

GOOGLE QUALITY SCORE AND HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE IT

Google uses a Quality Score (QS) to decide when and where your Adwords advert appears in the Search Engine Results Page (SERPS) listings. Since every advertiser wants their advert to appear as high as possible on the first page, it is important to understand the Quality Score and how it works.

In simple terms the QS is a mathematical way for Google to work out how relevant your advert is to the search query. Google likes win:win. The more relevant the advert, the happier the searcher; the happier the searcher, the happier the advertiser; the happier the advertiser, the more money spent on advertising with Google, so all parties win. Google dominates search in the UK with around 80% of all traffic but Yahoo and Bing also use a QS type system based on similar factors.

The component parts of the QS are pictured in the inset box. However, it is not as simple as it looks as each of the factors have their own associated algorithms. At this stage though, it is sufficient to know that the higher your QS the more likely you advert is to appear in response to a search and the higher the position on the page.

It is also important to remember that the QS is associated with an individual keyword so an advert will get a different QS for one keyword than for another even though it is the same advert. A final point to remember is that the QS works in a different way when using the Display/Content network.

So what must you do to improve your QS? The simple answer is improve the **relevance** of your advert. QS is all about relevance and the user experience so anything you can do to improve that experience will get you a better QS. Working through the factors on the right side of the formula there is much you can do to improve your QS.

Click Thru Rate (CTR)

The more click thru's, the more your advert will be displayed and the higher the ranking so this is a circular argument. Look to the other factors to increase CTR.

Keyword relevance

This is at the core of successful QS optimisation. Matching your keywords to the likely search query is an art in itself and the subject of a dedicated article in this series. It is rare these days for a single keyword to be successful; Google is just too popular for

that. A phrase of two or three words – the so called longtail – is best. Breaking your Google adverts into Ad Groups with a small number of closely related keywords or keyword phrases helps you keep control over what is working and what isn't and will also help Google give you a better QS.

Landing Page quality

Google's ranking system has been so abused in the past that it has developed ways to ensure that a site deserves its QS. One is by assessing the quality of the destination Landing Page when a user clicks the link. Just re-directing the user to your Home Page doesn't have the same value as a dedicated page optimised for that specific search term.

History

Google rewards longevity. It reasons that an old site is there because it is relevant to users and therefore your QS gets a boost. History also means regular updates so keep the site fresh and up-to-date.

Other factors

As Google tries to keep ahead of the game other factors continually come into play. At the time of writing server speed is receiving attention on the basis that the user experience is enhanced by your site uploading quickly and Google therefore rewards this.

Google aims for the QS to assess the relevance of the site to the user. Keep that in mind and design your optimisation efforts around this guiding principle.

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QS = ∫

Click Thru' rate

Keyword

Ad group relevance

Landing Page Quality

History

Other factors