

How Postoptics gets 58 percent of its online sales through Google advertising.



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Trevor Rowley
Managing Director
Postoptics



ABOUT GOOGLE ADVERTISING

Google AdWords is the world’s largest search advertising programme, currently used by more than 100,000 businesses to gain new customers cost-effectively. AdWords uses keywords to precisely target ad delivery to web users seeking information about a particular product or service. The programme is based on cost-per-click (CPC) pricing, so advertisers only pay when an ad is clicked on. Advertisers can take advantage of an extremely broad distribution network, and choose the level of support and spending appropriate for their business.

For more information, go to
<http://www.google.co.uk/ads/>

For 20 years, Trevor Rowley has worked as an optician in York. Less than five years ago, he put into motion a long-standing idea to build a mail-order contact lens business. “It should be easy to order lenses and supplies,” says Rowley. “People should not have to contend with an errand they could easily do from home.” He began offering his services through a catalogue and a Freephone number, and gained a good deal of notice and sales. Two years ago, Rowley began Google keyword-search advertising. The result of steady growth and persistent vision, Postoptics today claims 80 percent of the mail order and online contact lens business in the UK.

Rowley has been recognized as a “Future Entrepreneur of the Year” for his efforts. Even better, he has grown his business by giving excellent service. One way Postoptics achieves this is by providing customers easy access to their orders and to staff. “We like to communicate with customers any way they choose – online, on the phone, or by post,” Rowley says.

Approach

Rowley was not one to rush into online advertising simply because others were. “We have invested a lot time studying back-end systems to learn which ones provide the most data on our sales,” says Rowley. He appreciated that Google is used as a tool by what he calls “Internet-savvy” people “who know what they are looking for.” And since Google AdWords is built upon the search queries those users made, it has proved to be a good fit for Postoptics. “The goal of online ads should not be about the amount of traffic they create,” he says, “but about knowing who is buying, and the amount of each sale. When you study that over time, you know your return on investment as well as quite a bit about your customers.”

Results

“Google gives us 35 percent of our traffic and 58 percent of our orders,” Rowley says. And given Postoptics’ interest in scrutinizing traffic and purchase patterns, he notes that “day in, day out, month in, month out, Google consistently produces 10 or 15 percent higher value per order – that much more revenue per sale. It’s so cost-effective to pay per click for Google customers, because we know the quality of leads is very high.”

Now that Google advertising is a key part of Postoptics’ marketing strategy, Rowley says, “We’ve pretty much abandoned offline advertising. We don’t get a good return from running in the Sunday papers. We find that working a combination of Google advertising and direct mail gives us the customer base we need, and the most accurate way to cost out pounds per sale. We’re quite ruthless about it.”

By his own admission, Rowley is a cautious entrepreneur. He takes a leap, but only after understanding the variables and the risks. As far as Postoptics goes, he says, “Google has been very, very good – and I don’t praise things lightly.”