

A Guide to Search Engine Marketing Best Practices



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Search marketing is in constant flux with ever emerging trends. Many remodelers use digital marketing for lead generation, including search optimizing via their websites, buying paid traffic from Google or Microsoft, paying for ads on neighborhood-oriented sites and using third-party lead generators. No business ever captures all the leads, but it's critical to be sure you're not missing the most profitable opportunities.

To navigate past this constraint, look beyond simple benchmarks. Consider your lead generation budget or average cost per lead. Calculate your marketing cost per net sale. If this cost is less than your gross profit per sale, you're missing profitable leads and must find new ways to capture opportunities, such as trial-and-error experiments, direct digital advertising or partnering with a trusted lead provider.

Gregg Hicks
Vice President
Modernize Home Services



What is Search Engine Marketing?

Search engine marketing (SEM) is a digital marketing strategy used to increase the visibility of a website in search engine results pages (SERPs). SEM could be in the form of pay-per-click (PPC) marketing and organic search engine optimization (SEO). In this eBook we will be focusing on strengthening your PPC marketing tactics.

Audience Targeting

Audience targeting is taking your **audience of prospective customers and segmenting them into different categories, based on behavioral characteristics, demographics, interests, and intent**. For example, grouping audiences based on first time homeowners versus homeowners living in their forever home. Segmenting your ideal customer profiles into different categories enhances your search engine marketing (SEM) campaigns by delivering personalized messaging to each audience. Personalized campaigns result in higher conversion opportunities and brand awareness. There are several factors that go into targeting the right audience. Let's start with keyword creation.



“Segmentation is the main strategy we use to ensure digital ads are profitable and scalable. Organize your universe of potential customers into like-minded prospects, such as high intent (urgent) versus low intent (patient), remodelers versus fixers, kitchen versus bathroom, indoor versus outdoor and baby boomers versus millennials.”

“A deep dive on search marketing for remodelers”
By Gregg Hicks

As seen in



Keyword Creation

As many home improvement professionals begin their SEM journey, the most common roadblock is keyword creation and targeting. Ideally, when you are setting up campaigns, you are only creating campaigns around keywords that are relevant to the services your business offers. What are keywords and how do you target the right phrases?

Keywords are what people enter into their search engine. For example, a roofing contractor will look for queries related to roofing replacements. Another example could be a windows professional looking for queries related to multi-window replacements. Once you find your list of keywords, the next step is to figure out the intent behind each search.

A great way to figure out keyword intent is to think about every search on Google as a question that a homeowner is asking. Your job is to answer it. Once you start thinking about search queries as questions, it becomes easier to figure out where they are in the customer journey. For example,

a homeowner that is beginning to plan for their project will often search broad questions, such as “how much do I need to budget?” Homeowners who are further along the process tend to ask Google more specific questions, such as “what are the best types of shingles for a new roof?”

Another way to determine keyword intent is by using different match types. These are offered as you create your targeted list of keywords. So, if you have potential homeowners that are knowledgeable about what they are looking for (specific queries), you can potentially set up your keywords to exact match, meaning you can look for a specific audience that matches the search query, such as “bathroom remodeling in Austin, Texas.”

Specific questions often show high intent among homeowners looking to start a project. But if you are trying to reach a broader audience, you could potentially use a broad match of phrases, which help capture a wider net of traffic, such as “bathroom remodeling.”

“Another way to pick your keywords is by reverse-engineering your web pages. Your website should already be saturated with the words and phrases that most strongly express your company’s value proposition. By advertising on searches for the same keywords already found on your landing page, you’ll benefit from a higher quality score, and visitors will likely spend more time on your site as a potential customer.”

“Tune up your search marketing”
By Gregg Hicks

As seen in **WINDOW+**
DOOR

Our Advice



Put yourself in the homeowner's shoes. What questions would you ask? What do those questions look like on search engines?



Think about your ads and selected keywords. Is your messaging in line with the homeowner's beginning search? Do the keywords answer the homeowner's questions?



It is important to remain flexible. Often times you will have to make last-minute adjustments in an ever-changing landscape. Just be ready to react as you move forward.

Geotargeting and Dayparting

Let's discuss the other levers that can help with your audience targeting strategy. There are two targeting tactics to use when you think about your audience: Geotargeting and Dayparting. **Geotargeting is where you want your ads to show up. Dayparting is when you want your ads to show.**

This type of targeting allows you to focus your marketing spend during the times and in the areas where it would be most beneficial and efficient for you. Here are several essential questions to think about when starting your campaigns:

- What is valuable about your business?
- Where do you operate?
- What locations are beneficial to your business?
- Where do you do the most business and get the best jobs?
- Think about who is making the decision and who is doing the research:
 - ◊ When is your customer online?
 - ◊ What kind of research are they doing?



User Experience

User experience (UX) is how a user interacts with and experiences a product, system, or service. In search engine marketing, user experience plays a pivotal role in your conversions. For example, did you know a great user experience starts when a homeowner first sees your ad?

Landing Page UX

A common mistake is to think about user experience as only your landing page. Your user experience starts the moment a homeowner does a search and sees your ad. Since your ad is the first thing a homeowner sees, you have to show them that you have the answer to their search.

There are two important factors you should consider when it comes to the design and user experience of your landing page. The first is consistency. If a homeowner is looking for a roofing replacement, you want to ensure that your ad copy is relevant to the user's search and the services you offer. The second factor is when the user clicks on your ad and redirects them to your landing page. During this process, the goal is to have your landing page focused on roofing. Additionally, this landing page should also explain

Conversion Friction

Conversion Friction is anything that keeps your customer from completing an action. For example, this could be a form you want them to fill, but something prevents them from doing so or makes them think twice – friction is introduced. There will always be some sort of friction in your lead flow, but what you can do is minimize and improve the user experience. For example, optimize your lead form with the most necessary questions, such

“Optimize your landing page. If a homeowner clicks on your ad, then you have their attention. They expect the landing page to give them what your ad promised. Therefore, your landing page needs to be consistent with your ads.”

“How to improve your conversion rates”
By Gregg Hicks

As seen in **floor covering news**

what the homeowner would be getting out of you as a contractor if they are interested in a roofing replacement.

Finally, your goal as the contractor is to get the consumer to take action when they reach your website. This can be filling out a form, clicking a button, calling you, etc. If get them to do this, you are more likely to close the sale. However, there will often be times when the user experience may not be so great. We call this conversion friction.

as budgeting or type of materials for a project. Additionally, make sure your form is a streamlined process. In other words, keep the form about one project and not multiple.

Another common cause of friction is slow site speed. **More than 60%** of searches happen on mobile devices. If your site does not load fast, users will get frustrated and leave.

Measuring the Success of SEM Campaigns

Now your campaigns are up and running. You are now ready to measure the success of your SEM campaign. When it comes to measuring your campaigns, think about the desired outcome you want for your marketing budget. Oftentimes in the home improvement industry, businesses measure their appointment set rate, sales, or installations. In other instances, some businesses focus on branding to raise awareness about the services they offer.

Measuring KPI's

KPI is abbreviated for key performance indicator. KPIs are the key targets you should track to make the most impact on your strategic business outcomes. An example of a KPI could be increasing your appointments by 10% over the next fiscal year or improving brand awareness. Put simply, KPIs indicate if your business is hitting its targets. They are often called health metrics as they tell you how the company is doing to meet an objective that's already set. To build out your KPIs for the next fiscal year, follow these strategies:

- Choose goals that are directly related to your business goals
- Focus on key metrics rather than a slew of data
- Consider your company's stage of growth
- Identify both lagging and leading performance indicators



Attribution

Attribution is the process of assigning value or credit to a specific source - a campaign, keyword, ad group, or media channel. For example, a user comes to your site through a paid search ad and fills out a form - i.e. a conversion. To see where this form submission came from your attribution model will identify the user coming from your paid search channel.

As you grow your SEM campaigns, having an attribution model in place will tell you:

- Where your leads are coming from
- Which channels are driving conversions
- How to plan your future media spend
- Ensure that you are investing in the right areas.

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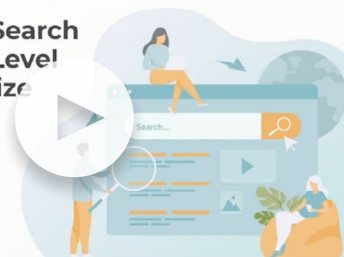


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About Modernize

For more than 15 years, Modernize has been a leader in the home improvement and services industry, connecting homeowners with contractors and other home services professionals.

Modernize operates in more than 15 high-value, high-consideration home segments, including new and replacement windows, solar installation, roofing, heating and air conditioning, siding, bathrooms and kitchens, new and replacement gutters, home security, and others.

The business brings a network of more than 1,000 contractors and professionals across all segments, offering broad geographical coverage and choice for homeowners.

Modernize is owned and operated by QuinStreet, Inc. (Nasdaq: QNST), a leader in providing performance marketplace technologies and services to the FinTech, financial services and home services industries.

QuinStreet is a pioneer in delivering online marketplace solutions to match searchers with brands in digital media.

The company is committed to providing consumers with the information and tools they need to research, find and select the products and brands that meet their needs. Modernize is a member of QuinStreet's expert research and publishing division.

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