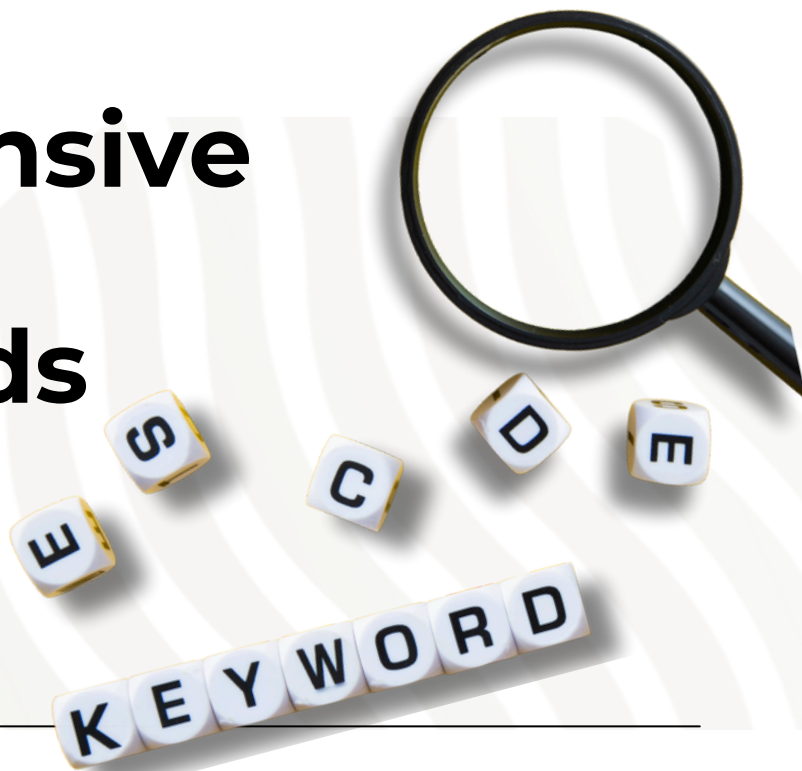


# A Comprehensive Guide To PPC Keywords



Keywords are a cornerstone of any PPC strategy, working to trigger specific ads, to a specific audience, at a specific time - so knowing how to find the best keywords for your PPC goals is essential.

Read on for a deep-dive into PPC keywords and how to best use them in your PPC ads.

## What To Expect

OUR GUIDE TO CREATING A  
WINNING KEYWORD STRATEGY

AN INTRODUCTION TO PPC  
KEYWORD FUNDAMENTALS

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID  
DURING KEYWORD RESEARCH

TOOLS & TECHNIQUES TO FIND  
THE RIGHT KEYWORDS

INSIGHTS FROM OUR TEAM  
OF PPC EXPERTS

SIMPLE TIPS TO IMPROVE  
YOUR EXISTING STRATEGY

# Introduction



## What are PPC Keywords?

PPC keywords are specific terms and phrases that advertisers bid on within PPC platforms, like Google Ads, to trigger their ads when users search for those terms. These keywords act as the 'middleman' between what users are looking for and the products or services your business offers. When selected strategically, they ensure your ads appear in front of the right audience at the right time.

PPC keywords are important because they directly influence the visibility and effectiveness of your ad campaigns. Well-chosen and relevant keywords can help you target users with high intent, increase the relevance of your ads, and drive more qualified traffic to your website. They also play a significant role in determining KPIs such as click-through rate (CTR), conversion rate (CVR), and quality score – which can impact cost-per-click (CPC).

On the other hand, poor keyword selection can result in wasted budget on irrelevant traffic, lower ROI, and missed opportunities to connect with your target audience

By researching and analysing PPC keywords, businesses can create more targeted campaigns, ensure their ads meet user intent, and ultimately maximize their return on investment.

Throughout this whitepaper, we'll be sharing:

- The fundamentals of PPC keyword research, which includes:
  - Understand keyword intent
  - Keyword match types
  - Keyword relevance
- Tools and techniques for finding the right PPC keywords, including:
  - Keyword research tools
  - Competitor keyword analysis
  - Short-tail VS long-tail keywords
  - Keyword organisation
- How to optimise your keywords to drive ROI, with insights into:
  - Strategies for refining keywords
  - Negative keywords
  - Geo-targeting and language targeting
  - Dynamic keyword insertion
- Tracking and improving keyword performance by:
  - Tracking key metrics
  - A/B testing keyword performance
  - Using Google Ads reports
  - Adjusting keyword bids
- Common mistakes to avoid
- Simple tips to improve your keyword strategy

# PPC Keyword Research Fundamentals



## Understanding Keyword Intent

Keyword intent is one of the most important factors to consider when crafting your keyword strategy. The intent of the keyword represents the reason for the user’s search and the results the user expects to find with their search.

Keywords fall into four main categories for intent:

Informational	Users are looking to learn about a certain topic, such as ‘what is an MOT?’
Navigational	Users are looking for a specific webpage or address for a location such as ‘Mikes garage MOT address.’
Commercial	Users are researching their options and gathering necessary information to make an educated decision such as ‘best value MOT garages,’ or ‘average price of MOT.’

Transactional	Users are looking to take a specific action and are ready to make a purchase, such as ‘book MOT test Dewsbury.’
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When conducting keyword research, it's important to consider the search intent and align it with your campaign goals and business offerings. Informational searches may drive high traffic but typically have lower conversion rates initially, often requiring tactics like remarketing. In contrast, commercial and transactional searches tend to have higher conversion potential, as users are already ready to take action.

## Keyword Match Types

Keywords can be added to ad groups as 3 match types. The match types dictates how closely a search term needs to match the keyword for the ad to be considered in the auction.

## Keyword Match Type Breakdown

Broad Match	Broad Match keywords are the most flexible and allow Google to use intent signals, landing page content, and other data points to determine when your ad will be considered in the auction. <b>For example, a broad match keyword such as ‘pink trainers’ will trigger for the same searches as phrase and exact match, plus a wide range of other terms including ‘sports trainers for women,’ ‘comfortable trainers under £200,’ and ‘trainer store UK.’</b>
Phrase Match	Phrase Match keywords allow for a little less flexibility and can trigger ads to show for keywords that include the meaning of of your keyword. <b>For example, ‘pink trainers’ will trigger for the the same searches as exact match, plus ‘trainers for tennis pink,’ ‘sports sneakers,’ and ‘comfortable pink shoes.’</b>
Exact Match	Exact Match keywords are the most strict, with ads only showing search terms that match or have the same meaning as the keyword. <b>For example, ‘pink trainers’ will trigger for that exact keyword, or small variations such as ‘trainers pink’ and ‘pink sneakers.’</b>

# PPC Keyword Research Fundamentals



Keywords can also be added to accounts, campaigns and ad groups as negatives.

Negative keywords follow the same match type structure as regular keywords. However, negative keywords tell Google when not to trigger your ad. Regularly adding negatives is crucial to keyword management as this cuts out relevant people landing on site and ensures no spend is wasted.

Negative keywords are particularly important in a broad match heavy keyword strategy as you want to cut out any wasted spend on irrelevant search terms.

## Keyword Relevance

Keyword relevance is 1 of the 3 key components of quality score. Quality score is an important tool that gives advertisers an indication of how well their campaigns and website fits with the correlating keywords.

Quality score is also calculated from 3 main metrics, these are:

- **Ad relevance:** how closely your ad matches what the user is searching for.
- **Expected CTR:** how likely users are to click on your ad when shown.
- **Landing page experience:** how relevant and useful your landing page is for the user once they have clicked on your ad.

Each of these metrics can be optimised to obtain a higher quality score, which can lead to a better ad rank, higher position and better results.

Keywords play the biggest part in ad relevance. Ensuring the keywords you bid for are closely suited to your business and are included in your ad copy and landing pages is key to ensuring you rank highly for this metric.

Ad relevance is assessed at keyword level however ads serve for all keywords within an ad group. Utilising a campaign structure following identifiable themes and intents will help ensure that the ad copy and keyword intent align.

Quality score is also an important metric in google determining your ad rank. This, along with bids dictate where your ad is placed within the search engine results page. Ad rank is built from ad quality (quality score), bids, user signals and search intent. Therefore, ads with a higher quality score are more likely to appear at the top of the search results page - the prime place for driving results.

## Remember!

These might be the basics, but whenever you revisit and optimise your keywords - intent, match types, and relevance are all crucial to the continuous development of your strategy.

Always keep the fundamentals in mind alongside your campaign goals and wider business objectives to reach and maintain a fruitful return on your PPC keyword activity.

# Tools & Techniques For Finding PPC Keywords

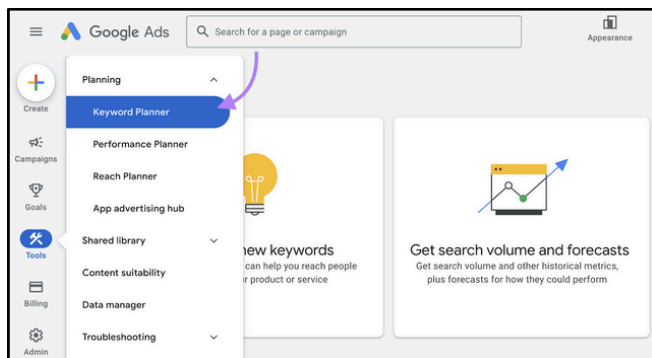


Along with being able to effectively identify the keyword intent and match types that can drive your campaign forward, there are a number of tools and techniques that can be used to help create the best PPC keyword strategy for your needs.

## Keyword Research Tools

There's a number of different tools you can use for keyword research. One we recommend as an agency is **Google Keyword Planner**, which is a free online tool for finding new keywords.

Some of its features include insights into search volume, competition levels, and CPC estimates - which allows advertisers to better plan and optimise campaigns effectively.



## Analysing Competitor Keywords

Analysing competitor keywords involves researching the terms and phrases your competitors are bidding on in their PPC campaigns. By evaluating search volume, competition levels, and relevance to your business, you can identify high-performing

keywords that resonate with your target audience. This insight helps create a strategic list of PPC keywords that maximize ad visibility, drive relevant traffic, and improve ROI.

## Short-Tail VS Long-Tail Keywords

Short-tail PPC keywords are broad, high-volume terms like "protein powder" that attract a wide audience but often come with high competition and lower conversion rates.

Long-tail keywords, such as "best protein powder for muscle gain UK," are more specific, have lower competition, and typically convert better due to higher user intent.

Short-tail keywords build awareness, while long-tail keywords drive targeted conversions. Having a balance of both types of keywords will allow you to best optimise reach and effectiveness.

## Keyword Organisation

Organise keywords into campaigns and ad groups that reflect specific products, services, and audience intents. Start with broader campaigns, then refine them into smaller ad groups of no more than 20 closely related keywords.

Use a mix of keyword match types to manage reach, and ensure ad copy and landing pages align with the keywords. This structure enhances quality score, boosts ad relevance, and attracts better-targeted traffic.

# Optimising Your Keywords To Drive ROI



Continuous keyword optimisation is essential to maintaining account health and continuing to drive the results that you want to see.

## Strategies For Refining Keywords

Keyword refinement can help your ads remain relevant and continue to reach the right people. We've highlighted some of the strategies we use regularly to keep our PPC keyword strategies up-to-date and effective:

- **Relevance:** select keywords that closely match your product/service to attract the right audience. This helps improve ad relevance, CTR, CvR, and quality score - consequently improving CPCs.
- **Performance Monitoring:** regularly review keyword performance. Pause keywords with high spend and no conversions, high CPA, or low ROI.
- **Keyword Grouping:** organise related keywords into themed ad groups based on product categories or user intent. This can help enhance ad relevance, CTR and quality score.
- **Campaign Goal Alignment:** choose keywords that align with your campaign's objectives e.g. branded keywords to target repeat customers.
- **Long-Tail Keywords:** use niche, long-tail keywords to target high-intent users with less competition to help boost CvR.

- **Avoid Keyword Overlap:** don't use the same keyword in multiple ad groups to avoid competition, inflated CPCs, and fragmented performance data.

## Negative Keywords

Negative keywords can be added to your campaigns to exclude any irrelevant keywords and avoid triggering ads that won't convert. In turn, this can help:

- **Reduce Wasted Spend:** spend can be better allocated towards keywords that do convert.
- **Support Campaign Goals:** adding negative keywords to avoid spending on queries that don't support campaign goals can help drive a better CvR.
- **Ad Group Differentiation:** negative keywords can be used at ad group level to prevent overlap and ensure search terms are matched to the correct ad group.

## More Tips & Insights

You can **use geo-targeting and language targeting** by creating region-specific ad groups with tailored ad copy and localized keywords, ensuring ads and landing pages align with user intent and language for improved CTR.

**Use Dynamic Keyword Insertion (DKI)** to automatically match ad copy to users' search queries, boosting relevance, CTR, and quality score, while potentially lowering CPCs.

# Tracking & Improving Keyword Performance

Tracking your keyword performance is crucial to see what's working in your account, providing important data to drive your strategy forward.

## Tracking Key Metrics

Finding keywords that bring highly engaged traffic at the lowest cost is key to achieving your goals. Metrics like CTR and CVR reveal how well your keywords and ads resonate with users. If a keyword is driving lots of traffic but not converting, it's worth revisiting its relevance and ensuring the right audience is seeing and interacting with your ads.

## A/B Testing Keyword Performance

Testing keywords and match types is crucial for optimising performance. Broad match keywords can drive more impressions and traffic but might lack relevance, leading to fewer conversions. On the other hand, exact match keywords can be too restrictive, while phrase matches may strike a better balance, providing more opportunities to drive traffic and conversions for the campaign to learn from.

## Google Ads Reports For Key Insights

Google dashboard reports are a great way to analyse results, offering valuable insights like quality score to improve landing page and ad relevance, along with key metrics like CTR, CVR, clicks, impressions, and conversions. Focus on your primary metrics and prioritize them in your report for a clear, streamlined view.

## Adjusting Keyword Bids

Finding data to support necessary changes is just the first step—you also need to adjust bidding carefully to avoid impacting other keywords or account performance. Leveraging experience and past performance insights is key, and you should update max CPCs whenever you see shifts in search volume or performance.

## Using Learnings For Optimisation

Like any other area of your PPC account and strategy - having a robust and working tracking system in place can provide the data you need to drive your strategy forward.

So, to recap:

1. **Track:** make sure tracking is set up and in place for the right metrics.
2. **Test:** continually test A/B test keyword strategies for insights into what performs well.
3. **Check:** check your Google Ads Reports for key insights.
4. **Adapt:** Adjust your strategy in line with what the data tells you!

## And repeat!

Applying a data-driven approach to your keyword strategy is the best way to discover what works best in your account, as well as providing a deep dive into seasonality and how this might affect your account performance.

# Common PPC Keyword Mistakes To Avoid

OOPS!

There are plenty of common mistakes that advertisers make when it comes to their PPC keyword strategy – mainly from ignoring or neglecting their strategy once it's live.

## Unrealistic Keyword Bidding Strategies

Ensure your bidding limits are realistic and aligned with competitive benchmarks. Avoid setting a max CPC too low to compete effectively or leaving insufficient budget to attract valuable traffic. Open communication with clients is essential to confirm the budget is adequate for targeting relevant, high-quality traffic that drives the desired results.

## Ignoring Negative Keywords

Negative keywords are crucial to campaign success! Having too few or too many can limit the traffic directed to your site. Regularly review them alongside your active keywords to ensure you're not missing relevant searches or unintentionally blocking new search trends that may emerge.

## Neglecting Keyword Lists

With 8.5 billion searches on Google daily, new search trends are constantly emerging. To boost ad performance, it's essential to regularly update your keyword lists and identify new opportunities to capitalize on.

## Overlooking Device Strategies

With the vast number of daily searches, it's important to recognize the differences between mobile and desktop keyword strategies. As new shopping methods emerge, like in-video ads and reverse image search, there will always be new shorthand keywords to leverage, improving performance across devices.

## Not Matching Intent & Match Type

Phrase match and broad match can bring in search terms with the wrong intent, so if you do use them, make sure you're regularly reviewing your search term reports (which you should be doing anyway!)

## Simple Tips To Improve Your PPC Keyword Strategy

To improve your PPC keyword strategy, start by **ensuring your keywords are highly relevant** to your website and the products or services you offer, making it easy for consumers to find what they need quickly. **Regularly review and analyse search queries** to uncover insights and opportunities. **Organize keywords into themed groups** based on relevant search themes to enhance focus and ad relevance. Lastly, **prioritise improving CTR** by using shorter, more compelling titles, adding effective sitelinks, and ensuring your URLs align closely with the ad content.

# Final Thoughts: Mastering PPC Keywords



## Key Takeaways

As with any part of your PPC strategy – there's no one-size-fits-all approach to ensuring that your keywords fit with your campaign goals.

Let's recap the things that all advertisers should be considering when it comes to their PPC keyword strategy.

- **Remember the fundamentals:** keyword intent, match types, and relevance might be the basics – but having a good foundation that reflects your goals will make optimisation and account growth much easier.
- **Use tools and techniques to your advantage:** use Google Keyword Planner to find the right keywords, and take into account keyword organisation and competitor analysis to assist in improving your keyword strategy.
- **Continually optimise your keywords:** make sure you're continually analysing and optimising keywords to drive the best possible performance.

- **Track and test keyword performance:** tracking the right metrics and testing what works best can help you to identify what's working, and what isn't.
- **Avoid common mistakes:** there are many very common, yet avoidable, mistakes that advertisers make. Don't neglect these areas, and make sure you're on top of any potential red flags in your account.

## Driving Results With PPC Keywords

PPC keywords are the driving force behind any successful PPC campaign, connecting what users are searching for with what your business offers.

When you choose and manage your keywords carefully, you can target the right audience, boost ad relevance, and bring more qualified traffic to your site.

Smart keyword strategies improve key metrics, while cutting down on wasted spend. By staying on top of your keywords, and refining regularly, you'll set your campaigns up for success.

## Get Started With A Free PPC Account Audit!

Circus PPC Agency is a specialist PPC agency made up of an 18-person strong team of dedicated PPC experts that love what they do. Our experienced account managers have helped brands to drive incredible results with successful PPC keyword strategies, with new clients see an average 150% increase in sales within the first 3 months of working with us!

Contact us to get started with a free PPC account audit!

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experienced in PPC**



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