Ad Copywriting and Research

Ad Messaging 101

Without understanding your client's business, their user personas, and their competitive landscape you are not writing ads for success, but rather just shouting into the void from a mountain top. In a while your throat will start to hurt (or when thinking in terms of google ads you can swap "throat" for "pocket"). Plus, it's a fat chance that anyone, other than some random passers-by will ever hear you...let alone reply.

But, once you do get to know your user, what you can offer to them, and how to position it: Rejoice! An awesome book on copywriting called "7 Figure Marketing Copy" says:

Learn what makes your readers' hearts sing, and compose them a beautiful song.

And, that's basically your goal. The way you get to learn what truly resonates with your audience is by testing. Testing a lot. Testing frequently and in a methodological way. Trying different angles, looking at the results, accumulating insights and cues, and continuously tweaking and evolving your approach.

The 4 Building Blocks of Search Ads

The old way (no longer available after June 30, 2022):
- **Headlines** - Headline 1, Headline 2, and Headline 3. Each one can be 30 characters long.
- **Descriptions** - Description 1 and Description 2. Each one can be 90 characters long.
- **Final URL** - A link to the page where you users will land after clicking on an ad.
- **Path 1 and Path 2** - 15-character-long phrases that you can use enrich the final URL and give higher confidence to the user that they'll land on a website that offers what they searched for. They can, but don't have to be used.

This type of ads will continue to serve even after June, and you'll still be able to see reports on their performance, pause and resume them, or remove them if needed. You'll only not be allowed to create new ones.

The new way (the only way post June):

- **Headlines** - Up to 15 Headlines (but still only up to three will show up at the same time). Each one max. 30 characters long.
- **Descriptions** - Up to 4 Descriptions (but only up to two will show up at the same time). Each one max. 90 characters long.
- **Final URL** - A link to the page where you users will land.
- **Path 1 and Path 2** - 15-character-long and still available as before.

> **TIPS & TRICKS:**
> (1) Use the **=LEN** formula in an xls. or a [spreadsheet](#) to help you count the characters easier, so you can focus on the messaging part and not counting.

Let's Talk About Quality Score

Your ads can have an impact on how much you end up paying for each click in the auctions. This is influenced by the Quality Score, which ranges from 1-10. The higher it is - the better, because you will be "rewarded" with a lower cost/click.

The Quality Score consists of the following three elements:
Ad Relevance, Landing Page Experience, and *Expected CTR*.

The Expected CTR (click-through-rate or the percentage of people that viewed your ad, and actually clicked on it) is more difficult to influence. It's dependent on your industry, its competitiveness, and how your bids (amount you're willing to pay) compare to what Google sees as the industry benchmark.

On the other hand, you can easily influence the Landing Page Experience by landing users on relevant pages that match your ads, which in turn match the search intention of the user.

Finally and most easily, you CAN influence the Ad Relevance score. HOW? - by simply making the ad headlines relevant to the keywords that it triggers. What we typically do is customize the Headline 1's whenever possible. Here are a few examples:

a) keyword: "plant delivery" | headline 1: "**Plant Delivery** to Your House"
b) keyword: "potted plants" | headline 1: "Indoor **Potted Plants**"
c) keyword: "plant gifting" | headline 1: "Potted **Plant Gift** Delivery"

Ok, I Get That, But How Do I Write Concepts?

There are 3 steps, that's it. Analyze the information you have, create high-level hypotheses on what to test, and write copy to prove or disprove those hypotheses. In either case you'll learn.

Let's try this with a few practical examples:

Example #1 (user persona-based)

Hypothesis: We know that the client's main user persona is a millennial female that lives in NYC. She loves having nature indoors, but has little-to-no natural daylight in the majority of her city apartment.

Concept: Low-Light Plants

Headline 2s:
- *Get Shade-Loving Indoor Plants*
- *Thriving in Low-Light Homes*
- *Fit for Low-Light Apartments*
- *Will Be Alright in Low Light*

Pair them with the keyword-customized headline 1's and you can get the following:

Ad · www.expandedtextads.com/low-light/plants

Indoor Potted Plants | Thriving in Low-Light Homes

Get fully-grown and potted plants delivered to your docr. No mess, no hassle. Fresh from our greenhouse - 100% Guarantee! Nationwide delivery. Order now.

Ad · www.expandedtextads.com/low-light/plants

Plant Delivery to Your House | Get Shade-Loving Indoor Plants

Get fully-grown and potted plants delivered to their door. No mess, no hassle. Fresh from our greenhouse - 100% Guarantee! Nationwide delivery. Order now.

Example #2 (business-based)

Hypothesis: In addition to plant delivery, the client offers ongoing plant care support via Plant Mom, who's a real person that customers can contact via the website or social media to ask questions, send pictures of plant problems, and get answers.

Concept: Ongoing Plant Parenting Support

Headline 2s:
- *24/7 Plant Mom Care Support*
- *With Tips & Plant Mom Support*
- *We'll Help You Keep it Alive*
- *Delivery + Plant Care Support*

Pair them with the keyword-customized headline 1's and you can get the following:

Ad · www.expandedtextads.com/low-light/plants

Indoor Potted Plants | Delivery + Plant Care Support

Get fully-grown and potted plants delivered to their door. No mess, no hassle. Fresh from our greenhouse - 100% Guarantee! Nationwide delivery. Order now.

Ad · www.expandedtextads.com/low-light/plants

Plant Delivery to Your House | With Tips & Plant Mom Support

Get fully-grown and potted plants delivered to their door. No mess, no hassle. Fresh from our greenhouse - 100% Guarantee! Nationwide delivery. Order now.

Example #3 (competitors-based)

Hypothesis: We see one of the main competitors is heavily relying on messaging that communicates "Plants Starting at Just $5". We'd like to counter their offer, but our client doesn't allow discounts ever or feature such low-cost products in their inventory.

Concept: Diminish the Value of the Competitor's Offer

Headline 2s:
- *Don't Settle for a $5 Sprout*
- *Why Buy Just a $5 Seedling?*
- *Big, Lush Plants Don't Cost $5*
- *No $5 Twigs Here*

Pair them with the keyword-customized headline 1's and you can get the following:

Ad · www.expandedtextads.com/low-light/plants

Fully-Grown Plants, Delivered | No $5 Twigs Here

Get fully-grown and potted plants delivered to their door. No mess, no hassle. Fresh from our greenhouse - 100% Guarantee! Nationwide delivery. Order now.

Ad · www.expandedtextads.com/low-light/plants

Lush Indoor Potted Plants | Don't Settle for a $5 Sprout

Get fully-grown and potted plants delivered to their door. No mess, no hassle. Fresh from our greenhouse - 100% Guarantee! Nationwide delivery. Order now.

Ad Testing

Here are some general rules for ad testing:

- Start by testing **completely different offers**. Then, see what sticks and double-down on it. Always introduce new angles and value props into the mix.
- Introduce **2-3 ads** in ad groups that are within manual campaigns (2 expanded, 1 responsive being the general suggestion)
- Introduce **4-5 ads** in ad groups that are within smart campaigns.
- Depending on the volume, you'll need to **pause lower performing** ads and **introduce new ones** every 1-2 weeks, or 1-3 times per month.

Q: How do I know which ad is winning?
A: You'll need to know how to read the numbers and what they mean. The overall story has a bit more layers to it, but this is the gist of how you should read your data.

High Impressions 🟢 Good sign. Google prefers your ad and is showing it most.
Low Impressions 🔴 No good. It's not bringing you volume and Google doesn't like it.
High CTR 🟢 Means that the highest percentage of users that saw your ad, clicked it.
Low CTR 🔴 People who see this ad, don't click on it. Think "why" and pause it.
High CvR 🟢 Means most users who clicked on the ad, also converted.
High CTR, and high CvR 🟢 🟢 Win! Your most clicked ad is the highest converting.
High CTR, and low CvR 🔴 🔴 You're getting happy-clickers. These people click your ad, you pay money for clicks, and don't get anything in return since they don't convert.

> **TIPS & TRICKS:**
> (3) You'll want to calculate the Statistical Confidence of your ad test results. Preferably, test results need to be with 95% statistical confidence before you make a conclusion.
> (4) Use online tools to help you do the calculations.

(5) Insert impressions and clicks to get the Statistical Confidence of your CTR; and insert clicks and conversions to get the Statistical Confidence of your CvR.

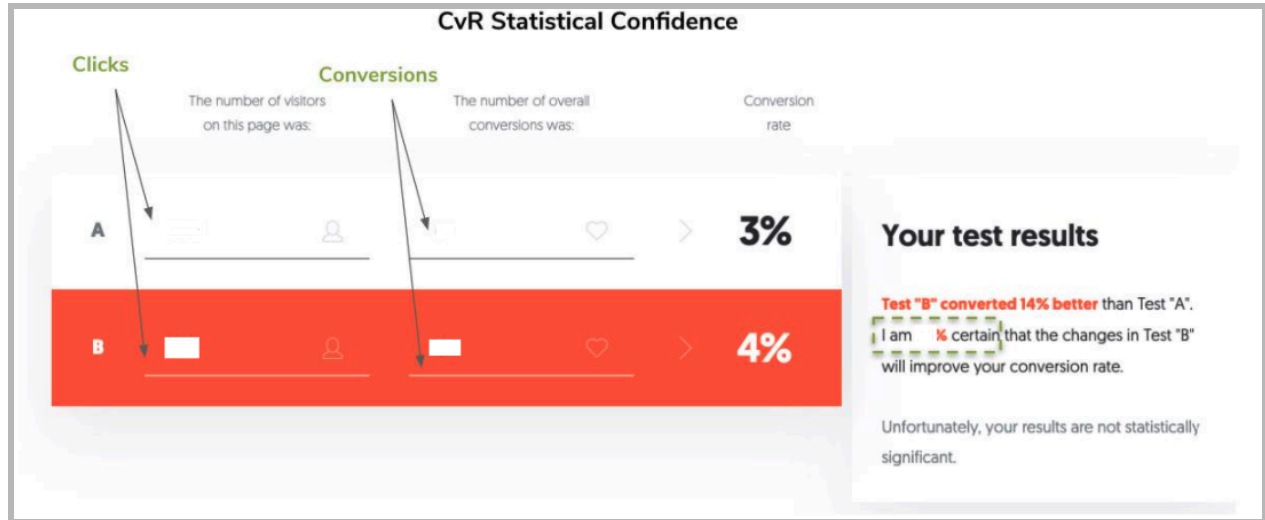## Statistical Confidence Calc. Visuals

Let's use an example for calculating **Statistical Confidence of our ads CTR**:
- Insert the impressions and clicks for each ad;
- It automatically does the estimate for you.
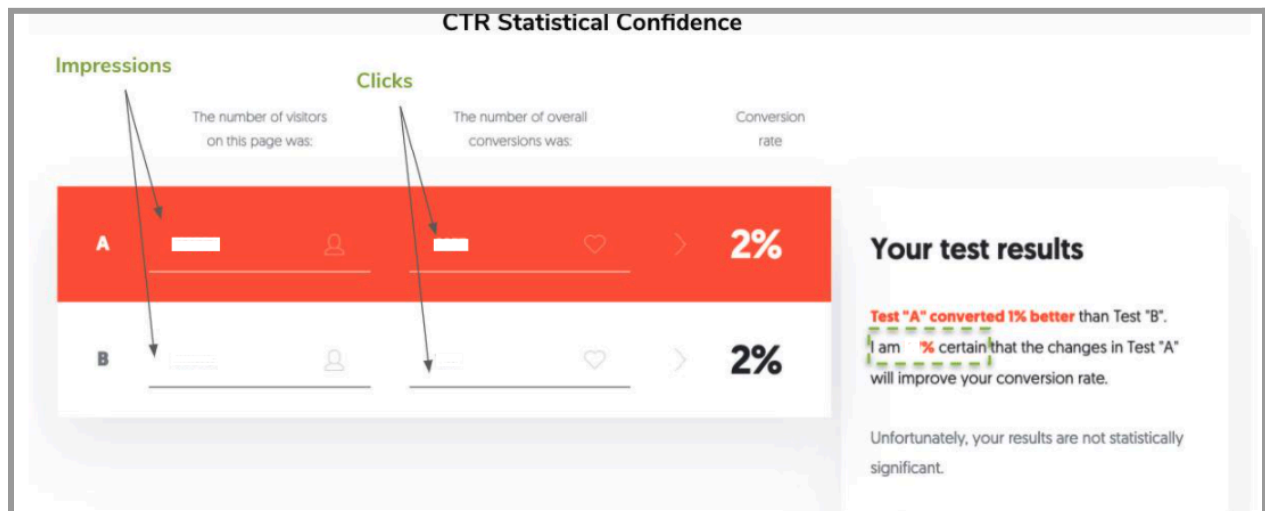
Let's use an example for calculating **Statistical Confidence of our ads CvR**:
- Insert the clicks and conversions for each ad;
- It automatically does the estimate for you.

CvR Statistical Confidence

Clicks   Conversions

The number of visitors on this page was: The number of overall conversions was: Conversion rate

A   3%

B   4%

Your test results

Test "B" converted 14% better than Test "A".
I am %️ certain that the changes in Test "B" will improve your conversion rate.

Unfortunately, your results are not statistically significant.

Research

Go all-out with your research once (usually when you're starting with the client) to really get to know the competitive landscape and the industry. You're looking to gather info about:

- Who are your competitors?
- What do they offer that's unique?
- What they don't offer to the user?
- What do you or they do better?

Then, do frequent touch-ups to help you keep monitoring the landscape and gather clues about any changes that <u>may or may not</u> be happening. Remember, just like you're doing your own testing, so are they. When you keep track of their messaging changes - you're learning without spending your client's money.

Let's say you see a competitor launch a new messaging concept. Do they pause it quickly? If yes, it's probably because it didn't work! Also, what are those few ads they seem to be running forever? If they're keeping them month, after month, after month...it's probably because they're the best performing ones.

You can also ease your job by grouping the competitor's themes into several different categories (or concepts), such as price, offer, trustworthiness, CTA, features, etc.

Q&A:

Q: Can we judge an ad's performance even if it's not 95% statistically significant? And if yes, then what is the acceptable range? Does it depend solely on our previous experience?

A: We sure can, and sometimes have to judge an ad's performance before there's enough statistical confidence. Especially if it's not doing good and has already been running for a week or two. I cannot define the acceptable range, and that will depend on the case. But if it's consistently showing the same results, we won't wait for it forever.

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Q: Any tips on how to position and differentiate a new and small brand and eventually get some of the customers from the big brands which are a long time in the market?

A: Here are a few ideas on how to start thinking about the positioning:

- Small brands usually have the advantage of being more involved, better dedicated, with a more personal relationship with customers. Use the "big guys" downfalls against them (bureaucracy, wait times, etc.)

- Delight and attract with Quality, Excellence, Exceptional Service. Don't go for the price since the big guys can always out-beat you there (just look at Amazon). Plus, "cheaper" is not a brand positioning. It's a downward spiral since there'll always be someone who comes up with a lower price.

- There's a growing tendency to support small businesses, local brands, etc. I'd explore that direction.

Finally, some customers will always make the decision to go with the big guys because they may seem like the safer option. So, focus on figuring out WHO are those that do transition over to the smaller business and WHY.

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