Account structure best practices

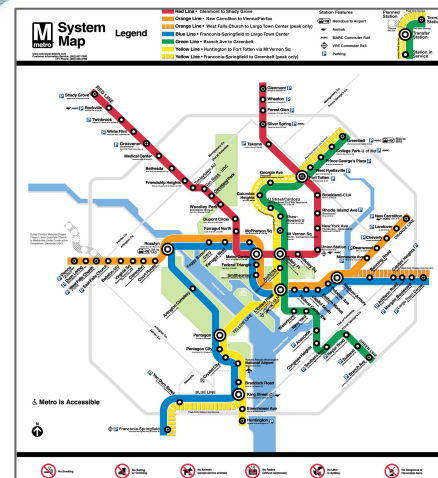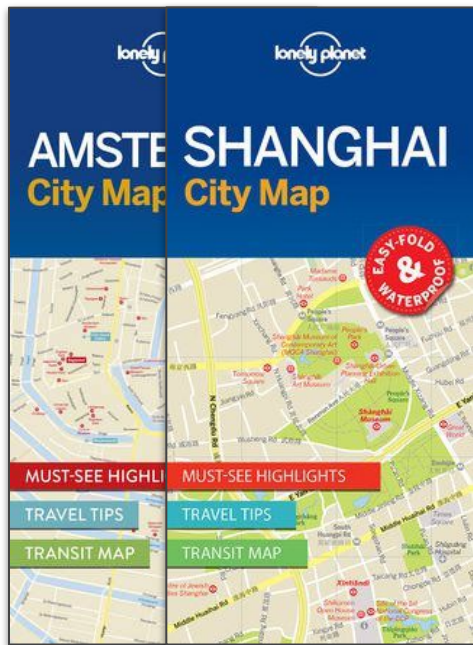*for modern Search*

February 2021

Introduction

Hello

Bonjour

こんにちは

你好

Ciao

A few years ago...

... in order to get around, you needed to have multiple maps - each one would serve a specific purpose.

Google

Nowadays...

Enabler

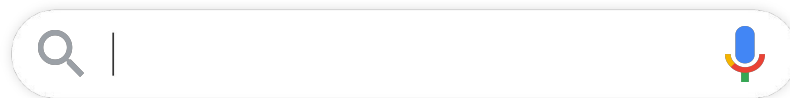thanks to technology, we can now get anywhere with the help of a single device

Google

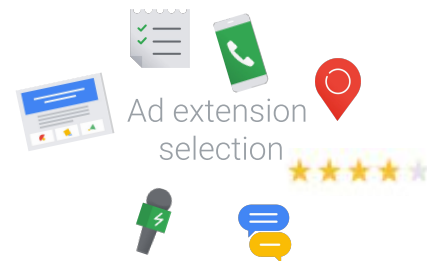Dynamic Search Ads

Smart Bidding

Responsive Search Ads

Search has evolved thanks to Machine Learning

Optimized Ad Rotation

DDA

Data Driven Attribution

Ad extension selection

Google

Keyword matching is also smarter

EVOLUTION OF SEMANTIC MATCHING

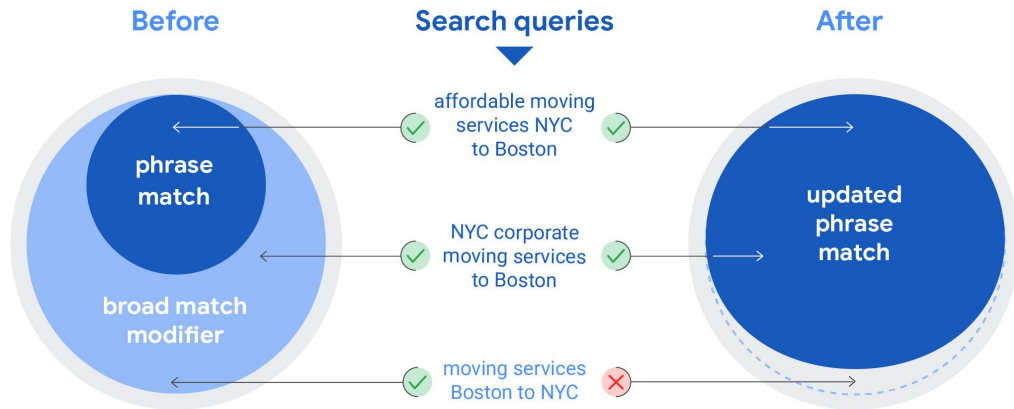| 2012	2017	2018	2019
Phrase Match & Exact Match	**Exact Match**	**Exact Match**	**BMM & Phrase Match**
Inclusion of **syntactic variants** of keywords (plurals, misspellings, abbreviations, acronyms, etc.)	Allowance for **word reordering / function word** addition or removal if meaning is unchanged.	Inclusion of synonyms, implied words and queries with the **same meaning.**	Keyword close variants now include synonyms, implied words and variants with the **same meaning.**
"Cabernet sauvignon wine" can match to <Cabernet sauvignon wines> <Cabernet sauvingon wine>	[paintings in the Louvre] can match to <Louvre paintings> <paintings in Louvre>	[best cafe latte in Paris] can match to <best latte in Paris>	"waitress jobs in Paris" can match to <find Paris server jobs> +waitressing +jobs +Paris can match to <serving or bussing jobs in Paris>

Google

2021 Update to Phrase and BMM

This change brings the best of broad match modifier into phrase match. As a result, phrase match will expand to cover additional broad match modifier traffic, while continuing to respect word order when it's important to the meaning.

The slow rollout begins February 18th, 2021.

Link to announcement post for full details.

Keyword= "moving services NYC to Boston" **or** +moving +services +NYC +to +Boston

Before | Search queries | After

phrase match

broad match modifier

affordable moving services NYC to Boston

NYC corporate moving services to Boston

moving services Boston to NYC

updated phrase match

*Note that these circles are not to scale

New keyword match type portfolio

Exact match

Matches to searches that are the same meaning as the keyword.

Syntax:
[keyword]

Phrase match

Ads show on searches that *include* the meaning of your keyword. The meaning may be implied, or the user search may be a more specific form of the meaning.

Syntax:
"Keyword" (or legacy BMM syntax +keyword)

Broad match

Matches to searches that are related to the keyword.

Syntax:
keyword

Precision ·· Reach

Even so, complex account structures still abound

COMMON PRACTICES / ARTIFICIAL CONSTRAINTS:

- Match-type-specific ad groups and campaigns

- Duplicate keywords across every match type

- Single keyword ad groups

- "Funneling" to match type using negatives

- Monitoring the search terms report and adding low-volume search terms as exact keywords (even though they're already captured by other targeting)

- Manual bidding at the keyword level and using bid adjustments / bidding rules

Google

Why are simplified account structures better?

Better performance through machine learning

Larger ad group volume allows machine learning-based solutions like RSA to learn faster and deliver better performance

Ease of management

Estimated up to 20%* time savings to focus on strategy and not on manual tasks

Easier to identify insights allowing better decision making

Less margin of error

Estimated time saving is based based on internal surveys

Google

How Smart Bidding unlocks simpler structure

Google

Smart Bidding opens the door for simpler account structures

With manual/API bidding...

More complex and granular account structures can yield better performance. Advertisers try to get as close to query-level bidding as possible by building exhaustive keyword lists, using negative keywords to funnel traffic, and duplicating campaigns for different geos, devices, audiences, etc.

With Smart Bidding...

Granular account structures aren't necessary for bid optimization: **Smart Bidding works with any account structure as it is auction-time, evaluates unique signals for every auction, and optimizes based on data from all of your campaigns**. However, accounts using Smart Bidding can be managed more easily with a simplified account structure and other best practices.

Google

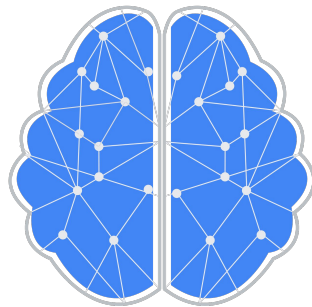# Why doesn't Smart Bidding **need a granular account structure?**

#1

It bids auction-time & at the query-level

#2

It uses a combination of signals to set the best bid

#3

It optimizes based on data from all of your campaigns

Google

#1 Smart Bidding bids **auction-time & query-level**

Smart Bidding sets unique bids for each individual auction & query based on your goals and conversion likelihood.

Manual/API bidding optimizes at the keyword-level, not for each query or auction. The structure of exhaustive keyword lists used to be critical when manually optimizing at scale.

Granular keyword segmentation is unnecessary as Smart Bidding is auction-time and factors various signals beyond keywords and the query entered

Mobile user in NYC
searches **buy sofa**
after visiting your site yesterday

Interior design aficionado
searches **trending sofa colors**
before ever visiting your site

Tablet user
searches **return sofa**
after converting on your site last week

Google

#2 Smart Bidding **uses combinations of signals to set the best bid**

Smart Bidding uses signals combined, per auction. All signals are measured and optimized per auction and query, including thousands of signals exclusive to Smart Bidding.

Manual/API bidding can perform some basic "cross-signal" optimization (at most, 2 or 3 layers deep), but only through a complex and fragmented account structure.

Actual query

OS

Location

Language

Bid
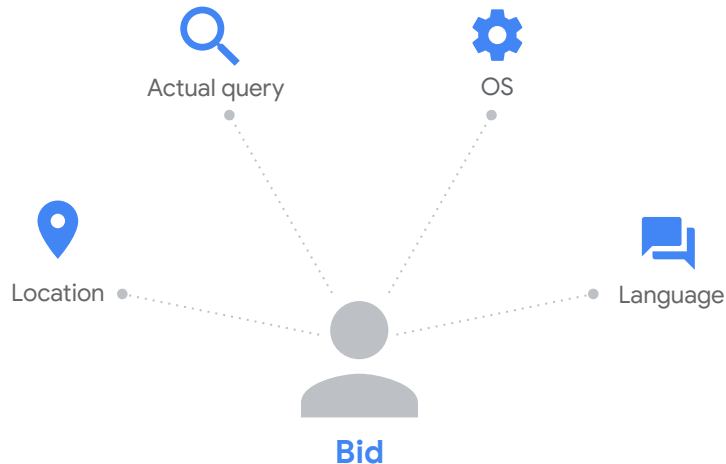
Granular campaign/ad group segmentation by dimension is unnecessary as Smart Bidding already evaluates a combination of unique signals per auction

Google

#3 Smart Bidding can optimize based on **conversion history from all of your campaigns**

Smart Bidding will learn how to optimize bids for each auction with conversion history from all of your campaigns in an account*. This means even campaigns that are new or have low conversion volume will benefit from Smart Bidding.

Smart Bidding will work with any account structure, and there is no "perfect" account structure to boost its bidding optimization.

Smart Bidding will use data from all of your campaigns to set unique bids per auction, regardless of how your account is segmented

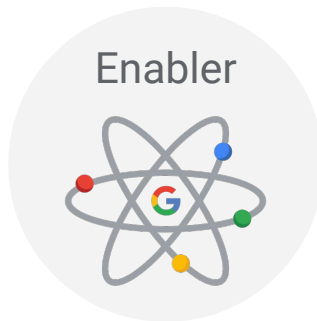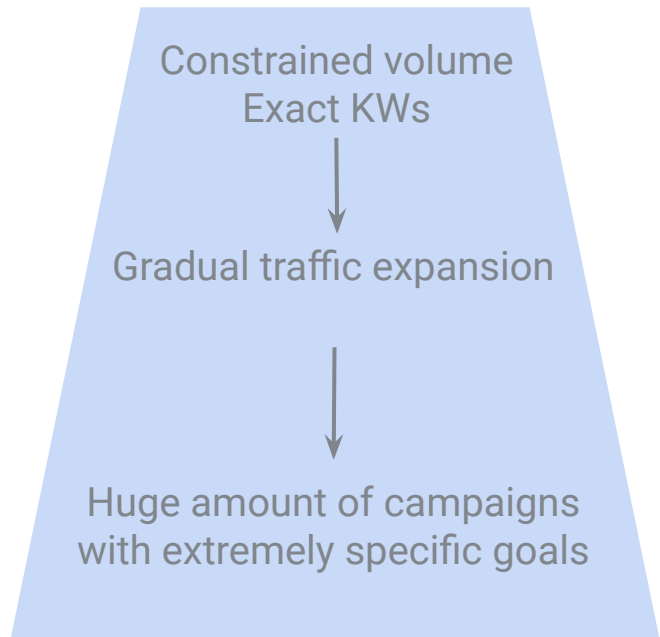| # of Convs	Campaign
156	Brand Search
78	Generic Search
34	Generic Remarketing
4	Small Campaign "C"
8	Small Campaign "B"
13	Small Campaign "A"

Smart Bidding will use data from all of your campaigns in real-time**

*Smart Bidding will also use cross-account conversion history if conversions are set up at the MCC-level.
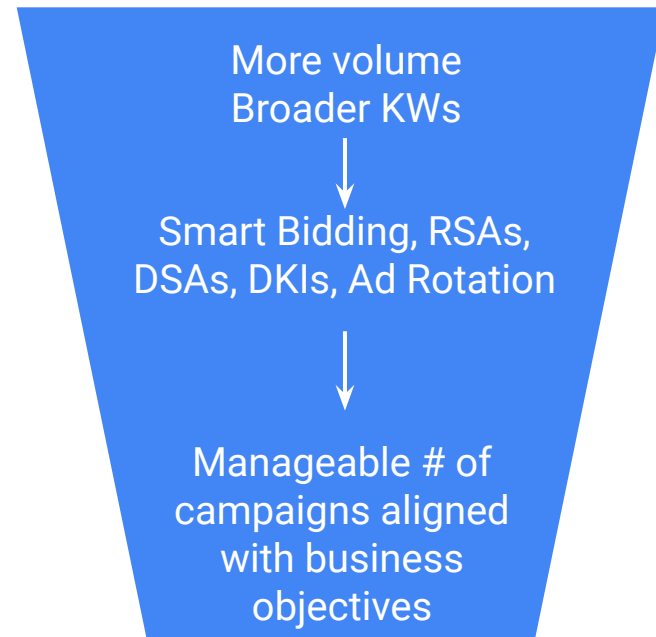**Even if just one campaign is using Smart Bidding, that campaign will use account-wide data.

Google
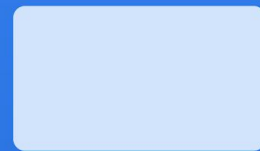
Best-in-class advertisers are automating and simplifying

Manual management

Constrained volume
Exact KWs

↓

Gradual traffic expansion

↓

Huge amount of campaigns with extremely specific goals

Enabler

Automated management

More volume
Broader KWs

↓

Smart Bidding, RSAs, DSAs, DKIs, Ad Rotation

↓

Manageable # of campaigns aligned with business objectives

Google

How to simplify your structure

Account structure with Smart Bidding: Fundamentals

Base campaigns on business objectives

Smart Bidding is **objective-based bidding**. The goals of your campaigns will help determine which bid strategies to use.

Theming is still important

Technically Smart Bidding can work if you mix themes together in an ad group. However, **creative relevance** is still important, so a well-themed ad group is ideal. Grouping themed keywords together also helps us **better understand your keywords** to select the best keyword + ad option to serve.

Provide better data for better performance

A Machine Learning algorithm is only as good as what we give it to learn. Make sure you are set up for success by **measuring and reporting what really matters**.
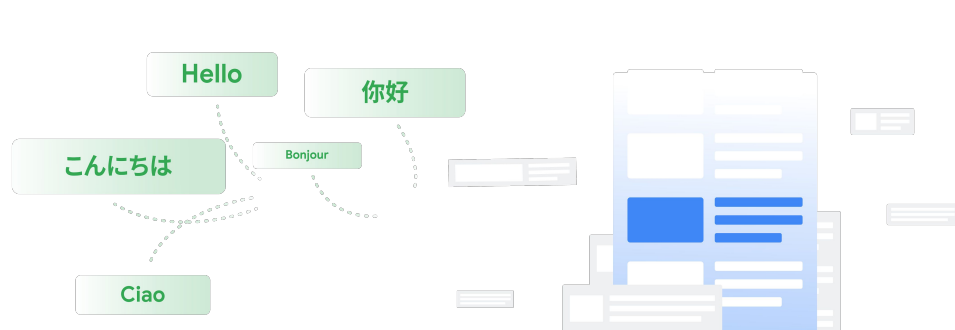
Google
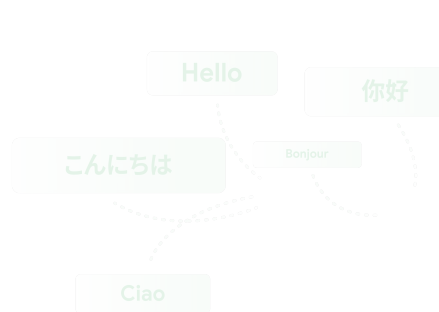
Steps for simplifying accounts:
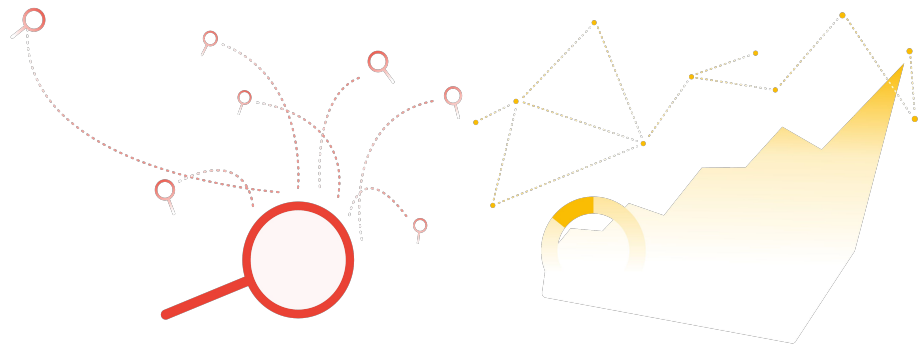
Consolidate traffic
into fewer and larger ad
groups and campaigns

1

Broaden match types
under Smart Bidding

2

Maximize **coverage** and
incremental reach with
DSA

Hello

你好

こんにちは

Bonjour

Ciao

3

Leverage RSA and
dynamic features for
Creatives

4

Google

Steps for simplifying accounts:

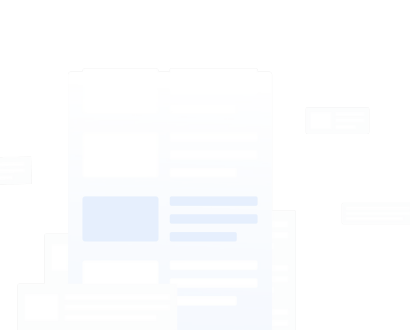**Consolidate traffic**
into fewer and larger ad groups and campaigns

Broaden match types
under Smart Bidding

Maximize coverage and incremental reach with DSA

Leverage RSA and dynamic features for Creatives

1   2   3   4

Google

① Consolidate traffic based on objective...

Manual Bidding

Match type	Broad Match Campaign	adgroup adgroup adgroup adgroup
	Exact Match Campaign	adgroup adgroup
	Phrase Match Campaign	adgroup adgroup

Device	Mobile Campaign	adgroup adgroup adgroup adgroup
	Desktop Campaign	adgroup adgroup adgroup
	Tablet Campaign	adgroup adgroup adgroup

Audience	10 day (RLSA) Campaign	adgroup adgroup adgroup
	20 day (RLSA) Campaign	adgroup adgroup
	30 day (RLSA) Campaign	adgroup adgroup adgroup

| DSA | Dynamic Search Ads | adgroup adgroup adgroup |

Smart Bidding

tCPA 10$

Campaign 1

tCPA 18$

Campaign 2

Google
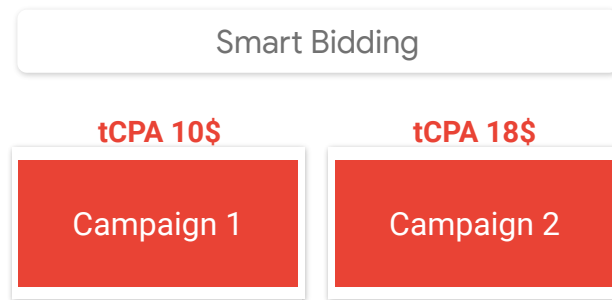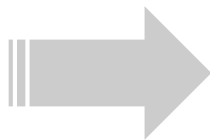
1 ...by removing unneeded traffic segmentations...

✓

Keyword Match Type

Smart Bidding is auction-time & query-level:

It is not necessary to segment by match type or single keyword ad groups to boost optimization.

✓

Device, Geo, Day, etc.

Algorithms factor in device, physical location, time of day, and a host of other signals.

✓

Audiences

Algorithms automatically factor recency on 1st-party Audience lists - add the longest & largest list possible to maximize reach.

Google

1 ...and cleaning up unnecessary excesses...

Use basic hygiene recommendations

🔧 Remove conflicting negative keywords   (+<0.1%)   ⋮

People didn't see your ads because of conflicting negative keywords. Remove them so your ads can show.

Recommended because conflicting negative keywords are preventing some of your keywords from showing ads ⑦

🔍 Remove redundant keywords   (+0.1%)   ⋮

Make your account easier to manage by removing redundant keywords

Recommended because you have redundant keywords with the same ad group, destination, bid, bidding strategy, and match type ⑦

🔧 44 ad groups do not have any keywords   (+0.5%)   ⋮

Get your ads running by adding keywords to each ad group

Remove misspellings, plurals & stemmings

	Keyword	Match type
✅	womens hat	Exact
	women hats	Exact
	woemen hat	Exact
	hats women	Exact
	hats for women	Exact
	hat for women	Exact
	hats for woemen	Exact

Google

1 ... moving to larger volume ad groups and campaigns

💡 Try to maximize the number of impressions per ad group*.

Grouping themed keywords together helps us better understand the intention of your keywords to select the best keyword + ad option to serve.

A good way to consolidate traffic is to have each ad group point to a single landing page. This will allow more volume and more variety of queries per ad group, while still staying on-theme.

If not ready to consolidate campaigns, Portfolio Bidding is a good place to start, as it allows you to optimize bids across multiple campaigns to reach your performance goals
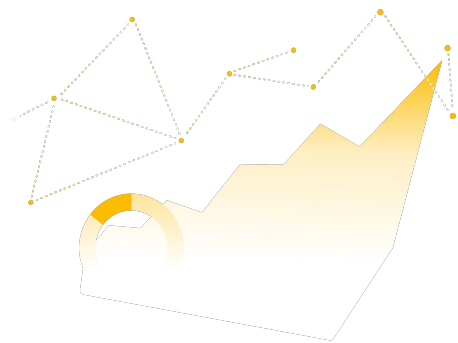
*Some automated features have volume thresholds, like the Performance Asset label for RSA which only shows if there are 5k+ impressions per month in the ad group

Google

Steps for simplifying accounts:

Consolidate traffic into fewer and larger ad groups and campaigns

Broaden match types under Smart Bidding

Maximize **coverage** and incremental reach with DSA

Leverage RSA and dynamic features for **Creatives**

1

2

3

4

Google

2 Broaden match types under Smart Bidding...

A broad match keyword covers all the same queries as the same keyword in narrower match types, plus more.

When using Smart Bidding, there is **no incremental gain** to having keywords repeated in different match types.

Broad

Phrase
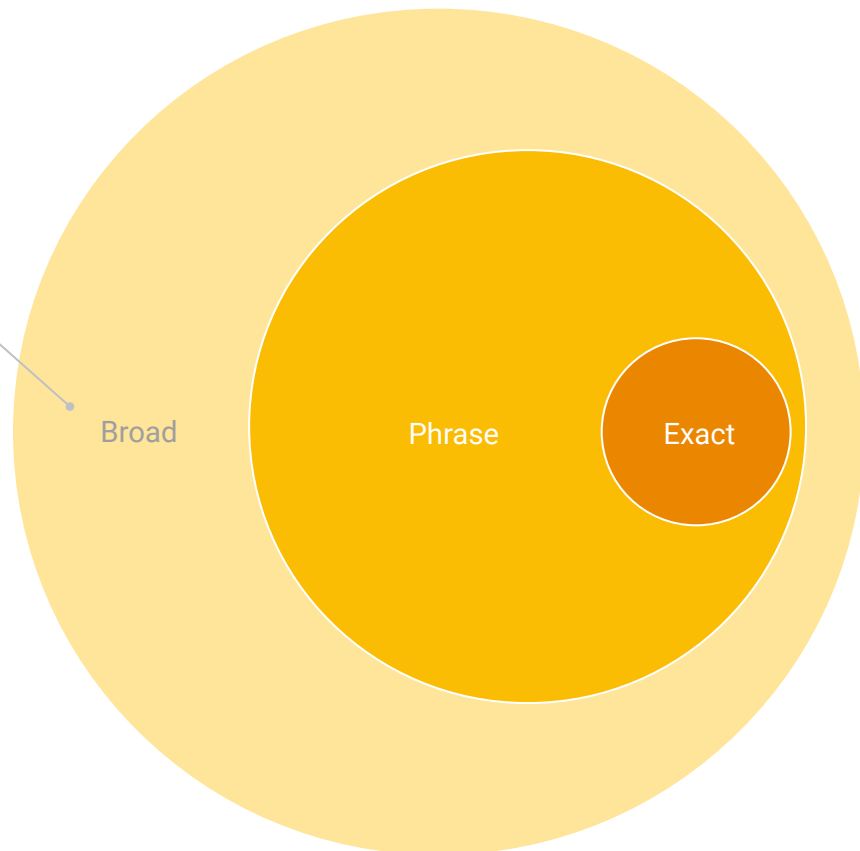
Exact

Note: not to scale

2 …and use fewer keywords with better results.

Broad keyword

Set of queries reached through a single Broad match keyword

Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact Exact

Many exact keywords would be needed to achieve the same reach as a broad match keyword.

This strategy is time consuming and inefficient...

...and it's likely that business-relevant queries are missed.

Smart Bidding allows you to **safely** cast a wider net with a broader match type, as bids are customized in real-time to make sure you're reaching **business-relevant queries** that help you **achieve your KPIs.**

Google

Steps for simplifying accounts:

Hello

你好

こんにちは

Bonjour

Ciao

Consolidate traffic
into fewer and larger ad
groups and campaigns

Broaden match types
under Smart Bidding
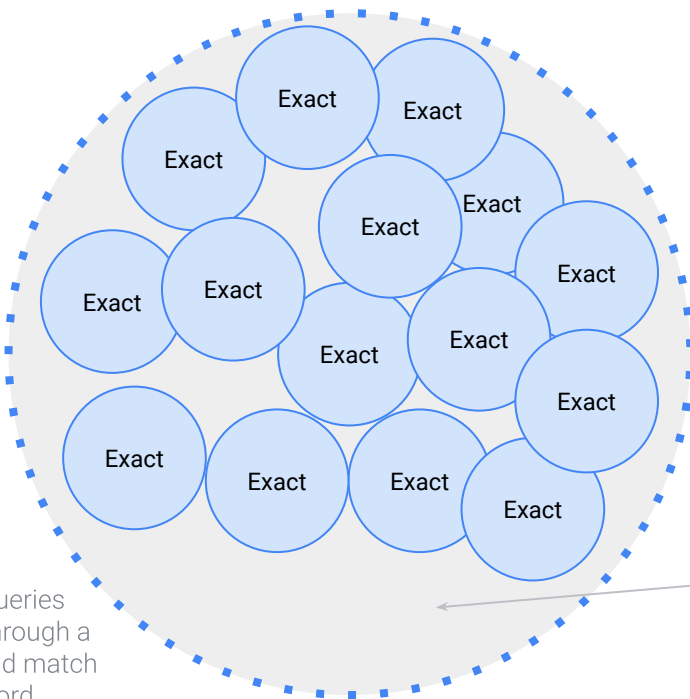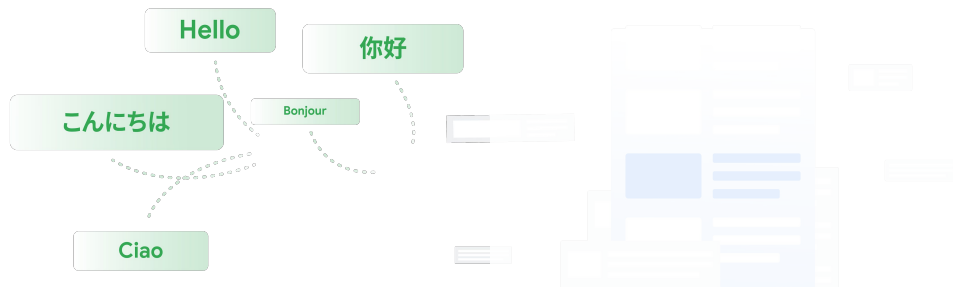
Maximize **coverage** and
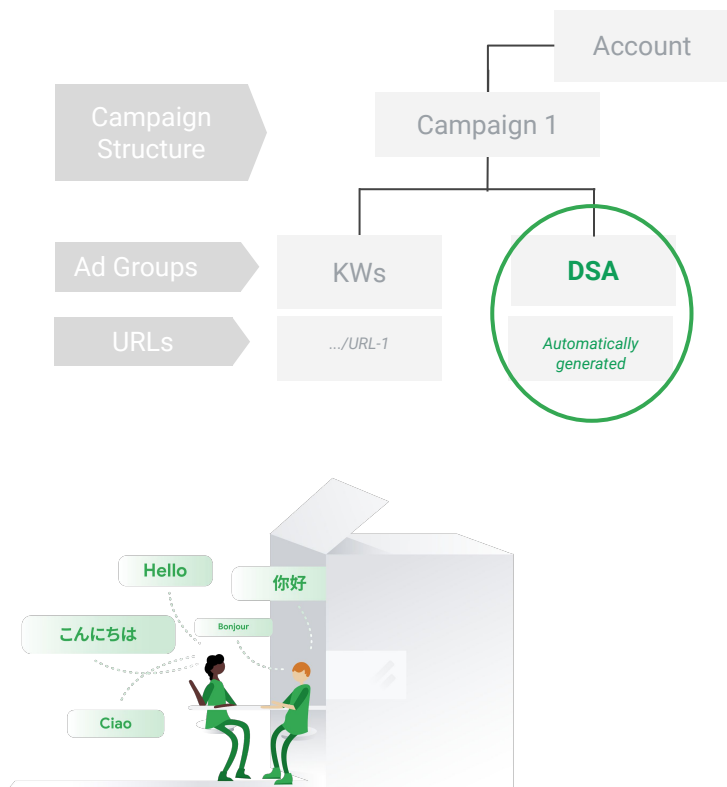incremental reach with
DSA

Leverage RSA and
dynamic features for
Creatives

1   **2**   **3**   **4**

Google

3 Maximize coverage and incremental reach with DSA

Campaign Structure

Account

Campaign 1

Ad Groups

KWs | DSA

URLs

.../URL-1 | *Automatically generated*

Hello
你好
こんにちは
Bonjour
Ciao

Cover more queries
75% of search terms targeted by DSA are new and incremental

Save time
Deliver a personalized ad, dynamically generated based on your relevant landing page to drive performance.

Drive performance
Compared to the average non-brand campaign, DSA targeting generates lower CPAs

Google

3 ...and optimize account structures with Hybrid campaigns (standard + dynamic ad groups)

Separate
DSA campaign ✖

- different budget
- different bidding
- different target

DSA ad group in
Hybrid campaign 💎

- same budget
- same bidding
- same target

💡 Set up DSA targeting at the **ad group level** alongside keyword ad groups in the same campaign

Recommended DSA targeting options:

Exact URLs or URL contains

www. 🎤

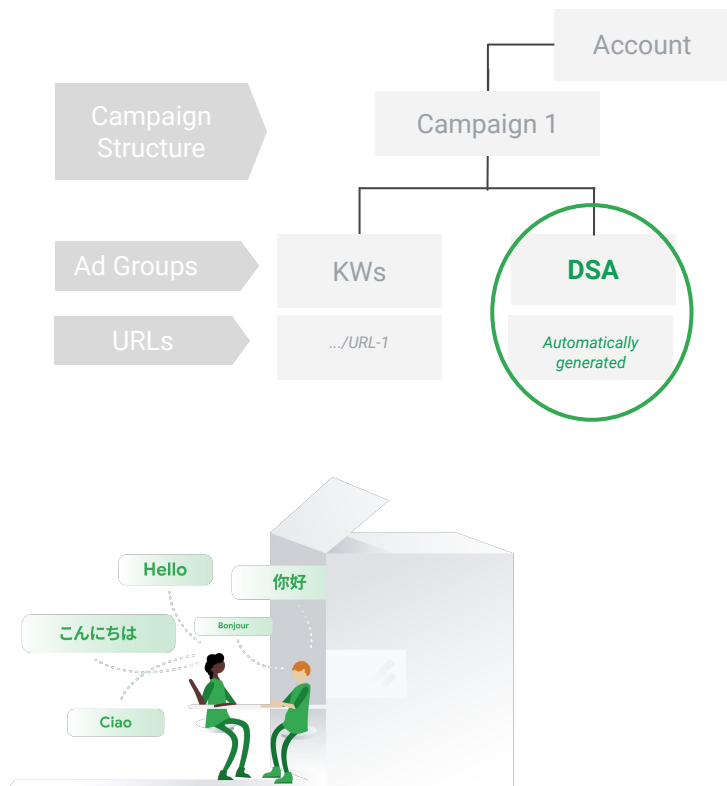Simple to setup while providing lots of control

Page Feeds

Maximize control at scale for large sites

Categories

Perfect for maximizing your coverage with little effort

3 Understanding the relationship between DSA & keywords

Campaign Structure

Account

Campaign 1

Ad Groups

KWs

DSA

URLs

.../URL-1

Automatically generated

Hello
你好
こんにちは
Bonjour
Ciao

What will serve if...

… the query (or its spell-correction) is identical to an exact match keyword?	→ The exact keyword will have preference over DSA.
… the query is identical (but no variations) to a non-exact match keyword?	→ If no exact match can trump (via rule above), the non-exact keyword will serve over DSA, unless DSA has a better Ad Rank and lower bid.
.. the two cases above don't apply?	→ Keyword or DSA, depending on Ad Rank.
NOTE: the above rules are followed as long as the keyword / DSA is eligible (i.e., not disapproved, budget constrained, etc.)	

💡 It's not necessary to add your keywords as negatives to your DSA targeting
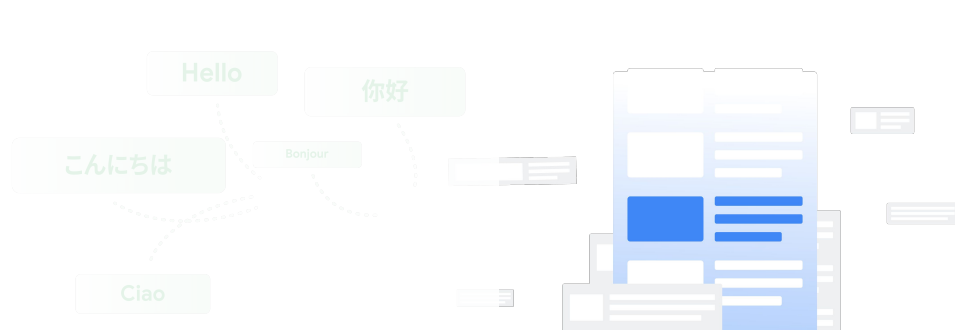
Google

Steps for simplifying accounts:

Consolidate traffic
into fewer and larger ad
groups and campaigns

Broaden match types
under Smart Bidding
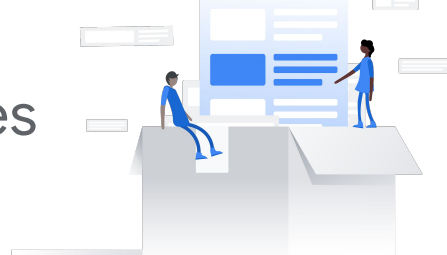
Maximize **coverage** and
incremental reach with
DSA

Leverage RSA and
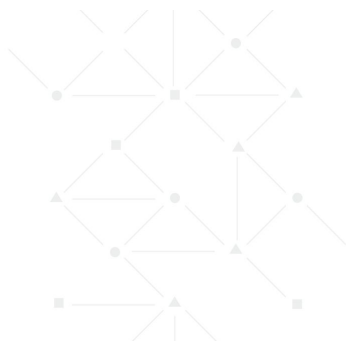dynamic features for
Creatives

1

2

3

4

Google

4 Leverage RSA and dynamic features for creatives

Maintaining relevance between queries, ads and landing pages is key!

Use the power of machine learning to show highly-tailored ads with Responsive Search Ads

Leverage dynamic features to deliver customized ads without segmenting traffic

Dynamic Keyword Insertion
`{KeyWord:default text}`

Currently compatible with ETAs & RSAs

IF functions*
`{=IF(<dimension>=<criterion>,text to insert):default text}`
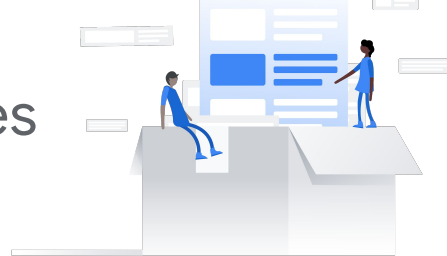
Currently compatible with ETAs

Ad customizers-
`{LOCATION(Level):default text}`

Currently compatible with RSA

Google

4 Leverage RSA and dynamic features for creatives

Maintaining relevance between queries, ads and landing pages is key!

Your ad assets

Headlines (3-15)		Descriptions (2-4)
H1	H5	D1
H2	H6	D2
H3	H7	D3
H4	Up to 15	Up to 4
+ URL		

Google Machine Learning Technology

Right ad for the right customer

H3	H1	H6
URL		
D1		D3
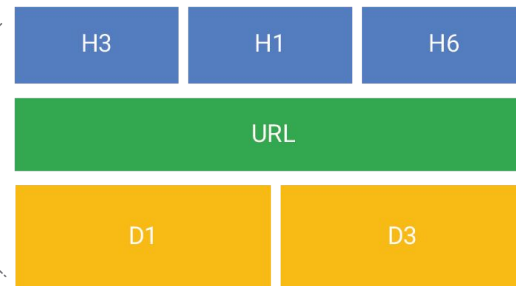
Supply up to 15 headlines, up to 4 descriptions as your assets for RSA. The system will use these assets to automatically create new ads, in the RSA format, depending on the search query.

Google

Conclusion

Google

Additional best practices

Audiences

Audiences are "food" for Smart Bidding and provide important user signals to the algorithm

Portfolio Bid Strategies

Bundle campaigns w/ similar performance targets if not yet ready to consolidate campaigns.

Ad extensions & Optimized Ad rotation

Optimize expected CTR through more relevant creatives.

DDA

Feed in all user signals with data-driven attribution and make Smart Bidding even smarter

Google

Ensure sufficient budget: Smart Bidding performance directly depends on it!

Ensure your tCPA and tROAS campaigns are not limited by budget.

Campaigns restricted on a budget will not be able to maximize volume within your target

Consult the Recommendations page and Performance Planner for opportunities to grow or reallocate budgets on campaigns

If the goal is to optimize towards a specific budget, use maximize conversions or maximize conversion value bidding strategies

Google

Good to know 💡

1 **Smart Bidding trains on all data in your account.** New campaigns are not starting from zero because the account will use the performance data that has been stored so far at query level, for that domain.

2 **Restructure your campaigns/accounts in batches,** validating the learnings, and minimizing disruption.

3 **Don't focus too much on Quality Score.** QS is a good indicator of relevance between a keyword and the ads inside an ad group but it doesn't see the full picture. It's relevance across query / creative / landing page which matters and this is determined in real time for every auction, regardless of what the keyword's QS is.

Google

Structuring for automation:
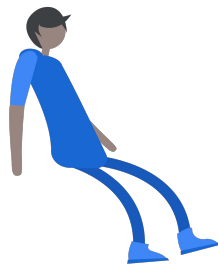# Paving the way for the future of Search

Granular structures require massive amounts of time and effort to manage through manual tasks with little added value. They lead to higher margin of error and make it difficult to manage advertising through Google Ads.

Simplified structures are **possible thanks to Smart Bidding**

Adopting this framework will help prepare you for the future, where automation helps you stay focused on what really matters - **growing and achieving your KPIs**.

Structuring for **automation** will allow machine learning-based solutions to realize their **full potential**

Google

Case Studies

Hello
Bonjour
こんにちは
你好
Ciao

Google

CASE STUDY

Holistic restructuring project boosts Vodafone conversions at lower CPA

Vodafone Italia
Vodafone.it
dalberti@, mmannocci@, drigante@

The challenge

Vodafone had a very granular and complex structure split in 4 different accounts with more than 200 Active campaigns.

The main challenges included: management of campaigns and reporting very difficult due to monthly Bid Strategies and new formula columns on SA360; Direct Customer; Generic Campaigns on Manual Bidding; Brand Campaigns were using Target Impression share; Google solutions were not efficiently used; CPA was high and optimization very impractical.

The approach

A restructuring project following account structure best practices for modern Search was set up with all relevant Stakeholders including Vodafone, Search Specialist, SA360 Specialist and Audience specialist. As a result, the group agreed to: following a step by step restructuring plan based on campaign type and priority and including a consolidation of campaigns and Ad-groups (from 200 to 8 active campaigns); implementing RSA, using an automated bidding tCPA strategy on SA360 for live auction, using a DDA attribution model on SA360, leveraging all audiences signals (RLSA, Similar Customer match) in observation mode

The results

Comparing YoY H1 2020 vs H1 2019 Residential Accounts (ADSL, FIBRA, Site Links, Dominance) before and after restructuring, Vodafone was able to achieve more conversions (+31%) at a lower cost (-8% CPA) and a higher CTR (+8pp).

"In the era of automation an account structure that maximises the efficiency of the algorithms is almost mandatory."
—Vodafone Digital marketing Team

-8%	+31%	+8pp
CPA (YoY)	Conversions (YoY)	CTR (YoY)

Google Ads

MINI leverages account structure best practices for modern search in their Google Ads strategy to improve Performance

MINI

France https://www.mini.fr/fr_FR/home.html

The challenge

Amid growing competition, automotive player MINI had difficulties keeping search campaigns profitable, especially on top generic keywords segments.

Partnering with iProspect

MINI, iProspect & Google collaborated on a marketing transformation plan to develop the right project roadmaps to face this challenge. Alignements & follow ups were done on a regular basis to track progress while keeping focus on the long term goal.

The approach

To reach **MINI's goals,** iProspect transformed their way of using search ads, switching from a granular micro-optimisation approach, **to a simplified account structure, gathering more data** at every level: campaign, ad group and audience. This reduced the number of generic and brand model campaigns by 70% and 75% respectfully. This also helped to reduce the number of ad groups by 25% by **merging the keyword match types**.

iProspect used **Google Ads Smart Bidding** algorithm to place the best bid at the best price at the right moment using the data collected in the new account structure. Implementing Responsive Search Ads & Dynamic Search Ads in each campaign made the ads extremely relevant and tailored to a broader set of queries, compared to what their original account structure allowed.

The results

After implementing the new account structure and Google Ads Machine Learning solutions (Smart Bidding, RSA & DSA), the results were almost immediate and positive on all the KPIs observed by the client. The click through rate increased 5x, and the conversion rate increased by 15%, while reducing the cost per click and, therefore, cost per conversion by 20%.

"The new account structure helps us manage multiple campaigns and optimise our budget, allowing MINI and iProspect to drive more business and focus on innovation."

—*Céliane, Head of Digital Acquisition at MINI France*

+5%	+15%	–20%
Conv	conv.rate	cost/conv

YoY Search Results from Nov 1st 2019 to Jan 31st 2020

Nissan, 1st Auto in Spain to adopt a simplified account structure methodology, sees their CPL decrease by more than 70%

Nissan Motor Co., Ltd
Barcelona, Spain • Linked URL

The challenge

Strengthen the SUV and Crossover segment (including generic keywords) which could provide the qualified volume we were looking for and increase the current leads in existing campaigns.

The approach

Our Google Team team proposed the restructure of the Generic Crossover campaigns through a new machine learning friendly approach.

Methodology

Working with the SUV and Crossover category landing page, we structured the generic keywords with the highest volume and best performance in the last months, creating one unique campaign focused on a maximize conversions objective.

The aim of the new structure was to merge the traffic previously fragmented across different Crossover campaigns, in order to grant to each ad group the highest possible volume. This is a key step to make all automation all machine learning solutions work at their best.

Total number of Crossover Offensive campaigns were reduced from 3 to 1 and the keywords from 373 to 47.

We implemented RSA, ETA & DSA ads for better optimization and overall performance.

The results

The first month of activation showed great results: Website traffic increased by +487%, intenders by +448% and qualified visits by +274% (all vs previous year).

This new campaign also achieved big improvements in CPC & CPL: -77% Average CPC and -72% in CPL (*vs* non simplified campaigns).

This methodology brought an easier and more efficient campaign management thanks to a lighter structure, with fewer ad groups, keywords and ads.

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Besides time savings, this new methodology helped to substantially reduce CPLs while generating more traffic. Given the context, rolling it out to other markets would be advisable, especially to improve performance on generics."

— Helena Calderón, Search Manager Nissan United Spain

YoY Results: May 1 to 8 June 2020 (vs PY)

-77%	+487%	-72%
Avg. CPC	Clicks	CPL

Google Ads

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