



ADWORDS VERSUS SEO

As the time and difficulty in achieving Google rankings increases, many webmasters are moving away from Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to focus on Google Adwords. Google Adwords enables you to list your website in Google searches immediately, for as many keywords as you wish. With adverts appearing above and to the right of search results in highly visible positions, Google Adwords is a clear alternative to SEO. Let's compare the two.

What is Adwords?

Adwords is a pay-per-click advertising service in Google search results. Most clicks on adverts cost from a few cents up to several dollars. The cost-per-click depends on the competition for the keyword and the quality of your advert. Over 90 per cent of Google's profits come from Google Adwords, so they are heavily invested in ensuring the Adwords platform works well for business. This is in contrast to their free search results, where Google rank websites based on unknown and changing criteria, with little recourse for a business to question a change in their ranking. Adwords provides:

- A marketplace where you can instantly list your advert in front of potential customers for any search term you choose.
- A way to exactly measure your ROI.
- Ability to control your spend to a daily budget.

The downside to Adwords:

- The cost is increasing as more people use the service to advertise.
- The ability to target locations is limited to cities, not at the suburb level.
- Adwords adverts have a lower click through rate than free search results, so there are many users you may miss out on.
- You must continually spend to achieve rankings. A competitor can choose to out-rank you anytime they are willing to spend more than you.

What is SEO?

The goal of SEO is to get listings in the free search results for competitive search terms. Most modern SEO strategies are based on creation of interesting and relevant content, which is then shared across


the internet. The goal is to create content that is so interesting and important, that internet users share and link to it. Google measures any created links to your content and ranks the content to match.

If a ranking in the free organic search results can be achieved for an important keyword for your business, the value of SEO is potentially very high as there is no cost associated with traffic Google sends to your website. If you have high quality, unique and interesting content on your website, SEO has to be part of your online strategy.

But SEO can be hard. Creating content that ranks is difficult and not something that can be automated or predicted in advance. A content producer would be very lucky to have one in 10 pieces of content to be shared widely across the internet. As such, achieving a high ranking for multiple keywords is a very difficult task, especially for a business that is not social or a producer of content. Achieving rankings can also take a lot of time, waiting for your content to gain the trust of the search engines.

SEO is a high risk, high reward strategy. Replicating success across multiple keywords requires tremendous effort and a measure of good fortune. Measurement of ROI is very difficult with SEO and in most cases won't be known for many months.

So what should you do?

1. Try Adwords and closely measure what the cost of an enquiry is (not just the cost of a click). Keep changing your campaign settings until the cost per enquiry makes sense for your business. Focus on creating great adverts matched with relevant landing pages on your website. Follow up on all enquiries and continue to measure the results week to week. You need to stay on top of Adwords to ensure that you are not getting outranked and losing important new leads.
2. Don't forget SEO – ensure your existing webpages follow best practice so they have a good chance of ranking without much additional effort after optimisation.
3. If you do decide to create content, create it for the right reasons and initially forget about ranking in search. Repurpose your created content in your newsletters, handouts to customers, and post it on your website and social media platforms. 

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