

The Essential Handbook To Google Search Ads

2020 Edition



STAGE3

Whether you manage a small startup or a global organisation, perfecting your Google Search Ad strategy is an essential ingredient in the recipe for modern marketing success.

Even the most inexperienced marketer or business owner will have heard the term Google Ads (formerly Google AdWords) during their research. With a deeper understanding of the platform and how to unlock its true potential, your entire marketing strategy can be transformed with immediate and lasting results. Our handbook to Google Search Ads will teach you everything about starting, managing, and modifying your Search campaigns to achieve epic results!

The road to effective marketing starts here.

Why Google Ads Is Good For Your Business

Firstly, let's quickly talk through why you would look at Google Ads in your channel mix. Google Ads are a proven way to maximise your online conversions. According to Google, on average you will generate \$2 for every dollar you spend! Some other key stats:

- Google receives 3.5 billion searches a day!
- People who click on an ad are 50% more likely to become a customer
- Search ads can increase brand awareness by 80%

The beauty of Google Ads is that they will bring in targeted web traffic straight to your website. The nature of Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising means that you only pay for the clicks you get. So, if nobody clicks the ads, then you don't pay a cent!

If there are people searching for your product or service, then Google Search Ads are a great place to start!

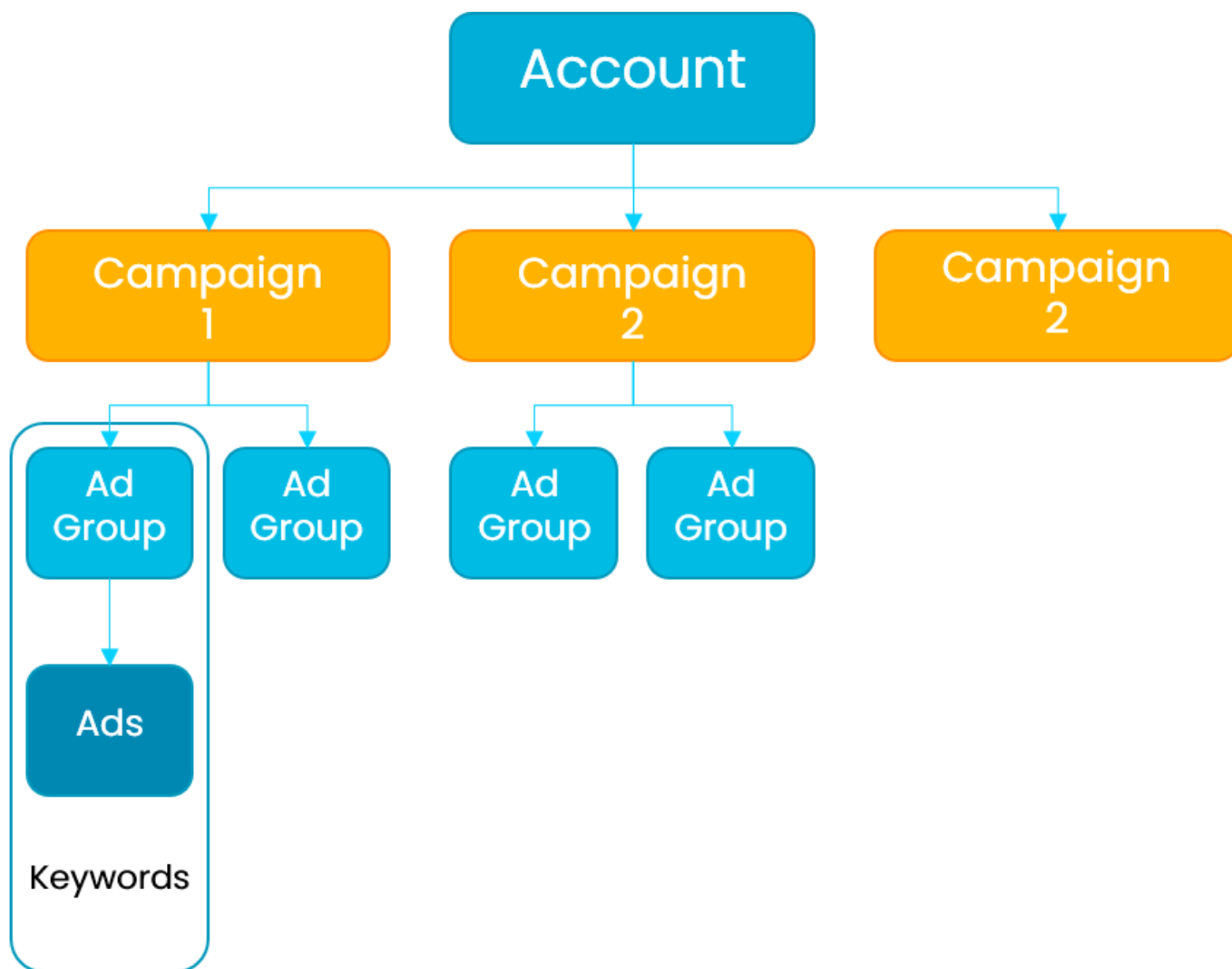
Before We Get Started

There are a few things we need to cover before we set up and run an effective Google Ads Search Campaign.

The first of these is how the Google Ads platform is structured, so when we go through and create a campaign, you know where we are up to in the process.

Account Hierarchy

The Google Ads platform is broken down into four tiers:



Account

This is as it sounds. Your account. Things like billing, Google Analytics linking, time zones (which are important), profile sharing with [legendary agency experts](#) and general account administration.

Best practice is to only have one account per business/entity as it can get confusing if you are running a multi-site retail chain, so in this case you could look at splitting it out.

Campaigns

This is where you can start defining some of the specifics around the campaign itself. Information around the location, budget, scheduling, devices, goals and ad extensions. We'll go over these settings in more detail when we create a campaign.

As a result of the different types of options, there are several ways to determine what the campaign should be. But it is important to maintain some sort of consistency with the naming convention. Imagine looking in an ad account and seeing:

- Campaign 1
- Jan Campaign

Not a lot of useful information to go on when it comes to reporting.

Ad Groups

Ad Groups are where we start to determine the keywords and the ads themselves. Google also gives us an option to create standard or dynamic ad groups. Standard groups can only contain text ads, call-only ads and keywords, whereas dynamic ad groups can only contain Dynamic Search Ads and dynamic ad targets.

When thinking about Ad Group set up, the most important thing to consider is the theme. As all Ads within the Ad Group will be shown for the Keywords listed in the Ad Group, so it just makes sense to have them grouped.

A Word On The Google Auction

As it sounds, every time someone does a search, there is a real-time auction to see whose ad is presented at the top of the search results. A number of factors can influence the order, the most obvious is how much you are willing to bid. But that's not that only factor. Things like how relevant your ad is to the query has a huge impact.

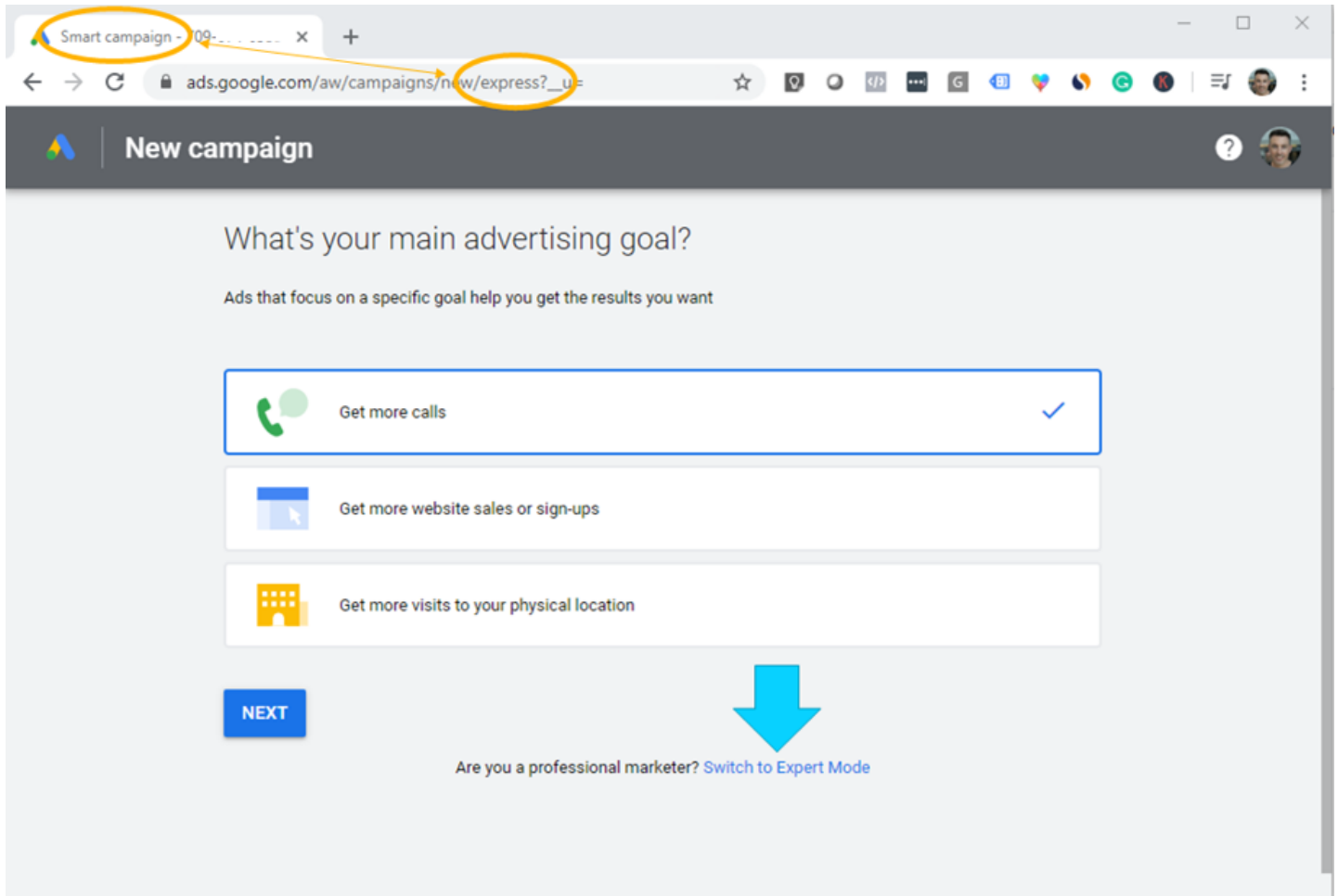
Same with how relevant the landing page is. If Google sees everyone bouncing off your page after clicking an ad, they will assume your page isn't giving the searcher what they wanted and make it harder for your ad to be presented.

Set Up A Google Ads Account

Before you can run your first [Google Ads](#) campaign, you must first sign up for a Google Ads account. Before you can set up a Google Ads account, you must first have a Google account (I.e. a Gmail account). This will provide the log-in credentials that verify who you are and present the user interface and data relating to your campaigns.

Once you are signed into your Google account, head over to ads.google.com and hit the Start Now button and then **STOP!!**

Google will automatically set you up through an express version and will present you with a screen to set up a Smart Campaign. See below image of how you can tell you are about to run a smart campaign (in orange) and the what you should be doing instead (blue arrow):



Smart Campaign (Express) Versus Expert Mode

Smart Google Ads Campaigns

Google Ads Smart Campaigns (previously Adwords Express) offers a quick and easy solution for people that aren't naturally great with technology or feel unfamiliar with launching a campaign. The Express platform limits you to text-based adverts, but they can still be displayed across multiple channels including the Google Search, Google Maps, and Display Network.

The ads can be displayed on mobile screens where they also offer a great solution to provide key business information (contact details, social media links, etc.) when you don't have a website. Campaign maintenance is minimal too, especially as Google uses automated management to help your ads and budget work harder.

The cons are many:

- You don't have as much data, and to be successful in today's marketing landscape, you need to take a data driven approach to optimising advertising
- We will get into this later, but Keyword match-types and even Negative Keywords are not options
- You don't get to decide on placements. Less of an issue for search
- Just less control. Google decides when, where and how much you spend (for which they are the beneficiary)

Expert Mode Google Ads Campaigns

Standard Google Ads are a more advanced program and do require a little more time and effort. It's still relatively simple, though, and gives you a far greater sense of control. You even get to write your own ad!

The expert set up lets you choose the networks that your ads will be shown on. It also enables your own choice of keywords, set prices, and structure.

Which Should You Chose?

Expert Mode. Always. Whilst a Smart campaign will get you up and running faster, you have less control over what search terms your ad is presented to, and as a result, you'll burn through your ad spend budget.

For the rest of this guide, we will be using Expert Mode.

In order to complete the setup of your Google Ads Account, you will need to create a new Campaign.

Set Up A Google Ads Search Campaign

Introducing NextBank

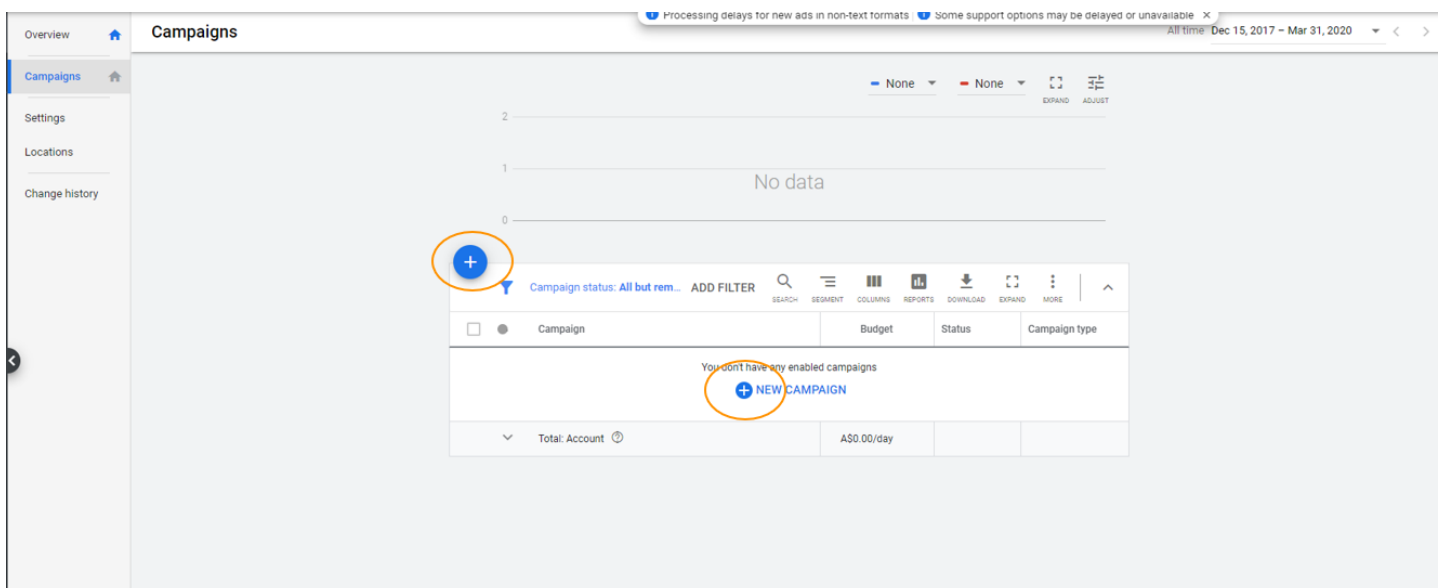
To help make this more real, we are going to create a real campaign for a fake client, NextBank (which Bank will be your NextBank 😊).

NextBank are like normal Banks and have a range of products and services available to their customers. From deposit accounts, savings accounts, credit cards and more.

When creating your campaign, see what similarities you have with NextBank and where some differences lie. You will need to adjust the process for your needs (i.e. don't blindly follow this).

Add Campaign

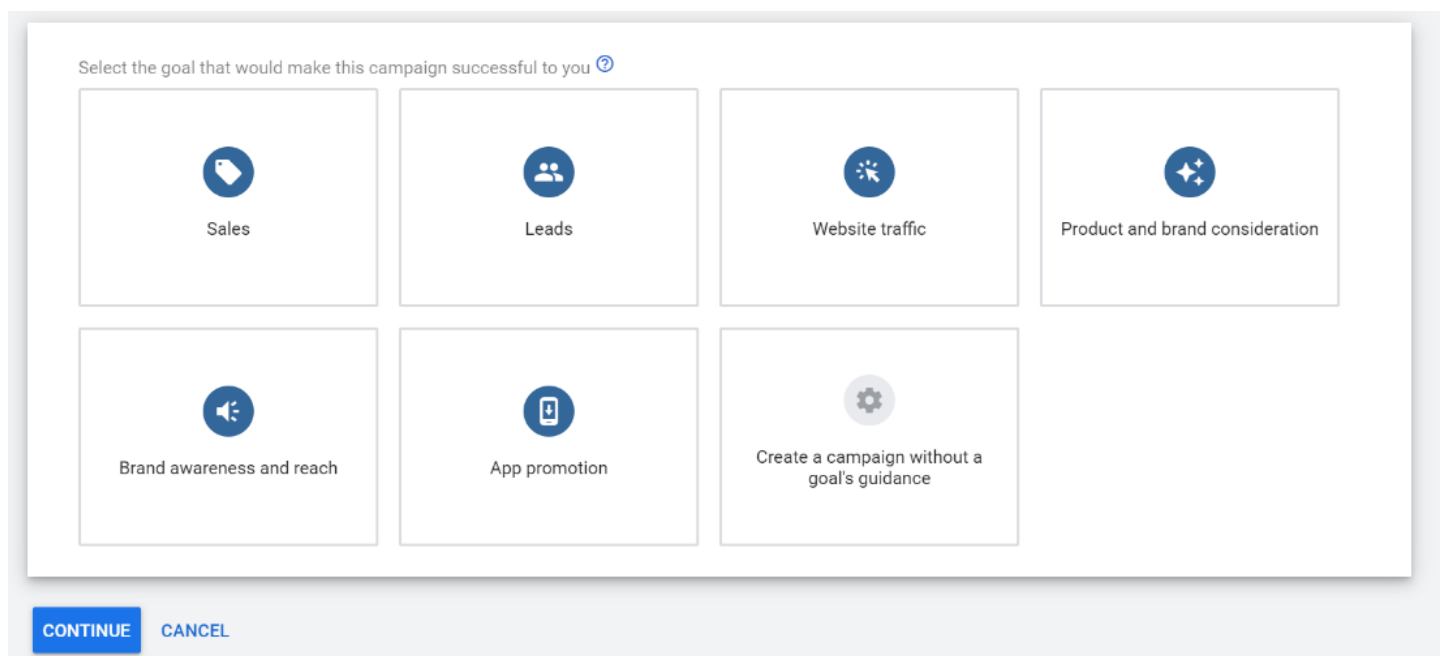
If you had an account already, hit the + symbol under campaigns:



Whether you are following along and created a new account (and hit Expert Mode) or hit the + on your existing account, the next step is to set the objective and campaign type.

Objective & Campaign Type

After navigating to the new campaign, the first pop-up window relates to the Objectives of the campaign. As is the case with other forms of marketing, not all ads will be designed to achieve the same goals. As each goal is accomplished through different means, each of the objectives has its own set of campaign types, bidding strategies and optimisation strategies available:



Select the goal that would make this campaign successful to you ?

 Sales	 Leads	 Website traffic	 Product and brand consideration
 Brand awareness and reach	 App promotion	 Create a campaign without a goal's guidance	

CONTINUE CANCEL

In the below table, we break down the Goals, what they are good for and the types of campaigns that are relevant for, as well as where in the sales funnel they are best used for:

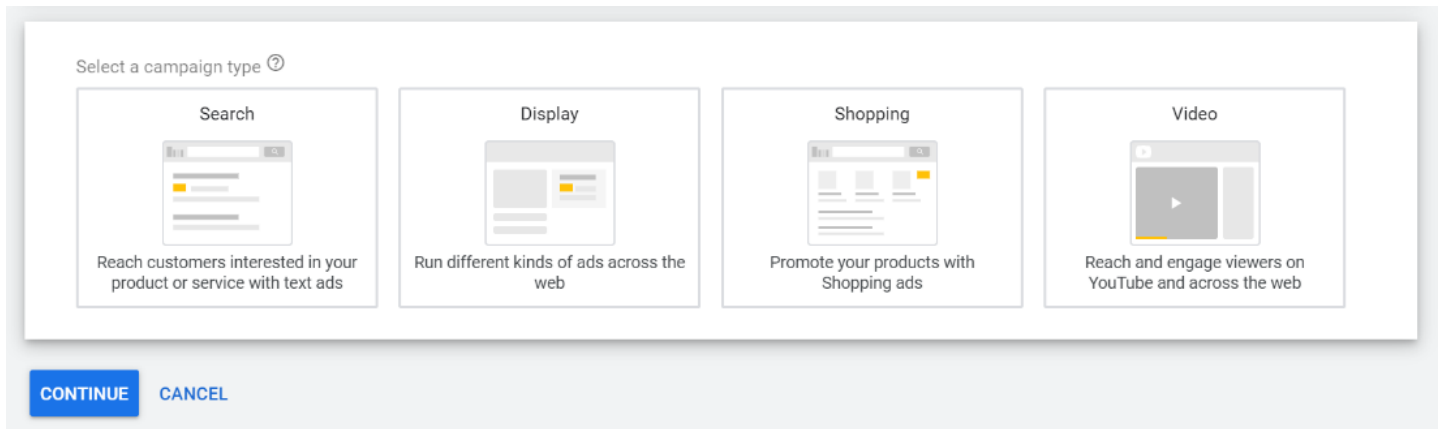
Goal Options	Types of Campaigns	Place in the Funnel / Level of Awareness
Sales Campaigns are optimised around a sales conversion event. Need to ensure adequate conversion tracking is in place to get the most from Sales campaigns. Particularly useful for product-based companies	• Search • Display • Shopping • Video • Smart	Non-Branded Search • Middle of Funnel • Solution & Product Aware Branded • Bottom of Funnel • Most Aware
Leads Campaigns are optimised around generating leads. Again, need the appropriate tracking in place (onsite, call tracking etc.) Great for service-based businesses where a person needs to walk the potential client through a sales cycle	• Search • Display • Shopping • Video • Smart	Non-Branded Search • Middle of Funnel • Solution & Product Aware Branded Search • Bottom of Funnel • Most Aware
Web Traffic Campaigns will be optimised for click-throughs to get more people on the site. Great if you have a conversion focused landing page as well as a remarketing strategy. Can also optimise for lead form submissions.	• Search • Display • Shopping • Video	Non-Branded Search • Middle of Funnel • Solution & Product Aware Branded • Bottom of Funnel • Most Aware
Product & Brand Consideration Optimises for ad engagement and uses a Cost Per Engagement bid-strategy.	• Display • Video	• Top of Funnel
Brand Awareness & Reach Very high-level advertising and focuses on getting ad impressions and getting the most exposure for the ads as possible. Still able to optimise for middle of the funnel lead form submissions.	• Display • Video	• Top of Funnel
App Promotion These are for getting more app downloads and app engagements. Depending on the type of app it is, will depend on how it is used.	• App	• Full Funnel
Create Campaign without a goal	• Search • Display • Shopping • Video • Smart	• Could be anything you want

For NextBank, we are going to run a **Web Traffic** campaign to get as many people on to our site as possible.

The next window will allow you to choose the type of ad campaign you want to run. As in the above table, our options are:

- Search (text ads that appear on the SERPs, for example),
- Display (includes banners as well as text ads),

- Shopping (direct links to promote products as seen on the search results page),
- Video (integrated and interactive videos that are shown on desktop or web).



As this is an [Essential Handbook](#) for Google Search Ads, we are obviously going to run **Search Ads**.

We are now prompted to select the ways in which we would like to reach our goal, which we only have 1... visiting the website:

Select the ways you'd like to reach your goal ?

www.nextbank.com.au

Next, we are prompted to create a conversion action. For this, we will need to install some code on our website via two options:

✓ Your conversion action has been created for your account: [Website traffic](#)

i To start tracking conversions, you'll need to install the tracking code on your website.

Instructions for finishing tracking setup after creating your campaign was sent to duncan.b.currie@gmail.com. To send instructions to someone else or to add tracking code yourself, click "installation options."

^ Installation options



Email instructions to your webmaster



Install tracking code yourself

As this isn't an Essential Handbook in Google Analytics, we'll quickly cover the 'Install tracking code yourself' and assumes you know how to install tags. If not, check out our [Video Series](#) on Getting Technical.

For now, all we need to know is that we take the Event Code and add it to the completion page. For NextBank, this is a form pop-up that after you enter in your details, a screen appears with:

No obligations. No credit card info.

Thank you! Your submission has been received!

That's our completion page, and where the conversion snippet is added.

General Settings

The next screen that we are presented with is where we will name the campaign as well as look at expanding where the campaign will be shown.

The screenshot shows the 'General settings' page for a Google Ads campaign. At the top, it displays 'Type: Search' and 'Goal: Website traffic'. Below this is the 'Campaign name' field, which contains 'Apr1-Traffic-Cold-CrediCard'. The 'Networks' section is expanded, showing options for 'Search Network' and 'Display Network'. Both networks have checkboxes to 'Include Google search partners' and 'Include Google Display Network', respectively. At the bottom, there are three expandable sections: 'Start and end dates' (Start date: April 1, 2020; End date: Not set), 'Campaign URL options' (No options set), and 'Dynamic Search Ads setting' (Get automated search targeting and customized ad headlines based on your website).

General settings

Type: Search Goal: Website traffic

Campaign name Apr1-Traffic-Cold-CrediCard

Networks

Search Network

Ads can appear near Google Search results and other Google sites when people search for terms that are relevant to your keywords

☐ Include Google search partners

Most advertisers include their ads on Google search partner sites

Display Network

Expand your reach by showing ads to relevant customers as they browse sites, videos, and apps across the Internet

☐ Include Google Display Network

Don't miss the opportunity to reach more people across 3 million sites and apps

Hide more settings

Start and end dates Start date: April 1, 2020 End date: Not set

Campaign URL options No options set

Dynamic Search Ads setting Get automated search targeting and customized ad headlines based on your website

For the name, we use a name generator for both [Google Ads](#) and [Paid Social](#) Ads to keep things as consistent as they can be, and for this campaign, it is:

Apr1-Traffic-Cold-CreditCard

Date-Objective-Traffic Temperature-Product (this one has a little wiggle room depending on what we are doing)

Network Settings

The Network Settings feature is the first item to consider. This dictates where your ad campaigns will be shown.

Search Network– Google has several different ways to get your ad in front of people, outside of the Google site. If you check the box, the ad can appear in other sites when people search for things relevant to your keyword. Great for brand awareness campaigns. For our NextBank Credit Card campaign, we are going to de-select it so we know our ads will be focused on Google and micro-manage the settings.

Display Network– similarly, Google can take your ad text and stick it in third party websites. You don't have much control as to where these are displayed, or even any insights as to where they have been displayed. Again, not a bad tactic to test if you are wanting to increase brand awareness, but for NextBank, we'll de-select it.

Campaign Dates

Self-explanatory. If the campaign is over a specific time period, this is where we would define this.

Campaign URL Options

This is very much in the analytics side, so for now, we will leave this section blank.

Dynamic Search Ads

Google is getting pretty smart. This option has Google crawl your site and determine the targeting and even headlines based on your website. Way too much control by Google for my liking, particularly with a complex account like NextBank, so again, we'll leave this blank.

Targeting and Audiences

Location Settings

As well as deciding where adverts should appear in relation to the digital arena, you can set the geographical parameters via the Location Settings. There are several options at our disposal, such as;

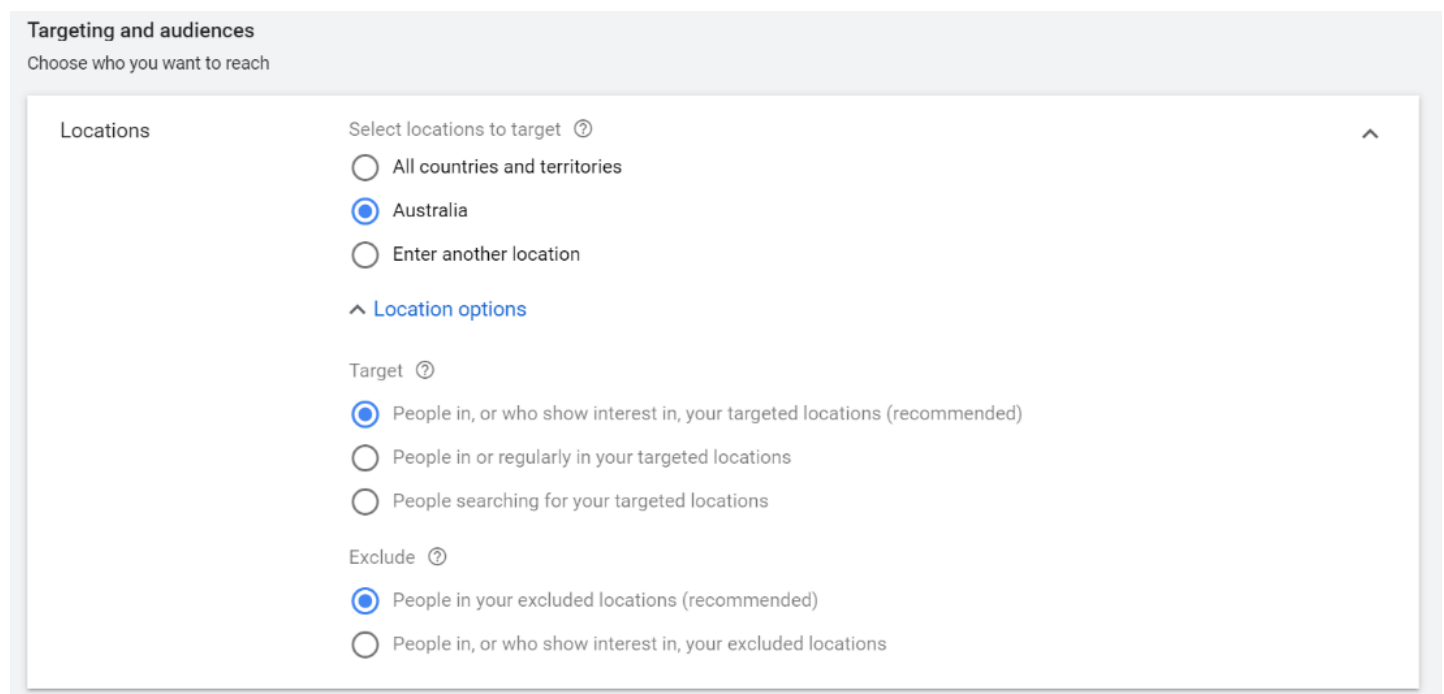
All countries and territories – for uninterrupted universal coverage.

Country – either your country or a specific territory overseas, it's up to you.

Enter another location – you can set a city, state, county, or region.

Alternatively, if you click the Advanced Search button, you can also set the radius of your reach. For example, this could mean using a 10km radius around your brick and mortar store. We love this feature for geographically bound businesses, and you can do some pretty cool things around exclusions as well.

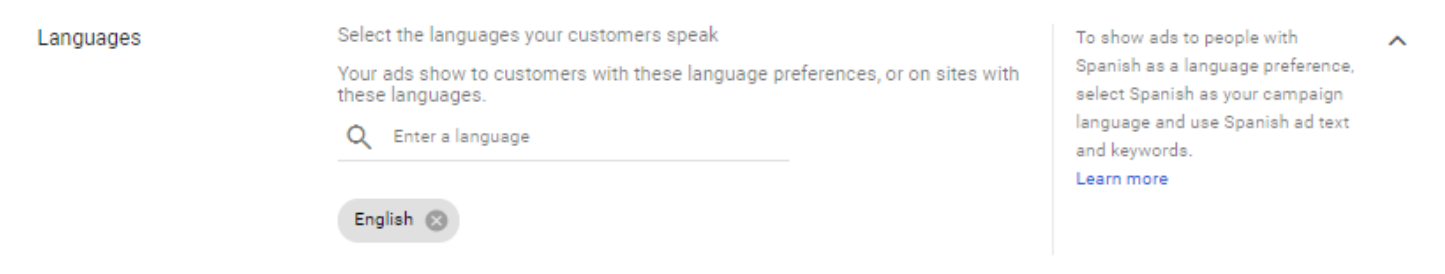
For NextBank, we are going to push this nationally and keep Google's default Target and Exclusion settings.



The screenshot displays the 'Targeting and audiences' section of the Google Ads interface. At the top, it says 'Choose who you want to reach'. Below this, there's a 'Locations' section with the heading 'Select locations to target'. Three radio button options are listed: 'All countries and territories', 'Australia' (which is selected), and 'Enter another location'. Below these options is a link that says '^ Location options'. Further down, there's a 'Target' section with three radio button options: 'People in, or who show interest in, your targeted locations (recommended)' (selected), 'People in or regularly in your targeted locations', and 'People searching for your targeted locations'. At the bottom, there's an 'Exclude' section with two radio button options: 'People in your excluded locations (recommended)' (selected) and 'People in, or who show interest in, your excluded locations'.

Languages

Pretty easy for us on this one but think of places like Canada where a large population speaks French and you wanted to target them specifically in French.



Define Your Audience

The great advantage of online marketing is that it enables you to target a very specific target audience, giving you the best chance of reducing wasted adverts and focusing on the audiences that matter. Aside from boosting conversions and efficiency, it prevents data from becoming skewed by outside audiences, allowing you to make calculated data-driven choices.

The types of audiences which you can add at this stage are:

Affinity Audiences – what people are interested in and their habits

In-market Audiences – these guys are actively researching or planning around the topic

We will be going deep into Audiences at another time, but for now, we will do a simple search on 'Credit Cards' to get people who are actively in-market for the product.

Audiences

Select audiences to add to your campaign. You can create new audiences in [Audience Manager](#).

SEARCH

IDEAS (14)

BROWSE

3 selected

CLEAR ALL

credit card

What they are actively researching or planning (16)

In-market audiences

Credit Cards

In-market audiences

Personal Loans

In-market audiences

Payment Processing & Merchant Services

In-market audiences

Credit & Lending

In-market audiences

Debit & Checking Services

In-market audiences

Auto Loans

In-market audiences

Financial Services > Credit & Lending

Personal Loans

Financial Services

Credit & Lending

Financial Services > Credit & Lending

Credit Cards

Audiences targeting setting for this campaign

Targeting

formerly "Target and bid"

Narrow the reach of your campaign to the selected audiences, with the option to adjust the bids

Observation (recommended)

formerly "Bid only"

Don't narrow the reach of your campaign, with the option to adjust the bids on the selected audiences

We've selected options covering Credit Cards, Personal Loans, and Credit & Lending. This is one time where we will stick with Google's suggestion and just have it on Observation. This is a good way to determine if an in-market audience converts better than a targeted audience. If it does, in future campaigns we might want to look at focusing in on only those that Google thinks are in-market based off their browser and search history.

Budget and Bidding

Budget

The whole purpose of using Google Ads (or any form of marketing for that matter) is to boost the bottom line. So a strategy that does not consider the financial elements will struggle to achieve the desired outcomes.

There are a lot of ways to determine the likely spend on Google Ads, but it will typically start with a top-down approach. Either how many sales you want to achieve, or the more likely how much we can invest in ads. Then, once we start getting data through, we are able to perform some detailed targets for Return On Ad Spend (ROAS), Return On Investment (ROI) etc.

At [Stage3](#), we like to focus on Cost Per Conversion along with Cost Per Acquisition with an eye to Lifetime Customer Value, but that is a story for another day.

NextBank are wanting to generate 100 new Credit Card customers a month, and because they are a long-standing client, we have some performance metrics that we can apply to this campaign:

Conversion Rate – of the customers we send through to NextBank's site, they convert 5% of these (100 visitors = 5 clients)

Cost Per Conversion – previous campaigns are around the \$100 per conversion mark.

You might think this is high, but their Lifetime Customer Value is \$1000. There are some other costs that get added into the mix for Cost Per Acquisition, such as application processing costs etc., but we'll be targeting the \$100 mark for this campaign.

As they want to get 100 new customers a month, at a \$100 per conversion, they'll need to be investing \$10,000 per month. Assuming 30 days per month, we'll be rolling with a \$333.33 daily budget.

Now its important to note that this is only the average. Google may spend more than this on somedays (never more than double the daily average) and less on other days. Over the course of the month, though, you'll never surpass the Average Budget x Days figure.

Bidding

Although it may seem a little mysterious, when you set your bidding strategy, you are telling Google what you want to be optimising for. Because there are going be a few auctions throughout the day for your keywords, they try and present your ad to a person that is likely to perform the action you are focusing on.

There are several options, which are based on the goal you set at the Campaign level. Some key strategies to look at are:

Cost Per Acquisition – the CPA-focused strategy means that your campaign is being optimised based on the average cost per acquisition.

Return On Ad Spend – $\text{Sales} \div \text{ad spend} = \text{ROAS}$. [Sophisticated campaign managers](#) use this type of bidding where the expected return is known. Particularly relevant in ecomm or digital products where the ability to scale spend and return is not limited.

Maximise Conversions – the simplicity of the strategy makes it a very appealing prospect for everyone. You set a daily budget, and Google's automated bidding service will bid in a manner that gains maximum conversions (desired actions that will hopefully lead to sales).

Enhanced Cost Per Click – the EHCPK strategy uses smart bid to increase or decrease bids based on whether the click is likely to bring a sale. This helps optimise your budget efficiency but does mean you may miss out on some keywords and placements.

Maximise Clicks – the method is designed to bring the most traffic to your site. In theory, more clicks should mean more sales, especially coming from the target demographic. Particularly useful when used alongside a remarketing program.

Manual CPC – the manual approach to CPC means setting bids for different ad groups or placements. You might not always gain the best optimisation, but you can adjust the budgets to focus on the most effective campaigns in a very responsive manner.

Target Search Page Location – the TSPL-focused method is one that allows you to focus on where the ad is presented on the results page, even in the top 4 places.

Target Outranking Share – the automated bidding tactic lets you choose a competitor site and ensure that your budget is used to outrank it. The positives are pretty clear. However, bid costs can be more expensive.

Cost Per Thousand Impressions – the CPM is based solely on the impressions. It is one of the oldest options and can work out as the cheapest too. If you have a good Click Through Rate, this can be a great option.

Cost Per View Bidding – the CPV approach is probably most similar to CPC but is focused solely on video ads. Views are determined by how long someone watches the video. Given the high engagement levels, this can work out very well. However, some users will quit before seeing the whole message.

As we selected our goal at the campaign as **Web Traffic**, we are only presented with Conversions; Conversion Value; Clicks or Impression Share (we can add in others, but it defeats the purpose of selecting Web Traffic as the goal). As we want to get a specific number of cards sold, we will focus on Conversions. And as we know the typical Cost Per Conversion is \$100, we will also set a target cost per action.

Bidding

What do you want to focus on? ⓘ

Conversions ▾

Recommended for your campaign

☒ Set a target cost per action

Target CPA ⓘ

A\$ 100.00

✓ This campaign will use the **Target CPA** bid strategy to help you get the most conversions at or below your target cost per action

[Or, select a bid strategy directly \(not recommended\)](#)

Ad Extensions

Have you ever wondered why some ads take up more space than others? Chances are, they are using Ad Extensions. Below, we can see Coles have used extensions to create a larger ad and provide more options for the searcher to look at:

Ad • financialservices.coles.com.au/Coles/Credit_Card ▾

Coles Credit Cards | A faster way to fly

Collect faster flybuys points and transfer to Velocity points to fly faster. T&Cs apply. Apply for a **Card** Today. Response in 60 Seconds. Earn flybuys Points. 55 Days Interest Free.

\$10 Off Your Groceries

Redeem 2,000 flybuys Points & Get \$10 Off a Coles Supermarket Shop.

Coles Rewards Mastercard

Transfer Your flybuys Points To Velocity Points*. T&C's Apply.

Ad • www.bankwest.com.au/ ▾

Bankwest Credit Card | Choose From 4 Card Types

Compare Our **Cards** & Choose A **Card** That Suits Your Needs. T&Cs Apply. Find Out More. Apply online today. Limited time offer. Get payment reminders. \$0 worldwide replacement. Save on FX fees. Types: No Annual Fee, Rewards, Frequent Flyer, Balance Transfer.

[Rewards Credit Card](#) · [Low Rate Card](#) · [Bankwest Easy Alerts](#) · [Bankwest with Apple Pay](#)

📍 [Glen Waverley](#) · 6 locations nearby

We can also see that BankWest is also using site link extensions, but as they are in the number two spot, only their Site Link text is visible.

There seven different types of extensions, but for this campaign, we only have the ability to create three (once our initial campaign is launched, we can add in more):

Sitelink extensions – they are URLs to additional pages on your website. In most cases, this will be links to service pages and contact pages. They appear in blue underneath the main advert and allow you to showcase a far greater range of what you do (as above).

Callout extensions – they sit between the main ad description and the sitelink extensions. While they aren't hyperlinked to webpages, they can provide the user with further details about your greatest USPs. This could include information about certifications, location, or services.

Call extensions – they are simply your phone number. Given that mobile traffic now outweighs desktop traffic, this can have a telling influence on leads. Besides, calls bring far more closed deals than web clicks.

We'll start with the Site Link extensions, and as we are going to do product level Ad Groups, we will keep the extensions general in nature:

Sitelink extensions

Select and create campaign-level sitelink extensions

Add at least 2 sitelink extensions

Add new sitelink extension

Sitelink 1

Sitelink text

Zero Liability Guarantee

24 / 25

Description line 1 (recommended)

No out of pocket expense

?

24 / 35

Description line 2 (recommended)

if fraud was to happen

Final URL

22 / 35

<https://www.nextbank.com.au/zeroliability>

?

Sitelink 2

Sitelink text

Award Winning App

17 / 25

Description line 1 (recommended)

Manage you card on the go

?

25 / 35

Description line 2 (recommended)

Canstar 5 star rated app

Final URL

24 / 35

<https://www.nextbank.com.au/mobile app>

?

On to Call Outs, and again, as these are campaign level call outs, we'll keep them generic and valuable for the potential customer:

Callout extensions

Select and create campaign-level callout extensions

Add at least 2 callout extensions

Search		3 selected	CLEAR ALL
☒ 3 callout extensions		COVID-19 Free	X
☒ Bank Of The Year 2021		Bank Of The Year 2021	X
☒ COVID-19 Free		Highest Customer Rating	X
☒ Highest Customer Rating			
+ NEW CALLOUT EXTENSION			

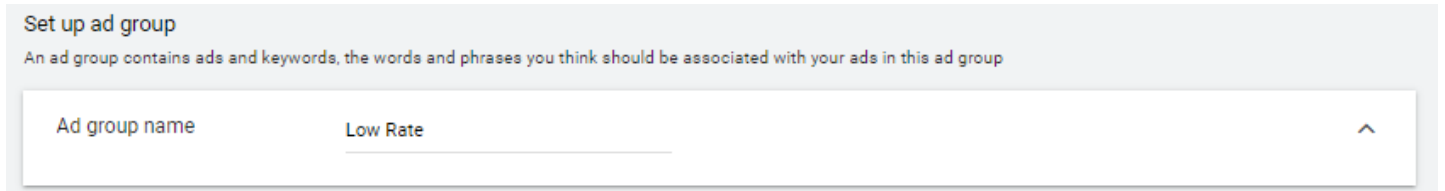
We won't add a call extension for this campaign, as we want to get people to complete an online application form. If you were running an ad for a plumbing business, we'd suggest putting the phone number in.

Once we have completed all of that, hit the 'Save & Continue' button at the bottom, then it's off to the Ad Groups.

Ad Set & Keyword Research

Naming the Ad Set

The first step is to name the Ad Set. As we are looking to doing two different products; low rate and low fee, we will separate them on that basis. So, the first Ad Group is:



Set up ad group

An ad group contains ads and keywords, the words and phrases you think should be associated with your ads in this ad group

Ad group name Low Rate

Simple, right? Don't over think it. It's better to have the campaign live and learning than labouring over what you are going to call the Ad Group. As we talked about earlier, as all ads within this ad group will be sharing the same Keywords, we will be grouping based on the 'Low Rate' theme.

Keyword vs Search Term

Before we get in to creating a list of keywords, it's important to remember that not always does the search term match the keyword it triggered. The keyword is triggered by something in someone's Google search, so don't think you have to come up with every way you think someone might enter it into the search bar.

Keyword Match Types

There are four different types of Keywords that can have a drastic impact on campaign performance. They are:

Broad Match— this is where Google steers you when you first get into the Keyword section. There'll be a long list of words that may or may not make sense, but they will just be the words. No brackets, no symbols. This is how we determine it is a Broad Match. For example, we might see:

Low Rate Credit Card

This gives Google the discretion to present your ad to any search that could be relevant. Someone could search 'Debit Card' and the ad would be shown. Not ideal. There is a time and place for Broad Match, but it is not as a positive keyword (we'll get in to Negative Keywords later).

Modified Broad Match – this is where *modify* a broad match keyword. Creative name, right? By putting a plus symbol (+) in front of each word, we are asking Google to ensure that each of those words are in the search query. Doesn't matter what order, just that they are there. For NextBank, this would look like:

+Low +Rate +Credit +Card

You can still get a lot of random queries with Modified Broad Match, but slightly less than just Broad.

Phrase Match – now we are starting to get a little specific with our query matching and is accomplished by using quotation marks around the keyword ("keyword"). The sequence of the keywords phrase must match the sequence of the query. Take the below example:

"Low Rate Credit Card"

For the ad to trigger for this keyword type, the user needs to have that in the query exactly as presented. They could search 'cheapest and best **low rate credit card** available now' and the ad would be presented. Great for longer keywords!

Exact Match – we are now getting into complete control territory. This is when a user types the exact same phrase, no variations. This is giving Google the least amount of flexibility to show your ads. To make an exact match keyword, we put [] around the keyword. E.g.:

[Low Rate Credit Card]

The ad would only trigger if the person put exactly 'Low Rate Credit Card' into the search bar. If they searched 'which is the best Low Rate Credit Card in Australia', it would unlikely present the ad, which is why you would use it in combination with phrase match.

Best Practice

As eluded to above, it's best practice to put the keyword in multiple times to cover off the match types we want.

If we were to focus on bottom of the funnel ads (and we are for this guide), we would put both phrase and exact match types:

"Low Rate Credit Card"

[Low Rate Credit Card]

Keyword Research

Now we could write a full [Essentials Handbook](#) just on Keyword Research, but we will try and keep it brief for now.

We quite often use Single Keyword Ad Groups, which are obvious bottom of the funnel keywords that have a high number of searches. An example search: “Low Rate Credit Card”

But, with additional keyword research, we could investigate and *test* keywords terms that are higher up the funnel. An example search: “Manage Household Cashflow”

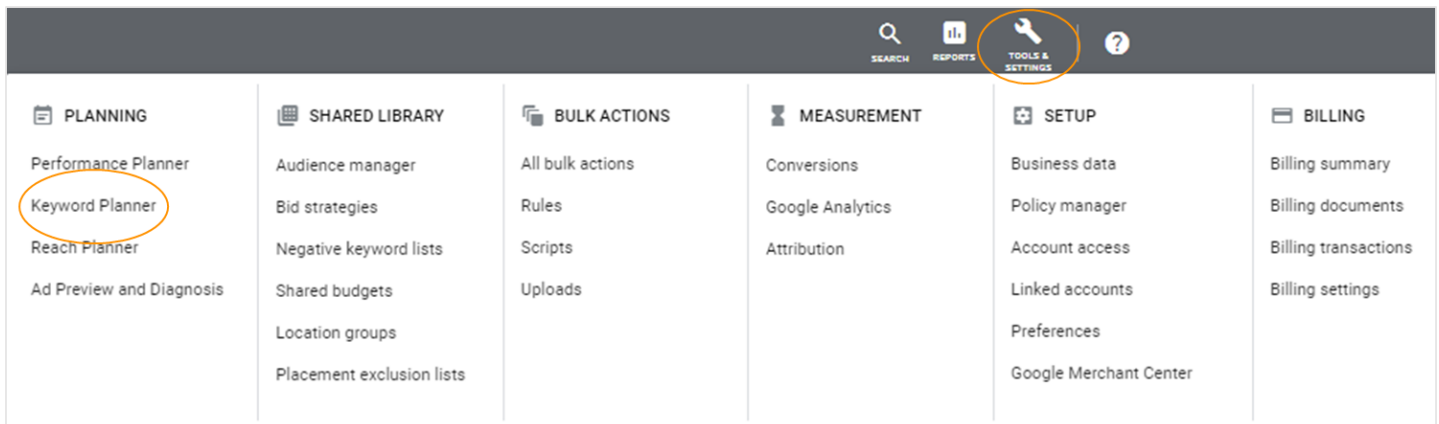
Through research, we will be able to determine:

- Estimated volumes
- Estimated costs
- Better view on customer acquisition funnel
- Competitor insights

We'll do some research on our credit card campaign using a couple of techniques.

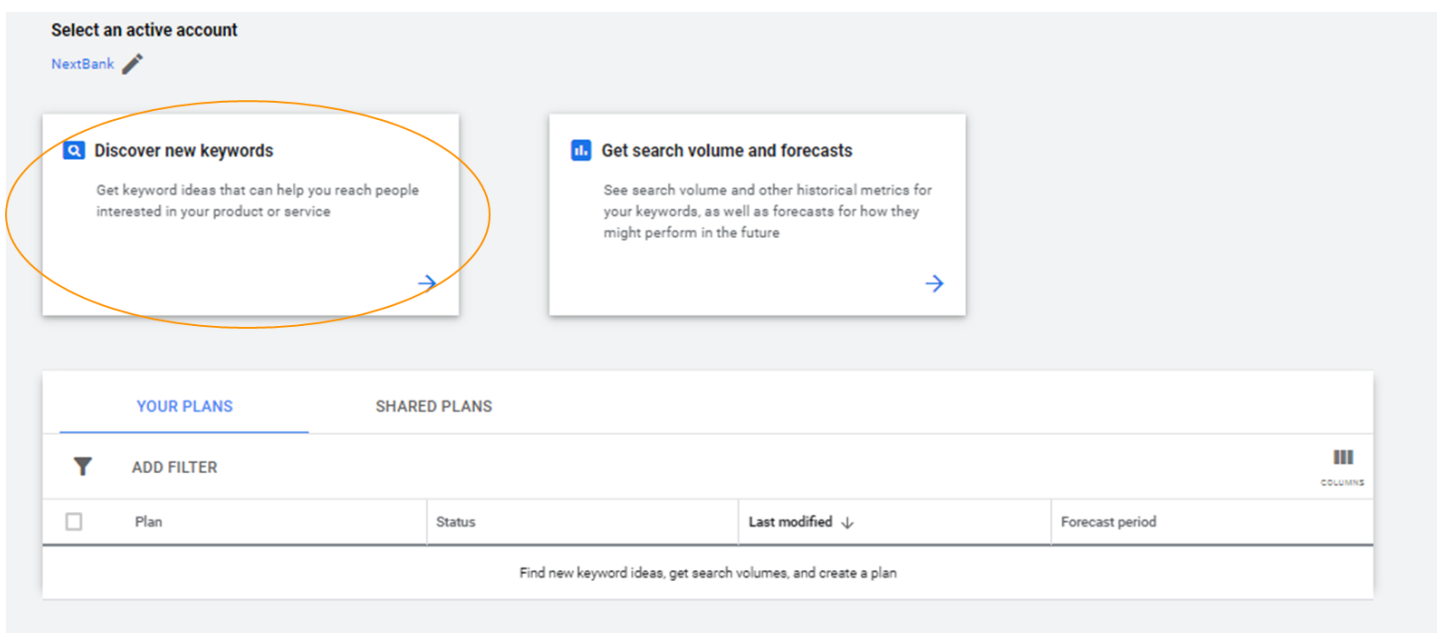
Keyword Planner Tool

There are a few ways to this, but we'll use Google Keyword Planner, which is a free product available through the Google Ads platform. And a pretty obvious first step. To find the Keyword Planner, hit the spanner icon on the top right for 'Tools and Settings'.



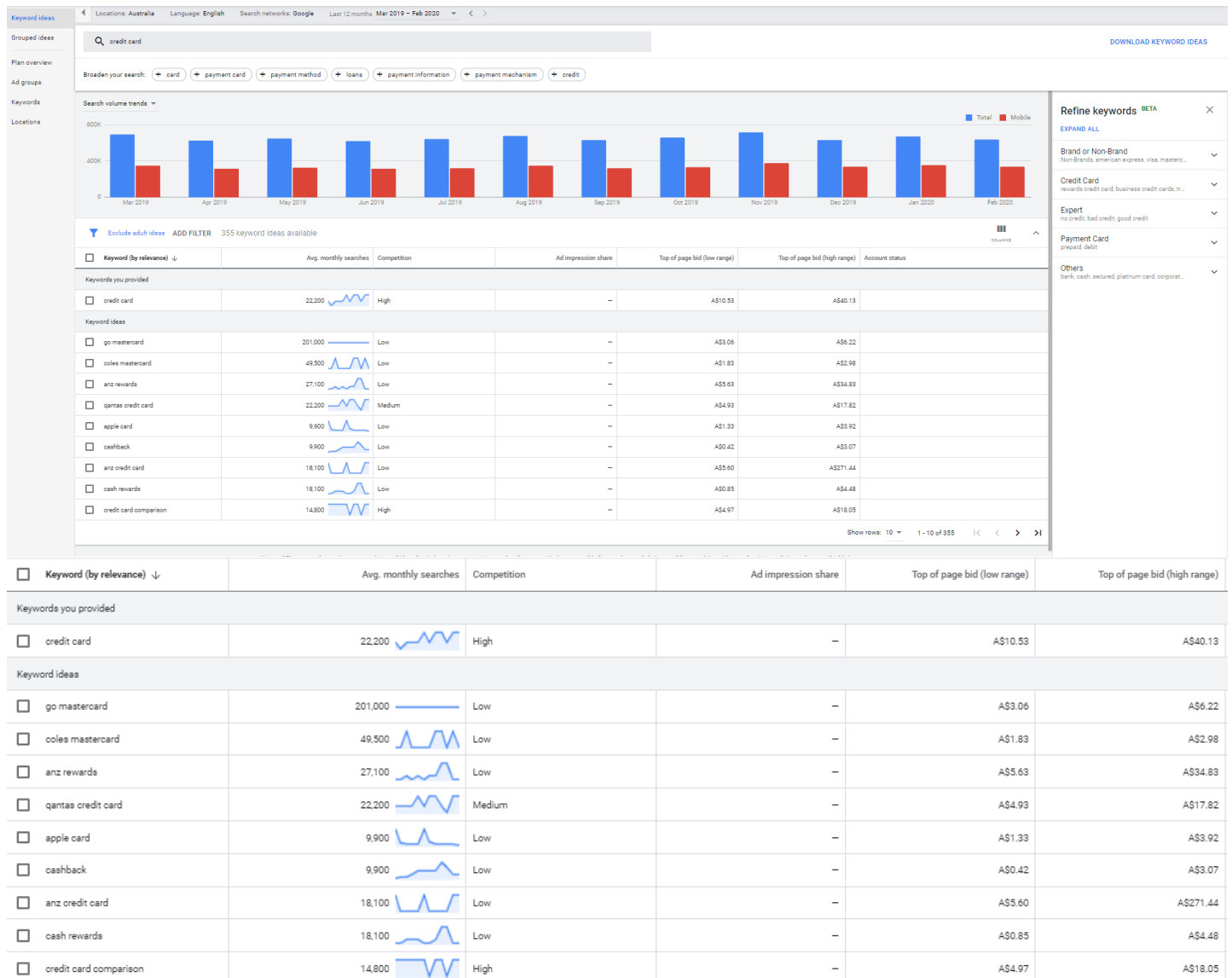
Discover New Keywords

First, we'll see what keywords we would like to run with by selecting 'Discover new keywords':



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We are now able to either enter in our website URL or enter an initial keyword. We've used 'Credit Card' with the below results:



As you can see, there are a few ways to look at the results. Whether it be through the quantity of searches; how competitive the keyword is; or the cost. There is no one way to do this, other than using some common sense. You'll likely use a combination of criteria, at least until you get some reporting through to optimise.

There are a lot of branded keywords, so we would suggest filtering on the right for only non-branded. The reason for this is that searching for a branded product indicates the user is very far down the sales funnel. If you are a new brand coming to market, what we would suggest is creating an ad group specific for competitors.

We can create the Ad Group directly from planner, so we are going to re-search for 'Low Rate Credit Card' as this will be our first Ad Group for this campaign.

1 selected Apr1-Traffic-Cold-CreditCard ▾ Low Rate ▾ Exact match ▾ Add keywords		
☐ Keyword	↓ Avg. monthly searches	Competition
Keywords you provided		
☒ low rate credit card	2,400 	High

If you are doing Keyword Planning before you set up a campaign, and we would advise of that, instead of allocating the keyword to a campaign and Ad Group as we have above, you would add it to 'Plan' and create an Ad Group.

Once we have selected the keywords, we want to add to the Ad Group, add them as both Exact Match and Phrase Match... DO NOT add them as Broad Match!

Now, when we have repeated the process for Low Fee, there just isn't enough searches coming through for it to make sense to have a dedicated Ad Group, so instead we will do Generic credit card ad group like the first keyword search we did before, taking care to remove the branded searches.

Instead of adding the keywords directly to a campaign and ad group, we can either download all of the results and then do some excel magic. Or we could add them to 'Plan'. As we know we are looking at doing some Personal Loans ads later, we run a similar search for 'Personal Loans':

4 selected Plan ▾ Personal Loan ▾ Phrase match ▾ Add keywords			
☐ Keyword (by relevance) ↓		Avg. monthly searches	Competition
Keywords you provided			
☒ personal loan		33,100 	High
Keyword ideas			
☒ loans		74,000 	High
☒ small loans		9,900 	High

The benefit of adding them to plan first, is that you are able to then go into the Volume & Forecast section and play around with Max CPC to find out how much you could spend and expected performance. More than that below.

Search Volume& Forecasts

Back the Keyword Planner home screen, we now have a plan in the 'Your Plans' section:

 **Discover new keywords**
Get keyword ideas that can help you reach people interested in your product or service
[→](#)

 **Get search volume and forecasts**
See search volume and other historical metrics for your keywords, as well as forecasts for how they might perform in the future
[→](#)

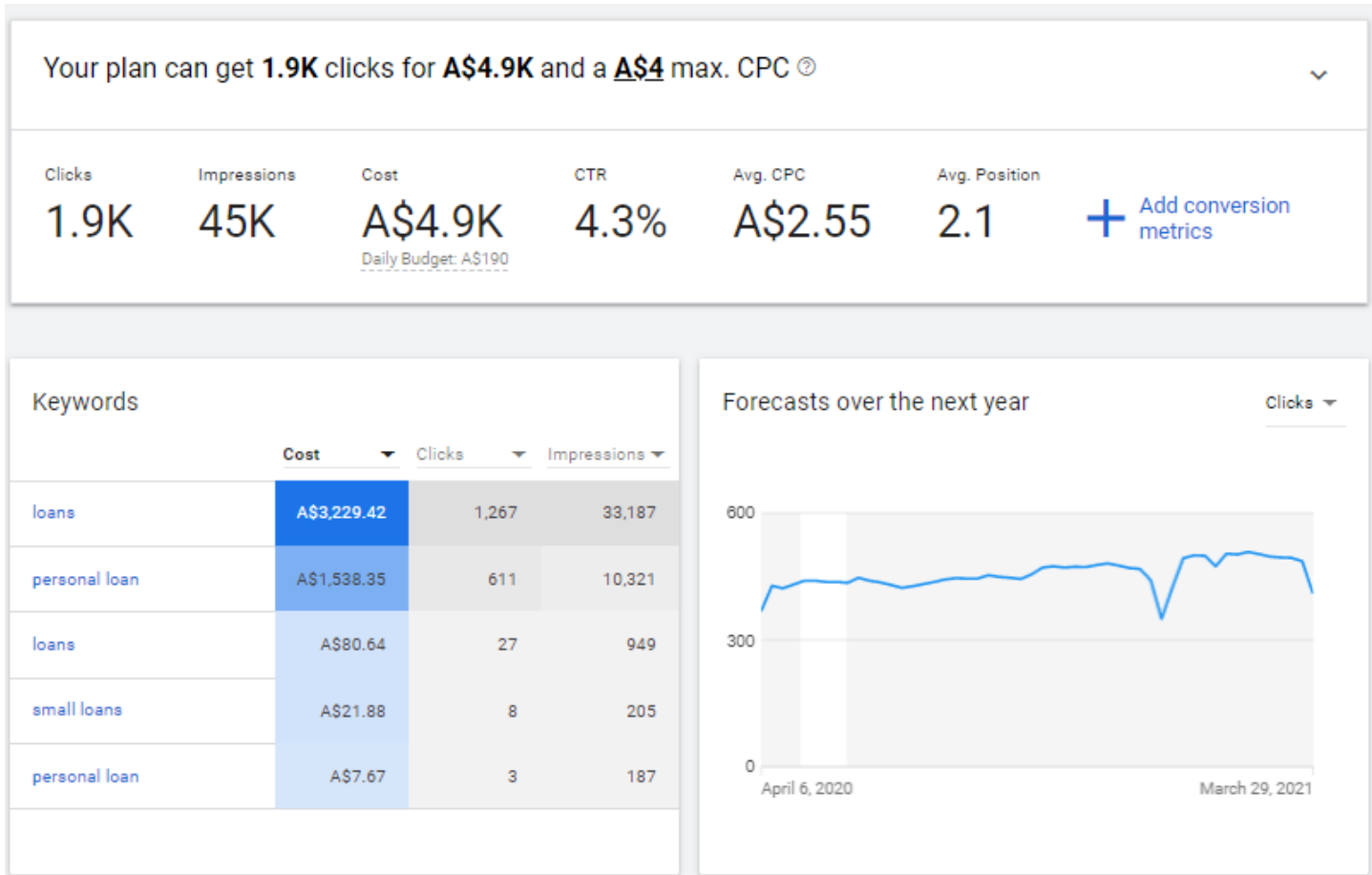
YOUR PLANS

SHARED PLANS

 ADD FILTER 

☐ Plan	Status	Last modified ↓	Forecast period
☐ Personal Loans	Draft	Apr 5, 2020	May 1 – 31, 2020 (Next month)

Now we get to the sexy part. **Analytics!**



There are only two metrics we can play with at this stage, and that is the max. CPC amount and the Conversion metric. We can start to play around with the max CPC and see how much clicks, impressions and conversions we could get. Like any plan, it doesn't always work out the way you anticipated. After all, everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face (M. Tyson), but it's a good exercise to go through.

We also love the volume forecast for the year to come. Interesting to see different seasonality in certain industries.

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Here are what the Keywords look like once they are added to the Google Ads console:

The screenshot displays the Google Ads console interface for a campaign named "Apr1-Traffic-Cold-CreditCard". The left sidebar shows the campaign status as "Enabled and Paused" and lists various settings like "Generic", "Low Rate", "Audiences", "Demographics", "Settings", "Devices", and "Change history". The main content area is titled "SEARCH KEYWORDS" and shows a line chart at the top with a blue line representing the keyword status over time, ending at "Mar 31, 2020". Below the chart, a filter bar indicates "Keyword status: All but removed" with an "ADD FILTER" button. The table below lists 10 keywords, all of which are "Eligible" and have 0.00 conversions and a cost of \$0.00.

☐	☐	Keyword	Status	Conversions	Cost / conv.
☐	☒	[low interest credit cards]	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00
☐	☒	"low interest credit cards"	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00
☐	☒	[low rate credit card]	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00
☐	☒	"low rate credit card"	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00
☐	☒	[lowest interest rate credit card]	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00
☐	☒	"lowest interest rate credit card"	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00
☐	☒	[best low rate credit card]	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00
☐	☒	"best low rate credit card"	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00
☐	☒	"low rate mastercard"	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00
☐	☒	[low rate mastercard]	Eligible	0.00	A\$0.00

Negative Keywords

Negative keywords are words that you want to ensure your ad doesn't show for. For example, when we run ads for our services, Digital Marketing, we ensure we have a huge negative keyword list that includes:

- Free
- Courses
- Training
- Books

As we don't offer any of these, we don't want our ads shown when someone searches for 'digital marketing courses' etc.

This is where Broad Match comes into the mix. Negative keywords are most effective when they are broad match, as you are telling Google that anything like 'courses' is to be excluded.

Ad Sculpting

This is when we use negative keywords to ensure the right ad is shown to the right person. Let's look at our Low Rate ad group and our Generic ad group from before. To ensure that the Low Rate ad group ad is triggered when someone searches for 'Low Rate Credit Card', we will put "Low Rate" into the negative keyword list in the Generic Ad Group.

The reason we have used Phrase Match in this example is that someone could search for 'Low Fee Credit Card' and we want to ensure that it gets presented in the Generic ad group.

Ad Creation

Time to unleash those creative writing skills you developed in Year 10!

Good ad writing is really going to make and break the effectiveness of your campaign. And by effective, we don't just mean the amount of click throughs you get. We mean ROI. We took over an account a while back and they were getting some decent click-throughs but were not getting leads. The reason was that the ad was so vague, the person was clicking to find out what our client did... not because they wanted what they had to offer.

The role of the ad copy is to be attractive to the people you are going after, but to also dissuade people you are not after.

A great example is putting the word 'premium' in the copy. You are unlikely going to get people who are after the cheapest or free. So, if you offer a premium service... put that in the copy and ensure you are paying for high-quality prospects.

Remember – the game is to get customers, not clicks.

Search Text Ad Format

Field	Length
Headline 1	• 30 Characters
Headline 2	• 30 Characters
Headline 3	• 30 Characters
Description 1	• 90 Characters
Description 2	• 90 Characters
Path (Display URL)	• 15 Characters x2

Google makes changes to the Text Ad format quite regularly, and the 3rd headline is one of these recent editions. In fact, we found it hard to find an example of someone using one, but here is a great example from Finder:

The diagram illustrates the components of a Google Search Ad for Finder.com.au. The ad is displayed in a light blue box with a white background. The components are labeled as follows:

- Display URL:** Ad · www.finder.com.au/
- Headline 1:** 2020 Top Credit Cards | 0% Interest and \$0 Annual Fee
- Headline 2:** ★★★★★ Rating for finder.com.au: 4.3 - 209 reviews
- Description 1:** Get The Latest **Credit Card** Reviews & Exclusive Offers. Compare & Find A Better Card.
- Description 2:** The 2 Million Australians Who Use Finder Each Month To Save Time And Money. Balance
- Callout Extensions:** Transfer Offers. Brands: ANZ, Citibank, Bankwest, NAB, Coles, American Express.
- Sitelink Extensions:** Best Velocity Point Cards · Best Rewards Cards 2019 · Top Frequent Flyer Cards

Best Practice Ad Copywriting

One thing to remember when we go through this, is that this is a Google Search campaign. Someone is actively searching for your product or service, so this is very different to the type of things you would write in a magazine copy, or a cold traffic ad on Facebook. These guys are educated on the category.

So, when we come to writing a high converting ad (remember, customers not clicks), highlight:

- Your Unique Selling Proposition
- Compelling features
 - I know what you're thinking. Shouldn't we be talking about the benefit? No. As we said earlier, the user already knows about the category. If someone is searching for a 'Low Rate Credit Card', they already know they can save interest... that's why they are searching for one!!
- Offers: pricing, promotions etc.
- Prime the user to what is going to be in the landing page
 - One word: Congruency.
- Think about mobile first
- Get "salesy" with your call to action (but don't be a douche and lie)
 - Urgency
 - Scarcity
 - Social proof
 - Motivations etc.

- Headlines are the most important
- If your business has personality, use it
 - Makes it easier to stand out of the crowd!
- Use upper case at the start of each word

And here is our ad:

Lowest of the Low Rates | 4.99% Credit Card

 nextbank.com.au/LowRate/CreditCard

Lowest Rate In Australia. No Hidden Fees. No Catches. Just The Best Rate. Use With Apple Pay And Google Pay. Instore And Online Anywhere In The World.

Highest Customer Rating - Bank Of The Year 2021 · COVID-19 Free

Zero Liability Guarantee

No out of pocket expense
if fraud was to happen

Award Winning App

Manage you card on the go
Canstar 5 star rated app

It's important to note that the display URL doesn't have to be an actual page. This ad is directed to www.nextbank.com.au.

As you can see from this example, because we made the Ad Group specific to Low Rate, we were able to get very specific with the words we used. If anyone was searching for 'Low Rate Credit Card' they would know that this was the ad for them! Unlike the ads that currently get shown:

Ad • www.bendigobank.com.au/credit-cards/low-rate ▾ 1800 139 291

Bendigo Bank Low Rate Card | Up To 55 Days Interest Free

Enjoy 11.99% p.a. On Purchases. Use Your Own Digital Wallet. 24/7 Fraud Monitoring Included. Fraud Monitoring Included. Personalise Your **Card**. Request A Callback.

Low Rate = Tick
Where's the extensions?
Request a call back is a terrible CTA, but at least it primes the potential customer they can't apply online...

Ad • www.finder.com.au/ ▾

Top 10 Low Rate Transfer Cards | 0% 22 Months Credit Cards

★★★★★ Rating for finder.com.au: 4.3 - 209 reviews

Compare The Top 10 Balance Transfer **Credit Card** Offers In Australia. Apply Now! Switch Today & Start Saving. Avoid Paying **Interest** With A 0% Balance Transfer Deal. Balance Transfer Offers. Types: Balance Transfer, Cash Back, **Low Interest**, No Fees, Rewards.

Low Rate = Cross!
This is just talking about Balance Transfers. At least Low Interest is a Callout extension.

Ad • www.xe.com/ ▾

Xe Official Website | Send Money with Credit Card | xe.com

Make international money transfers with competitive exchange **rates** and no transfer fees. Enterprise-grade security to ensure the safety of all international money transfers. 60 World Currencies. Fast & Easy. **Fee** Free Transfers. Great Exchange **Rates**. Market Professionals. [About Us](#) · [Download The Mobile App](#) · [Contact Us](#) · [Blog Center](#) · [Read The FAQs](#)

Low Rate = Cross!
These guys don't even offer Credit Cards!

Ad • financialservices.coles.com.au/Credit_Card/Low_Rate ▾

Coles Credit Cards | Low Rate Mastercard | Apply Online Today

Save \$10 Off Your Coles shop when you redeem 2000 points at the checkout. T&Cs Apply.

Low Rate = Tick(ish)
At least it is for a Low Rate card, but would have been better putting the rate on, not \$10 off or points.

Campaign Optimisation

Again, we could write another guide just on optimising! Google Ads is not a set and forget platform. The more effort you put into the campaigns post launch, the better the result.

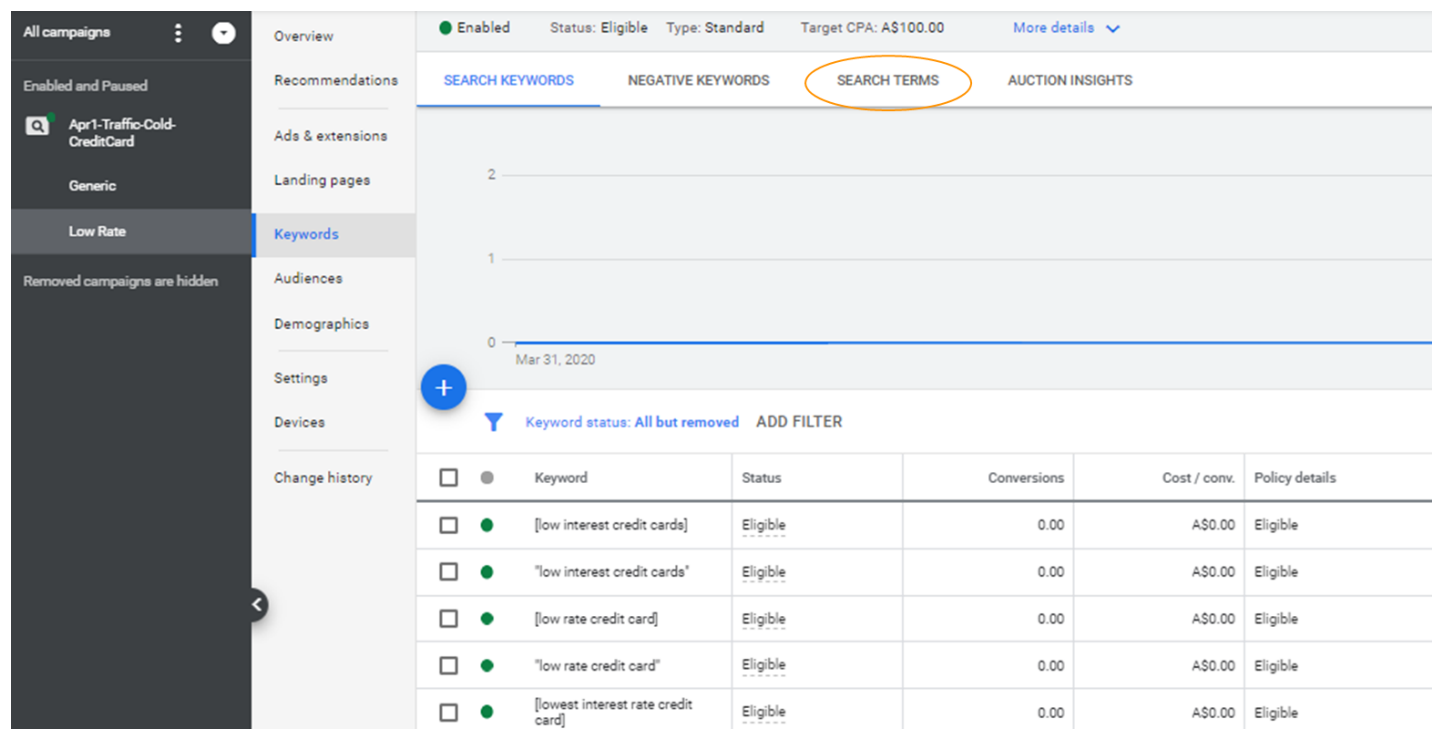
The campaigns themselves can be improved through minor tweaks. One of the best options is to use testing. There are a few things to test: ad copy; audiences; landing pages etc. We always have tests running. Just because something worked in a previous test, doesn't mean it will on the new campaign.

If you have an assumption. Test it.

Other key steps that can boost your campaign efficiency include, but are not limited to;

Negative Keyword Mining

When you go into the Google Ads console, head over to the Keywords section and you'll see some great information. One section we'll look at now is the Search Terms report:



Now as this campaign and ad creation has been theoretical, we don't have any Search Terms to show you, but this is the section where you can see what exact searches the people who clicked on your ad made. The first thing you will learn is that most people can't spell. The second thing is that despite how hard you think of all of the negative keywords up front, your ads will get triggered by random queries. It's a simple process to exclude the search term by checking a box.

Conversion Tracking

We are huge proponents of analytics. By having the website tagged for conversion events, you are able to accurately determine what campaigns, ad groups, ads and even keywords are performing best. You are flying blind without it.

Ad Variations

Have multiple Ad variations within an Ad Group so Google's algorithm can promote the one that works best. If they only have one option, you can't use their machine to automatically optimise. This includes adding in **Responsive Search Ads** (these are dynamic text ads.... Pretty cool stuff!)

Landing Page Variation

We talked about congruency from the ad to the landing page earlier. Depending on what sort of product or service you are selling, sometimes you can play around with the landing page that the customer gets directed to.

For NextBank's Low Rate Credit Card, it wouldn't make sense to test another generic Credit Card page as that would likely cause annoyance and make the potential customer bounce.

Landing page optimisation, or [Conversion Rate Optimisation](#) as it is referred to, is a topic for another day. But for now, just make sure the ad matches the page... and there is a Call To Action on it!

Full Funnel Growth

Even with the best campaigns, ads and landing pages, you are not going to get 100% conversion rates.

This is where omni-channel remarketing comes in to play. Whether it be through [Paid Social Advertising](#) or Google Display, by identifying the Google Ads acquired website visitor, you can create compelling warm-traffic campaigns that increase the total conversion number than with just Google Ads alone.

Conclusion

Google owns more than 90% of the search market and is shown to generate 3x more traffic to target websites than social media and other channels. The Google Ads platform's paid campaigns offer an easy solution to bypass the competition and reap the rewards of a strong presence on the Google results page.

A strong Google Ads strategy that focuses on the right keywords, copy, and bidding can boost brand awareness, interest, and conversions with almost immediate results. Better still, the results-based model and advanced tracking facilities allow you to control your spend along with every other aspect. When the data-driven strategies are tailored accordingly, the campaigns can be the most valuable tool at your disposal.

If this all sounds great, but you don't have time or desire to run these types of campaigns, [get in touch](#) and we can see if we can help.

...

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