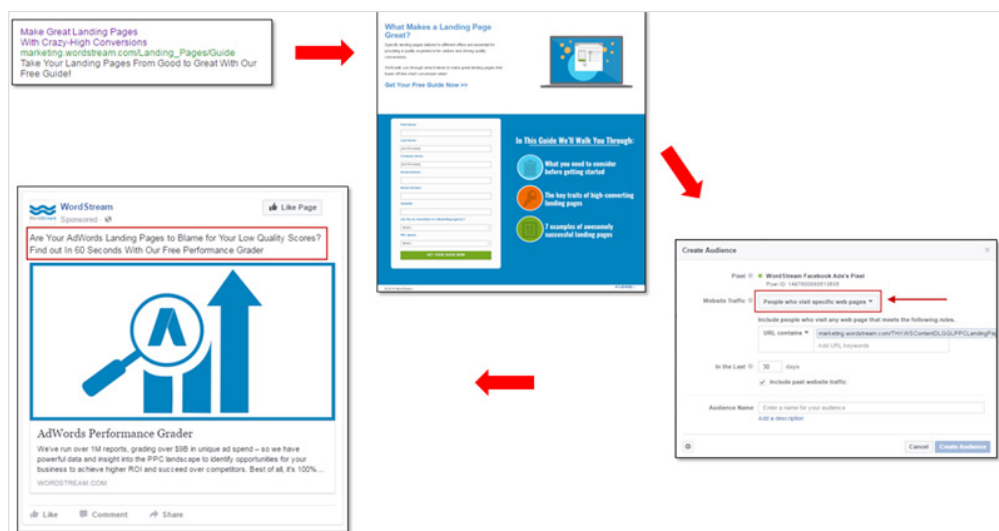
#11: Make Yourself Indispensable

The final issue we notice among online advertising agencies is going to sound counterintuitive: they lose business by doing a great job.

At a certain point, some clients decide that they can take over their own account management (usually after performance peaks and plateaus for an extended period). You obliterate CPA goals, eliminate inefficiencies, and run out of ideas to test. The client decides they can handle tweaking bids and adding negatives, so they sever ties.

In other words: *you delivered on your word, you made mounds of cash for your client, but you didn't make yourself irreplaceable.*

The easiest way to become stickier—the thing that makes tools like Salesforce so indispensable—is to bake yourself into the very fabric of your client's business model. You need to stop managing standalone marketing channels and start developing and executing on cohesive, cross-platform growth strategies.



This means taking what you learn in AdWords to inform Facebook audience creation, using RLSA to reach top of funnel prospects first touched on Instagram later in the sales cycle: Basically, aligning goals between search and social by understanding the relationship between audience and intent for each of your clients.

Do that, and your agency becomes utterly indispensable.

About WordStream Advisor for Agencies

WordStream Advisor for Agencies helps you get more done in less time, driving better results for your clients and your business. It gives you the tools you need to optimize your clients' paid search and social advertising campaigns in just 20 minutes per week. Smart tools and weekly alerts save time and money, and visually stunning reporting makes it easy to show your clients how much you're doing for them. Learn more [here](#).

ABOUT WORDSTREAM

WordStream, Inc. provides software and services that help marketers get the maximum results from their online marketing efforts. WordStream's easy-to-use software allows for more effective paid search and social campaigns with the 20-Minute Work Week, a customized workflow that guides marketers through steps that can greatly improve their AdWords, Bing, Yahoo, and Facebook campaigns, plus tools for call tracking, keyword optimization, and more. WordStream also offers an award-winning free PPC tool, the AdWords Performance Grader, which evaluates users' Google AdWords accounts and provides valuable tips for improvement. WordStream is a Google Premier Partner.

INCREASE EFFICIENCY, GROW YOUR AGENCY

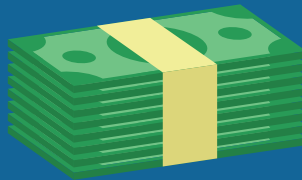
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