

Case Study – Paid Search Strategy

We've provided lots of tips and tools across a host of topics of interest to dealers this year including [SEO](#), [YouTube](#) and more. This month, we would like to share a case study to help show how Paid Search marketing (i.e., Pay Per Click or PPC) can be used to drive results for your dealership.

1. The Situation

For many dealers, especially smaller ones, using Paid Search can be scary. It is a very specialized topic and it can be easy to spend a lot of money that isn't productive or aligned to your goals.

A Cirrus' client had been running their Paid Search marketing using automated tools but without a clear strategy of what their business goals were for this or how to accomplish them using the automated tool.

Their conversion goals and settings were also misaligned. We spoke about metrics and conversion goals in our recent article: [Google Analytics: Metrics that Matter](#).

The client asked Cirrus to help them setup a strong Paid Search strategy with better defined goals, configure their PPC settings to align to these goals, and run the program on their behalf.

2. Defining Goals for Paid Search Marketing

After reviewing the account, we agreed to redefine a "conversion" as the result of an actionable item completed on their website.

A contact form would be perfect for this and the client was already using several for specific customer requests. For example, a customer could request information about a specific unit, ask the dealer to check if they could qualify for financing, or request a service repair.

Each form was already geared towards the prospect completing an action that would connect them with the corresponding department in our client's dealership.

Based off this, we agreed on the following key goals for Paid Search:

- Drive quality traffic
 - Where “quality traffic” refers to the likelihood of the prospect completing a transaction
- Optimize the number of conversions
 - Measured by the number of completed online forms
- Lower the cost per conversion

This was a change to how the account was being run in the past. Previous:

- Conversion goals were a measurement of time on the website
- Paid Search strategy was focused on clicks and cost per click

3. Steps to Strategy Change

To execute the strategy, we had to make changes to both their Google Analytics and Paid Search campaigns. We took these steps:

- Moved the Paid Search account from Google Express to Google AdWords
 - Google AdWords provided us more control over the campaigns
- Re-worked campaigns and ad groups and
- Changed bidding and keyword strategy to better align with new goals

4. Results of New Paid Search Strategy

To gauge results, we instituted a monthly performance tracking program that included Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a comparison of these over time.

Although our core KPIs were conversions and cost per conversion, we also reviewed clicks, cost per click, and traffic engagement in addition to other metrics each month.

Since this program began in May 2017, we have seen continuous improvement in their core metrics.

While May marks the first month of year over year performance comparisons, the trending since we made the change is also important.

In the charts below, you can see the trends showing improvements to the core KPIs year over year (May-Dec '17 to Jan-May '18)

- 66% increase in conversions
- 111% increase in conversions as a percentage of site visitors
- 30% lower cost per conversion

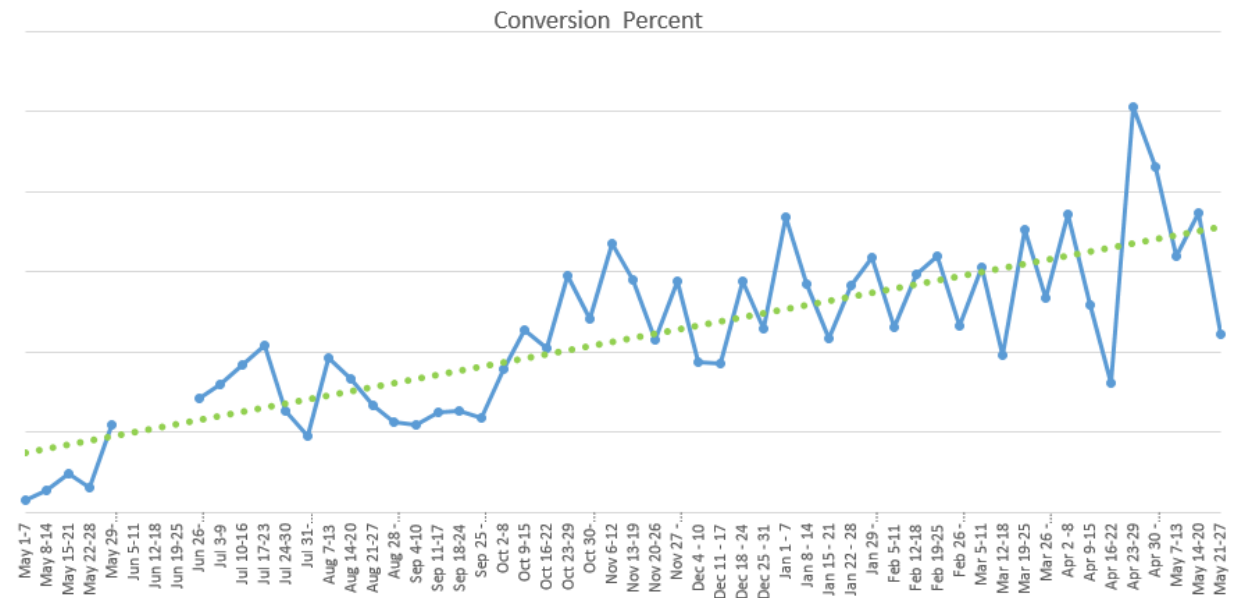
In addition, while we showed declines in clicks and click through rate, we saw improvements in the quality of the site visitors.

This was measured by declines in bounce rates (from an average of over 40% to virtually non-existent) and pages per session (from an average of 4.0 pages compared to current average of 8.3).

In fact, our CPC increased, but because we were gaining more high-converting, quality traffic, this was a metric we were comfortable with.

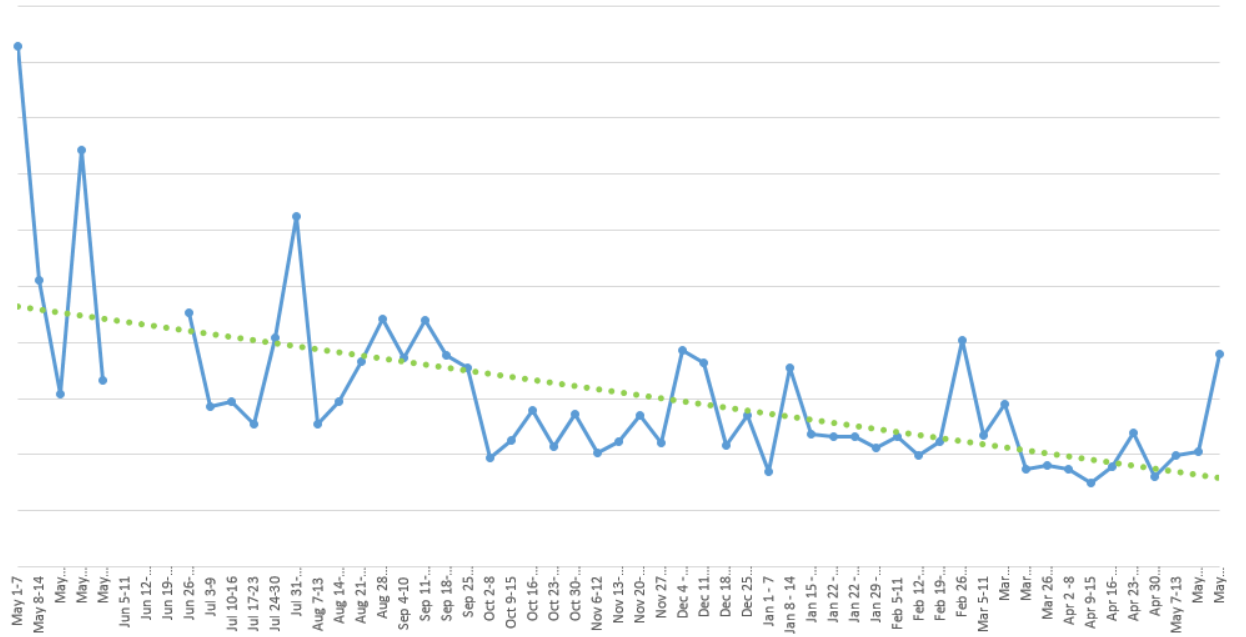
The below charts show the trends for our top goals of conversions and cost per conversion.

Conversions as a Percent of Site Visitors



Cost Per Conversion

Cost Per Conversion



Like other marketing tactics, Paid Search is an ongoing project. We are proud to have demonstrated the ability to adapt and adjust to the strategies and goals of our dealers and drive revenue at a reasonable cost.

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