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United Airlines Case Study



Company Background

United Airlines is one of the world's largest airlines. United Airlines and United Express operate more than 4,500 flights a day to 339 airports across five continents. United is part of United Continental Holdings (UAL).

Challenge

United Airlines sought to increase visibility and fuel revenue growth in a cost-effective manner. The company had hired a new internal team to revamp its e-Commerce and online marketing. The team recommended that United find an expert agency partner to develop and execute an effective paid search strategy. United retained True Interactive to manage all of United's paid search programs. True Interactive's history of improving paid search effectiveness was a major factor in the decision.

Solution

- Conducted a thorough analysis of United's paid search campaign structure to identify inefficiencies and gaps in keywords that United was incorporating into paid search.
- Established goals for branded and non-branded campaigns (without the word "United") to measure program effectiveness using profitability metrics and historical online marketing data.
- Identified the most appropriate keywords for paid search campaigns specific to United's top originations and destinations, thus addressing previous keyword gaps identified in our audit.
- Developed new campaigns, landing pages, and ad copy to align United's online ad spend and page copy with crucial keywords, such as for popular routes that customers requested.
- Launched site links to solidify branded ads and help direct customers to the core pages and functions within United's site.
- Streamlined and customized the user experience, reducing the clicks required to visit the United Site and book a flight after viewing an online ad.
- Initiated mobile campaigns targeting business travelers using smartphones – a segment crucial to United.

Results

United's revenue increased steadily during each of the first 12 months after True Interactive launched the revised campaigns. In the first six months of the program, click through rates improved by 88%, cost per clicks dropped 75%, and cost per order improved by 200%. The success of campaigns using non-branded terms was one of the greatest success stories of the business relationship. United exceeded its return-on-ad spend goals by 100% and greatly exceeded initial revenue projections.

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