

SEM GUIDE

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Introduction

It's not a secret that web hosting is a highly competitive business. The biggest challenge for new entrants is not only competing on the prices, services and products but also digital visibility, because not enough end customers know about your business. Digital marketing can work perfectly for Web hosting industry, to help you grow your business. This guide will help you to understand better the nature of SEM and the real value behind it.

What is SEM?

SEM (Search Engine Marketing) is the form of digital marketing which is dedicated to visibility increase in search engine results relevant to the promoted product using the power of paid advertising.

Sometimes people confuse pay-per-click (PPC) term with SEM, however PPC just represents the model of payment for clicked traffic and can be related to various paid advertising channels.

SEM can be an important part of any marketing strategy since it is not only a conversion driver, but also a shortest way for researching your audience's preferences, testing new topical opportunities inside your niche and even identifying the most beneficial directions for your long-term SEO strategy.

Although worldwide the most popular channels for SEM advertising is Google search engine with its Google Ads and Bing with Microsoft Advertising, there are still regions where local search engines have position of power, e.g. Yandex in Russia, Baidu in China, Seznam in Czech republic and Naver in South Korea.

The Concept

When user performs a topical search via search engine by using certain keywords, search engine will output paid ads besides organic search results. The proposed paid ads is the result of sophisticated auction driven by variety of factors including advertisers bids, ad and landing page relevance, the conditions of user's search (location, device etc.).



What you should avoid before it is not too late

Focusing on process instead of outcome: traffic or visibility in search is not the final outcome, but just the way / part of the process to reach the business goals. If there is lack of understanding about actual business goals on the level of planning – implementation of SEM campaign as the procedure makes no sense.

Ignoring ROI monitoring: the common mistake of all new advertisers is about forgetting to track the return of investment (ROI). The benefit of SEM is the ability to measure all the layers of the campaign including expenses, conversions volume, cost per conversion etc. It is an absolute must to automatize ROI tracking in order to make vital decisions without any delays.

One landing for a variety of topics: in order to achieve the highest possible relevancy from the point of view of the user and as well from the perspective of any advertising system it is a must to have dedicated landing pages per each topical selection of ads and the keywords triggering them. No doubt it takes much more time to set the whole thing up, however these efforts will pay off.

Lack of initial segmentation: lack of initial basic campaign-level segmentation leads to waste of budget and failure to get the correct statistics which should help to improve your campaign performance after initial stage of testing. Pay attention the topical and geo segmentation as well as to outline other features which may be critical to your audience.

How to start your SEM campaign

For those who never had any experience with SEM - it is worth to take the following courses on Udemy:

Google Ads For Beginners ([on Udemy](#))

- Fundamentals of Google Ads
- Campaign targeting
- Managing budgets and bids
- Creating successful ads
- Keyword research
- Competitive research
- Research tools
- Optimization strategies
- Intro into Display Ads & Remarketing

Microsoft Advertising/Bing Ads For Beginners ([on Udemy](#))

- Understand perfectly what is Microsoft Advertising, the terminology and the basics of SEM advertising
- You will avoid many of the most common mistakes that people make in Bing Advertisement to set up you Microsoft Advertising account and how to use settings



- How to choose in the right way your Microsoft Advertising audience and keywords to target
- How to create and manage your own Microsoft Advertising campaign on a budget and how to track and optimize results
- How to stand out competition creating compelling ads that get high-quality clicks

Important rules to follow and why you shouldn't bid on Plesk keywords

[PPC Branding Guidelines are available here.](#)

Glossary

Ad: Promotional content with certain structure which is shown to the user for the sake of interaction.

Ad groups: An ad group contains one or more ads that share similar targets. You set a bid, or price, to be used when an ad group's keywords trigger an ad to appear. This is called a cost-per-click (CPC) bid. You can also set prices for individual keywords within the ad group. Use ad groups to organize your ads by a common theme, such as the types of products or services you want to advertise.

Ad relevance: Ad relevance measures how closely related your keyword is to your ads.

Account budget: An option where you can specify a set amount of money that you'd like your account to spend over a set period of time. It's available to advertisers who use monthly invoicing as a payment setting.

Audience: The group of potential customers that you care about most and try to reach with your SEM ads.

Algorithm: A sequence of computational steps that transform the input into the output.

Bid: Like an auction, this is the amount you're willing to be charged for a click on your ad. It is usually a "not to exceed" amount, so the cost may actually be quite less than your bid.

Campaign: A set of ad groups (ads, keywords, and bids) that share a budget, location targeting, and other settings. Campaigns are often used to organize categories of products or services that you offer.

Conversion: A desired action that a person takes as a result of clicking your ad. Conversions are most commonly defined as completing a purchase, registering for an event, making a phone call, visiting a store and subscribing to a newsletter.



Click: The action a potential customer takes when selecting a link in your ad, via a mouse-click or touchscreen, for example. The clicked link may take the person to your website, to an app store page, trigger a telephone call from a mobile device or show directions to your location.

Click-through rate (CTR): The percentage of people who clicked an ad in the search results page. Measuring CTR is a common indication of how well ads or keywords are performing.

Landing page: The page on your website where searchers arrive after clicking on your ad.

Optimization: The process of enhancing an ad's performance by adjusting aspects of the campaign. A few examples of optimizing might include modifying bids, changing keywords and adding targeting.

Keyword: Words or phrases describing your product or service that you choose to help determine when and where your ad can appear. The keywords you choose are used to show your ads to people. Select high-quality, relevant keywords for your ad campaign to help you reach only the most interested people, who are more likely to become your customers. A great keyword list can help improve the performance of your ads and help you to avoid higher prices. Poor keywords can ultimately cause you to have higher prices and lower ad position.

Keyword research: a selection process of the relevant keywords with certain monthly search volumes relevant to your product or service. Both Google Ads and Microsoft Advertising offer their built-in tools for this purpose. In the same time you may use any 3rd party tools for keyword research, e.g. KWFinder.

SEM: Search Engine Marketing, the process of advertising on search engines, which involves bidding on keywords to get traffic and visibility in search results.

SEO: Search engine optimization, tactics and strategies used to improve the position of a page in the non-paid, "organic" area of the search engine results page.

What to learn more about SEM strategy? Email us at partners@plesk.com, we are here to help!

