

How To Conduct a PPC Competitor Analysis

Competitive PPC analysis offers an incredibly effective way to optimize and plan your paid search campaigns to promote your blog, but how do you conduct this analysis?

Ultimately, it boils down to a few simple steps.

Identify Your Paid Search Competitors

Before you can analyze what your competitors are doing, you need to figure out who they are. While there are many ways to do this, a tool such as Semrush or Auction Insights in Google Ads to make things easier.

Using your preferred PPC marketing tool, start by searching for keywords you're targeting to get an idea of who else is bidding on each term. You can also check sponsored posts on social media and look at industry-specific forums, magazines, and newsletters to learn more about companies active within your niche.

Once you have a list of competitors, segment them to get a better idea of where they sit in the market. Here are a few things to look at to ensure you're analyzing relevant competitors:

- Size and Budget: Much larger competitors may not be relevant to your strategy.
- Geography: Who are your closest competitors geographically if you're targeting a local market?
- Product Lines: Which companies sell the most similar products and services?
- Target Audience: Rivals targeting similar customers will typically offer the most valuable insights.

Next, you'll also need to discover what makes these companies your competitors. Why are they competing with you, and where are their efforts focused? There are a few ways to do this, including:

- Checking keyword overlap with PPC tools.
- Looking at market positioning.
- Analyzing seasonal trends.
- Examining whether competitors have similar objectives, such as brand awareness or lead generation.

Analyze Competitor Keywords

PPC competitor research typically looks at keywords first, as these are what generate traffic for your ads and landing pages. You'll want to examine the search volume of each keyword your competitors are using, as well as the cost-per-click (CPC) and any other metrics you can get your hands on, such as click-through rates (CTR).

Comparing your top keywords with your competitors, what do you note? Consider whether they use exact, phrase, broad, or partial matches. Do they use any negative keywords to improve overall targeting? What about long-tail keywords to reach a wider audience? Finally, check how much they bid as part of your keyword research.

Find Competitor PPC Ads

If you've already examined the keywords your rivals are using earlier in your PPC competitive analysis, this should give you all the information you need to find their ads. However, there are a few ways you can go about this.

The easiest method is to use tools such as SpyFu and Semrush. These platforms let you enter keywords to find relevant ads.

However, a few free alternatives exist, such as the Ad Preview and Diagnosis tool within Google Ads. You can also type keywords directly into Google and Bing to find ads manually.

Look at Competitor Ad Copy

Now that you can see your competitors' ads, your analysis should shift to breaking down the individual features that drive their success. In particular, you should examine how they handle the following things:

- Ad structure and language
- Keyword and product alignment
- Call-to-action style and placement
- Visual elements
- Ad extensions
- Audience targeting

By examining these major ad features, you can learn a lot to inform your strategy. However, it's crucial to evaluate any changes using A/B testing because subtle differences in market dynamics may mean that not everything can translate to your own campaign.

Check Out Competitor Landing Pages

Landing page and ad copy analyses are very similar. However, landing pages contain more content, so you'll need to devote more time to them during your PPC competitor research.

As part of your analysis, always check the following things:

- Page Design: How do competitors structure their content? How do they use multimedia and other features to enhance the user experience?
- Keywords: How do your competitors incorporate keywords into the content? Check sections such as the headings, body, and even image alt text.
- Language and Content: How does the landing page persuade visitors to do something? What is their call-to-action request, and how is it positioned on the page?
- Visual Elements: How do your competitors use media to enhance the content? Where do they position images and videos?

These page elements are part of the conversion funnel that guides visitors toward a desired action. Analyzing how your competitors drive these conversions allows you to improve the performance of your own landing pages.

Compare Competitor Website Performance

No one likes websites that load slowly or lack stability. In fact, 47% of visitors will leave your site if it takes longer than three seconds to load, according to statistics compiled by Forbes.

Website performance is crucial to both SEO and PPC because it affects traffic from all sources. Whenever possible, you want your pages to load faster than your competitors and for users to experience less layout shift.

Fortunately, there are many ways to check page load times and other performance metrics. For example, the Chrome browser gives you access to this information through DevTools and Lighthouse. You can also use external tools such as GTmetrix or PageSpeed Insights.

Use Insights To Set New Goals

When you complete your competitive PPC history and analysis, you'll have lots of information to sort through. To benefit from this information, do the following:

1. Identify your competitors' strengths and weaknesses and note areas where you can improve or beat them. Pinpoint gaps in their strategy, too.

2. Benchmark your current performance against your competitors using metrics such as CTR and conversion rates.
3. Set realistic KPIs based on tangible metrics and goals to help you reach them.

The most important part of this process is selecting KPIs that make sense for your business. For example, if a rival has just a 1% higher conversion rate, you can realistically match or beat this using your competitive PPC research data. However, gaining more market share than a larger competitor in a short period wouldn't be realistic.

Overall, KPIs and goals should follow conventional SMART principles, meaning they should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timely