

Consider, Convince, Convert

The Performance Marketer's Field
Guide to AdWords Ad Extensions

AdWords Best Practices Series

Introduction

Ad extensions are a way to give potential customers useful and relevant info beyond a regular text ad. You can win a customer's consideration, convince her of your value, or drive her right to a conversion. Ask yourself which extensions would fit with your keywords and fulfill a potential user's needs.

In this Field Guide, we'll cover the aspects of AdWords Ad Extensions that you should know about when managing your account:

- 1** Benefits *Page 03*

- 2** Things to Remember *Page 04*

- 3** Reporting *Page 05*

- 4** Management and Optimization *Page 06*

1 The Benefits of Ad Extensions

People engage with ads that have extensions. Seller ratings give users confidence in your website. Call extensions connect customers right to your employees. Advertisers spend lots of time [optimizing their ad text](#) (which is great), but you should know that implementing extensions is typically a more impactful way to improve CTR. An ad extension adds value to potential customers just by being present. Additionally, with the [recent changes to ad rank](#), extensions have become an increasingly important part of getting your ads noticed.

TIP: Every type of extension that we offer is intended to benefit our users, which translates to a higher CTR for you. Many, such as sitelinks, show improvements of 10-20%.

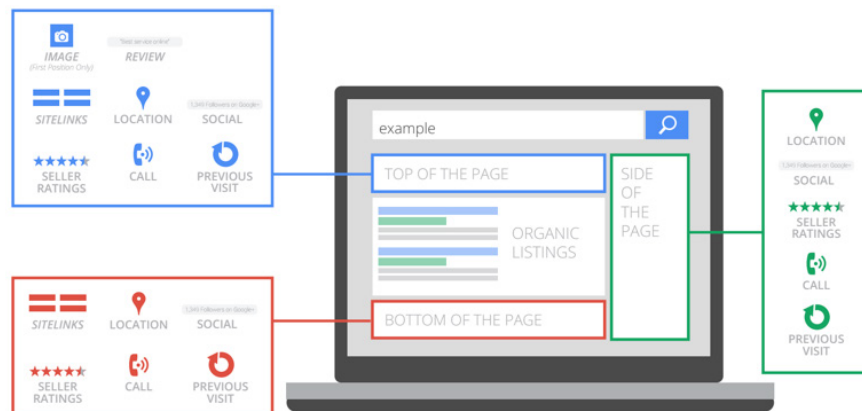
There are tangible and measurable gains to giving users more information, and extensions are auto-optimized to show the best possible combination on each and every auction. Sometimes the “best possible combination” translates to areas aside from CTR - users may get value from seeing a phone number on a desktop ad (i.e. a direct connection to your business via a phone number) even if that doesn't translate to a routine click.

We've also found that more information is a good thing, which means that ads with multiple extensions perform better than ads with only one extension. Identify which extensions work for your business and implement them. The best combination of these extensions is automatically determined on an auction-by-auction basis.

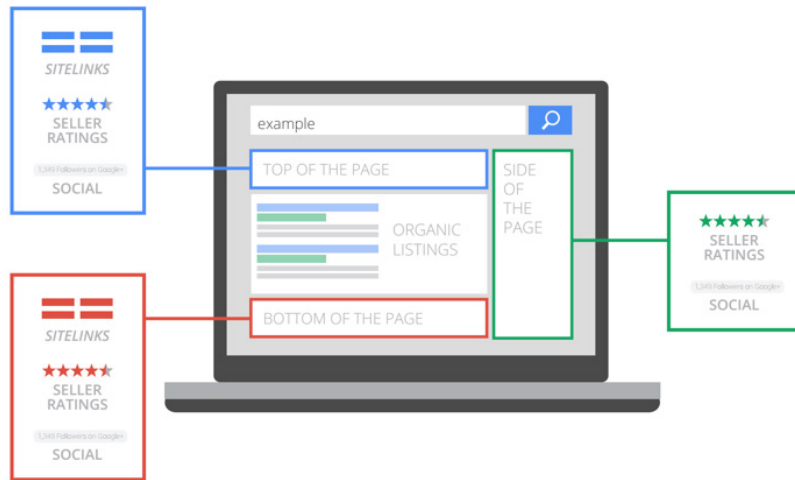
Enabling extensions is a good thing, but remember that your extensions are most likely not going to show 100% of the time. Only certain positions are eligible to show certain extensions.

There are lots of extensions in existence (and even more in beta). While this set of options will continue to evolve, here is what is presently available and where they can appear on the page:

Google Search



Search Partners



Note: Search Partner site owners choose what, if any, formats they allow, so not everything will show by default.

As you can see, placement on the results page determines which of your extensions can be shown. If you know you have great extensions in place for users, watch your average position and placement to ensure that your extensions are showing as often as possible.

2 Things to Remember

We try to show as many relevant formats as possible in the available space. Since there are so many moving pieces, there's no way to prioritize which extensions you want to show. Enable whatever makes sense for your customers and let the AdWords system decide within those options. The specific extensions that are displayed are a function of your previous performance, user context and available space on the page.

Clicks on extensions are typically charged the same price you would be charged for a click on your ad. There are a few exceptions, though. The below types of interactions are all free:

- Phone calls from your forwarding number on call extensions that show on desktops/tablets
- Links to reviews from seller ratings extensions
- Clicks to the review site on your review extensions
- Clicks on +1 button or a link to your Google+ page
- Clicks on Ratings on your consumer ratings annotations

In many cases there isn't a lot to optimize for extensions. Implementation is the only step to take for a practitioner, but that doesn't mean you can enable them and never think of them again. Be aware of what's going on in your account so that you know you're saying the things your customers want to hear.

3 Reporting

TIP: Implementing every type of extension that makes sense for you should benefit both your users and your account.

Report on how your extensions are doing by taking a quick snapshot of before and after implementation. Take note of when you turned on certain extensions and [compare dates in the interface](#) to ensure you're heading the right direction. This isn't going to be a perfect solution, as there are lots of other variables present over that same timeframe, but it should give you directional evidence regarding your account's performance.

Segment your reports by click type to see detailed performance for many of your extensions. Anything that's active in that time period will appear as its own type of click. There isn't any reporting on the extensions that appear automatically (seller ratings, social annotations, previous visit annotations).

Sitelinks-Specific Reporting

Remember to compare sitelinks to one another and not to overall ad performance (as CTR on sitelinks is almost universally lower than a click on an ad, even though an ad with sitelinks will perform better than an ad without sitelinks). You can also look at a sitelink's contribution to the entire creative. If you segment by "This Extension vs. Other" you can see if that extension is encouraging clicks on the headline or other links.

Identify your strong performers in terms of CTR (on the link itself or the surrounding ad), conversion rate, and conversion volume to establish a baseline of what target you can shoot for with low performers. If certain sitelinks aren't receiving a lot of impressions they've been passed over by the system, which means that you could probably work on improving those first.

Once you've found what's not working, try out new text to improve performance. If CTR is fine but your conversion rate is lagging, you could be sending traffic to the wrong page or setting user expectations incorrectly with a misleading link. As with your ads, even top performers could potentially be improved upon. Think about something new you may want to try.

When viewing your sitelink data, the info is available at the ad, ad group, campaign, and account level. Add or remove these columns on the Ad Extensions tab to determine just how specific you want your info to be.

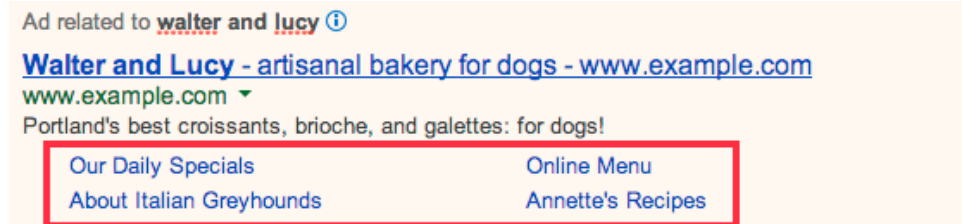
TIP: Beyond normal reporting, it's also a good idea to do a simple sense check. Are those the six (or twenty) pages that would be the most useful for your customers? Even if CTR or impressions are low, is there a minority of your users that will find that sitelink very useful? You may want to keep that link in place for them.

What You Need to Know About

4 Managing Ad Extensions

[Sitelinks](#)

Use case: You want to help people find what page they're looking for on your site with just one click.



Optimize the messaging in this space routinely, just [as you do with ad text](#). Many advertisers aren't taking advantage of this excellent feature just yet, so before we start optimizing you may need to [implement them](#).

Make sure to have **at least six active sitelinks for desktop and four active sitelinks for mobile**, but remember that you can go all the way up to twenty total per ad group or campaign. Sitelinks allow 25 characters for the link itself, and that space allows for testing. We've found that somewhat shorter sitelinks are the most effective, though, so **try to keep them closer to 18-20 characters for desktop and 12-15 characters for mobile**.

Test Your Sitelinks

Pure A/B testing isn't possible because [each sitelink must point to different content](#). When you're identifying what's lagging behind, recognize that other variables can muddle your results (things like ad tests, bid changes or seasonality). You can try out variations of sitelinks in different campaigns or sets of ad groups to see what works better, but it's still not going to be a perfect solution. Recognize the imperfection of this whenever reviewing your results.

Sitelink testing shouldn't be as frequent as your ad testing (due to the lack of A/B testing). Monthly or quarterly reviews might make sense for you, depending on your volume.

Apply ad copy testing principles to your new sitelinks. Think of distinct calls to action and benefits that relate to a user's search and the page you're directing them to. You can also take lessons from previous ad tests and apply them. For example, you can use losing (but still strong) ad copy as your sitelinks or their descriptions.

Sitelinks with Additional Detail

[Example T-Shirt Store](#)

[www.example.com](#)

Shop Our Huge Selection Of Unique T-Shirts For Men And Women.

[Order Online Now](#)

Free next-day delivery with orders over \$50.

[Store Locator](#)

Find a store near you. Buy online and pick up in store.

[Graphic Tees](#)

Shop all your favorite brands at 40% off through Sunday.

[Custom Tees](#)

Create your own t-shirt design and upload for printing.

You also have the option [to add additional detail to your sitelinks](#), which is great opportunity to prove value to customers before they click.

Mobile Sitelinks

Try to speak to mobile users. Think about mobile intent and how it differs from desktop, and then reflect that way of thinking in your sitelinks. You'll also want to keep mobile sitelinks shorter (to around 12-15 characters) to ensure they aren't cut off.

Location Extensions

Use case: You have a physical location where you can attract customers

Ads related to **ice cream amherst** ⓘ

[Amherst ice cream parlour - student discount all January](#)

[www.example.com](#) ▾ 1 (415) 123 - 4567

Our specialty is vanilla peanut butter cup. English majors, buy one get two free.

📍 100 Dardanelles Road, Amherst, MA

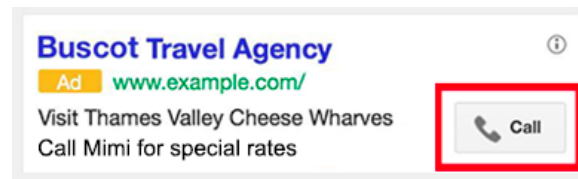
You can now set these up at the account level if you're using [upgraded location extensions](#). Account-level extensions allow for easier setup but also give you the option of setting up filters to prevent extensions from showing up on campaigns where they don't make sense. Remember to think of the intent behind your keywords and whether that user would benefit from seeing the nearest location that you have.

Upgraded location extensions also have the benefit of device control for advertisers. You can choose if you want your extensions to show on mobile devices or desktop/tablet.

Although it varies by vertical and advertiser, your online conversion rates generally go up when location extensions are present, despite this being thought of as an offline extension. When reporting on extensions be sure to check that metric.

Call Extensions

Use case: Phone calls are an important way for customers to connect with you

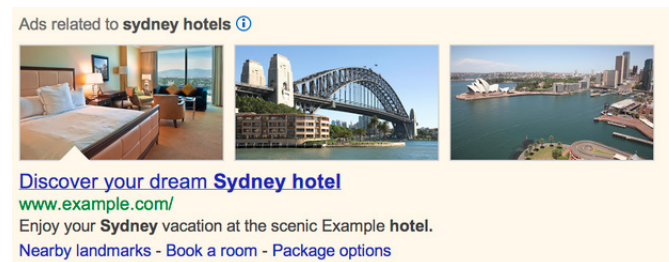


You can now count [conversions from calls](#). Decide whether receiving a call can be more valuable to you than a regular website click. This can be particularly true on mobile devices. Review how many conversions are generated from calls vs. website clicks. If calls convert at a higher rate, use call extensions and adjust your bidding strategy to maximize total conversions instead of just online conversions.

The good news is that phone calls now work with [target CPA and eCPC bidding options](#). These options automate bidding - incorporating factors such as device, browser, location and time of day - to get the most conversions for your budget.

Image Extensions

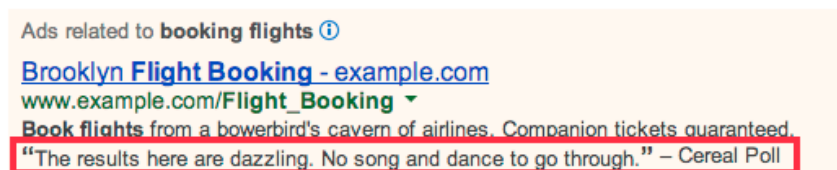
Use case: Seeing your product or service is more compelling than just reading about it



These haven't been widely released yet, but you can request access to image extensions via your account team. Clicks on the image take users to the same landing page as a click elsewhere on your ad. These can be a very powerful feature, but remember a couple of things: you have to be in position one in the top slot to be eligible to show (so only enable them in places where it would make sense for you to be in position one), and these can take up a lot of real estate, so they aren't as accommodating in their co-triggering as other extensions may be.

Review Extensions

Use case: You've received positive press or awards that could prove value to potential customers



One review can be enabled for your entire account, so it's possibly the fastest extension to put into place. Once you have them in place, make sure that your main ad text isn't repeating something in a similar vein to something that appears in your review.

Be sure to read the [review extension policy guidelines](#) to learn what reviews can or cannot be approved.

TIP: If you qualify for certain extensions they will appear alongside your ads without any action on your part. We'll often refer to those that appear automatically as annotations instead of extensions.

Some Extensions Will Show Automatically

Seller Ratings

Use case: Your company (not your individual products) has accrued numerous positive user reviews online

Ad related to **clothes store** ⓘ

Example.com - Clothes store with all the brands you need
www.example.com/ ▼

★★★★★ 237 reviews for example.com

Find **Gabri's** Belgian Shoes at this **clothes store**. Free delivery in Sherman Oaks!

Accrue thirty ratings in the last twelve months from any of the [review sites listed here](#) (along with Google Shopping and Google Trusted Stores).

You can view your current active reviews by visiting

<http://www.google.com/products/seller?zmi=xxxxxxx.com> (replace xxxxxxx.com with your domain). If you have a total rating lower than 3.5 stars, it won't be shown on search ads.

Social Annotations

Use case: Members of the social community are following you on Google+

Ad related to **annas pet** ⓘ

Example.com - Anna's Pet Supplies - Georgetown
www.example.com/ ▼ |

See a wide variety of insect carriers, personally chosen by **Anna!**

Anna's Pet Supplies has 247,118 followers on Google+

To have ads appear with social annotations all that you'll have to do is [connect your Google+ account to your website](#), match your ads' display URLs to website URL on Google+ page, and have 100+ followers on your Google+ page.

Previous Visit Annotations

Use case: You want searchers to find their way back to your website

Ads related to **wonder phone** ⓘ

WonderPhone 2000 by Krung - example.com
www.example.com/ ▼

7" SD display with sugar glass. Order online!

You've visited example.com 3 times. Last visit: today

Logged-in users on Google.com will be shown notifications whenever they've visited your site before, whether they've visited via Google Search results or Search ads. Organic results have shown this annotation for a while, but ads began showing them in December 2013. As long as search results or text ads share the same URL as your ad's display URL, these annotations will be eligible to appear. You'll need at least one click from an organic search result or at least two clicks from your search ads.

[Consumer Ratings Annotations](#)

Use case: You want to drive traffic to your site with the power of consumer opinion

[Save on Auto Insurance - exampleinsurance.com](#)
[www.exampleinsurance.com](#) ▼
Multiple Savings. Get An Online Quote Now.
Ratings: Customer service 9.5/10 - Claims handling 9/10 - Discounts 8/10

Based on data from self-identified customers of your business who responded to [Google Consumer Surveys](#), these annotations show highly rated attributes of your business along with your ads. Scores are benchmarked in each industry so ratings reflect how you stack up against related businesses. Through these results you can see not only what you're doing well, but where you have room to improve. Since these are based on customer feedback, improving your ratings will depend on making improvements that your customers will notice.

With few exceptions, we don't show ratings below 7.5 in the annotation. We try to show three ratings on desktop, but sometimes only two might fit. Mobile and tablet usually have less screen real estate, so they usually show fewer ratings than on desktop.

We want our users to find value in the ads we display, so you can rest assured that we want your ads to be engaging. If auto-enabled extensions are projected to hurt your performance we won't show them.

If you would rather opt out entirely, that option is available to you. Only opt out if you really feel that you wouldn't want these annotations to appear in any situation.

[Opt out of seller ratings](#)

[Opt out of social annotations](#)

[Opt out of previous visit annotations](#)

[Opt out of customer ratings annotations](#)

The Moral of the Story

You can engage with your target audience right on the Google results page by making the most of your ad extensions. Optimization can be limited for them, but you should be aware of everything that's available to you and know how they're doing. Enable those extensions that you haven't implemented yet for a fast way to improve your ads and increase your likelihood of connecting with new users.