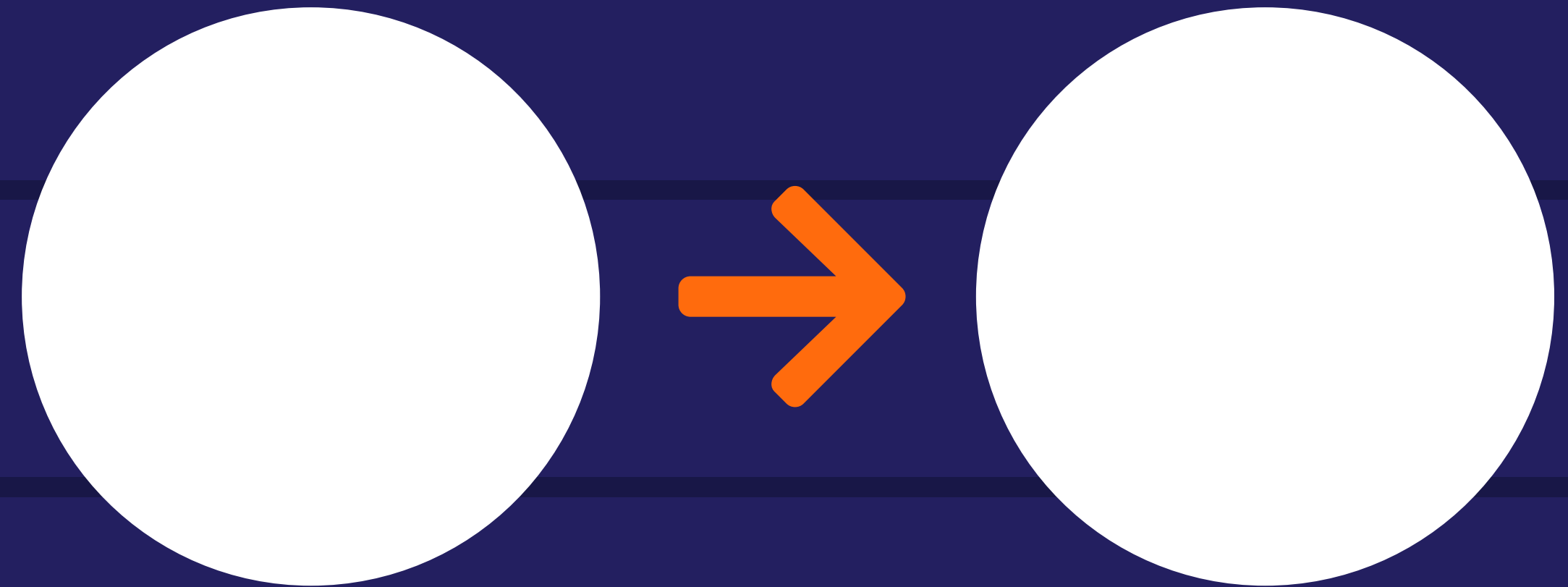




7 Tips for eCommerce Owners to Successfully Run Google Ads

before we dive in

It's important to state that Google Ads is no longer called Google AdWords and they updated their logo. This is important so that while you're reading, you understand why we're phrasing this as Google Ads when many people are only familiar with the older name of AdWords. So don't worry, we're not phrasing anything wrong, we just do our best to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to new information, and then share that information with those wanting to learn more...like yourself.



01

don't use google ads express—use google ads

Why? Simple. You have no control over your ad dollars. You're literally just handing over your money to Google and trusting them to put the TLC into your ads that one designated professional would. It's just not going to happen. You will find you are spending your money far too quickly and not understanding what's going on, let alone trying to analyze what's working, what's not, and what strategies to change to continue to strengthen your campaigns. Don't let your Google Ads be a "set it and forget it" type of situation.

TIP

When you first create your campaign, make sure you are creating a Google Ads Campaign, and not an Express Campaign.





02 write our your flow before you start

What is a flow? I'm simply describing the build, which is...

Campaign → Ad Groups → Ads → Keywords

Before you start logging in and clicking buttons, you'll want to decide what your goal is. Are you selling something? Is it leads that you need? Or maybe you're wanting to aim for brand awareness for a new product or service. Whatever your goal is, define it first so that you can build around your purpose.

types of google ad campaigns

For the purpose of this eBook, we are focusing on eCommerce so we will discuss campaigns specific for eCommerce companies.

For example, if you're trying to sell products, you'll want to look into a Shopping campaign. Unlike all the other types of campaigns (Search, Display, Video) you'll need to create a separate account on Google Merchant Center and then link that to your Google Ads account in order to run this type of campaign. To simplify, Shopping campaigns are the ads that show the actual images of your products on Google's SERP (Search Engine Results Page). We have an in-depth article on all the different types of Google Ad campaigns that dives further into this.

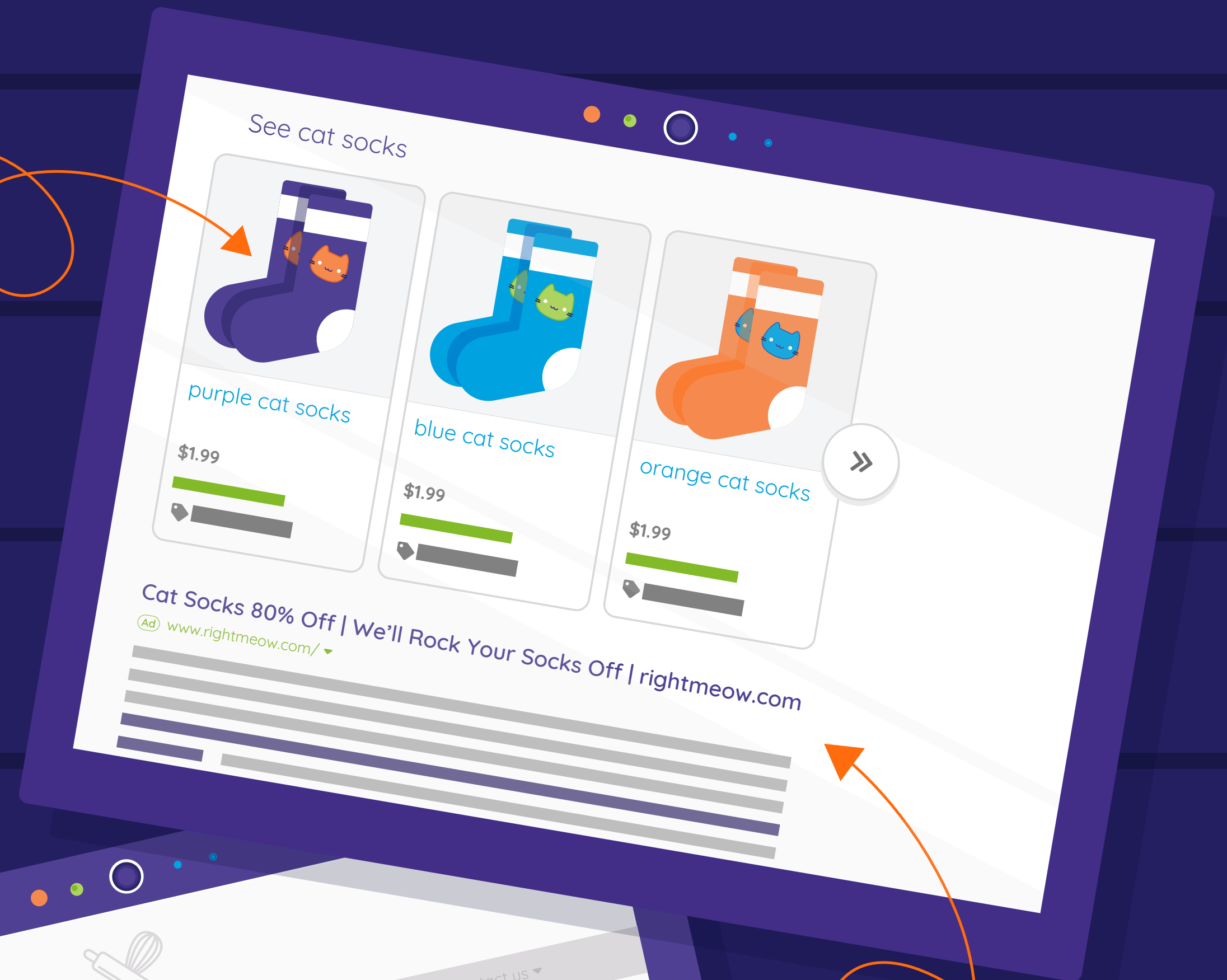
Now, you are not limited to Shopping Campaigns if you're selling products online. In fact, if you have the budget, it's important to experiment with different types of campaigns to answer the ever-so-important question of, "What Works?" So, try out a Search Campaign as well, and retarget those customers that go to your website from those ads so that your follow-up ads will do just that...follow your potential new customers around the internet. Remarketing can be expensive, but it's powerful, so when done right, the ROI success can be well worth the investment.



types of google ad campaigns to run

shopping, search, retargeting/remarketing

shopping



search



retargeting/remarketing



An illustration of a person's hands working on a sewing machine. The hands are positioned to cut a piece of purple fabric. The fabric has a dashed line labeled 'TRIM LINE' and a solid line labeled 'STITCH LINE'. The background is a dark purple grid. In the top right corner, there is a small circular inset showing a close-up of the sewing machine's needle and foot stitching the fabric.

03

build with intent — analysis needed before change

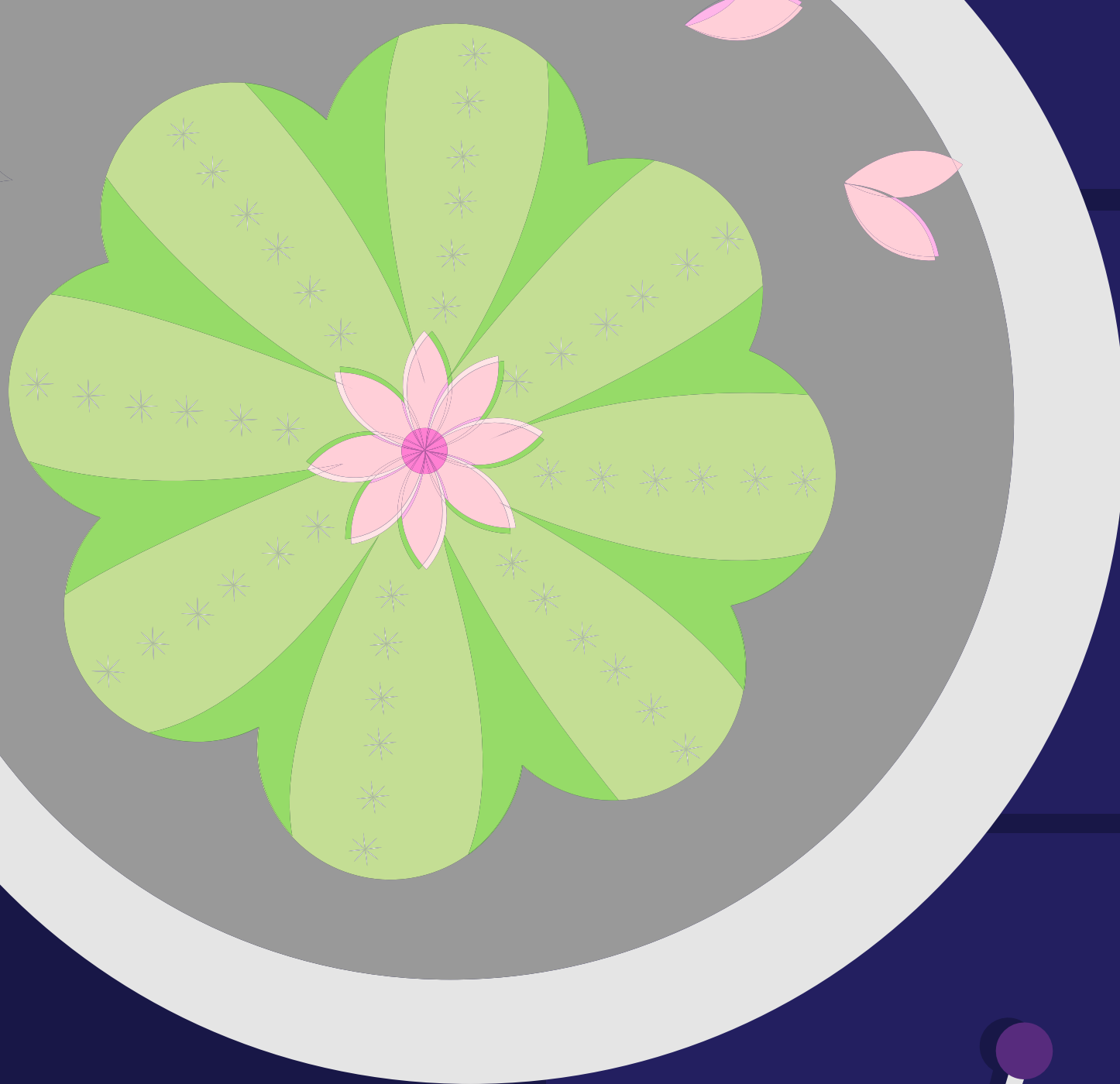
I cannot stress enough how important it is to not rush through the build. Each and every decision you make during this build process is vital once you launch your campaign.

Why?

It is in your best interest to not make any major changes in the first 30 days of your campaign build. In addition, the first time you decide to make a major change (hopefully following the proper analysis), you now have to make sure not to make any other major changes for at least another 30 days.

Why?

Every major change you make in your campaign, Google needs to 'relearn' your campaign. This can take several days, sometimes longer. Then, you want to allow at least 2 weeks of data to flow through before you start to see any valuable information after the campaign has been relearned by Google's algorithm. That's already 2/3 of an entire month which is still not enough time for you to make any large decisions about your campaign. This is why 30 days is the minimum. I repeat...minimum.



so, no changes?

I didn't say no changes, I said no major changes.

What's the difference between a change and a major change in Google Ads?

I'm glad you asked! Honestly, these are the kinds of questions I wish people asked. These are the game changers for anyone running a Google Ads campaign. An employee, an agency, anyone that has their hands in ads should know the answer to this question. Okay okay, I'll get to it and make this our next point...



04

the difference between
a change and a major
change in google ads

While there is daily maintenance that should be performed on your Google Ad Campaigns, there are some changes that should only be done sparingly. Here are direct examples of daily maintenance changes and larger changes.

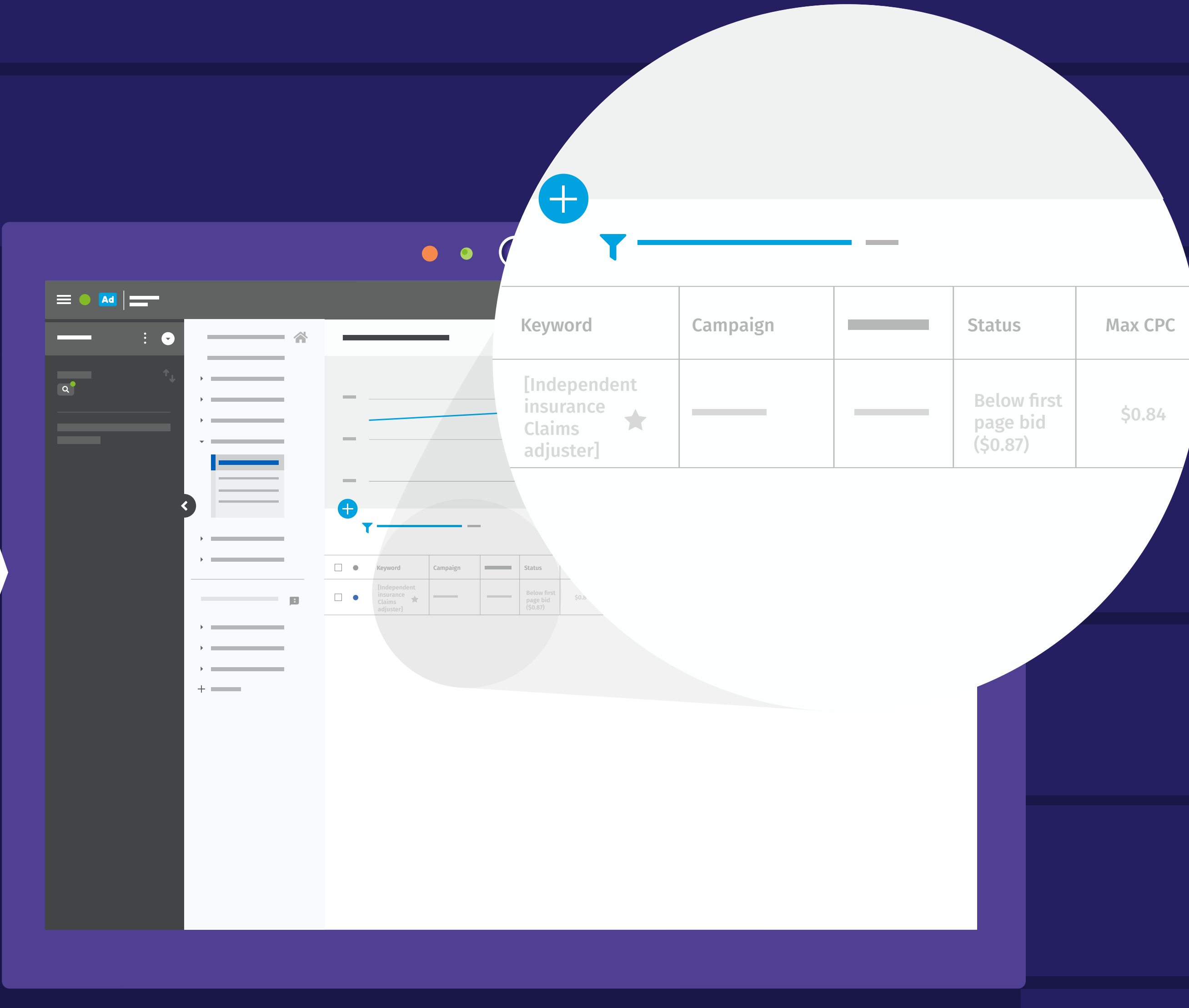
Daily Maintenance

Keyword Bid Adjustments. If you’re running a campaign that relies upon manual cpc bidding, like a “Top of Page” then you will want to look at what your keywords are bidding for. You can organize your keywords by “Status” to view any that under the current first page bid level. Here’s an example straight from one of our own accounts:

Search Terms Review

Do not confuse “search terms” with “keywords” as they are two very different things. While you bid on keywords, search terms are the actual words that users are typing into Google before seeing your ad. Here’s an example...

Keyword: “Red Shoes”
Search Term: “Women’s Red Shoes Online”





So, after you’ve looked at your keyword bids, click over to “Search Term” and choose which day you’re looking at. As I check these for our clients every day, I like to look at “Yesterday’s” Keywords as well as any today that I can review.

While reviewing these search terms, you will see that they are either already being bid on, or you can add the search term to your keyword list, or you can add it to your negative keyword list. This daily fine tuning pays off immensely in the long run as your campaign gets so detailed so that Google’s algorithm can better understand and serve up your ads to the proper people.

Negative Keywords:

Although you’ll want to build out a list of negative keywords before you launch your campaign, finding ones you may not have thought of usually happen during the daily search term maintenance. Personally, I find this part pretty fun because there are always those search terms that teach you something you didn’t know about not just your customers, but your products and how people search for them. Here’s an example...

In reference to lectures, you bid on the keyword “speaker series” but your ads are being served up when people search for Bluetooth speakers. If you’re putting in the effort to watch over your search terms like a hawk, then you’ll catch these terms to add to your negative keyword list which will save you both time in the future as well as money so your ads won’t be spent on the wrong search term.

This is some serious coverage on search terms so we’ll move on, but it was important and you deserve to read an eBook with detailed information that you can actually use. Ok, carrying on...

Major Changes

I feel like this paragraph should open up with that intense sound of dun, dun, dunnnnn! Grab a pencil, pen, typewriter, tablet, tattoo gun, laptop, or whatever else you use to remember something forever, because you shouldn't be running ads at all if you don't heed my words (as well as other Google Ads experts) about properly spacing out major changes.

There are several types of major changes, but first and foremost, whatever major change you make on your campaign, you better wait wait wait for at least 30 days before you intentionally or accidentally make another major change. The intent of this portion of the eBook is to give you the tools so that you won't make an accidental major change to your campaign. So, here they are...

New Campaigns

Anything new, you want to analyze for at least 30 days, other than performing your daily maintenance as described above. The same goes for new Ad Groups, Ads, etc.

Strategy Changes

At the beginning of your campaign build, you choose a strategy. Top of Page, Conversions, Maximize Clicks, etc. You do not want to change your strategy if you don't have to. If you're even considering a strategy change, I suggest discussing this with your team to go over the reasons, pros, cons, and anything else before making this decision. Once you are sure and have decided it is what is best, then be sure to hold tight as Google relearns your campaign and then another few weeks for data and a little more time after that before you make decisions on anything, not just strategy changes, but any other major change.





Budgets

This wasn't always considered a major change, but at some point in 2018 Google changed their algorithm regarding your daily budgets. This means, whatever monthly budget you choose, you will break down into a daily budget which you will enter into your campaign. I.e) $\$1,000/\text{month} = \$32.88/\text{day}$. Google takes that daily budget and has the ability to spend twice the amount of that in a single day, as long as they stay within the calculated monthly only given by the daily budget. So, if you are concerned that you are under budget and suddenly increase your daily to try to manually make your monthly goal, you're actually telling Google you're willing to spend much more within a single month, but it still has to take several days to relearn this so that it can best decide how to allocate those funds based on impression share and how often throughout a 24 hour period or however long your ad schedule is, if you've created an ad schedule. Side

Note:

Do not create an ad schedule without at least 90 days of data (with no major changes) to base that decision off of.

05

utilize extensions

Google's feature for extensions are one of my favorite things to utilize. There are so many different kinds, and Google is frequently updating and adding new ones for you to test out on your ads. But first...

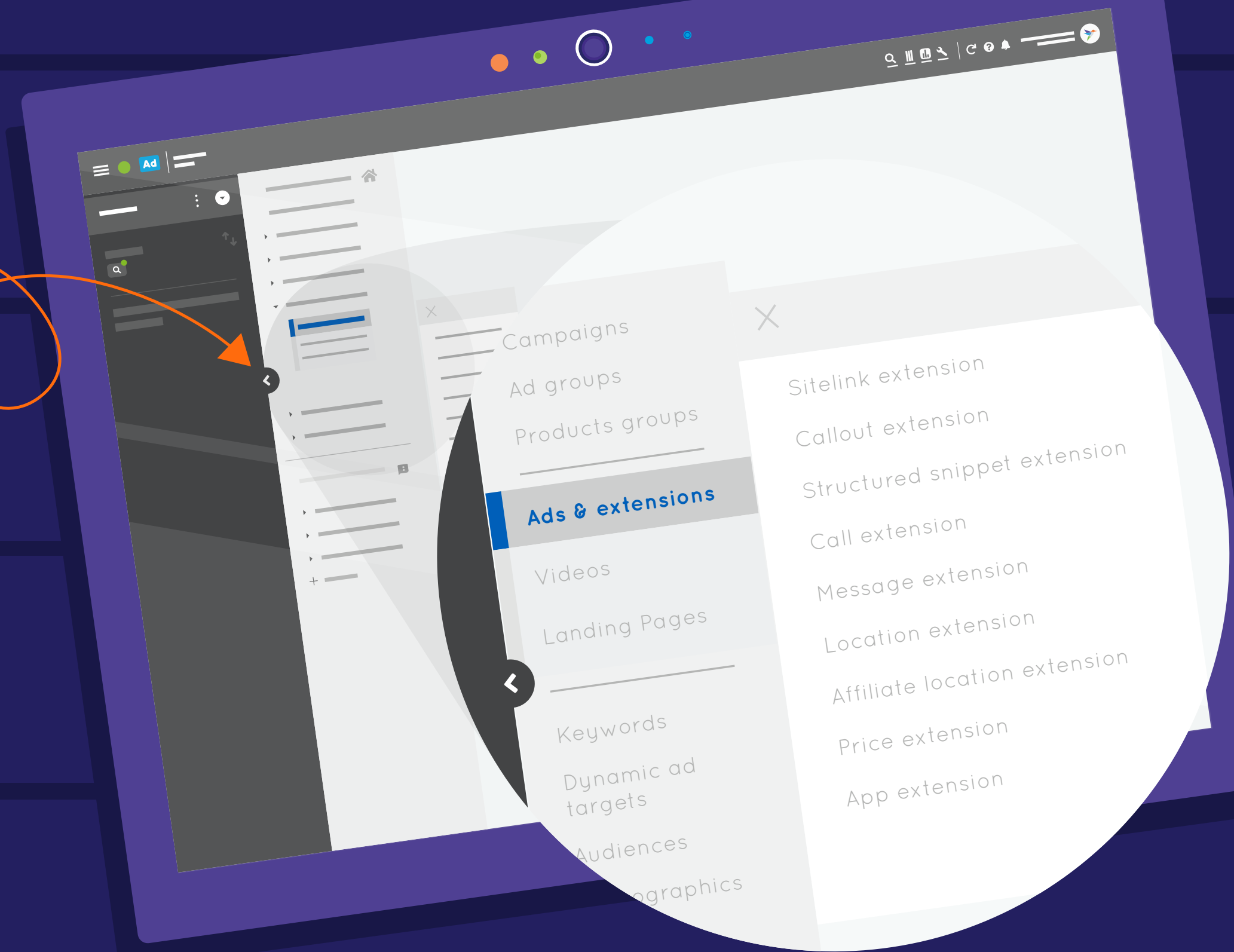
What in the world are Google Ad Extensions?

View the example to the right!

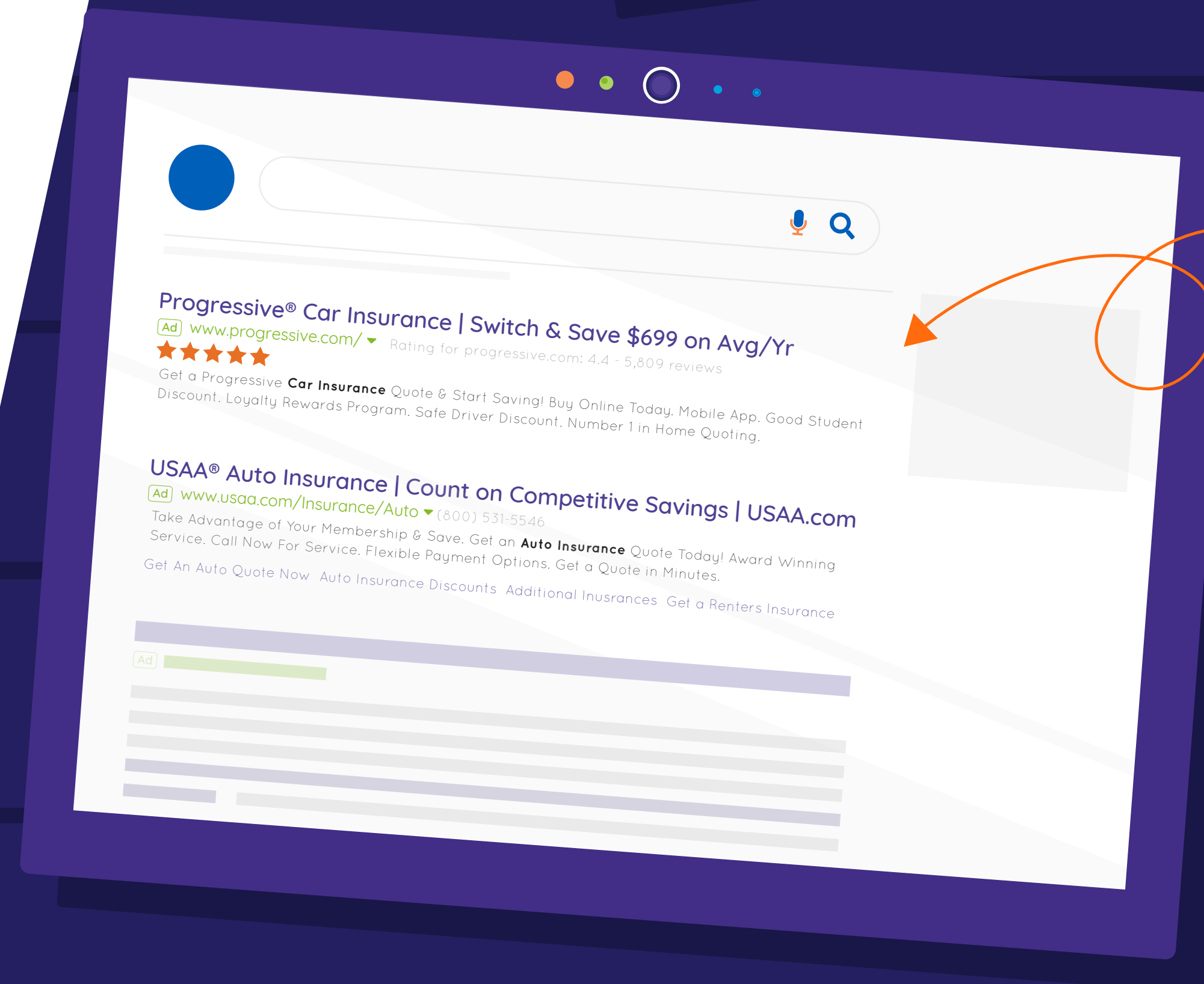
The "car insurance" ads to the right are examples of ads that utilizes a few different extensions. Progressive utilizes callout extensions and seller ratings. USAA utilizes a call extension showing their phone number and sitelinks which are clickable actions found at the bottom of the ad.

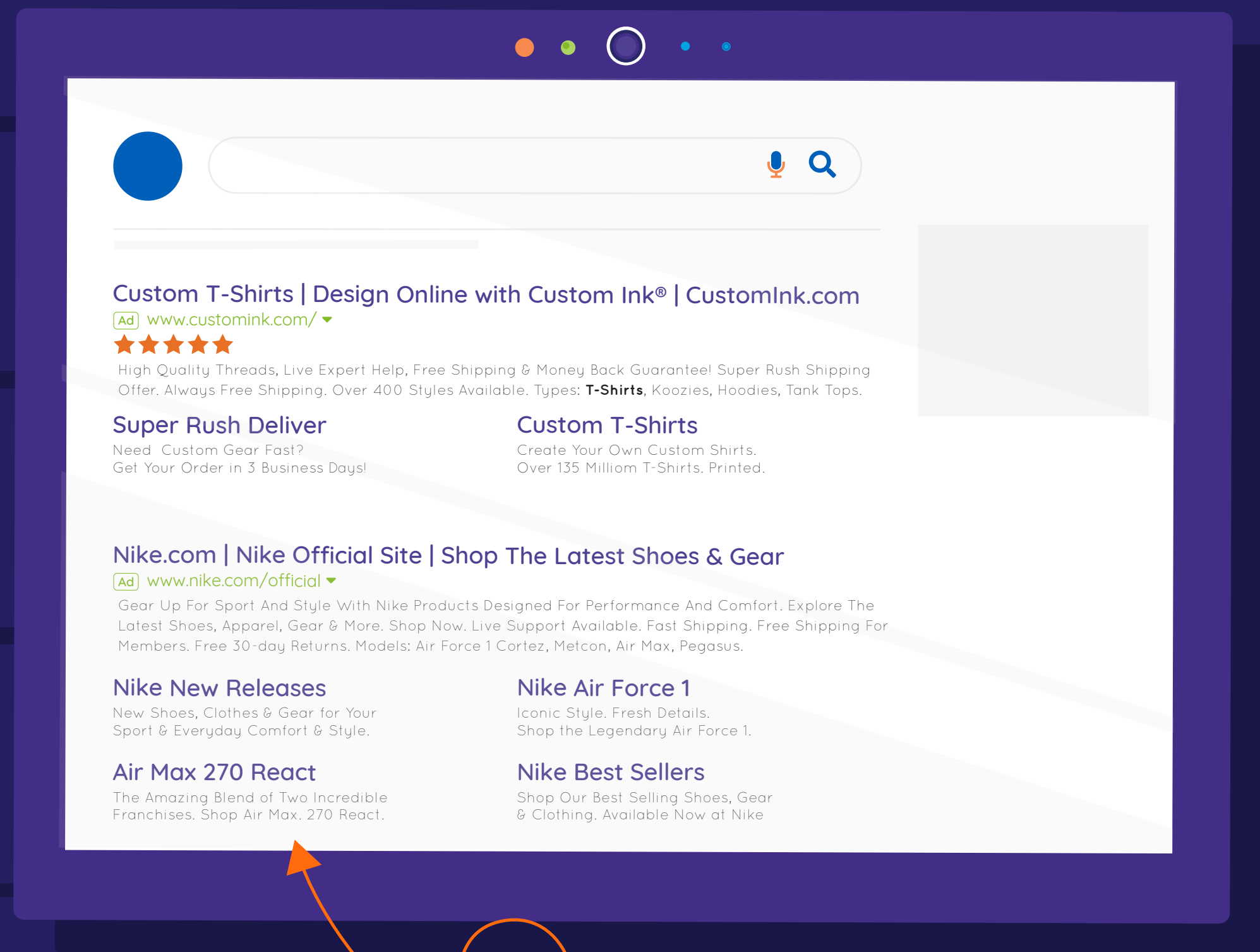
However, there are so many other extensions you could and should be using to really dominate the ad space. Let's look at an ad that successfully uses up more space than their competitors. Custom Ink does a better job with their extensions by utilizing more space with the sitelink extensions.

Google
Ad Extensions



car insurance ads





*Nike utilizing their
ad space*

But wait... someone “just does it” even better... Nike. Look at all that ad space they’re utilizing. I think they should add seller ratings to make this stand out even more, but this is still a great example of a brand that is successfully using several extensions, dominating the ad space, and having all that make sense.

If you’re really astute, you’ll notice I’ve mentioned seller ratings but they’re not in the extension dropdown as an option. That’s because Google requires a bit more – ok a lot more – work to implement this feature and that can only be done via your Google Merchant Center account.

Finally, be very aware of where you’re attaching your extensions to. You can apply them to Account Settings, Campaign Settings, or Ad Group Settings. This is important for extensions that may apply to one of your campaigns, but not all of them. If you create an account level extension, you applying that extension to show on every campaign, every ad group, and every ad. So make sure this makes sense for your strategy, otherwise be as fine tuned as possible when applying extensions. It’s worth the extra work to this on an ad group level basis as you build out and fine tune your campaigns



06

testing, testing

Once your campaign is built, a lot of the daily maintenance, other than what was previously mentioned, is testing and analysis.

Location

Are you selling products across the US? Once you have at least 90 days worth of data with no major changes, you'll want to analyze the areas that are converting at the highest rate. Another fun one is to find high converting areas with the lowest cost. Similarly, you can also find the highest converting products at the lowest cost. These products and areas can be pulled into their own ad groups and tested on their own which will, according to your analysis, convert the best (highest) and at the lowest cost.

Ad Schedule

In the beginning, you will want to be running your ads throughout the entire 24 hour period, every day. There are always exceptions to any of these rules but for the most part this is the case. After you have at least another 90 days of data to look off of, you can start to see what days and times your ads are performing the best. At this point, you are safe to create an ad schedule so that you're only showing your ads during these prime times which will save you money and, in theory, lower that cost per conversion.

Audience

Many companies know their target audience from a marketing perspective. However, a Google Ads campaign almost always shows me a more targeted or even completely different audience than what was predicted in the beginning. When analyzing your audience you can make better decisions for who you are showing your ads to. This is also a great area to test out remarketing/retargeting strategies.

Target, Exclude

As previously mentioned, you can target and exclude search terms that are coming in with your daily maintenance. However, you can also target and exclude geographically. Are there certain states in the US you don't ship to? Or, maybe after your analysis you have found that a particular state or region is a high cost for your ads but they are not converting. In turn, maybe there is a state that is converting the best so you can allocate a percentage more of your budget to that area, or even pull out a separate ad group or campaign for that particular state or region.

A/B Test Ads

You never want only one ad in an ad group. The easiest way to do this is to take one ad and create another one with the titles and description lines switched around. You can a/b test which one performs the best, as well as feed Google's algorithm with a healthier amount of ads. If you only have one ad in ad group, you will never reach maximum health according to how the algorithm works in Google Ads because it's simply not enough 'food' for the algorithm. I would suggest having more than 2 ads, but however many ads you have, make sure you're A/B testing them so that you can analyze which ones perform best and then allocate the budget towards the healthy ones while pausing the others and still maintaining more than one ad in a single ad group.

SKAC and SKAGS

We touched on this earlier, so just as a reminder that after your analysis if you find a healthy keyword that's converting at a rate that's far above all other keywords, try pulling it out into its own ad group, or even its own campaign. SKAC (Single Keyword Ad Campaigns) and SKAG (Single Keyword Ad Groups) are not magic, they won't always work...but when you find the diamond in the rough that does, that is the day where it will change everything.





07

trust the new algorithm

Specifically speaking, the "Maximize Conversions" algorithm. Back in 2018 I would have never used this strategy. Every test I performed and research with my colleagues proved that this strategy was a fast way to spend money with a low return. However, in January of 2019, Google put this particular algorithm back into Beta. I worked directly with my Google Reps on this and as hard as it was to take the risk to test this again, with their assurances, I went ahead and gave it a run. All this with the client's permission of course. It did not take long to see that this algorithm was actually working!

As with anything, this is not magic either. The particular client I ran the test on had years of data for the new algorithm to feed off of, as well as years of data from our daily maintenance and strategic changes when it came to bigger adjustments as previously discussed. I knew this would be the perfect client to test this on because I knew all the data we would be giving the new algorithm was healthy data. They literally had everything they needed to go on to determine how to properly maximize conversions.

After the first week, we were seeing results. After the second week, even more. Within the first month and the following, the campaign we were running maximize conversions on had been the healthiest it had ever been. Now, this includes our continued daily maintenance and changes made from analysis, all things we have discussed so far. With the partnership of our work and trusting the new algorithm, we were on top for our client and the results spoke for themselves.

Since early 2019, we have successfully applied this algorithm to all of our eCommerce clients following enough time for the build and Google to read substantial data. We have not applied it to every campaign, however, only those specifically set for purchase and again following enough data.

conclusion

You made it! You now have enough information to build and maintain a quality Google Ads campaign for your eCommerce store. But don't stop here, keep on top of trends with Google Alerts and follow trusted accounts that do the same so that you are staying on top of new information and the constant changes that Google delivers, because Google is like New York...it never sleeps and it's forever changing.

We love what we do so much that we invite you to ask us any questions regarding this eBook, Google Ads, or your eCommerce goals...no strings attached. Helping eCommerce companies grow is our passion, and we don't hoard the secrets to success, rather partner with our clients to show them what we're doing and how we're doing it. This is how we build trust, and this is why we're so confident in what we do, that we share all this with you.

