

# SET SMART BUSINESS GOALS

Align your organic & paid search  
marketing strategies to drive  
business success



Well-defined goals bring clarity and alignment with your overall business objectives. They also simplify decision-making and provide a barometer for success. The biggest hurdle for most business operators, however, is determining what goals are attainable and how to prioritize action items to achieve them.

Throughout this document, we'll explore how understanding your business objectives helps you set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goals for an effective digital marketing strategy. This includes benchmarking current metrics, recognizing your target audience, and conducting competitor analysis to shape and fine-tune your marketing objectives.

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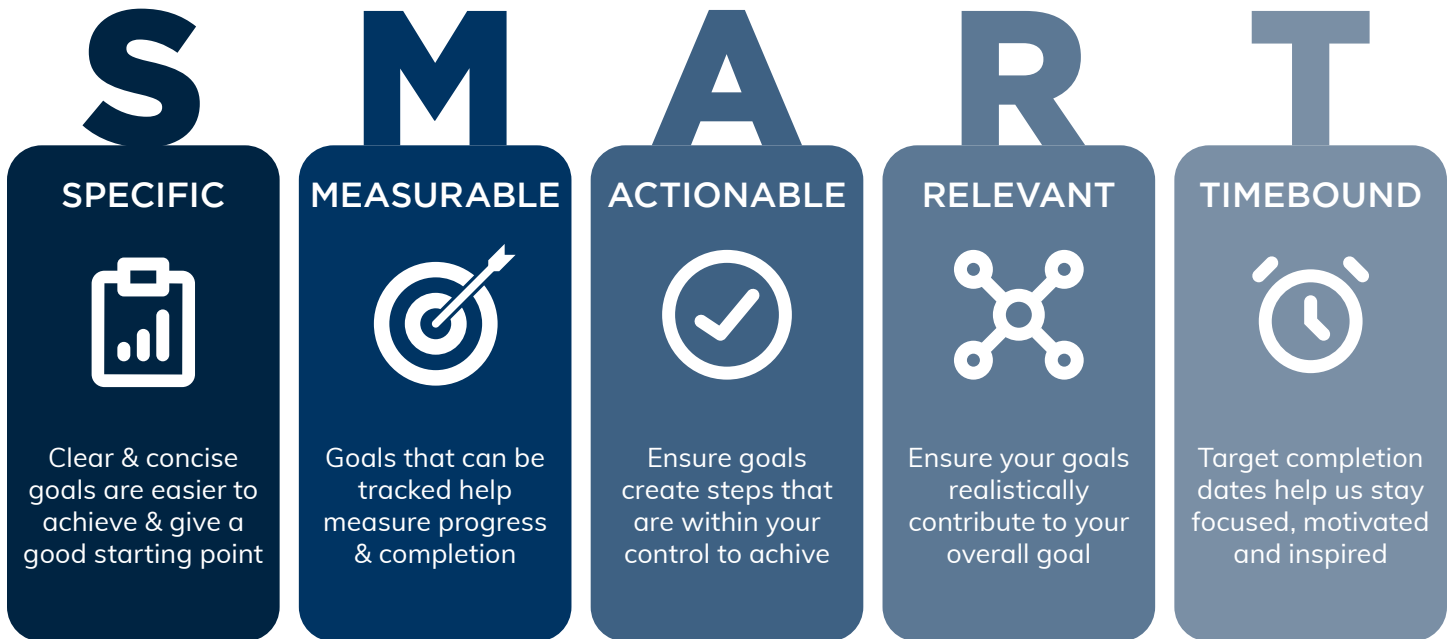
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# SETTING GOALS

Well-defined goals bring clarity and alignment with your overall business objectives. They also simplify decision-making and provide a barometer for success. The biggest hurdle for most business operators, however, is determining what goals are attainable and how to prioritize action items to achieve them. This includes benchmarking current metrics, recognizing your target audience, and conducting competitor analysis to shape and fine-tune your marketing objectives



## Tying It All Together With SMART Goals

Let's break down the SMART framework as applied to Digital Marketing goal setting.

- **Specific:** Instead of broad targets, hone in on specific product or service pages that have the highest profit margin or greatest opportunity to generate leads, respectively.
- **Measurable:** Ensure goals are quantifiable metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs) that can be measured and you understand the tools to monitor progress.
- **Achievable:** Keep campaign morale high by tackling the most attainable targets first, while working toward your long-term goals. Prioritizing immediate gains sustains cash flow back into your marketing efforts.
- **Relevant:** Keep your broader business objectives in mind as they relate to your strategy. Connect the dots with new site users and their behavior purchasing on your site or filling out a lead capture form.
- **Time-bound:** Factoring in time to execute holds your long term SEO efforts accountable against more immediate initiatives in your paid media campaigns and email marketing.

Utilizing SMART goal setting enables effective planning in your organic and paid media acquisition strategies, thus driving meaningful results that contribute to the success of your business.

**Pro Tip:** "SEO is a marathon not a sprint" — In most cases, SEO goals should be measured in months and years versus days and weeks. Patience with regular monitoring and optimization is key to a successful SEO strategy.

# SMART GOALS FOR LOCAL SEO

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In order to prioritize local rankings on search engine result pages for any business, start with the Google Business Profile.

## GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE OPTIMIZATION

Formerly known as Google My Business, this tool allows you to promote your business profile and website on Google Search and Maps. This is the first step in ranking for “near me” searches from users looking for your goods or services in your immediate area. If you haven’t yet, claim your Google Business Profile listing immediately and ensure all information is complete and accurate. From there, leverage your profile with recent photos and entice positive customer reviews to gain online presence and local credibility.

## BUILDING LOCAL CITATIONS

Local citations are online mentions of your business’s name, address, and phone number (NAP). Establishing local citations with relevant groups and sites offering information on providers in your industry further establishes your business’s authority in the eyes of search engines. To do this, outreach online directories, social groups, and industry-specific websites with your business information for their reference. Be consistent, though! Discrepancies in your NAP across various platforms can confuse search engines and potential customers.

## LOCAL LINK BUILDING

In local SEO, the focus is not just on building a large number of inbound links, but also on establishing links from other locally relevant and credible websites. Your goal should be to identify and secure opportunities for link building from local industry directories, community websites, local news sites, and similar resources. These local links signal to search engines that your business is an established and trusted part of the community.

## CREATING LOCAL CONTENT

Your local SEO strategy should involve creating content that specifically appeals to users in your service area. In addition, you should make sure that your site is structured in a way that makes it clear to Google who you are targeting. This can include location-specific landing pages and mentions of your location across the website.



# SMART GOALS FOR NATIONAL SEO

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The aim of a national SEO strategy is to attract and engage a larger, more diverse audience spread across the country. This broader scope offers new challenges but also brings exciting opportunities to grow the online presence of your business.

## AREAS OF FOCUS:

**Site structure:** Help users navigate your site and easily find what they're looking for to increase session duration and drive down bounce rates.

**Website performance:** Users have come to expect fast, seamless online experiences, and search engines reward sites that meet these expectations with higher rankings.

**Technical optimization:** Make sure your house is all cleaned up before you invite guests to the party. Eliminate duplicate content, broken links, 404 errors, and orphan landing pages that make your site clunkier and more difficult to index for search engines.

**Link building:** Building high-quality backlinks from relevant and authoritative sources is another critical goal for national SEO. These backlinks help to improve your website's authority, which can significantly enhance your search rankings and visibility.

**User experience:** Beyond fast page load times, build out a straightforward checkout process that's responsive on all devices. A poor user experience like slow load time negatively impacts the rest of your downstream metrics.

**Category page optimization:** Organize your product or service offerings to make it easier for users to find what they're looking for. This allows purveyors to rank for broader high-volume search targets. From an SEO perspective, they provide an excellent opportunity to target broader, high-volume (but still relevant) keywords related to your product categories or services.

## SERVICE PAGE OPTIMIZATION

Service pages are particularly important for businesses that offer distinct services. Each service page provides an opportunity to target a specific set of keywords related to that service. It's not just about adding relevant keywords; these pages should also provide comprehensive information about the service, answer potential queries users might have, and include strong calls-to-action (CTAs) that guide the users toward conversion.

## PRODUCT PAGE OPTIMIZATION

For a national audience, it's important to invest in unique and compelling product descriptions. These descriptions should incorporate your targeted keywords and provide substantial value to users.

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## ACTION ITEMS

Determine whether the scope of work is local or national.

Review Google Analytics to identify the most common conversion paths.

Identify which areas of focus are most impactful to your business.

Develop a series of goals using SMART rubric.

Have more questions about structuring your account?

**LET'S TALK!**



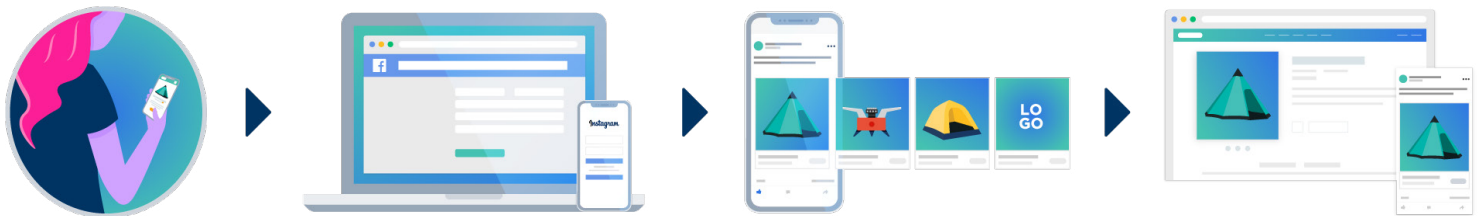
# SETTING GOALS FOR PPC

Many Google Ads users struggle to set goals that accomplish their larger business objectives. The platform can be tricky to understand, making it difficult to know what campaign results to expect and how to evaluate performance. Start by determining whether you need to increase the number of quality leads or decrease the cost-per-lead before making changes to account structure, settings, and strategy. From there, drill down into the specifics of what you want people to do on your website after they've clicked your ads.

## On-Site Actions

"How do I want users to engage with my site?" Even though the function of Google Ads is to target active searchers and draw them to your website, your ultimate goal as a business is to turn those site visitors into paying customers. Depending on your business, this might mean you need site visitors to complete more online purchases, or to submit more contact forms and requests for quotes. Other on-site actions could be signing up to receive weekly emails with special offers. Be sure to take a step back and consider what actions best align with your business.

“How do I want users to engage with my site?”



## QUESTIONS TO ASK: ON-SITE ACTIONS

What are my most popular products/services?

What do I want users to do when they visit my website?

How many phone calls do I currently get? How many of those calls turn into sales, and how many do I hope to get?

How about form submissions and emails?

What are my profit margins and how many sales do I need to turn a profit?

## Campaign Goals & Budget

Once you've got a clear idea of the overall business objectives you want to accomplish, you can start setting more specific goals and budget within the platform. Although it can be intimidating to make these decisions, remember they're just your starting point. Your goals and budget will need to be adjusted as your campaigns evolve over time.

If you already have an account, your own historical data is your best resource to create a baseline of what metrics to expect and how to improve upon them. And if you're creating a new account, there are a number of tools you can use to set a new baseline for measuring performance. In either case, there are several key performance indicators (KPI's) you'll want to track.



## Key Performance Indicators

**Conversions:** The most meaningful actions performed by a user on your website. Conversions are the key data points demonstrating campaign performance. Refine and control your conversion data further by tracking micro conversions and adjusting your conversion counting options to get an accurate story of how a click leads to a sale.

**Conversion Rates:** The average percentage of conversions per ad click. Conversion rates vary and change, depending on industry, so don't get caught up in what you may be reading about "ideal" conversion rates. What's important is identifying areas in your account that might be pulling rates down, making adjustments to those areas, and monitoring results.

**Cost-per-Acquisition:** The amount you pay for a conversion. In general, the more relevant your ads are, the more likely a user is to convert, and the lower your CPA will be. However, don't be alarmed to see your CPA higher than your CPC—keep in mind that everyone who clicks your ad doesn't go on to complete a conversion.

**Conversion Value/Cost (ROAS):** A measure of your Return on Ad Spend (ROAS). This metric takes your conversion value and divides it by the total cost of your ad spend. Use this metric to calculate the effectiveness of your advertising dollars in generating new business. Don't get ROAS confused with ROI, though. While ROAS measures the direct return of your ad campaigns, ROI takes all overhead costs (like your time) into account.

**Cost-Per-Click:** While cost-per-click should play a vital role in determining your budget, ultimately the final cost is out of your hands. You do, however, have control over one large factor that can impact the price you pay: Quality Score. So rather than focus solely on your cost-per-click data, focus on the relevance and performance of your ads. If you put your attention into making your campaigns the best they can be for users, you may notice a natural decline in your cost-per-click.

The goals you set for these KPI's will depend heavily on factors related to your individual business and industry. If you're creating a new account, you can use Google's Keyword Planner to identify how much search volume you could expect from a given keyword as well as the average Cost-Per-Click.

For example, let's say a plumber wants to target the keyword "24 hour plumber."

Using the Keyword Planner, they find out that bids range from around \$7-\$45 on that search term. They can make a mid-range estimate of \$20/click and, given that a minimum budget should allot you at least 4 clicks/day, set a starting budget of \$80/day to target that one keyword. Once you've determined objectives and targets, the next step is letting his campaigns run for a short test period. After the dust settles, evaluate performance and decide whether to shoot for a higher goal with increased budget.

## FREE ACCOUNT REVIEW

Evaluate Keyword Performance & Find the Right Budget

If you already have a Google Ads account but aren't sure whether your budget and KPI's are where they should be, focus first on the areas where you are spending the most money. These areas should be your most popular products or services, as well as products or services with the highest margins and best chance of showing a return. Make it a goal to improve those costly campaigns by identifying your weakest KPI's and taking steps to improve them. To get started with this, you can compare your campaigns' KPI's against common benchmarks for your industry.

Now if you've only been tracking ad clicks—not on-site conversions—you won't have the proof of sales needed to make major improvements to your campaigns. You'll need to set up conversion tracking but, in the meantime, you can take advantage of the Search Terms Report, which shows exactly what keywords users search before clicking your ads. The Report can be extremely helpful in determining where your budget can best be spent to achieve your goals.

The results of your Google Ads campaigns always start with your goals. Given the dizzying number of variables you can customize and control within the platform, it's essential that you have a clear vision of where you're going. Remember that the goals and budget you set now are just a starting point. Once your campaigns get rolling, you'll need to continually reevaluate both.

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## ACTION ITEMS

Determine what on-site actions are most valuable to your business.

Ensure that you're recording those actions through proper conversion tracking.

Establish KPI goals and budget levels based on your business, industry, and account's historical performance.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK: SETTING BUDGET

- How much time do I have to dedicate to my campaigns?
- Do I have accurate data in my account?
- How much budget do I have to work with?
- What are my estimated CPCs?
- How much am I currently spending?
- How many clicks does it take to generate one conversion?
- Are my current campaigns generating revenue?
- How much revenue do I need to make in order to break-even?