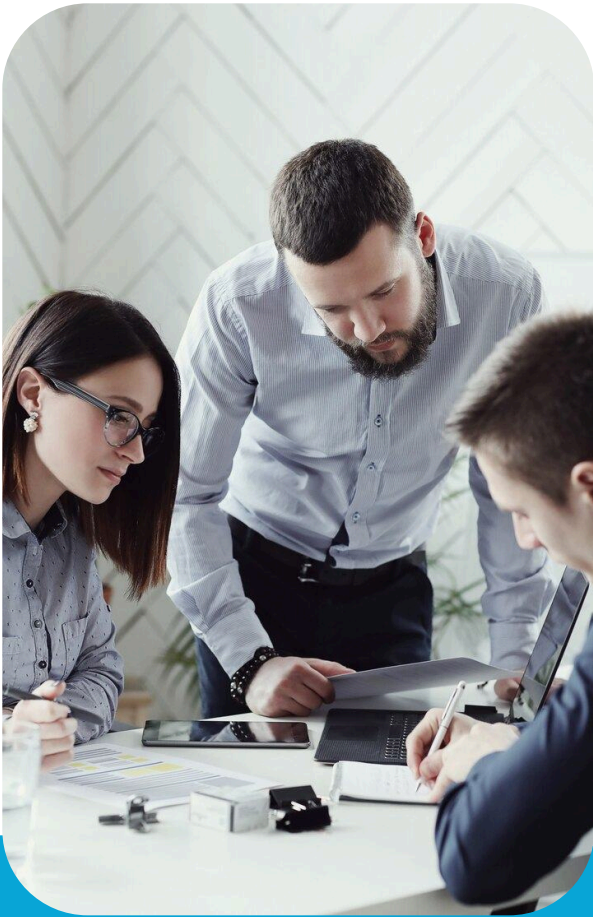




CASE STUDY

Optimizing Paid Search for Growth & Engagement



Project Overview

In Q4 2023, ACUE partnered with Partner in Publishing (PIP) to **enhance its paid search strategy**, improving engagement, visibility, and conversions.

Campaign Goals

- Increase website traffic and user engagement on acue.org.
- Support eCommerce initiatives for direct enrollment in ACUE's programs.
- Optimize SEM performance by refining targeting, bidding, and ad messaging.

This initiative focused on:

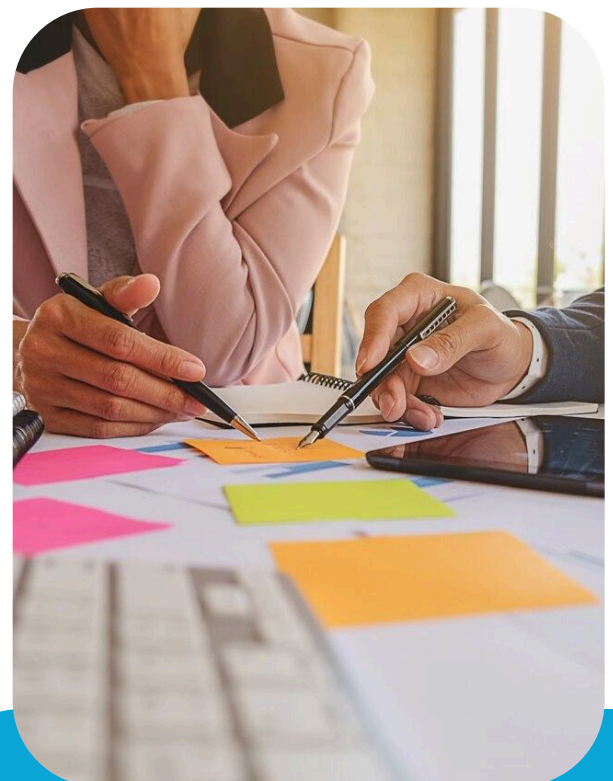
- **LinkedIn Ads and Google Ads:** Engaging institutional administrators and decision-makers (B2B), and driving enrollments from faculty and educators (B2C).

The Challenge

Before PIP's involvement, ACUE faced key digital advertising challenges:

- **High CPC & Low CTR:** Inefficient keyword targeting and messaging.
- **Budget Allocation Issues:** Limited insights on where ad spend would drive the best ROI.
- **Audience Segmentation Gaps:** Campaigns lacked refined targeting for B2B vs. B2C users.
- **Low Conversion Rates:** Landing pages were not optimized to turn clicks into enrollments.

PIP's goal was to maximize campaign performance, ensuring better engagement and cost efficiency.





The Process

How We Optimized ACUE's SEM Strategy Campaign Audit & Competitor Analysis

Audit of Past Campaigns: Analyzed pre-October 2023 Google Ads campaigns to evaluate:

- Keyword selection and ad placements
- Budget efficiency and CPC trends
- Ad copy and messaging effectiveness

Competitive Research: Assessed PPC strategies of competing institutions, identifying opportunities to:

Refine Messaging and Keyword Targeting: Improve audience segmentation for B2B & B2C.



Keyword Research & Audience Targeting

- Strategic Keyword Selection: Identified high-intent branded and non-branded keywords.
- Negative Keyword Implementation: Filtered irrelevant traffic to improve CPC efficiency.
- Precision Targeting on LinkedIn: Defined audiences by seniority, industry, and organization type.

Ad Copy & Landing Page Optimization

- A/B Testing: Ran multiple ad variations to improve CTR.
- Brand Consistency: Maintained institutional visual identity across all ad formats.
- Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO): Improved landing page UX and CTA visibility for better conversions.

Bidding Strategy & Budget Allocation

- Initial Budget Split: 70% LinkedIn Ads, 30% Google Ads.
- Optimized Allocation: Shifted to 30% LinkedIn, 70% Google Ads based on conversion performance.
- Bidding Model Adjustments: Moved to Target CPA bidding for cost-efficient conversions.



Conversion Tracking & Performance Monitoring

- Google Ads Conversion Tracking: Set up tracking for form submissions and enrollments.
- Google Analytics & UTM Tagging: Measured user behavior & ad impact.
- Real-Time Data Optimization: Adjusted campaigns based on performance insights.



The Solution

Key SEM Strategies Implemented

- Optimized Google Ads Campaigns: Restructured campaigns for better keyword grouping and performance.
- Enhanced Audience Targeting: Leveraged custom intent and lookalike audiences to reach prospects with precision.
- Refined Ad Messaging & Creatives: Tailored copy to B2B vs. B2C audiences.
- Landing Page Optimization: Ensured continuity between ad messaging and on-page experience.
- Budget Reallocation: Shifted spend to high-performing channels for better ROI.

The Results

LinkedIn Ads Performance

- CTR: **3.48% ***
- Impressions: **12.95 million**
- Clicks: **90,700**
- Avg. CPC: **\$1.34***
- Overall Campaign Effectiveness: **CTR 0.70%**



*2.83% above industry average, <https://www.theb2bhouse.com/linkedin-ad-benchmarks/>

*low cost for sustained campaign performance <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/2024-google-ads-benchmarks>



Google Ads Performance

Search campaigns for product launches and events (Learning Lab, Commons, NHETC) achieved a CTR of **22%**, which is **17% above the industry benchmark**.*

The achievements of all search-type campaigns obtained were:

- Users Reached: 103,700 (**86% increase YoY**)
- Impressions: 1.9 million (**9.6% increase YoY**)
- Avg. CTR: 5.45% (**70% higher than the previous period**)
- Avg. CPC: \$0.64 (**78% reduction in cost-per-click**)
- Total Campaign Cost Reduction: **59% (while increasing engagement)**

Overall Impact on ACUE's Digital Presence

- Visibility Growth: **+496% increase in views** (221,000 total views)
- User Growth: **+443% increase in total users** (104,000 total, 86,300 new users)
- Engagement Rate: 96.7% (**+46% improvement**)
- Bounce Rate Reduction: 3.2% (**90% decrease, indicating high engagement**)



Key Takeaways & Lessons Learned

- Platform selection and budget allocation must be flexible based on real-time performance
- Keyword strategy and audience targeting are critical for reducing CPC & improving CTR
- Conversion-optimized landing pages dramatically impact campaign success
- Continuous monitoring and refinement drive long-term SEM success

* (<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/2024-google-ads-benchmarks>)



The Benefits of Partnering with PIP

PIP's SEM expertise helped ACUE achieve:

- Higher brand awareness & engagement
- Optimized ad spend with lower CPCs
- A refined digital marketing strategy for long-term success

By restructuring paid search campaigns, leveraging LinkedIn Ads, and optimizing landing pages, ACUE's SEM strategy became a high-performing, cost-efficient growth driver.





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