How to Market Your Practice with Google AdWords

by Cicih Setiawati, Xero Gold Partner
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About the Author

Cicih Setiawati is the founder and owner of BukuBuku, an Indonesian Gold Xero Partner located in Bali that specialises in the Indonesian market.

Cicih attributes BukuBuku’s success to her early focus on online and digital advertising with Google AdWords.

This eBook outlines the step-by-step process Cicih took to set up BukuBuku on AdWords, and serves as a guide for accountants and bookkeepers looking to use the advertising platform.

How to Market Your Practice Using Google AdWords is the second piece in a two-part series, and follows Cicih’s first blog: A cloud accounting revolution: A BukuBuku story

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Over the years, Google has displaced traditional and often hard copy sources of information, such as the Yellow Pages and newspapers, to become the defacto first point-of-call for information. The search for professional accounting and bookkeeping services comes as no exception.

When I established BukuBuku in 2015, I conducted a little competitor analysis by jumping onto Google to see who else was providing accounting and bookkeeping services in Bali. I was surprised to learn that while there were a handful of practices that’d supported Xero, none had focused on Bali. It occurred to me then that there was tremendous opportunity in supporting both expat and local businesses in Bali with Xero. Digital advertising, and Google AdWords in particular, became a key channel in helping us get BukuBuku’s brand in front of customers.
Introduction to Google AdWords

AdWords, a product of Google, is an online advertising service where advertisers pay to display advertisements to web users.

To a user, AdWords listings are what display near the top and bottom of search results.

Your ads are shown to users at no cost until they click on it. This is commonly known as a “Pay-per-Click” (PPC) model. How much you pay depends on the popularity of the keyword – Google’s algorithms calculate this in real-time, much like a live auction system.

AdWords is a great tool to get immediate visibility of your brand for people searching for your services, and provides a quick and easy way for you to generate targeted visits to your website. Perhaps the best part about AdWords or most digital advertising strategies is that you can test its effectiveness easily with little budget. This research is just enough for you to assess if the strategy is going to work for your business and generate a positive return on investment.

Compared to Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), which can take months before you see results, returns with Google AdWords can happen almost immediately. You will see a spike in new website visits the minute you set up your campaign.

Tip: Adwords have this symbol 🎯

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Getting started with Google Adwords
If you think you’re ready to set up a full campaign, you’ll be asked for the following 4 things:

1. How much you want to spend, i.e. your budget
2. Your target audience (locations, networks, keywords)
3. Your bid
4. Your ad

There is no universal rule for setting a budget for an AdWords campaign – you just have to work backwards. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is your end goal?
   I want to acquire 5 new customers.

2. How do you acquire 5 new customers?
   My salesperson closes 1 out every 5 new customer leads that are sent to him (20% closure rate). This means for the salesperson to close 5 new deals, the business needs to send him a total of 25 new customer leads.

3. How will you acquire 25 new customer leads?
   Let’s define a new, potential customer lead as someone who fills out the Contact Us form on your website. Here’s the thing: NOT everyone who visits your website will complete the form. So...

4. How many visitors do you need to achieve 25 leads?
   Let’s assume 1 out of every 10 visitors to your website fills out the form (10% conversion rate). This means in order to achieve 25 conversions or leads, you will need 250 visitors to click on your ad and interact with your landing page. So, the next question to ask yourself is...

5. How much are you willing to spend for 250 clicks?
   The cost-per-click (CPC) average for Google AdWords stands at $3. So for 250 clicks, you have to be prepared to spend $750. Hence, budget = $750. In effect, this means that you can expect 25 leads, and 5 closed deals (based on your salesperson’s closure rate of 20%) for a cost of $750, i.e. your cost per acquisition or sale (CPA) is $150.

Since you only pay for clicks and not impressions (i.e., Google displays your ads for free until someone clicks on it), you’d want to make sure you refine your target audience, especially location and keywords so that your ads are served to the right users who have the right intent when they click through, and a high likelihood to fulfill the action that your website encourages them take (in our example, fill out the contact form).

Step 1: Set up your Google AdWords account

Here’s a step-by-step guide to set up your Google AdWords account. Before you begin, make sure you have:

- A website or landing page that you own,
- An email account (Gmail is recommended), and
- A credit card

Set up your AdWords account: www.adwords.google.com

Google offers a simplified offering called AdWords Express to new advertisers. AdWords Express offers a simplified user interface and makes it super easy for you to set up your first Google AdWords campaign. This is great if you are merely testing out AdWords to see if it is the right marketing platform for you. Ultimately if you decide that Adwords works for you and want to make a larger investment, you may still convert to the

Tip
It’s important that your landing page layout or website design has prominent buttons, messages or navigation to lead the user to this action (these are referred to as a “Call-to-Action” or CTA), and that the contact form (in this case) is easy to complete and even optimised for mobile to increase the chance that they do this.

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Step 2: Keyword planning

In order to target users who were searching for accounting and bookkeeping services in Bali, we bid for the following keywords: Xero Bali and Xero Consultant Bali. We also targeted words like Bookkeeper Bali and Accountant Bali. To ensure we had the targeted the right audience, we avoided keywords like Bookkeeper, Accountant (by themselves) or just Bali.

You’ll see in this process that Google provides you with the monthly search volume for the keywords you nominated, suggests new keywords, and quotes you a suggested bid for your CPC.

Tip

One of the key elements of a successful Google AdWords campaign is finding the balance between specific keywords that are relevant to your business and generic keywords. Although generic keywords may produce higher search volumes – you also run the risk of generating spurious clicks from users with a casual interest only, which ultimately wastes your money.

For example, if you offer Xero Training services only and you focus on the Singapore market, then examples of good and bad keyword targeting are:

**Good**

Xero Training Sydney or Xero Sydney

(because people who search for these terms are likely to have an interest in your offering)

**Bad**

Accounting, Bookkeeper, or just Sydney

(people typing these words individually into Google may be looking for other things unrelated to Xero Training).

The general rule of thumb is this: It’s better to attract a smaller number of clicks/visits from a fairly tightly-focused group of people with a firm interest in what you do, rather than getting lots of visits from generic words.
Step 3: Formulating your ad copy

We wrote some ads that showcase BukuBuku’s offerings. Here’s an example of what users will see if they search for “Xero Consultant Bali”

Here’s the thought process behind the ad structure:

- Headline relevancy has the highest attribution towards ad quality score. For example, if users search for “Xero Consultant Bali” – they should be looking for a Xero Consultant in Bali!

- The display URL provides a clear idea of where users will land had they chosen to click on the ad.

- The description further amplifies the ad is related to the search for “Xero Consultant Bali”, and describes additional services – payroll, migration, and set up. If users are not looking for these services, they will not click on the ad – and remember, your ad is shown on Google for free until someone clicks on it.

- Our phone number is located right underneath the ad headline and also allows potential leads to call us right away – essentially, we acquire the new leads for free!
Step 4: Set a goal

We then set up a goal or “Conversion” action for our site.

When people click on your ad, they will arrive at your website where it is important to always have a call-to-action (CTA). In most cases, you want the customer to get in touch with you, or allow you to establish a relationship with them. Work with your web developer to set up a script on your website so that when a user fills out and submits your contact form, or when they subscribe to your newsletter (or other actions of your choice), this script sends a message back to Google and you are then able to see how many clicks on a particular ad or keyword resulted in contact events or other interactions from customers.

This step is often ignored by advertisers, but is crucial towards measuring the effectiveness of your AdWords campaign.

Gone are the days of incurring large marketing spend on traditional marketing channels only to wonder if any real leads have been generated for your business.

Google AdWords lets you remove the guesswork and you can see exactly which keywords, which ads, and which campaigns are driving results for your business.

For example, if you wish to measure your return on investment (ROI) for this advertising spend:

You set up two AdWords campaigns and spent $500 on each one. One generated 2 inquiries and the other generated 0. For the successful campaign, your cost per acquisition (CPA) would be $125, and for the other you have spent at least $250 or more.

"Half my advertising is wasted, I just don’t know which half."

– John Wanamaker
Once your campaign has gone live with its conversion tracking capabilities, you are ready to refine your keyword list. This means that you make an effort to continuously review your keyword strategy and experiment with new advertising copy to determine what your potential leads were more likely to respond to.

AdWords provides you with a list of keywords and information about the number of times your ad was shown ("impressions"). and how many of those impressions resulted in clicks. They are presented in your AdWords dashboard in a tabular format (As illustrated in Figure 1).

If you’re looking at the AdWords dashboard for the first time, I agree it can be a little overwhelming! The data represented in tables are simply Google’s way of telling you how well your ads are doing: How many clicks to your website are they attracting? How many of those successfully convert into leads? How much are you spending to achieve each conversion?

In the “Keyword” view, you are able to compare different keywords to see the results that each keyword is bringing in for your campaign. As illustrated in figure 2, we can see that while the keyword “Xero” is driving the lion’s share of traffic (1,914 people saw the ad, 54 clicked), the leads or conversions are costing IDR 184,031 (approx. USD 13.82). Compare this with “Xero Accounting” which only attracted 128 impressions and 8 clicks, yet with a final CPA of IDR 82,706 (approx.USD $6.21). Which do you think gives you better ROI?

Usually increasing the bid on a keyword will increase its average position on Google search results (Avg. Pos. in the figure above) and in turn increase the CTR. Reducing the bid has the opposite effect.
Finding the “sweet spot”

They key to executing AdWords successfully is to refine your bids so that the keywords which attract conversions at a lower cost have their bids increased to find the “sweet spot” – **where you attract the greatest number of conversions at the lowest possible cost**. Keywords that result in zero conversions after 50 or more clicks should have their bids reduced and de-prioritised in your campaign so that they stop burning your budget.

As mentioned (right), the key to AdWords success is to find the “sweet spot” where you have lowered the bids on high volume keywords to the point where you:

- See an increase in **conversions** from keywords (those that don’t convert should have bids reduced, and eventually be deleted if no conversions result),
- Achieve these conversions at the **lowest cost**, and
- Maximise the **number of overall conversions per campaign for your daily budget** (ensure you are just filling your daily budget or even under-spending slightly)

**Tips**

- Typically, as long as the keywords you are targeting are focused and relevant to your offer or service, attracting clicks at lower ad positions tends not to have a big impact on user’s propensity to inquire about your service after they land on your website.
- Therefore to reduce your average CPA, you can reduce bids on high volume keywords (such as “Xero” in the above example). This may, however, reduce the number of clicks and conversions/leads that you get from that keyword (this article explains this principle in more detail)
Good copy is half the job

The same principles apply for optimising your ad copy. Google provides statistics which are very similar as they relate to your advertisements.

As illustrated in Figure 3, we can see that an ad that’d garnered 1,312 impressions had attracted 52 clicks, i.e. a CTR of 3.96%. In the second example, the ad attracted 22 clicks from 722 impressions (CTR = 3.05%).

When creating new ads or reviewing ad copy, the key metric to measure is the CTR. This is because your ad’s CTR is independent of keyword popularity, search volume, and landing page quality. Well-written ad copy alone can significantly increase the chances of a user clicking. Hence, to evaluate what ad copy perform better, you’d want to identify the ones that attract the highest CTR. This assumes that both your keyword list and ad are relevant to what you have to offer. Each week or month you should review your ads, keep the ones with the highest CTRs, pause or remove the ones with low CTRs, and then conceptualise a range of new ads so you can compare how these perform in the campaign.

Tips
Always ensure consistency across your keyword(s), ad copy, and website/landing page.

For example, if you bid for the keywords “Xero Training”, you’d want to ensure your ad copy and website/landing page feature the same offer. If you had taken the user to a Xero Conversion landing page instead, it’s a sure way to cause the user to bounce. Google recognises when your ads fail to engage users and give you a poor ad quality score. This adversely affects your ability to rank in ad positioning.

This means that if you offer multiple services, you should set up separate campaigns for each of them. Don’t be afraid to perform a few searches yourself to see what other advertisers are doing with their ad campaigns – they’re often a good source of inspiration!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Campaign Type</th>
<th>Campaign sub-type</th>
<th>Clicks</th>
<th>Impr.</th>
<th>CTR</th>
<th>Avg. CPC</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Avg. Pos.</th>
<th>Conversions</th>
<th>Cost / conv.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xero Accounting - Bali Is Xero a fit for your business? Our Bali Xero Experts will know. <a href="http://www.bukubuku.co.id">www.bukubuku.co.id</a></td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Search Network only</td>
<td>All features</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1,312</td>
<td>3.96%</td>
<td>IDR15,776</td>
<td>IDR820,347</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>IDR214,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xero Consultants - Bali Setup, migration and bookkeeping Contact our Bali based Xero team. <a href="http://www.bukubuku.co.id">www.bukubuku.co.id</a></td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Search Network only</td>
<td>All features</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>3.05%</td>
<td>IDR20,123</td>
<td>IDR442,712</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>IDR179,652</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Advertisement statistics
Step 6: Track success, and repeat

By carefully measuring and monitoring which campaigns were most effective, we were able to focus our budget and energy on the campaigns, locations, ads, and keywords that were successful in giving us the greatest number of leads at the lowest possible cost.

Patience is virtue! It’s important to remember that you won’t get the above keywords and ads and bid prices all worked out within days. Ensure your daily budget is set such that you can afford to optimise your campaign for at least two to three months. During this period, review the performance of each campaign every couple of days or weekly until you find the formula that works for you.

With all AdWord campaigns, you should aim to maintain your focus on the following measures of success:

- Total spend each month,
- The number of conversions (i.e. number of inbound enquiries received), and
- Your CPA

This helps ensure your investment in Google AdWords makes commercial sense and remains an acceptable marketing cost for your organisation to acquire a lead.

Remember, some phone calls you receive may not be trackable from within AdWords – so don’t forget to ask customers how they found you and track this!

Now that you have a proven model for an effective AdWords campaign, you may want to step up your game by either increasing the budget and scope or – in our case – set up separate campaigns. We set up a separate campaign to focus on Indonesian regions outside Bali (Jakarta and other main markets), and even targeted Australian users who may be looking for offshore service providers. By carefully measuring and monitoring which campaigns were most effective, we were able to focus our budget and energies on the most effective campaigns.
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