

Google Online Marketing Challenge Post Campaign Summary

Executive Summary

Campaign Overview

The Balsam Range Concert Campaign for the Chapman Cultural Center (CCC) began on March 22nd at 8:00am and ran for 3 weeks. The campaign promoted the bluegrass musical group, Balsam Range, at the annual fundraiser concert for the Chapman Cultural Center. The goal of the campaign was to influence concert goers to take advantage of online ticket ordering for this event. Key metrics were clicks, CTR (click through rate), and CPC (cost per click). The initial four ad groups were WNCW (Western North Carolina radio station), Bluegrass, Balsam Range Concert, and Trains I Missed (hit song performed by Balsam Range).

Key Results

The two most successful groups were WNCW, which had an average CPC \$.09, and a total of 593 clicks, costing \$51.09 spanning the entire campaign and Bluegrass, with an average CPC \$.52, and 300 clicks with a cost of \$156.15. A last week add-on was Benefit and Fayssoux which finished with 310 clicks, CPC \$.10 and costing \$31.22. The total clicks for the Balsam Range Campaign was 1213 with an average CPC \$.20. The CTR was .82%.

Conclusion

After a combined effort of approximately 40 hours of work our group concluded that we cannot prove whether AdWords contributed to the sale of tickets, or helped to bring in new patrons for the Center. However, our group did conclude that the ads previously thought to be successful, turned out to have very low results and ads that the group had low expectations for were quite successful. We also agree that with the amount of time and focus it took to monitor our campaign, we do not feel that AdWords would be worth the effort for the Chapman Cultural Center. Currently the marketing director is responsible for all marketing both online and offline such as direct mail, print ads and radio promotion. In order to be successful with Google Analytics, more staff would need to be hired and that is not always an option for a non-profit organization.

Future Online Marketing Recommendations

We recommend the use of Google Places and Google Adwords Express for the Chapman Cultural Center. This recommendation is not only budget conscious but also an effective and efficient use of time and money.

Industry Component

Campaign Overview

In meeting with our client we developed several goals. The marketing director Steve Wong had three main goals which were to sell concert tickets, prove that Adwords affected ticket sales, and find out if Adwords would be worth the effort for the Chapman Cultural Center. Our translation of his goals were to sell 125 out of 500 tickets, measure how many tickets we sold and measure the time we spent on the campaign.

Evolution of Our Campaign Strategy

Originally our key metrics were online conversions, impressions and offline sale survey results. We thought that online ticket sales would be easy to track since Chapman Cultural Center already had Google Analytics installed. However, the ticket purchase is a completely separate domain from the main site, though it was designed to provide a seamless experience to the user. We installed Google Analytics multi-domain tracking code to the ticket office site in the week prior to the campaign and created a goal of the ticket purchase confirmation page. However, due to limited expertise and access, as well as a delay in the time it takes for analytics goals to be measurable within Adwords, we could not trace a linkage between our ad campaign and ticket sales so we abandoned that metric to focus on clicks and CTR.

We originally chose to optimize for impressions because we surmised that some concert goers would see the online ads but still buy a ticket offline. Box office employees were told to ask ticket buyers how they heard about the event. However, the responses were not specific enough to determine whether sales were due to our ads or another online source. After the campaign started we realized the only metrics we could truly measure were clicks, CTR and CPC. Our new goal became enticing users to the site and bringing them as cheaply as possible.

We started with a budget of \$10 a day and automatic CPC bidding. Our four ad groups highlighted the type of music (bluegrass), the name of the band (Balsam Range), the name of the hit song (Trains I Missed) and the call letters of the local radio station (WNCW).

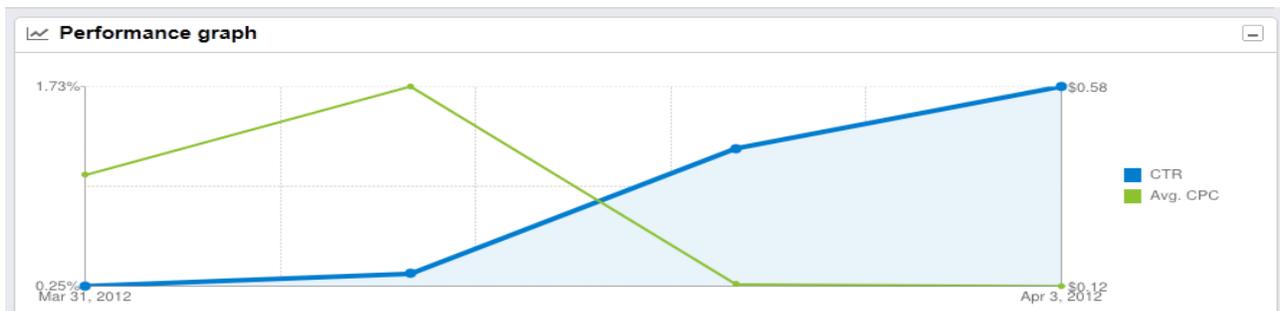
Bluegrass Show Bluegrass, BBQ, Beer & Balsam Range 4/26 in Sptbrg - Get your tickets! chapmanculturalcenter.org/balsam	Balsam Range Concert Balsam Range live concert April 26 at the Chapman Center chapmanculturalcenter.org/balsam	Trains I Missed Balsam Range's Hit Song Hear it live April 26 in Upstate SC chapmanculturalcenter.org/bluegrass	wncw fans? You'll love Balsam Range Bluegrass Acoustic Concert 4/26 Spartanburg chapmanculturalcenter.org/balsam
--	--	--	---

On March 30 we doubled the budget to \$20 a day which did not quite double our click count. By the end of week 1 it was clear that WNCW was the top performer for CTR at 1.6% and Bluegrass with its 6 ads was bringing in the most clicks at 76 clicks. We paused the other two ad groups on April 1 and the two remaining groups were managed by separate team members.

Also on April 1, we shifted tactics from optimizing for impressions to optimizing for CTR. A meeting with the client revealed the futility of the box-office surveys, so to better measure our impact we focused on driving traffic to the site by turning off display networks, whose total clicks had not reached 50 while impressions were over 80 thousand. At an 11% CTR compared to the overall .3%, ad extensions appeared to be driving more traffic to the site with a very low CTR of \$.09 compared to the overall CTR of \$.53. After the campaign we realized that these clicks, which composed 986 out of our total 1213, were merely measuring the opening of the extension. Only 6 of those 986 clicked through to the site.

Key Results

The dramatic result of the changes on April 1 was that CTR rose from .34% to 1.27% and CPC fell from \$.58 to \$.12 in the course of 2 days.



The rest of the campaign changes attempted to boost CTR and lower CPC even further, mainly by pausing least-successful ads and keywords, and exploring variations of ads and keywords which brought in clicks. Variations on “Spartanburg” (the town hosting the concert) proved to be the most effective, with the highest-performing keyword being “City of Spartanburg” from the WNCW group with a click count of 108, a CTR of 15.06% and a CPC of \$.07.

In the middle of the 3rd week, we created a new ad group to test two suggestions from our client - the “benefits charity” angle, and the locally-popular opening [Spartanburg Singer Opens](http://chapmanculturalcenter.org/balsam) Fayssoux to open bluegrass concert with Balsam Range April 26 chapmanculturalcenter.org/balsam

outperformed even our most popular WNCW ad in terms of CTR, reaching a top CTR of 7.27% versus WNCW's 3.38%.

Tightly trimming less-performing keywords and ads within the WNCW ad group while allowing a larger number of the lower-performing Bluegrass ads remain had a net effect of reducing overall clicks and CTR; upping the budget to \$30 on April 8 only increased CPC. These changes occurred immediately prior to Easter weekend, which appeared to compound the decline. On April 9th we reduced the budget to \$10 and paused all but our top performing ads in each group. Two days before the close of the campaign it occurred to us that since the all the WNCW ads performed higher than the Bluegrass ads, we should have chosen the top-performing ads across all groups. We paused Bluegrass entirely and enabled the WNCW ads once again which resulted in a last-day spike in CTR from 1.47%



to 2.45%.

Conclusions

When all was said and done, Yellow Team had spend \$246 dollars, had one hundred and forty eight thousand, five hundred people see our ad, and got one thousand, two hundred clicks. We actually brought 278 people to the site itself translating into \$.89 for each person. We were successful in achieving a low CPC which is important to most clients and answered Steve Wong's question of proof that Adwords could be effective. However, we were not successful answering Steve Wong's question of whether or not Adwords would affect ticket sales.

In retrospect, we would not have relied on location and call to click extensions if we had realized exactly how they operated. We decided that getting people to the site was a more reliable metric than relying on the ticket office to find out if ticket buyers had seen the ad. Also reduce analytics confusion, we could also have linked to a landing page on the ticket site and bypass chapmanculturalcenter.org entirely.

Through Google Analytics we know that 10% of the people we brought to the site explored

other areas of the site, primarily, the main events page. The 90% site exits could either mean they closed their browser, they clicked on a link that took them to a different site such as the Balsam Range home page, or they went on to the ticket site to try to buy a ticket.



bottom line is, we did potentially let 150,000 people know about the concert who wouldn't otherwise have known. We got 926 people interested enough to bother to see more info. Now those people at least know where the CCC is on a map. We also brought 278 people into the site - perhaps they will come back again. Compare this to print advertising, we realized it is often even harder to measure the impact of one's advertising. Our conclusion is that for a first try, our results were favorable.

Future Recommendations

When we revisit our client's goals, we really are only able to address one of them, and that was whether it is worthwhile for the Chapman Cultural Center to use Adwords. The short answer is that it is not worth Steve Wong's time. At least not this kind of campaign, and definitely not for a one-time event.

The way we used Adwords is not going to work for CCC. If CCC wants to know the return on investment, they would have to sink even more time into metrics than we did. And we know Steve does not have that kind of time. Secondly, most of the market research, keyword development, and ad formation is not reusable since this event will not happen again. Lastly, we know most Chapman Cultural Center events appeal primarily to older Spartanburg citizens, and without the cross-

generational appeal that this event had, we predict a lower response.

This does not mean that there is nothing CCC can do. There is a much simpler version of Adwords called Adwords express, designed for small businesses to quickly start advertising locally. With just basic information about the business and its products, and starting ads, Adwords Express would do all the guesswork and the campaign management for the client. This would work best with CCC focusing on very specific, easily definable offerings. For example, if they decided to advertise something like upcoming summer camps, or dance lessons. We suggest finding something that can be set up once and run many times, to cut down on how much time is involved.

We also recommend Google Places. Right now CCC is listed as a movie theatre, among other things. It would only take a few minutes to make it look more inviting. Steve could verify himself as the owner which would allow him more control over what's there. He could write a little blurb to describe the CCC, or change the pictures. He could also encourage patrons to write reviews. It does not cost anything.

Group Dynamic

The team roles definitely evolved throughout the campaign. Lydia began as the team leader and as the campaign progressed, she felt comfortable enough to delegate more of the responsibilities among the other group members so that she could focus on some of her interests which included the science behind the analytics. Wendy began as the market researcher for the group and after the launch of the campaign, she got more involved as the campaign analyst. She did a great job learning how to read and understand how adding/changing components could affect our campaign outcome. Meredith began as the AdWords Specialist and evolved more into a keyword researcher, becoming adept with the contextual tool.

Like any group project, teamwork is essential, and no matter how many times any of us participate in a group project, we all have to re-learn humility and adjust to working and sometimes depending on other people. Designating a team leader to delegate the work seemed inevitable, but at the same time, every member has a hand and opinion at every step of the way. It is very easy to delegate a leader, to have that person tell other members what to do. Those members can have the attitude of “she’s not the boss of me” and simply not do the work, which then leaves the team leader with the majority of the responsibilities. Delegating the responsibilities gives everyone the opportunity to have an opinion, but still have their hands in every leg of the project.

Client Dynamic

Steve Wong and the Chapman Cultural Center were a pleasure to work with. Despite being busy and overcommitted as is the nature of non-profit work, Steve took an active interest in the campaign and provided helpful information and ideas. Due to a close relationship with the client and the ability to see the marketing director's daily work and job circumstances, we felt we had a unique insight into how to integrate Adwords into the business practices of a real institution.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

Our original goal was to implement a plan our client could realistically continue to utilize after the challenge was over. This evolved into simply discerning whether Adwords was appropriate for our client. Our learning goals were to become comfortable with Google Adwords, Analytics and SEO (Search Engine Optimization) tools; to learn and apply universal principles of marketing; and to learn to scientifically measure and assess the impact of particular marketing techniques. We feel that we have met each of these goals.

Lessons Learned

Each member had different learning goals which shaped the lessons we learned. As team captain, Lydia had to learn how to distinguish between making the decisions on behalf of the campaign and when to involve the team in the decision making process. She also learned about the difficulties of organizing documents and facilitating online communications for successful collaboration. Simplicity and consistency are more important than high-functioning tools and experimentation – all documents in one digital “place,” replies to a single email thread instead of separate subject headings. As for her goal to learn about metrics and measurement, by the end of the campaign she was confirmed in her belief that analyzing actual metrics was far more effective than guesswork and anticipating user motives.

Wendy feels that going through the campaign has reinforced her belief that to truly understand and appreciate the workings of any kind of system, a person needs to immerse themselves into it. As for being a business woman, Wendy also began to see online marketing as a great tool in addition to offline marketing, but in regards to our campaign, AdWords is not a replacement for radio, print or direct mail, not to mention to seriously include Google Analytics as a marketing tool in any business would require a staff and specialists to monitor any campaigns.

Meredith learned that putting in the right keywords and getting a high enough CTR would not necessarily translate to proving to the Chapman Cultural Center that they could sell a certain quota of

tickets. This campaign could have had the most creative keywords and ads, but the fact is that Google AdWords cannot change people's behavior, and that includes their spending habits. The Chapman Cultural Center has an avid patronage group, and while they may or may not have access to the internet, the simple fact is that they will most likely continue to purchase their tickets last minute and through the Box Office.