



Who they are

- Garden State Life Insurance
- www.gardenstatelife.com
- League City, Texas
- 40 employees
- Life insurance

GARDEN STATE LIFE Insurance Company

A Member of the American National Family of Companies

What they needed

- To grow sales volume
- To cost-effectively acquire new customers

What they did

- Began with **Google AdWords** in 2006
- Began placing ads on Google's content network in 2006
- Tailored AdWords tools and features to their advertising goals
- Used Placement Performance reports to analyze and adjust their content network campaigns

What they accomplished

- **Increased site traffic:** 27% of site visitors came from AdWords
- **Drove sales:** AdWords accounted for 86% of Internet business growth in 2006
- **Reduced costs:** Used Placement Performance reports to target best-converting domain sites, lowering cost-per-acquisition (CPA)

Growth Formula

Garden State Life Insurance derives 23% of its leads from advertising on Google's content network.

Michael Musselman insists he never intended to be an online guru. An actuary by trade, when he first joined Houston area-based Garden State Life Insurance, Michael expected to work on experience and profitability studies, but was soon asked to help manage the company's online advertising.

"I didn't have much experience in marketing, but did in measurement and analysis," recalls Michael. "This was in 2006 and although Garden State was focused on Internet marketing, we hadn't done much with search advertising. We first ran a test with a search marketing company, but we didn't see the results we were aiming for." While the company decided what the next step would be for its search strategy, Michael set out to learn more about search advertising, using the Google AdWords™ Learning Center for much of his training.

"I watched the Learning Center's online tutorials and found them really helpful," he says. "It didn't seem like brain surgery, so I made a pitch to my boss that we try again and this time, I'd run our AdWords account. I said, 'We'll take it slow, we'll test, see what it can do, and if it becomes unmanageable, we'll bring in some outside help.' He agreed."



"As a company, we have a strong pedigree in television and direct mail advertising, and were particularly impressed with how quickly AdWords had a positive impact on our business. It accounted for four percent of our total business in 2006 and five percent in 2007."

Fast track

Michael first developed a list of targeted keywords and used Garden State Life Insurance's desired cost-per-acquisition (CPA) goal as his guide for the maximum amount he was willing to bid for each keyword.

"Our intent was to maximize sales and stay below that per-acquisition amount," says Michael. "I started with one general ad group to get the hang of things, and we installed the conversion tracking code on our website, which allowed us to track how our AdWords campaigns related to converting visitors into customers. Then we began to test ad copy and roll out new campaigns based on the test results. Our AdWords campaigns were profitable from day one, but it took me about a month to build out our keyword volume, and from there it took off."

In 2006, AdWords drove 86 percent of Garden State Life Insurance's Internet business growth. And in 2007, it's driven an additional 26 percent of growth. "As

About Google AdWords

Google AdWords™ is a performance-based advertising program that enables businesses large and small to advertise on Google and its network of partner websites. Hundreds of thousands of businesses worldwide use AdWords for text, image, and video ads priced on a cost-per-click (CPC) and cost-per-impression (CPM) basis. Built on an auction-based system, AdWords is a highly quantifiable and cost-effective way to reach potential customers.

For more information, visit
<http://www.google.com/adwords>

About Google's content network

Google's content network is a simple, cost-effective way to advertise on millions of high-quality news pages, topic-specific websites, and blogs. Google has partnered with global media outlets and niche publishers alike to create the largest online advertising network in the world. AdWords advertisers can either hand-pick specific sites or use Google's powerful targeting technology to place ads on the pages most relevant to their products and services, thereby expanding their marketing reach to targeted audiences all over the web.

For more information, visit
www.google.com/adwords/contentnetwork

a company, we have a strong pedigree in television and direct mail advertising,” explains Michael, “and were particularly impressed with how quickly AdWords had a positive impact on our business. It accounted for four percent of our total business in 2006 and five percent in 2007.”



Mix and match

As Michael became more fluent in AdWords, he discovered the right mix of account tools and features for Garden State. Negative keywords, AdWords Editor, and advertising on the Google content network all proved particularly effective.

“It really is about finding what works for your business,” says Michael. “We use negative keywords to make sure our ads don’t show for certain searches, which helps refine the quality of our traffic. AdWords Editor is a great tool for organizing keywords in a new campaign and making bulk changes. And with the recent addition of Placement Performance reports, I’ve made adjustments to our ads on the content network. They now account for 23 percent of our total conversions.”

Strong performers

Advertisers who run ads on Google's content network of hundreds of high-quality websites, news pages, and blogs can now view Placement Performance reports, which provide site-by-site performance metrics. Using the reports, Michael discovered that certain domain pages – parked web pages featuring conceptually related AdWords ads – were driving considerable traffic.

“Before Placement Performance reports were available, I would have assumed that ads on domain pages perform very poorly and don’t offer very much to the visitors who stumble across them,” he says. “But upon viewing the report, I noticed many websites were converting very well. So I blocked the poorly performing websites from showing our ads. Then I increased our overall budget on the sites that were converting well by 50 percent.”

Those steps delivered the results Michael was looking for. “Now, about 60 percent of sales from our content campaigns come from the domain pages. The acquisition cost of our domain ads is about a third of our non-domain content ads and about a half of the cost of our search network ads. Ads that appear on parked domain pages produce very qualified traffic, and that traffic converts on our website in a similar manner to our search network traffic.”

Higher state

Garden State Life Insurance is intent upon building on the success it's had with AdWords. “We think we’ve done a good job of optimizing our ads and structuring our campaigns – 27 percent of our Internet visitors in 2007 have come from AdWords,” says Michael. “Our next step is to develop customized landing pages and explore how to use the content network even more effectively through image and Flash ads.”

