

Keep it Simple, Stupid

Tips for Simplifying Management of Multiple AdWords Accounts



A WordStream Guide

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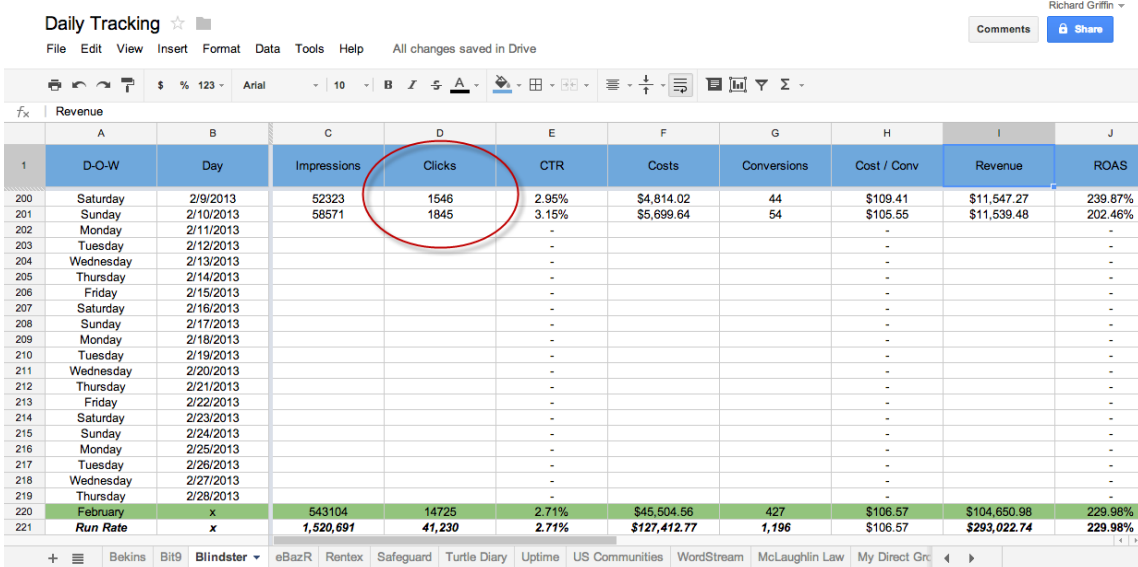
Did everyone have a high school teacher whose favorite motto was KISS? One day in sophomore biology, Mr. Burton stopped the class after not getting the answer he wanted from five consecutive students and decided to lecture us on keeping it simple. Now, I don't really remember what we spoke about that day — or much biology for that matter — but after he repeatedly drilled “Keep it simple (*stupid*)” into our heads, it has remained a staple in all aspects of everything I do — especially paid search.

Simplifying Day-to-Day PPC Task Management

The first thing I do every day is prioritize my task list. Whether you're managing multiple accounts or a single one, start at the top. Every single day you should review the stats from yesterday and log those into a [daily tracking sheet](#). This may feel like work for work's sake but it really allows you to see how impressions, clicks, [click-through rate](#), costs, conversions, etc. fluctuate day-to-day. If you are managing multiple accounts, the account with the largest change should get added to the top of your task list for review. If you're managing a single account, track changes at the campaign level. From here forward, I will focus on multiple account management.

Take this example.

Account 1:



Daily Tracking ☆

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	D-O-W	Day	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Costs	Conversions	Cost / Conv	Revenue	ROAS
200	Saturday	2/9/2013	52323	1546	2.95%	\$4,814.02	44	\$109.41	\$11,547.27	239.87%
201	Sunday	2/10/2013	58571	1845	3.15%	\$5,699.64	54	\$105.55	\$11,539.48	202.46%
202	Monday	2/11/2013								
203	Tuesday	2/12/2013								
204	Wednesday	2/13/2013								
205	Thursday	2/14/2013								
206	Friday	2/15/2013								
207	Saturday	2/16/2013								
208	Sunday	2/17/2013								
209	Monday	2/18/2013								
210	Tuesday	2/19/2013								
211	Wednesday	2/20/2013								
212	Thursday	2/21/2013								
213	Friday	2/22/2013								
214	Saturday	2/23/2013								
215	Sunday	2/24/2013								
216	Monday	2/25/2013								
217	Tuesday	2/26/2013								
218	Wednesday	2/27/2013								
219	Thursday	2/28/2013								
220	February	x	543104	14725	2.71%	\$45,504.56	427	\$106.57	\$104,650.98	229.98%
221	Run Rate	x	1,520,691	41,230	2.71%	\$127,412.77	1,196	\$106.57	\$293,022.74	229.98%

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Account 2:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	D-O-W	Day	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Costs	Conversions	Cost / Conv	Avg CPC	
201	Saturday	2/9/2013	64275	183	0.28%	\$1,833.76	7	\$261.97	\$10.02	
202	Sunday	2/10/2013	69357	176	0.25%	\$1,360.46	1	\$1,360.46	\$7.73	
203	Monday	2/11/2013			-					
204	Tuesday	2/12/2013			-					
205	Wednesday	2/13/2013			-					
206	Thursday	2/14/2013			-					
207	Friday	2/15/2013			-					
208	Saturday	2/16/2013			-					
209	Sunday	2/17/2013			-					
210	Monday	2/18/2013			-					
211	Tuesday	2/19/2013			-					
212	Wednesday	2/20/2013			-					
213	Thursday	2/21/2013			-					
214	Friday	2/22/2013			-					
215	Saturday	2/23/2013			-					
216	Sunday	2/24/2013			-					
217	Monday	2/25/2013			-					
218	Tuesday	2/26/2013			-					
219	Wednesday	2/27/2013			-					
220	Thursday	2/28/2013			-					
221	February	x	371513	1545	0.42%	\$13,632.25	35	\$389.49	\$8.82	
222	Run Rate	x	1,040,236	4,326	0.42%	\$38,170.30	98	\$389.49	\$8.82	

After logging the metrics for the two accounts we have two scenarios to investigate — one is positive, the other not so much. Account 1 had an increase of about 300 clicks day-over-day, while Account 2 realized a drop from 7 conversions to 1. Account 2 should be investigated first rather than account 1. Although the clicks in Account 1 spiked by nearly 300, the cost-per-conversion actually came down about \$5 — this is a win! Account 2’s cost-per-conversions skyrocketed from \$261.97 to \$1,360.46, and unless you don’t care about money, you should start to dig. This morning, Account 2 is going to get the majority of my attention, while Account 1’s owner might get a quick email about the success.

In either case, take a breath and relax. One day’s worth of data may not tell the whole story but at least you’re on top of it before it gets out of control!

Simplifying Paid Search Account Structure

With AdWords and Bing Ads accounts we need to make sure that we are building according to their best practices for a few reasons:

1. Because they wrote the algorithms and that’s what they want.
2. If the account is overly complicated there is a strong possibility for mistakes. In every account that I manage or consult with I absolutely need it to be optimized for PPC best practices and also be both manageable and scalable.

Don't make decisions on a single day's worth of data but compare that day to other "normal" days before making a change.

A manageable structure will allow you to quickly find where the drop in conversions came from or to quickly pinpoint where the wasted spend is occurring. First identify which campaign caused the dip, then the ad group, then the keyword/search queries. Don't make decisions on a single day's worth of data but compare that day to other "normal" days before making a change.

Now, this brings up a slight tangent. I recommend segmenting campaigns by product type or asset (offers like whitepapers, free trials, newsletter sign-ups, etc.). Take the WordStream PPC account for example. We have a variety of campaigns and a number of different advertising assets that each have different parameters for success. At WordStream we are willing to pay more for someone who converts to a [free trial of WordStream PPC Advisor](#) than someone who converts by [grading their AdWords account](#) or even someone who downloads our [Quality Score Toolkit](#).

Take a minute and think about your own account(s). Someone who is further down the funnel—closer to being a paying customer—should be worth more to you. If we know certain offers attract different funnel levels of lead types then we should be allocating different budgets and making different decisions on the metrics.

The other benefit of a simple, manageable account structure is that it easily allows you to add a new product or offer you want to advertise.

Here's another example: Let's say you sell clothing. You should have a campaign for Men's Shirts, Men's Pants, Women's Shirts, Women's Dresses, and Women's Pants. With a manageable structure you can easily add a new product line like men's or women's shoes. If you had one campaign, with one budget, and one set of settings, you'd never be able to successfully introduce a new product line—it would get lost among the other ad groups and keywords. By adding this new product line as its own campaign you have the opportunity to have unique settings, a specific daily budget, and also give the new keyword additions the chance to perform. Just keep an eye on it!

Simplifying PPC Reporting (and Bragging)

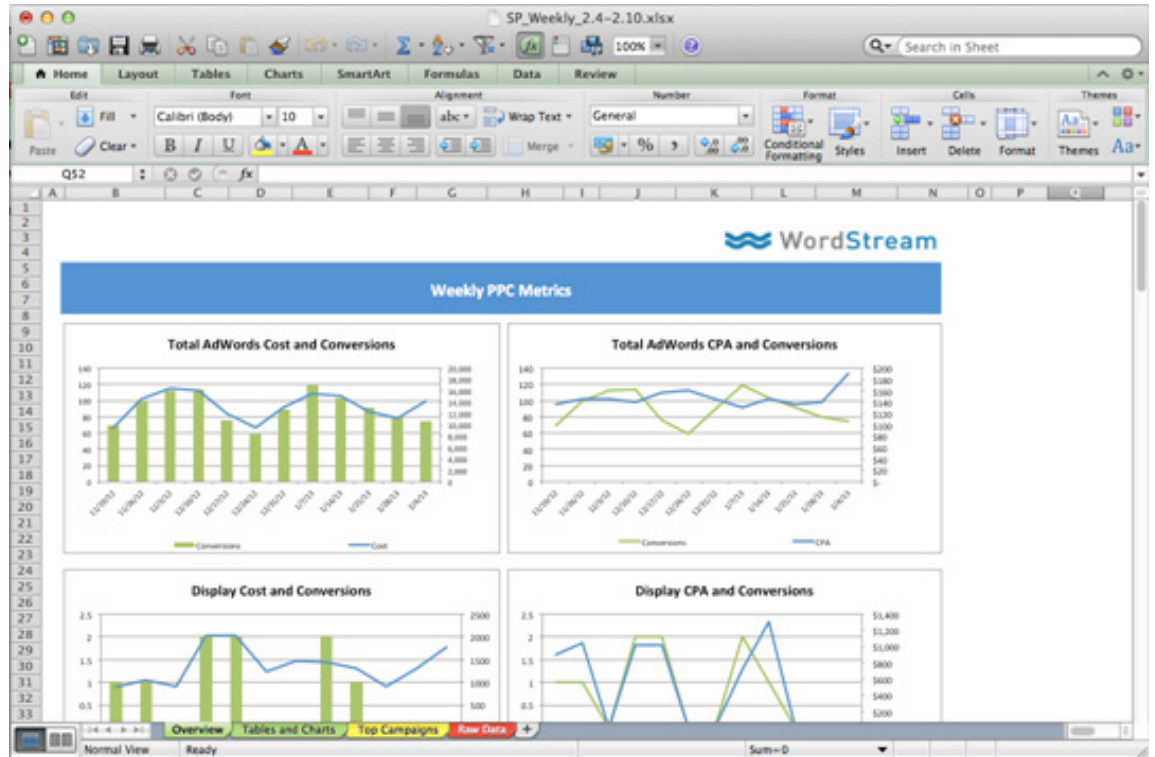
One of the greatest challenges to those who manage multiple accounts is showing (and convincing) your client of your successes. If you have a convoluted account structure that only makes sense to you, it is going to take a lot of relationship management to convince them you're doing the right things in the account.

Your client (or your boss) should get something tangible on paper on a weekly basis. Schedule a 30-minute meeting to hash out which metrics the person you report to wants to see and then give them what they asked for in a way they can understand. And keep it simple!

Look at this example: This dashboard in this report shows account-level statistics so the client (or your boss) can get a top-level snapshot of what is happening on a weekly basis.

Someone who is further down the funnel — closer to being a paying customer — should be worth more to you.

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Include a “Top Campaigns” tab and highlight some of the wins and losses on a weekly basis.

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet titled 'SP_Weekly_2.4-2.10.xlsx'. The main content is a table of weekly performance metrics. The table has columns for dates (1/14/13, 1/21/13, 1/28/13, 2/4/13) and a '% Chg. WoW' column. The data is as follows:

	1/14/13	1/21/13	1/28/13	2/4/13	% Chg. WoW
Invitations and cards - \$46					
Clicks	219	230	267	295	10.49%
Impressions	2014	1932	3649	7295	99.92%
Click thru Rate	10.87%	11.90%	7.32%	4.04%	-44.73%
Cost	\$ 658.70	\$ 711.39	\$ 670.29	\$ 635.43	-5.20%
Avg. CPC	\$ 3.01	\$ 3.09	\$ 2.51	\$ 2.15	-14.20%
Conversions	16	9	9	17	88.89%
CPA	\$ 41.17	\$ 79.04	\$ 74.48	\$ 37.38	-49.81%
Conversion Rate	7.31%	3.91%	3.37%	5.76%	70.96%
ANALYTICS					
Visits	299	357	415	453	9.16%
Revenue	\$1,199.89	\$1,022.02	\$1,452.34	\$1,601.51	10.27%
Transactions	13	15	12	27	125.00%
Average Value	\$92.30	\$68.13	\$121.03	\$59.32	-50.99%
Ecommerce Conv. Rate	4.35%	4.20%	2.89%	5.96%	106.23%
Per Visit Value	\$4.01	\$2.86	\$3.50	\$3.54	1.14%

The spreadsheet has tabs for 'Overview', 'Tables and Charts', 'Top Campaigns', and 'Raw Data'. The status bar shows 'Normal View' and 'Ready'.



By keeping your account structure clean and simplified not only does it allow you to understand what is going on but it allows you to remain fully transparent ([A WordStream Core Value!](#)) and really helps build trust between you and the person you report to.

Remember at the beginning of this post when I wrote about tracking the account daily? Well, that also allows you to understand what's going on between those times you pull your reports. Tracking daily allows you to tackle any red flags as they come up.

About WordStream

[WordStream Inc.](#) provides search marketing software and services to small and medium-sized businesses that want better results from paid search. WordStream's easy-to-use PPC Advisor software facilitates more effective PPC campaigns by providing a customized workflow, the 20-Minute PPC Work Week, to help advertisers increase relevance across Google, Bing, and Yahoo and get expert-level results in a fraction of the time. Whether you're new to search marketing or are an experienced PPC manager, WordStream's PPC management software can provide the boost you need to grow your business and drive better results.

