How To Dominate Your Market With Search Engine Marketing

by

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Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1: The Benefits of Domination

Chapter 2: The Importance Of Search Engines Today

Chapter 3: Google - What Gets Clicked On

Chapter 4: Understanding the game – what does Google want?

Chapter 5: How Google Now Ranks Ads

Chapter 6: Quality Score – How To Buy Clicks At A Discount

Chapter 7: Quality Score factor #1 – Ad Relevance

Chapter 8: Quality Score factor #2 – Landing Page Quality

Chapter 9: Quality Score factor #3 – Click Rate

Chapter 10: The Limits Of Quality Score Optimisation

Chapter 11: Visitor Value, The Secret To Success

Chapter 12: Are You Choking Your Traffic?

Chapter 13: The Components Of Visitor Value

Chapter 14: How To Scientifically Improve Your Website

Chapter 15: The Easiest Thing To Sell

Chapter 16: Without this, no-one buys

Chapter 17: Conversion Best Practices

Chapter 18: Price is subjective

Chapter 19: How To Quadruple Your Sales

Chapter 20: Supersize Your Business

Chapter 21: How To Sell More To Existing Clients

Chapter 22: Summary

Appendix 1: The AdWords Multiplier Method – Big Profits From Small Improvements

Appendix 2: The AdWords Multiplier Method In Practice – 643% Increase In Profits

Appendix 3: How I Can Help You

Introduction

On July 14th 2015, Chris Froome won stage 10 of the Tour de France. His time for the stage was 4 hours, 22 minutes, seven seconds.

In second, was Nairo Quintana, 59 seconds back with a time of 4h23m21s.

The difference between their times was 0.38%. Yet the media described Froome's win as "dominant"...

"Chris Froome looks unbeatable after a dominant display" – Telegraph

"Froome destroys field to win stage" - BBC

"Such was Froome's dominance that his fifth Tour stage win could be decisive" - ITV.com

"Chris Froome blasted away his overall rivals at the 2015 Tour de France on Tuesday, with a dominant display"

"Chris Froome's Dominance" - NY Times

So what does this have to do with search engine marketing?

Well, just like in sport, the difference in performance between dominance and mediocrity can be incredibly small.... But the difference in rewards is huge.

This special report lays out a simple process you can follow that will help you dominate your market.

But, before we do that, let's look at some of the reasons why you should want to dominate.

Let's get started,

Steve Gibson

PS I created a page at www.bothsidesoftheclick.co.uk/dominate-resources where I list resources that will help you implement this strategy.

Chapter 1: The Benefits of Domination

"The Rich get Richer, that's the law of the land" – Glengarry Glen Ross

A study by Harvard Business School showed that, "As market share increases, a business is likely to have a higher profit margin, a declining purchases-to-sales ratio, a decline in marketing costs as a percentage of sales, higher quality, and higher priced products."

Or, to put it another way, as you overtake competitors, you get a whole heap of additional advantages that allow you to pull further ahead of them, such as...

- Better economies of scale
- Lower prices from suppliers
- Better brand awareness, leading to higher trust, resulting in higher conversion rates.
- More word of mouth traffic

With search engine marketing, the differences between winners and losers can be even greater:

- 10 15 times as many website visitors
- 50% 100% higher conversion rate
- 15 30 times as many customers
- 33% 50% lower cost per acquisition
- Up to 30% higher margins per sale (ignoring marketing costs)
- Even higher increases in profit per sale (due to lower marketing costs)
- 25%- 25% more repeat sales per customer

Over the coming chapters, I'll explain why these differences are so great... and, of course, how to become one of these dominant companies.

Chapter 2: The Importance Of Search Engines Today

British people are the most frequent online shoppers in Europe.

Last year (2014), we spent £44.97bn online – which equated to 15.2% of all retail sales.

And, in 2015, that's expected to increase to 16.2%.

But, even if you're not in ecommerce, the internet is important.

A 2014 study reported by Adweek revealed that "81% of shoppers conduct online research before buying."

And, in business-to-business, the number is even higher: "94 percent of B2B buyers research online for purchase decisions". (Acquity Group, 2014)

And where did they do this research? 77% did it on Google.

So the message is clear: if they can't find you on search engines, you don't exist.

And, in the UK at least, when we say search engines, we mean Google – because Google has 88.6% of the UK search engine market.

Chapter 3: Google - What Gets Clicked On

Most website owners think that organic (i.e. "free") listings attract the most clicks.

Technically, that's true. A 2014 study concluded that, "71.33% of searches resulted in a page one Google organic click".

But, if you're trying to do business online, that's the wrong way to look at it.

Here's why: most searches are non-commercial – i.e. there's zero chance of you spending any money – either now, or in the future – as the result of doing that search.

As business owners, what we care about is what happens when someone does a search with <u>commercial intent</u>. After all, if you were to do SEO, it's those sorts of keywords you'd SEO for, right?

A couple of years ago, Wordstream conducted a study and found that, for highly commercial search terms:

- Paid ads took up 85.2% of the above-the-fold pixels
- Paid ads received 64.6% of the clicks
- Organic listings only had 14.8% of the above-the-fold pixels, and 35.4% of the clicks

So, when it comes to commercial searches – the sort of search that could make you money – paid listings get around 2/3 of the clicks.

This tells us that, in order to dominate, SEO isn't going to do the job – you need to be using paid advertising, otherwise you're surrendering 2/3 of the market without a fight.

The Importance Of The Left Side

Google runs text ads in 3 positions: top left of the page, right hand side, and (sometimes) at the bottom of the page.

These 3 areas of the page get very different click rates. In fact, ads at the top left will typically get 10-20 times the click rate of ads on the right hand side.

Which means, if your ads are showing on the right hand side, you're losing 90% - 95% of the market.

And, of course, you can't dominate a market with 10% (at best) market share.

So, if you want to be dominant, you've got to appear in those left hand slots.

So let's move on to our next topic: how Google ranks ads. (And how you can get above your competitors, despite bidding less!)

Chapter 4: Understanding the game – what does Google want?

In order to understand how AdWords works, we need to understand it from Google's side.

When Google first created AdWords, ads were ranked according to this formula: bid x click rate.

So, if a competitor was bidding £1.50 and had a click rate of 1%, and you were bidding £1 but had a click rate of 2%, your ad would show above his.

Why Did Google Do This?

Let's look at Google's perspective: they are, for all intents, a web publisher. They are a web publisher who makes money by giving free content and placing ads on the pages with this free content.

Basically, just like a blogger.

So, let's imagine we're bloggers and we want to maximise our ad revenue, what do we do?

Simple: we show the ads that make us the most money.

And that's what Google was doing: bid x click rate = how much money Google earns from that ad.

To go back to our previous example, the competitor's ad would make

£1.50 x
$$1\%$$
 x $1,000 = £15$

every 1,000 times it was shown.

Your ad would make

$$£1 \times 2\% \times 1,000 = £20$$

every 1,000 times it was shown.

So your ad makes Google more money, and therefore would be shown higher.

That's the old way Google did it, but in 2005, things changed...

Google Had A Problem

Back in the mid-noughties, AdWords ads had a poor reputation. They were seen as "spammy" and less credible than the organic listings.

As a result, many searchers wouldn't click on them.

Google realised that, if they could improve the quality of that ads, click rates would go up and they'd make more money.

Introducing Quality Score

So, in 2005, Google introduced something called "quality score".

Quality is a score out of 10, based on a combination of 3 factors:

- (1) Expected Click rate
- (2) Ad relevance
- (3) Landing page experience

It's probably simplest to think of Quality Score is a mark out of 10 Google gives you for popularity and relevance.

No-one outside of Google knows exactly how quality score works – and there are a lot of incorrect assumptions - but because we understand what Google wants, we can make some fairly safe assumptions, namely...

Assumption#1: If Google thinks your landing page is poor quality, they won't want to show your ad.

Assumption#2: If Google thinks your ad isn't relevant to the search term – i.e. what the searcher typed into Google – then they don't really want to show it.

Introducing Quality Score has, generally, been a success for Google. By forcing advertisers to be more relevant – and to be more transparent in how they do business – clicking an AdWords ad is now little different to clicking an organic listing.

Google has raised the reputation of AdWords ads. And, as we saw, the ads now get the majority of clicks for commercial searches.

Chapter 5: How Google Now Ranks Ads

Google's new formula for ranking ads is:

bid x quality score

Let's look at how this works, by using an example where there's just 3 advertisers:

Advertiser	Bid	Quality Score	Ad Rank
Α	£1.00	7	7
В	£1.50	4	6
С	£0.90	8	7.2

In this example, advertiser C would show at the top, followed by advertiser A, followed by advertiser B.

So, even though advertiser C is bidding the least, he gets the best position. And, the highest bidder – advertiser B – is placed last.

How Much You Pay Per Click

The amount you pay for a click isn't the amount you bid, it's normally a little less.

What you pay is:

The bid of the advertiser below you x his quality score / your quality score.

Going back to our previous example,

Advertiser	Bid	Quality Score	
Α	£1.00	7	7
В	£1.50	4	6
С	£0.90	8	7.2

The top advertiser, C, would pay:

 $£1.00 \times 7 / 8 = £0.875$

The middle advertiser, A, would pay:

£1.50 x 4 / 7 = £0.855

In the next few chapters, I'll go into how you can maximise quality score. But let's start by looking at how quality score impacts your marketing costs...

Chapter 6: Quality Score – How To Buy Clicks At A Discount

As you've seen, a higher quality score can do one of two things:

- (A) It can move your ad to a higher spot on the page.
- (B) It can allow you to pay less for your current spot on the page.

How much less?

Compare the cost to having a bid of £1 and a quality score of 5:

Quality Score	Bid Required
1	£5
2	£2.50
3	£1.67
4	£1.25
5	£1
6	£0.83
7	£0.71
8	£0.63
9	£0.56
10	£0.50

As you can see, the rewards for high quality scores – and punishment for low quality scores – can be significant...

- Just going from averages of 5 to 7 would allow you to pay almost 30% less for the same ad positions.
- Dropping from 7 to 5 would force you to increase your cost per click by over 40% if you want to stay where you are on the page

So it goes without saying that, if you want to be one of the dominant advertisers in your market – one who appears at the top of the page – it's going to be very hard if you have to pay a premium to be there.

So let's look at how to make sure you get the best possible quality score, starting with ad relevance...

Chapter 7: Quality Score factor #1 – Ad Relevance

Google wants ads to appear relevant to the searcher.

The way it tries to do this is by parsing the text of your ads and deciding whether that text relates to what Google believes is the meaning behind the search.

Unfortunately, Google is not particularly good at this.

Brad Geddes, one of the world's leading AdWords experts shared the story of writing an ad for his book. When his ad mentioned "testimonials", he got a Quality Score of 3. When he changed "testimonials" to "reviews", the quality score went up to 10.

This shows two things:

First, just what a poor job Google sometimes does of understanding ads – and how easy it is for an advertiser to suffer as a result.

Second, that ad relevance can cause a difference in quality score of 7 points.

There are some PPC experts who believe quality score is the sum of your click rate score, your ad relevance score, and your landing page score, and that, of these 3, click rate has the highest weight.

But Geddes' story – and a similar story I'll share with you about landing page quality – proves that's not the case.

My own belief – based on experience – is that there's a more complex arrangement, where good/bad/indifferent scores for ad relevance and landing page restrict your possible quality scores.

This is consistent with the assumptions in Chapter 4.

Avoiding Ad Relevance Problems

Because Google has limited ability to evaluate ad relevance, it pays to give it a helping hand.

Here are a few rules to help:

Rule #1: Treat ad groups like *ad groups* – i.e. look at your keywords and ask, is this keyword relevant to my ad? If it isn't, move the keyword to a new ad group and write an ad that *is* relevant.

Rule #2: Use your keywords in your ad. Google's understanding of ads is so poor that you'll find ads whose text contain the keywords will usually get a much higher ad position – reflecting a higher quality score - than those without.

Rule #3: If you write a new test ad, and you find that ad has a much lower ad position – i.e. it's showing a <u>lot</u> lower on the page than the other ads in the ad group – that's often a sign Google thinks the ad is less relevant. In which case, you should usually delete it.

Chapter 8: Quality Score factor #2 – Landing Page Quality

In the last chapter, I told you about Brad Geddes' problem with ad relevance, let me tell you a problem one of my clients had with landing page quality...

A few years ago, I had a PPC client whose web designer carelessly added an extra h1 header to some of his landing pages. The header was blank:

<h1> </h1>

(is the code for a space)

After doing this, his quality scores dropped from 7 to 3.

When this rogue h1 was removed, his quality scores went back up to 7.

A couple of weeks later, the designer repeated this mistake and quality scores dropped again – and, again, returned to their previous levels when it was removed.

How serious was this?

To put it in perspective, if we hadn't identified and fixed the problem, he'd have had to bid 133% more in order to retain his ad positions.

Imagine that: imagine your cost per click more than doubled overnight. You wouldn't be thinking about domination, you'd be worrying about whether you could compete in AdWords at all.

So, as with ad relevance, Google isn't particularly good at correctly evaluating landing pages.

My advice is to try to give Google what it wants, but be on the lookout for pages where Google doesn't seem to "get it".

Google is looking at a handful of things:

- (A) Is the text on this page relevant to what the searcher searched for?
- (B) Is the user likely to find what he wants on this page?

- (C) Do users tend to stay on this site, or do they quickly jump back to Google?
- (D) Does the site behave in an honest and transparent way?
- (E) Are there trust issues with this site?
- (F) Does the page load quickly?

As long as your page does all these things – or, rather, Google thinks it does all these things – you'll normally be fine.

Chapter 9: Quality Score factor #3 - Click Rate

This is the one factor where, because it's straightforward, Google generally does a good job.

What Google is doing is comparing your click rate to the expected click rate for that ad position and keyword.

That means Google understands that:

- (A) For some keywords, ads get lower click rates usually because they're either less commercial, or because their search intent is ambiguous.
- (B) Click rates vary hugely according to ad position. As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, ads on the left get 10-20 times the click rate of ads on the right hand side.

So, when deciding whether your click rate is above average, average, or below average, they're comparing you click rates to historic click rates for your keywords and ad positions.

The advice for optimising your click rate is 'AdWords 101':

#1: Make sure all the keywords in your ad group are relevant to your ad. If not, move them to a different ad group.

#2: Keep testing different ads. It's not unusual to find a new ad gets two or three times the click rate of your existing ad. (Though, if you're tracking conversions, think before deleting an ad that has a lower click rate, but higher conversion rate – the goal is conversions, not clicks.)

One of the great things about improving your ads is that you're rewarded with the twin benefits of both increasing your traffic through a higher click rate, and increasing your traffic by raising your quality score and appearing in higher positions.

Now, having spent 3 chapters telling you how to optimise quality score, I'm going to give you some bad news...

Chapter 10: The Limits Of Quality Score Optimisation

In truth, it's not easy to gain a significant competitive advantage with Quality Score.

You can have a higher click rate to your ads, and you can avoid problems with ad text and landing page relevance.

But, if you're in a competitive market, your competitors will likely be using professional PPC managers, and they'll be doing the same things.

So how <u>do</u> you gain an advantage and win one of the left hand ad slots?

Well, if the equation is bid x quality score, and the answer isn't quality score, then the answer must be by bidding more than your competitors.

And there you have it, if you want to be a dominant advertiser in AdWords, you need to do 3 things:

#1: Fix any quality score problems

#2: Maximise the click rates of your ads

#3: Be able to outbid most of your competitors

And the rest of this special report is about that third thing: how to bid more than your competitors, and still make a profit.

So let's start with the most important metric in your business...

Chapter 11: Visitor Value, The Secret To Success

If the purpose of AdWords is to buy visitors at a profit, then how much you pay for a click must be less than the value of a visitor.

And the value of a visitor, which we'll call, "Visitor Value" (original, huh?) is

Visitor Value = Conversion rate x the value of a conversion

So, if 2% of your visitors become customers and a customer is worth £100, then the average visitor is worth £2.

In which case, your profit from AdWords would be:

(£2 – average cost per click) x number of visitors

So, if you're paying £1.50 per click and you're getting 1,000 visitors a week, your weekly AdWords profit would be

$$(£2 - £1.50) \times 1,000 = £500$$

If you could increase your visitor value by 50% (usually not hard to do, as you'll see), then that equation becomes:

$$(£3 - £1.50) \times 1,000 = £1,500$$

So you'd triple your profit.

Imagine, after raising your visitor value to £3, you bid £2.50, but your ad moved from the right hand side of Google's results, to the left hand side – and got 10 times as many clicks – your profit would be:

$$(£3 - £2.50) \times 10,000 = £5,000$$

Now you're making 10 times as much as when you started.

And that is the secret to dominating in AdWords: earn enough per visitor to be one of the left hand advertisers.

Before I show you how to do this, I need to cover one thing...

Chapter 12: Are You Choking Your Traffic?

As we saw in the last chapter,

Visitor Value = Conversion rate x the value of a conversion

Conversion rate is simple to understand, but there are 2 ways to look at the value of a conversion.

#1: How much profit you make from a typical sale.

#2: How much profit do you make from a typical client over time – also known as the "lifetime value".

In most industries, most sales are repeat sales. That is to say, most of the orders you get are from existing clients.

And, because there's little or no marketing cost for those orders – and because the orders are often bigger – a purchase from an existing customer is usually far more profitable than one from a new customer acquired from paid advertising.

So you may find that, when you look at the stats in your business, maybe only 10% of the profits come from first time sales.

Do you really need to make a profit on the initial sale?

If bidding more is the secret to higher profits - as we saw from the examples in the last chapter - one way to bid more is to be willing to break even on the first sale.

Your ad will show higher on the page, and the increase in click rate will bring in many more customers than you would have had... and the profit from those customers future sales will usually far exceed the profits you gave up by bidding higher.

Direct mail companies – and catalogues – have been using this approach for decades.

Amazon takes it one step further, and actually loses money in order to get a new customer.

So this is the first and, perhaps, the easiest way to increase visitor value: change how you measure it.

In the next chapter, we'll look at the factors that determine visitor value, before showing how you can improve each one.

Chapter 13: The Components Of Visitor Value

Jay Abraham, the daddy of all marketing gurus, says there are 3, and only 3, ways to grow a business:

- Increase the number of clients
- Increase the average profit per sale
- Increase the average number of purchases per client

And he points out that, if you improve each of these things by just 10%, your net sales will increase by 33.1%.

e.g. from

1,000 clients x £100 per sale x 2 purchases a year = £200,000

to

1,100 clients x £110 per sale x 2.2 purchases a year = £266,200

So visitor value has 3 components:

- Your conversion rate, i.e. what % of visitors become customers
- The average profit per sale
- The average number of times a customer buys

We'll deal with each of these in turn, starting with an important concept in conversion optimisation...

Chapter 14: How To Scientifically Improve Your Website

If you've used AdWords, you'll probably be aware of the concept of splittesting ads.

And you may realise that, in order to be competitive, you need to split-test your ads. That's because, if you limped along with the first ads you wrote, your click rate would be much lower and you'd be missing out on a lot of traffic.

Well, what's true about AdWords ads is also true about web pages. The chance the first version of a web page is optimal is basically zero. There's always something that can be improved.

So, just as with ads, you need to be constantly refining your web pages – splittesting one version against another, to see which is the winner.

There are a number of different pieces of software that'll help you do this. In order to keep this report up-to-date, I created a web page at

www.bothsidesoftheclick.co.uk/resources

that has my latest recommendations, ranging from books to read, to online tools that'll help you increase your profits – including split-testing software.

Whatever tool you choose to use to split-test your website, they all work in a similar way: they send some of the page's visitors to each version of the page, and count how many conversions each version produces.

You run the test long enough to get a statistically reliable result. And, once you have a winner, that becomes the new version of the page.

What Should You Split Test?

You can test anything on a web page. The factors that tend to make the biggest difference to conversion rates are:

#1: Offers – prices, guarantees, speed of delivery, bonuses.

#2: Themes – which benefits do you most emphasise?

#3: Selling styles – e.g. long copy v short copy, personal tone v corporate tone, big promise v sober promise.

#4: Headlines – often the first text the visitor reads.

#5: Graphics – especially pictures of people. But the quality of product pictures can make a big difference, too.

#6 Text on action buttons – should a button say "Get your free report now" or "Submit"?

#7: Adding proof/reassurance elements – placing testimonials near action buttons, safe shopping logos.

#8: Things on the purchase page – form fields, repeating guarantees.

#9: Page layout – for example, having text to the left of an enquiry/sign up form compared to having it to the right.

Now I've explained how to know whether you've improved your conversion rate, let's look at how to improve it, starting with...

Chapter 15: The Easiest Thing To Sell

One of the first lessons I learned in sales was that the easiest thing to sell is something that's worth buying.

So, let me ask you a question: why should someone buy from you rather than from your competitors?

If you can't give a concrete answer to that question (and most business owners can't), I have another question...

If you, the business owner – who knows your product or service better than anyone else – doesn't know why someone should buy, how can you expect a complete stranger to know?

How can you expect someone arriving at your website for the first time to answer a question even you can't answer?

It's crazy, but it's what most websites ask their visitors to do.

It's like saying, "I don't know why you should buy from me, but here's some information that you might want to try to piece together into a persuasive proposition."

... And we wonder why only 2-3% of visitors buy...

Understanding USP

The solution to this problem is to create a "Unique Selling Proposition" (USP).

The idea of the USP was developed by Rosser Reeves, whose agency used it to popularise products like Anacin, Colgate, M&Ms, and Bic pens.

In his book, 'Reality in Advertising' (1961), he broke the Unique Selling Proposition into 3 parts:

Proposition: The ad must make a proposition: Buy this product and you'll get this specific benefit.

Unique: The proposition must be one the competition <u>cannot</u> or <u>does not</u> offer.

Selling: The proposition must be so strong that it can pull a large percentage of prospects to your product.

How To Find Your USP

It may be that your product or service already offers a unique advantage to the user. In which case, you're in a strong position to start with.

But, if that's not the case, there are a couple of solutions...

#1: As we saw, a proposition is unique if your competitors do not make it. Is there an advantage both you and your competitors offer, but they don't feature it prominently in their advertising?

By bringing this advantage to the foreground, you can create a uniquely advantageous proposition.

#2: If you really offer no exclusive advantage, can you improve your product or service?

And, if you can't improve it directly, can you improve your offer by...

- (A) Adding bonuses?
- (B) Providing a faster service?
- (C) Guaranteeing results?
- (D) Increasing your credibility by getting endorsements from credible people or organisations?

Any one of these things can be the basis of a USP.

Look at Compare the Market: as a comparison site, they have no product advantage. So, to encourage people to buy through them, they give away meerkat toys. That's using bonuses to make a unique offer.

Or you can combine these elements. One of the most famous USPs of all time was for Domino's Pizza: "Fresh, hot pizza delivered to your door in 30 minutes or less—or it's free". That's a combination of speed and a guarantee – and it propelled Domino's from a small local business to a global brand.

Creating a USP can be complicated, but it's worth it.

Bill Bernbach, who topped Advertising Age's 20th century list of advertising's most influential people, said,

"Advertising doesn't create a product advantage. It can only convey it...No matter how skillful you are, you can't invent a product advantage that doesn't exist."

And, if your ads don't convey an advantage, you're going to have mediocre ads, driving mediocre traffic to a website with a mediocre conversion rate.

The problem with mediocrity is that it provides meagre rewards. We're not in the meagre rewards business, we're here to dominate.

Chapter 16: Without this, no-one buys

John Caples – who wrote some of the greatest ads ever written - defined effective advertising as, "A believable promise to the right audience."

Gary Bencivenga, perhaps the greatest living copywriter, says "Without belief, nobody buys."

Do you see a pattern?

People are sceptical. If you make big claims about your product, back those claims up with proof and you'll see your conversion rate increase

There are many ways to prove your claims. Here are just a few:

Proof Element #1: Testimonials

These are most powerful when they back up a specific claim. So, if I claim a weedkiller works in less than an hour, I like to have a testimonial next to this saying, "All the weeds were gone within an hour".

Video testimonials tend to be the most powerful, then testimonials with photos, then testimonials with full names (and company name for B2B). Once you get to testimonials with nothing other than initials, the impact is really low.

Adding headlines to testimonials works well. Example: rather than

"I spent substantial money on PPC and barely saw any return at all. Since hiring Steve to manage my AdWords – and making the changes he suggested for my website – I'm getting 20 times as many enquiries (I've counted them – a 2,000% increase!) and my AdWords campaign is now very profitable."

This

"I'm getting 20 times as many enquiries"

"I spent substantial money on PPC and barely saw any return at all. Since hiring Steve to manage my AdWords – and making the changes he suggested for my website – I'm getting 20 times as many enquiries (I've counted them – a 2,000% increase!) and my AdWords campaign is now very profitable."

As you see, the main selling point really stands out. People who want more enquiries will be drawn to that headline. They probably wouldn't have noticed it buried in line 3 of a testimonial.

Proof Element #2: Demonstration

This is perhaps the most effective form of proof. After all, if you've seen something with your own eyes, you're going to believe it.

A great example of demonstration is Blendtec's online video series, "Will it blend". You can check them out here:

http://www.youtube.com/user/Blendtec

If you watch one of those videos, do you have any doubt this is a powerful and robust blender?

Proof Element #3: 3rd party studies and expert opinion

If there's research that supports the claim you want to make, use that research to add credibility.

So, instead of saying, "If your server goes down and you lose your company data, you could go out of business", say:

"A study by the CBI showed that 20% of companies that lost their server data without having a recent back-up went out of business within 3 months...".

Proof Element #4: Specificity

This was best summed up by Claude Hopkins:

"One expects a salesman to put his best foot forward and excuses some exaggeration born of enthusiasm. But just for that reason general statements count for little. And a man inclined to superlatives must expect that his every statement will be taken with some caution.

But a man who makes a **specific claim is either telling the truth or a lie**. People do not expect an advertiser to lie. They know that he can't lie in the best mediums. The growing respect in advertising has largely come through a growing regard for its truth.

So a definite statement is usually accepted. **Actual figures are not** generally discounted. Specific facts, when stated, have their full weight and effect."

Examples would be,

"Lose 36 Pounds in Only 7 Weeks"

"We have spent 47 years perfecting this dish."

"At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock"

You'll often find that unusual numbers will outperform round numbers. For example, I wrote two AdWords ads for a client, where the only difference was these 2 statements:

Ad #1: "40 years experience. Call today"

Ad #2: "39 years experience. Call today"

The latter ad got 76% higher click rate.

Proof Element #5: Specific Guarantees

Guarantees are the ultimate "put your money where your mouth is" proof element.

But, to be credible, a guarantee has to be specific, needs to have consequences for you if you don't live up to it, and the prospect needs to be able to exercise it.

So, something like "low prices" isn't a guarantee. It's an empty claim and there's really no way of determining whether your prices are "low".

"Never knowingly undersold" is better, but there are still no consequences of you being undersold. ("Sorry, mate, I had no idea everyone else was cheaper...")

A more powerful guarantee is "If you find it cheaper anywhere else, we'll refund the difference plus 10%".

It's specific, there are consequences for the vendor, and it's fairly easy for the prospect to understand how to get the refund.

A close relative to guarantees are refund policies. If you're selling products to consumers, you have to allow refunds, so why not emphasise this? It reduces the risk for the consumer. And lower risk = higher sales.

Chapter 17: Conversion Best Practices

In his excellent book, "Secrets of Successful Direct Mail", Richard Benson wrote:

"There are only two rules in direct marketing.

Rule 1: test everything.

Rule 2: Refer to Rule 1"

So, although I'm going to give you some "best practices", understand they are, at best, things that work more often than not. Or, to put it another way, they're assumptions.

Those assumptions may hold for your business or they may not. So, wherever you can, split-test any changes you make to your website.

With that warning in place, here are some things I've found tend to increase conversion:

Stick to the story – when someone lands on your site as a result of a Google search, that's the 3rd step in the process. The first step was that they typed something into Google. The second step was when they looked at your listing and thought "that could be what I'm looking for".

The third step is what they find on your site. And that page should repeat the promise you made in your search engine listing.

Be real – customers want to know that, if something goes wrong, you're a real business and they can contact you. That means putting a physical address on your contact page. Ideally a landline number as well. And, if you're a limited company, your company number.

Speak their language – ecommerce stores tend to follow certain conventions. As a result, those conventions have become a "vocabulary of shopping online".

If you do things differently, rather than speaking their language, you're forcing them to learn yours. And that extra work will usually result in fewer sales.

Tell the whole story – most websites shy away from using long copy on their pages because they assume people won't read. However, in a test, long copy will usually beat short copy.

This is because long copy allows you to give more reasons to buy, overcome more objections, and to give more proof.

Buyers read.

Your font should be larger and darker - most money is in the hands of people who are over 40. If, like me, you have the misfortune of being over 40, you'll probably know that's an age when many people's eyesight deteriorates.

So what looks readable to a 20-something web designer with a large fancy monitor isn't necessarily going to be easy to read for your prospects.

So ditch the "light grey on white" text. Make the font colour contrast clearly with the background.

As for font size, I wouldn't recommend anything under 10 point. 12 point is optimal in fonts like Arial.

Your action button should be on the first fold of the page - The "first fold" is whatever people can see without scrolling. If your main call to action — it could be a buy button, a web form — is below the first fold, test moving it up. Your conversions will probably increase.

The call to action button should be a colour that stands out against the rest of the page - Tests have shown there's no one ideal colour for an add to cart button. But they have shown that contrast between the page colour and the button colour usually results in more sales.

Break up your copy with sub-headlines - People won't necessarily read every word on your page. So make it easy for them to skim the page by breaking the page into sections, with a headline for each section. That way, they can zoom past the features and benefits that don't interest them, and be flagged down by those that do.

Keep paragraphs under 6 lines long – dense paragraphs of text discourage readership. I aim for no more than 6 lines per paragraph.

Keep narrow – reading text that is wide – more than 45 characters, including spaces – causes eye fatigue. Do your visitors a favour and keep your text below 45 chars wide.

We're almost at the end of our coverage of conversion rate optimisation. There's one thing left: how to deal with price resistance.

Chapter 18: Price is subjective

Oscar Wilde famously claimed, "A cynic is a man who knows the price of

everything, and the value of nothing."

But, let's be honest, unless we're used to buying a particular item, do we really

know how much it should cost?

It's our job as marketers to help our prospects understand the value of our

offer.

We can do this in a number of ways:

#1: Amazon price formatting

Amazon show you how much you "should" pay (RRP) and how that relates to

what you'll pay if you buy from them e.g.

RRP: £26.99

Price: £18.35

You Save: £8.64 (32%)

So, rather than wondering if £16.51 was a good price, you now know what the

standard price is, and that you're getting an 32% discount on that standard

price.

I had a client who was selling a little-known consumer electronic brand at a big

discount to RRP. The problem was, because prospects didn't know the brand,

they saw cheap = low quality.

We tested using the Amazon pricing format and his conversion rate increased

by over 30%.

#2: Compare to time saved

If you have an automated system that costs £50 and saves a business owner 6

hours a month, you could say,

37

"As a business owner, you probably make at least £50 per hour – maybe many times more than that. Our system typically saves users 6 hours a month. That's equivalent to £300 of your time."

#3: Compare to a related service

Example: if you're selling teeth whitening strips, you could compare the cost to the cost of a professional whitening.

#4: Trivialise the price

If you're selling something that's £20 a month, you can point out that's just 67p per day. It's less than the price of a daily coffee at Starbucks or a sandwich.

These 4 techniques use something called "price anchoring" – using another price to make your price seem like a great deal.

Smart marketers use this all the time. You should use it, too. Not only does it increase conversion rate, it allows you to charge higher prices.

Let's move on to what may be the most valuable chapter in this report...

Chapter 19: How To Quadruple Your Sales

In 1906, Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto discovered that 80% of land in Italy was owned by just 20% of the population.

This observation evolved into what's commonly known as either the "Pareto principle", or the "80-20 rule".

The rule states that roughly 80% of effects come from 20% of causes. For example...

80% of money belongs to 20% of the population 80% of crimes are committed by 20% of criminals 80% of complaints come from 20% of customers 80% of sales are generated by 20% of salespeople

...and...

80% of a company's profits are from 20% of its customers.

And it's this last one we're going to focus on.

How many businesses lose 75% of their sales

Imagine you have 100 customers and they produce £40,000 in net sales.

The 80-20 rule suggests the following:

- 80 customers, generate £8,000 an average of £100 per customer.
- 20 customers generate £32,000 an average of £1,600 per customer.

But... and here's the point... those 20 customers can only spend £1,600 each <u>if</u> you let them.

If you only have one product and one price, and you sell those products one per customer, then those 20 "golden customers" can't spend any more than the others.

Which means you get:

- 80 customers spend £100 per head total £8,000
- 20 customers are restricted to £100 each total £2,000

So, instead of making £40,000, the business only makes £10,000.

75% of the profits are lost.

The Good News

The good news is, if your business is doing this, then, with the right strategy, you could quadruple your sales.

For example, you could...

#1: Encourage people to buy larger quantities. (I added just one sentence to a client's website, and his average order size increased by 36%.)

#2: Offer more expensive versions of the same product. See Crazy Egg's site, where they have 'Basic', 'Standard', 'Plus', and 'Pro' packages:

https://www.crazyegg.com/pricing

If they only offered the basic package, the people who wanted the Pro level would only be able to spend 1/11 of the money they want to.

#3: Bundle your product and service with other products and services.

#4: Add maintenance plans, and other recurring services.

#5: Broaden the definition of your business. Rather than sell one thing, can you become a trusted advisor in your broad category?

#6: Turn your business into a lead generation business for a bigger ticket item. Does buying your product identify your customer as a good prospect for another company?

For example, if you were selling business accounting software, your customers could be good customers for accountants, lawyers, web designers...

It's possible you could make more money by recommending other companies than you make from your software.

These are just some of the ways to offer more value (and get paid for it) to the 20% who want to spend more.

As you can imagine, if you could do this, it'll double, triple or quadruple your sales... and your visitor value... and what you can bid for a click.

Having this back end is perhaps the biggest game-changer. It can catapult you from market obscurity to market leadership.

Chapter 20: Supersize Your Business

McDonalds is a selling machine.

Everything about their operation is designed to get people in, get them to spend as much as possible and then come back over and over again.

They've spent decades and a decent-sized fortune testing and trying different approaches to arrive where they are today.

And you can be certain that, if McDonalds is using a selling technique, then that technique is producing big results.

This means you can bypass the decades of trial and error, and adapt and adopt their techniques for your own business.

Let's look at three of these techniques...

(1) Can I make that a large?

Following the release of the film "Supersize Me", McDonalds withdrew some of their "up-sizing" options. However, that wasn't because they didn't work. In fact, they were so effective they were regarded as a danger to the health of America!

What McDonalds understood was, if you offer someone a larger quantity of something for a relatively small increase in price, they'll often say yes.

For example, I go to two supermarkets. One of them offers bottles of coke for £1.25p each. The other offers the same bottles for the same price, but has the option of two bottles for £2.

Now, at the first supermarket, when I buy coke, I only ever buy one bottle. In the second supermarket, not only do I buy coke more often, I also usually buy two bottles.

Why?

Well, it's not because 50p (the difference between £2 and two £1.25's) is important to me. It's because the extra 50p for the additional bottle seems such a bargain.

And, because the coke costs less than 50p to the retailer, he increases his profit. And this is the principle behind all the "buy 2, get 1 free" and "3 for the price of 2" offers you see.

But, it's not just about food.

Many drycleaners offer to clean a 4th garment free if you pay for 3 garments to be cleaned.

There's a website that sells health supplements. They've got a "buy three, get one free" on most of their products. For the customer that could mean the unit price goes from £29.99 to £22.49. The retailer adds £59.98 onto the sale.

If the profit on the original price was 50%, a single unit gives a profit of £15. The bulk option brings in £67.47, of which £22.47 is profit. That's an increase in profit of 49.8%.

If you've a carpet cleaning company, you can say to your clients "as we're already coming to your home to clean your living room carpet, we can do another room at half-price".

In your own business, how can you offer bulk-buying options to your clients that will offer them a better price and give you an increased profit?

(2) Would you like the deluxe?

Do McDonalds just sell a basic burger? No, as well as a hamburger, there's a cheeseburger, double cheeseburger, a Big Mac...

Many businesses sell higher ticket versions. A computer salesman would be foolish not to mention to you that, for an extra hundred pounds, you can have a faster computer, bigger screen, bigger memory and so on.

Is this immoral?

Here's my take on it: a good salesman is an advisor. It's his job to help you decide which item is best for you. If he fails to educate you about the possibilities available to you, he's done you a disservice.

In the PC example, if the higher performance PC is better suited to your needs, you'll get a better deal and the salesman a bigger commission.

You both win.

However, if the salesman fails to educate you and just lets you buy the basic model and you find out, two months down the line, that your PC isn't high-spec enough for you, you've both lost out. And you'll probably be saying "that damn salesman....".

So, it's your duty to educate your clients about the choices available. If you can give them a higher performing option or an option that gives them extra features, you'll find that many of them see the more expensive choice as the "better value" option.

However, if you don't educate them, they might not know this better option even exists.

(3) Would you like fries with that?

Whether it's fries with your burger, extra cheese with your nachos or added toppings on your pizza, the fast food industry knows that this one simple phrase is a money maker.

However, it doesn't just apply to the food industry.

I recently went to a concert by a little-known singer songwriter. After the show he hung around and sold his CDs to people in the audience. He sold around 20 CDs for £12 each. If the profit per CD was £8, and he sold 20 a night, 100 nights a year, this would make him £16,000 a year. Not a bad sideline for a "struggling" singer songwriter.

If you sell menswear and a man buys a suit, the salesman could say "you'll need a tie to go with your new suit".

The shop might sell an extra 10 ties a week just by asking this one question (and there's no reason why the customer should only have one tie that goes with the suit, why not offer a second tie at a discount?). That's an extra 500 ties a year. And, as well as a tie, the customer might need a belt and a couple of new shirts!

Summary

All of these techniques can be used online – as any Amazon customer knows.

But how many small businesses use them?

Maybe that's why they're small businesses?

Chapter 21: How To Sell More To Existing Clients

It can cost 5-10 times as much to sell to a new customer as it does to sell to an existing customer... yet most businesses focus almost all their attention on customer acquisition.

It doesn't make sense... especially given that, according to a Bloomberg article from 2007, "studies show that 68% of customers leave a business relationship because of a perceived attitude of indifference on the part of the company".

So the first rule of selling more to your customers is to treat them as well as you'd treat your prospects.

Build Loyalty By Adding Value

According to marketing guru Dan Kennedy, every month you fail to keep contact, you lose 10% of your customers.

One easy way to keep in touch is with a monthly newsletter that adds value.

That way, not only are you keeping yourself in the client's mind, you're building a deeper relationship.

Tell and Sell

If you sell a wide range of products, do your customers know? Maybe they're buying from a different company, but would buy from you if they knew you sold it.

Some of the ways you can do this, for example: in a newsletter, by email, in a catalogue, by having your salespeople mention these other products, through point of sales offers .

Programme Repurchases

Joe Polish, who teaches carpet cleaners how to market, encourages his students to set up regular cleanings for their clients.

So, rather than get a single cleaning... then waiting until the carpet is intolerably dirty... they set up a schedule to clean every few months.

That double or triples how often a client buys each year.

Reorder Reminders

If you sell a product that's reconsumptive – i.e. it runs out and people buy again – you can work out roughly when people are about to run out, then send them a reminder to buy again.

These are just some of the ways you can increase the average number of purchases per customer.

Chapter 22: Summary

In this report you discovered...

- * That most buying decisions start with a Google search
- * That, for commercial searches, paid listings get around 2/3 of the clicks
- * That the ads on the left get 10-20 times the clicks as the ads on the right
- * Therefore, to dominate your market with search engine marketing, you need to be one of those left hand advertisers.

We then covered...

- * How Google ranks ads
- * How to avoid Quality Score problems that'll harm your ad positions.

Then moved on to the real way to beat your competitors: which is to have a higher visitor value, and how to do that.

Because the goal of this report was to teach a mindset and a strategy, the "how to" was covered only briefly.

For example, I barely touched on PPC setup and optimisation, or on conversion rate optimisation.

Both of these subjects deserve books of their own. And, if you go to the resources page at www.bothsidesoftheclick.co.uk/dominate-resources you'll see up-to-date book recommendations.

The strategy I taught here is something I call "The AdWords Multiplier Method". You can read the simplified version – without the "how to" – in Appendix 1.

And, in Appendix 2, you can see a real world example of how I implemented it for a client who'd been using AdWords for 8 years, and increased their AdWords profits by 643% in a few months.

Finally, if you want the benefits of dominating your market, but feel you need help, then check out Appendix 3, where I list the services I offer.

Best wishes,

Steve Gibson

PS If you liked this report, why not sign up to my free monthly newsletter at http://www.bothsidesoftheclick.co.uk/free-adwords-report

Appendix 1: The AdWords Multiplier Method – Big Profits From Small Improvements

When trying to grow an online business, many site owners get stuck in what I call the "traffic trap" – focusing exclusively on getting more and more visitors.

Why is this a "trap"?

There are two reasons: firstly, when you continue to work on the same aspect of your business, you get diminishing returns – it takes more and more effort to produce smaller and smaller gains. Secondly, by focusing on only one thing, you're restricting growth.

If, instead, you worked on traffic PLUS conversion PLUS profit per sale, you'd see far higher growth... with, arguably, less effort.

The AdWords Multiplier Method

With AdWords, there are a number of factors you can influence:

- Number of impressions (times your ad is shown)
- Your clickthrough rate
- Your cost per click
- Your website conversion rate
- Average profit per sale

And, if you were to improve each of these by 10%, here's an example of what you could get:

	Before	After (10% Better)
Impressions/month	2,000,000	2,200,000
Clickthrough rate	1.00%	1.10%
Clicks	20,000	24,200
Cost Per Click	£0.50	£0.45

Cost	£10,000.00	£10,890.00
Website Conversion Rate	1.00%	1.10%
Profit Per Sale	£60	£66
Number Of Sales	200	266.2
Sales	£12,000	£17,569
Total Profit	£2,000.00	£6,679.20

233.96% Increase In Profit!

Again, this is the product of just two things: focusing on every factor and making small improvements.

What you'll usually find is that you'll improve some factors by 20% or 30%.

The Virtuous Circle

For example, a few years ago, I increased one client's average order value by 37% (in a split-test) just by adding a single sentence to his web page.

That increase in order value means he could then turn a profit on some keywords that were previously unprofitable. It's a virtuous circle.

And that's what you'll find when you get out of the "traffic trap": increasing your conversion rate and average order allows you to spend more money to bring in a visitor. This, in turn, leads to more visitors. These visitors can be put through split-tests that will increase your conversion rate... and so on...

And, while all of this is happening, you're building up your bank account and some of that money can be re-invested in other marketing (like hiring a top-class SEO).

Appendix 2: The AdWords Multiplier Method In Practice – 643% Increase In Profits

The point of this case study is to show how working 'both sides of the click' multiplies profits – in this case, a 643% increase in profit over 7 months. It also shows how to tackle a poorly optimised account.

Due to confidentiality, this case study doesn't contain sensitive data about the client.

Also, because they are a well-known company, they get a lot of searches for their brand name. I've excluded that data from the case study as, although the profit from brand searches increased by over 30% – due to increased ctr and

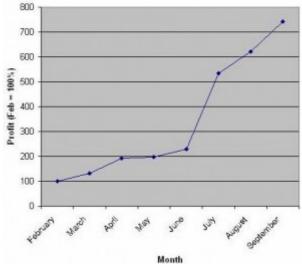
conversion rate – there are far fewer opportunities for PPC optimisation when it comes to brand searches.

A Bit of Background

The client is a well-established online business. They started using PPC in late 2005 and had used at least 2 different PPC agencies prior to hiring me in early 2013.

So it's important to understand I was optimising a long-standing

professional campaign, rather than a new account or D-I-Y campaign.



Profit - Month by Month

But, despite this, I was still able to quickly multiply profits.

Month 1

I started by asking the client what a conversion was worth. Using that data, I could see the cost per conversion was 79% of the value of a conversion. Or, to put it another way, they would spend £1 and get back £1.26 – a profit of 26%.

That's not particularly bad in a competitive market but, as you'll see, after 7 months, it was increased to 89%.

When I took over, the campaign was poorly structured. There were a number of campaigns, some of which had hundreds of active ad groups – one had 477. These ad groups overlapped to the point where there was no way to know which ad group would be triggered by a particular search.

The previous managers had used bid management software. As a result, the bids varied hugely within ad groups. And, looking at historic data, the differences in bids didn't reflect the differences in ROI of different keywords.

My first step was to simplify the account so it was clear which ad group would show for any particular search (using negative keywords).

Each resultant ad group – and there were around 90 of them – was tightly themed around one keyword idea. I also split ad groups into (a) phrase + exact match, and (b) broad match.

I used historic search query reports to estimate cost per conversion per ad group – and set the bids accordingly. All bids were set at ad group level, rather than keyword level – i.e. every keyword within an ad group had the same bid.

Doing that meant I could get a clear picture of the ROI for different keyword themes – and how that varied across different match types.

Finally, I also deleted some obviously losing ads.

The result: the spend decreased 11%, conversions dropped 1.5%, cost per conversion dropped 9%, profit per £1 increased to 39p. Profit in month 1 was 33% higher than when I started.

Because these changes took some time to implement, we didn't get the full value of these in month 1 – so the real level of improvement was greater than 33%.

Month 2

This was mainly a continuation of the work done in month 1. As data came in, I continued to adjust bids, delete losing ads, write new ads, and break up ad groups where appropriate.

One thing that's worth addressing at this point is that, if your ad shows on the left, you'll get 10-20 times the clickrate you get if your ad shows on the right.

So my goal was to find the balance between being on the left and getting the maximum number of clicks versus maximising the profit per conversion. It's often wise to accept a much lower profit per conversion in order to bid higher and get 10-20x as many visitors.

Month 2 results: the spend increased 42% month-on-month, but that resulted in 42% more conversions. Profit per £1 increased slightly to 40p. Profit in month 2 was 91% higher than when I started.

Month 3

This month saw a continuation of the work above, but I also started looking at the landing pages being used. I felt I could improve on them, so I wrote a new page that went live at the end of May.

This page was tested in the 15 highest-volume ad groups. Ultimately, it averaged around 20% higher conversion rate but, as you'll see, that didn't start paying off until June.

Month 3 results: Due to (mainly) ad split-testing, profit increased to 99% higher than when I started.

Month 4

The 'normal PPC work' continued. But we started to see higher conversion rates due to the impact of the new landing page. (Remember it was only running in 15 ad groups and half the time – the other half, ads with the old landing pages were being shown.)

Month 4 results: The success of the previous month's work meant I could increase bids. As a result, the spend went up 21% month-on-month, conversions were up 19%, profit was up 128% compared to when I started.

By this point we were getting 66% more conversions per month than in February. Our cost per conversion was down 10%. So, although spend was up 50%, profits were up by 128%.

This is what happens when your campaigns become more effective: you can bid for higher ad positions, and still make more profit per conversion.

Month 5

As you'll see from the chart at the beginning of the article, this is when the landing page really started paying off.

I initially tested it in 15 ad groups. By now, it had proven itself superior in most of these ad groups – meaning all the traffic in those groups was going to this higher converting page. And I'd rolled out the test to more and more ad groups.

Month 5 results: As a result of this, the cost per conversion was 30% lower than when I started. Or, to put it another way, instead of paying £1 to get back £1.26, we were paying £1 to make £1.80.

Because we were now so competitive, we were bidding for ever-higher ad positions – our spend was 76% higher than when I started.

In return for this extra money, we had 150% more conversions and a 434% higher profit!

This is the benefit of combining effective pay per click management and landing page optimisation.

Months 6 and 7

There were no new landing pages during this time, but I did continue to roll out the landing page from late May.

I was also continuing to split-test ads, tweak bids, add the occasional new keyword idea (hard to find when you start with an account that's over 7 years old), adding negative keywords.

However, as you'll see from the chart, profit continued to increase: +521% in August, +643% in September.

By the end of September, things looked like this:

February v September

Difference %

Clicks +112%

Impressions +59%

Ctr +33%

Cost/click +4%

Cost +121%

Conversions +232%

Conv rate +57%

Cost / conv -33%

Profit/conv % +126%

Total Conv Value +232%

Profit +643%

Profit per £ spent +239%

As you can see, spend increased by 121%, but that resulted in 232% more sales.

All of this was made able by lowering the cost per conversion. By cutting that by 1/3, we ended making 126% more per conversion. That allowed us to bid more and get higher ad positions.

This is what I called working "both sides of the click": using conversion rate optimisation to enable you to bid more. That gives you more impressions, higher clickrate, more conversions etc... to a far greater extent than if you just worked on the PPC account.

Of course, I coupled that with account optimisation. So the gains from both sides multiplied like compound interest and gave the 643% increase in profit we wouldn't have achieved if we'd only done PPC work, or only done conversion rate optimisation.

Appendix 3: How I Can Help You

People get into marketing for different reasons. My reason may be unique: I was banished to the marketing department as a punishment for falling out with my boss.

That was 1994. I've had a few detours since then, but have been working in marketing since I returned to the UK in 2001.

Here are a few of the services I offer:

PPC set up, optimisation and management – Google AdWords has gotten increasingly complex, and increasingly hard to business owners to self-manage. Hiring a experienced professional will usually pay off – in terms of both increased ROI, and in saved time.

As Red Adair once said, "If you think it's expensive to hire a professional to do the job, wait until you hire an amateur".

Copywriting – I've been writing copy for 14 years. And, when I'm hired to improve existing copy, I usually succeed. In fact, I succeed often enough that I'm happy to guarantee I'll beat your conversion rate, or you pay me nothing.

Conversion Rate Optimisation – Just like the copywriting... but with design/usability advice thrown in.

I've beaten one of the most famous conversion rate optimisation companies in the world. I improved 2 pages they repeatedly failed to beat... and, in 3 attempts, they failed to beat a page I wrote.

That doesn't mean I'm better than them. I am, however, around 1/10th of their price... and, as with my copy, I guarantee my results.

Marketing Strategy/Consulting – I've worked with, or consulted for, hundreds of businesses. Each of those businesses was doing some smart things - which could be adapted and adopted by other businesses.

And most of them were doing some not so smart things – mistakes to avoid.

That gives me a perspective far broader than you'd get from running just one business.

On top of that, I've been tuned into the marketing world since the 1990s. I've seen ideas come and go, and I've identified the marketing principles and techniques that work well, and keep working.

With my consulting service, you get to short cut this process. So, rather than spend the next 15-20 years learning the principles and techniques of marketing, why not borrow my experience instead?

If any of these services interest you, you can get in touch with me via my website: www.bothsidesoftheclick.co.uk