

Google AdWords is a pretty darn good traffic tool sometimes, but it's nearly always a kickass market research tool. Let's look at how you can use AdWords to

- Determine how many people want what you've got
- Slice and dice your services to appeal to several targeted niches, for deeper connection and thus higher conversion rates
- Discover what approach, language, and offers work best with each niche

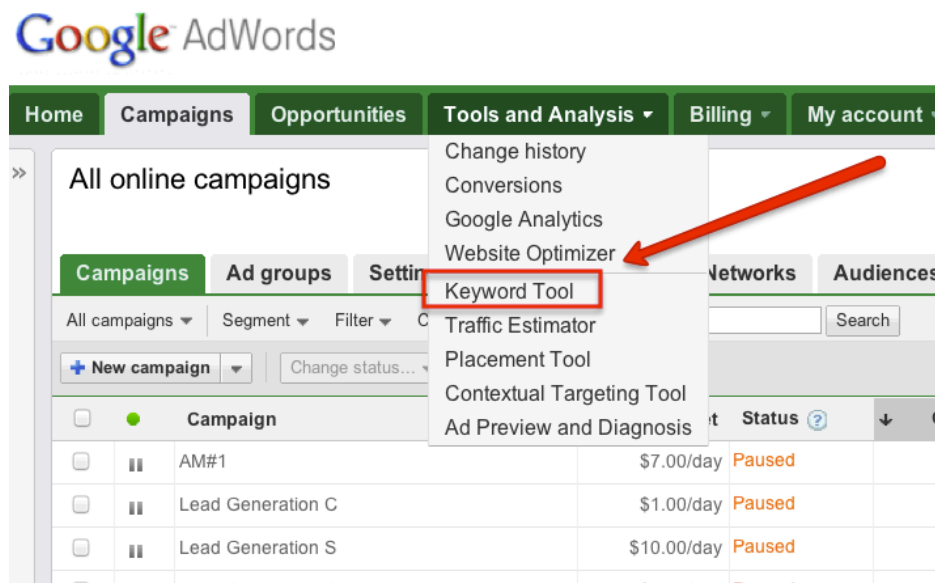
1. Do People Want What You've Got?

I know they need what you've got. They're suffering, and you've got the cure. They're confused, and you've got the elixir of clarity. They're missing the boat, and you've got a shiny pair of oars.

But if you're reading this, chances are most of your prospects don't think about their problems and go, "I know what will fix this: life coaching!" (or "reiki" or "a straw bale meditation shed in my backyard" or "myofascial release" or whatever you do).

While it's possible (and often necessary) to sell solutions to people who aren't searching for those solutions, let's start our research by getting curious about whether people are looking for your specific modality.

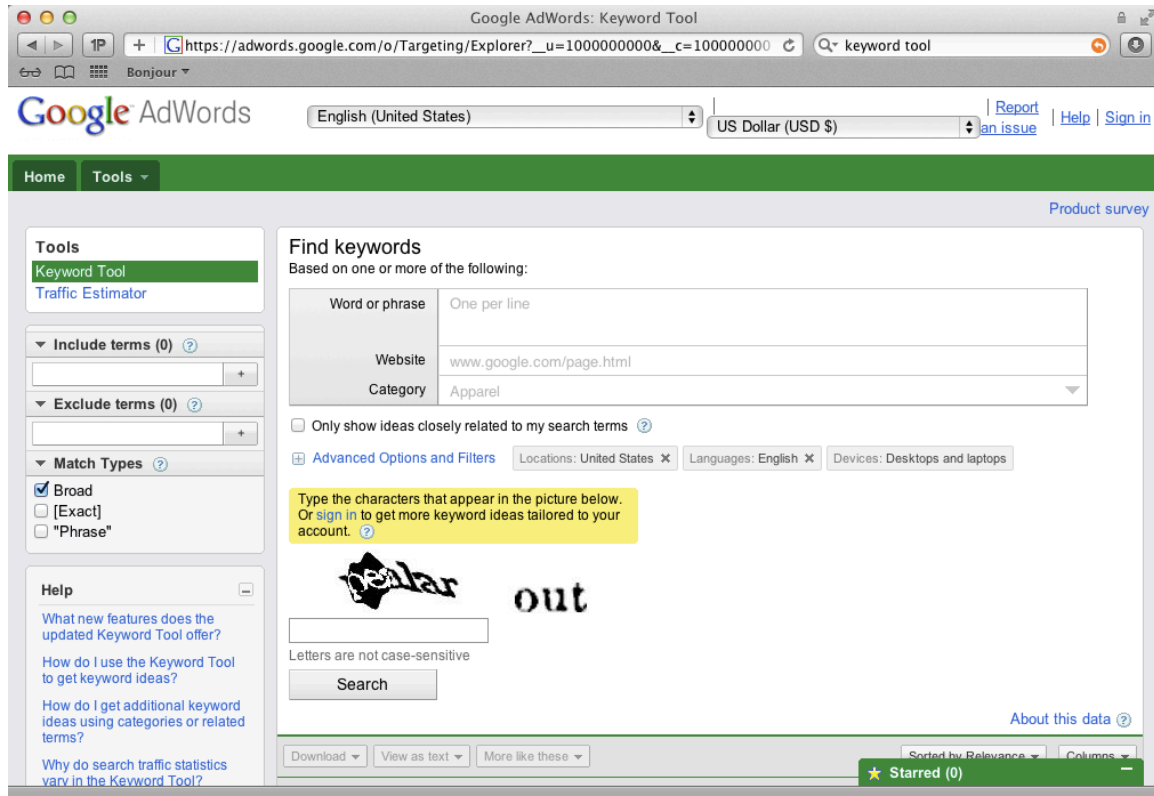
Introducing your new friend, the Google Keyword Tool! If you have an AdWords account, you can access the tool straight from there:



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Howie Jacobson, author, Google AdWords For Dummies

If not, you can still use it (search Google for “keyword tool” and select the first listing), but you just have to fill in any annoying “Prove you’re human” captcha before your first search. Also, the results are not as complete as when you’re logged in to AdWords.



To oversimplify things greatly, you’re concerned with two different types of keywords: problems and solutions.

Problem keywords describe problems:

Back pain
Credit card debt
Midlife crisis

While solution keywords describe (drum roll) solutions to those problems:

Back pain -> Myofascial release
Credit card debt -> Debt consolidation
Midlife crisis -> Jaguar convertible (kidding! I meant Spiritual Awakening)

The challenge you probably face is that a lot more people are searching on problems they know they have than solutions like yours that they’ve never heard

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of. (Quoting Ned Ryerson in Groundhog Day, “Am I right or am I right or am I right?”)

Let’s verify this using the Keyword Tool.

The default search settings, if you’re in the US, are US, English, desktop and laptop computers. You can change these options to whatever is most appropriate for your market: French Canadians, Spanish speakers in the US, etc. The biggest limitation is that you can’t dig down past the country level. So you can’t get data from the keyword tool about Spanish speakers in Texas, or English speakers in Quebec. (More on workarounds later.)

Here’s what Google tells me about the relative popularity of my two keywords:

The screenshot shows the Google AdWords Keyword Tool interface. The search terms entered are 'back pain' and 'myofascial release'. The results table shows the following data:

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
back pain	Medium	2,740,000	1,500,000
myofascial release	Low	40,500	27,100

The interface also includes a left sidebar with 'Tools' (Keyword Tool, Traffic Estimator), 'Include terms', 'Exclude terms', 'Match Types' (Broad, Exact, Phrase), and a 'Help' section. The top navigation bar shows 'Home', 'Tools', and 'Product survey'. The bottom of the interface shows 'Go to page: 1', 'Show rows: 50', and 'Starred (0)'.

See what I mean? What’s a myofascial release practioner to do?

Now a quick detour about keyword match types. You see in the left column up there, where there’s a check mark next to Broad. That means Google is counting every search that could possibly related to **back pain**, and not just the specific phrase.

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So those 1,500,000 local (that's the column to pay attention to) searches include **low back pain**, **upper back pain**, **neck pain**, and even some related terms like **chiropractor**. Check this out:

The screenshot shows the Google AdWords Keyword Tool interface. On the left, there are navigation links for 'Tools' (Keyword Tool, Traffic Estimator), 'Include terms', 'Exclude terms', 'Match Types' (Broad, Exact, Phrase), and 'Help'. The main area is titled 'Find keywords' and shows search results for the terms 'back pain' and 'chiropractor'. The results are displayed in a table with columns for 'Keyword', 'Competition', 'Global Monthly Searches', and 'Local Monthly Searches'.

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
back pain	Medium	2,740,000	1,500,000
chiropractor	Medium	2,740,000	2,240,000

Below the table, there is a section for 'Keyword ideas' showing 'upper back pain' with a competition of 'Medium' and 1 search. The interface also includes filters for 'Locations', 'Languages', and 'Devices', and a 'Sign in' button to see the full set of ideas.

See that! The global monthly searches are identical, which would be so much of a coincidence that you have to assume Google sees **back pain** and **chiropractor** as pretty much the same search. (Yes, the local numbers are different. Go figure...)

So we need to put Google on the witness stand and make it swear to tell the whole truth. Uncheck Broad and put a check next to Phrase instead. Now we've forced Google to include our keyword, as is, as part of the whole search phrase.

So Google can count **low back pain** but not **neck pain** for the "back pain" search, and the word **chiropractor** must be in every search that Google counts for that keyword.

Now we see:

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The screenshot shows the Google AdWords Keyword Tool interface. On the left, there are navigation links for 'Tools' (Keyword Tool, Traffic Estimator) and 'Help'. The main section is titled 'Find keywords' and shows input fields for 'Word or phrase' (back pain, chiropractor, myofascial release), 'Website' (www.google.com/page.html), and 'Category' (Apparel). Below the input fields, there are checkboxes for 'Only show ideas closely related to my search terms' and 'Advanced Options and Filters' (Locations: United States, Languages: English, Devices: Desktops and laptops). A 'Search' button is present. Below the search results, there is a table with columns: Keyword, Competition, Global Monthly Searches, and Local Monthly Searches. The table shows results for 'back pain', 'chiropractor', and 'myofascial release'. The 'myofascial release' row is highlighted with a red box.

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
"back pain"	Medium	1,830,000	1,220,000
"chiropractor"	Medium	1,220,000	823,000
"myofascial release"	Low	40,500	27,100

I added “**myofascial release**” back in, just for kicks. You can now see a clear difference between the three keywords. The problem has the most searches. The most obvious solution (at least to most people) comes in second. And the cool, little-known modality limps in last.

So what should you do? Advertise yourself as someone who solves back pain? Sure. That’s where the people are. But realize that you’ll get a very small percentage of those people who immediately buy your value proposition. Most will look at your weird solution and pass.

Does that mean you can never call yourself a myofascial release practitioner? Of course not. You can call yourself that 27,100 times a month, if you advertise on Google or grab a spot on the first page of organic search results.

Wait, though! Are you willing to travel the length and breadth of the US to serve clients? If not, the number of **myofascial release** searches is a lot lower. Maybe only a few dozen per month; maybe fewer than that. Not enough to build a business on.

In a few pages I’ll show you how to determine the actual number of searchers in your geographic area. For now, just relax and know that it can be done.

Slicing and Dicing Your Market to Construct Your Niche

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So you have to figure out a different way to niche yourself. Not based on what you do, but based on how your prospect sees the world. For example, what if you choose to work primarily with women with back pain?

Search terms (1)

Keyword

Competition

Global Monthly Searches ?

Local Monthly Searches ?

☆ back pain women

Medium

22,200

12,100

Go to page:

1

Show rows:

50

1 - 1 of 1

Keyword ideas (100)

Keyword

Competition

Global Monthly Searches ?

Local Monthly Searches ?

☆ causes of lower back pain in women

Medium

3,600

2,400

☆ lower back pain in women

Medium

12,100

8,100

☆ causes of back pain in women

Medium

5,400

2,900

☆ lower right back pain in women

Medium

1,900

1,600

☆ lower back pain

Medium

823,000

450,000

☆ back pain

Medium

2,740,000

1,500,000

☆ upper back pain women

Medium

720

480

☆ lower abdominal and back pain in women

Medium

1,600

880

☆ lower back pain women

Medium

12,100

8,100

☆ causes of low back pain in women

Medium

3,600

1,900

☆ lower left back pain in women

Medium

2,400

1,600

☆ what causes lower back pain in women

Medium

3,600

2,400

☆ chronic lower back pain in women

Medium

320

170

☆ what can cause lower back pain in women

High

720

480

Not a ton of searches, but quite a few. And those few searches suggest something else: a whole lot of people typing “back pain” into Google have two X chromosomes (that’s a nerdy way of saying “are women,” in case you were paying less attention than me in high school biology).

So when the market calls out “back pain,” you can respond “... in women.” Amen! You’ve niched yourself so you can stand out from all the clutter. Everyone else can talk about back pain in general, but you’re speaking directly to that tiny minority, women. Wait a minute! Women probably make up at least half of all back pain sufferers. Let’s check one of my other favorite market research tools, the Google search results page, to see if anyone is speaking specifically to women:

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The screenshot shows a Google search for "back pain". The search bar at the top contains "back pain" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, it says "Search" and "About 451,000,000 results (0.13 seconds)". On the left side, there are filters for "Everything", "Images", "Maps", "Videos", "News", "Shopping", "Blogs", and "More". Below these are filters for "New York, NY" (Change location), "Any time" (Past hour, Past 24 hours, Past 2 days, Past week, Past month, Past year, Custom range...), and "All results" (Sites with images, Related searches, More search tools). The main search results are displayed in a grid. The first result is "Where is Your Pain? | AtlanticSpinalCare.com" with a link to "www.atlanticspinalcare.com" and a description: "In Three Steps We Can Identify The Cause And Recommend A Treatment." The second result is "Suffering From Back Pain? | ForestHillsPhysicalRehab.com" with a link to "www.foresthillspinalrehab.com" and a description: "We'll Help You Get Back To Living. Forest Hills Rehab. Visit Us Now!" The third result is "Get Rid of back pain - We can help | njspinaldisorders.com" with a link to "www.njspinaldisorders.com" and a description: "Multidisciplinary approach to back". Below these results, there are sections for "Searches related to back pain" and "WebMD Back Pain Health Center - Information and News About...". The "Searches related to back pain" section lists: "Sciatica" (Pain affecting the back, hip, and outer side of the leg, ca...), "Herniated disc" (Condition affecting the spine, in which a tear in the outer...), "Spinal stenosis" (Condition in which the spinal canal narrows and compres...), "Strain" (An injury to a part of the body caused by overexertion or...), and "Arthritis" (Painful inflammation and stiffness of the joints). The "WebMD Back Pain Health Center" section has a link to "www.webmd.com/back-pain/default.htm" and a description: "Get information about back pain, lower back pain, neck pain, and sciatica, and learn about back pain causes, treatments, and medications." The right side of the search results shows several ads. The first ad is "Cutting Edge Treatments" with a link to "www.newyorkpainscare.com" and a description: "Get Neck & Back Pain Relief Today. We Can Help You, Call Now!". The second ad is "Back, Neck & Spine Care" with a link to "www.clevelandclinic.org" and a description: "Download Free Spine Care And Pain Management Patient Treatment Guides". The third ad is "Chiro Center Styertowne" with a link to "www.chiropractorsclifton.com" and a description: "Serving Clifton New Jersey Call for a Free Consultation!". The fourth ad is "Back and Neck Pain Relief" with a link to "www.nosurgeryforme.com" and a description: "\$39.00 Special (Insurance Accepted) Consultation and First Treatment". The fifth ad is "Back And Neck Pain Relief" with a link to "www.bcnwyc.com" and a description: "\$89 Special (insurance accepted) Exam and first treatment".

Not a mention. Not a peep. And what an opportunity for you!

If you advertise your business using AdWords and your ad headline reads “Back Pain Relief for Women,” then you appeal to that niche more specifically than all the other ads and listings.

It’s possible that you can niche even tighter than that. How about “back pain during pregnancy”? As a rule, the tighter the niche, the fewer prospects but the easier to convert each prospect.

Like, I know this Canadian dude who’s an awesome marketer, and a fantastic marketing teacher. He could help just about any business owner with their marketing. But he chose a single niche – get this: hippies! Or folks who are flattered to be thought of as hippies.

And by focusing on that niche, he has carved out a wonderful business for himself. Good income, Ferarri 458 Italia, Rolex, lives on a beachfront property in Cozumel – wait.

What, Tad? That’s not entirely accurate?


OK, so he travels a lot and does a ton of improv. Isn’t that even better?

Size Up Your Market and Figure Out Your Messaging Using AdWords




Now's where you're going to pull out your wallet and spend twenty bucks to set up a simple, cheap, and quick AdWords campaign. I'm not going to go into the details on how to create and set up your account. If you need that, you should get a copy of *Google AdWords For Dummies, 3rd Edition*, which will set you back another \$20 (33 cents of which ends up in my pocket!). Or you can just watch all the free videos at VitruvianWay.com/cafe/gafd3.


Here's the basic idea:


1. Set up a Google search campaign (no display network, no search partners) for desktops and laptops only

Networks  ☐ All available sites (Recommended for new advertisers)
☒ Let me choose...


Search ☒ Google search
☐ Search partners (requires Google search)

Display ☐ Display Network 
☒ Broad reach: Show ads on pages that match my primary targeting method 
Example: Show ads if keywords match
☐ Specific reach: Show ads only on pages that match all my targeting methods 
Example: Show ads only if both keywords and placements match

 Your ads won't show on search partners.
Your ads won't show on Google's Display Network. [Learn more](#)

Devices  ☐ All available devices (Recommended for new advertisers)
☒ Let me choose...

☒ Desktop and laptop computers
☐ Mobile devices with full browsers
☐ Tablets with full browsers
[Advanced mobile and tablet options](#)

 Your ads won't show on mobile devices.
Your ads won't show on tablets.

2. Target only the geographic locations you serve



A relationship coach who works via telephone can cover a country or two; our myofascial release practitioner probably has a 2-county area at best.

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Locations  In what geographical locations do you want your ads to appear?

☐ All countries and territories
☐ United States and Canada
☐ United States
☒ Let me choose...

Targeted locations	Reach 
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada 	1,030,000 Remove Nearby

[Show map](#)

3. Create one ad group for each niche you identify via the Keyword Tool


4. Populate each ad group with exact match keywords closely related to the ad group theme

5. Write several ad variations for each ad group and run them simultaneously, optimizing for conversions if you can track conversions:

Advanced settings

 [Schedule: Start date, end date, ad scheduling](#)

 [Ad delivery: Ad rotation, frequency capping](#)


Ad rotation 
☐ Optimize for clicks: Show ads expected to provide more clicks
☒ Optimize for conversions: Show ads expected to provide more conversions
☐ Rotate: Show ads more evenly


and rotating evenly if you can't (ignore the scary Google warning):

Advanced settings

 [Schedule: Start date, end date, ad scheduling](#)

 [Ad delivery: Ad rotation, frequency capping](#)

Ad rotation 
☐ Optimize for clicks: Show ads expected to provide more clicks
☐ Optimize for conversions: Show ads expected to provide more conversions
☒ Rotate: Show ads more evenly

 Your ads may not perform as well with standard rotation. Optimized ad rotation is recommended for most advertisers. [Learn more](#)

6. Now set a daily budget of \$10 and run the campaign for one week.

During this test you'll spend no more than \$70, and possibly a lot less. You only pay for clicks (which represent visits to your website), so if your market is tiny or your ads are atrocious, you'll pay very little (and learn a lot about your market or your ads).

You're looking to answer the question:

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How many impressions (views of your ads) would you have gotten for each ad group had you deployed an unlimited budget?

In other words, how many potential prospects are searching online, either for information about their problems or for general or specific solutions?

You can get this number at the ad group level by doing a little middle school arithmetic. First, note the number of impressions that Google allotted you, even with your puny daily budget.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ad group	Status	Default Max. CPC	Display Network Max. CPC	Max. CPP	Clicks	Impr.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ad Group #1	Eligible	\$0.85	auto	Fee: \$1.00 Bid: --	4,005	291,252
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ad Group #2	Eligible	\$0.47	auto	Fee: \$1.00 Bid: --	1,357	69,985

Second, grab AdWords by the throat and force it to show you a hidden ad group metric called “impression share.”

From the **Ad groups** tab on the campaign page, click the columns button and select **Customize columns** from the drop-down list:

The screenshot shows the Google AdWords interface for a campaign named 'Lead Generation C'. The 'Keywords' tab is selected, and the 'Customize columns' button is highlighted with a red box and an arrow. The interface includes a top navigation bar with tabs like Home, Campaigns, Opportunities, Tools and Analysis, Billing, and My account. Below the campaign name, there are details like 'Paused', 'Budget: \$1.00/day', and 'Targeting: Display Network'. The 'Keywords' tab shows a list of keywords: 'cold calling', 'blue widget', and 'green widget', each with its own ad group and status. The 'Customize columns' button is located in the top right of the keywords list area.

Select the **Competitive metrics** tab and add **Impr. share**, then click the Save button:

Ad groups Settings Ads Keywords Networks Audiences Dimensions

All but deleted ad groups Segment Filter Columns Search

Customize columns

Select metrics

Performance >> Add all columns

Conversions >>

Call details >>

Competitive metrics >>

Impr. share Add

Lost IS (rank) Add

Exact match IS Add

Relative CTR Add

Drag and drop to reorder

Ad group

Status

Default Max. CPC

Display Network Max. CPC

Clicks Remove

Impr. Remove

CTR Remove

☐ Save this set of columns

Save Cancel

You'll now be able to see the impression share metric for each ad group. That number represents the percentage of impressions your ads received out of the total number possible for that time period.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ad group	Status	Default Max. CPC	Display Network Max. CPC	Max. CPP	Clicks	Impr.	Impr. share
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ad Group #1	Eligible	\$0.85	auto	Fee: \$1.00 Bid: --	4,005	291,252	62.43%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ad Group #2	Eligible	\$0.47	auto	Fee: \$1.00 Bid: --	1,357	69,985	36.07%

Simply divide impressions by impression share to figure out the total size of your market for each ad group.

For Ad Group #1, that works out to $291,252 \div .6243 = 466,526$ possible impressions.

You try Ad Group #2 and check your answer at the end of this report.*

Now you have very accurate numbers of prospects for your services in your service area.

Ad Testing To Identify Your Best Niche

But we saw earlier that few people are searching for myofascial release. If our practitioner wants to earn enough money to eat, she has to target a broader audience, those who want to deal with their back pain. She can figure out her best niche by bidding on the general keyword **back pain** and then running ads that appeal to different niches:

Pregnant women
Mothers of toddlers
Career women who sit at desks all day
Older women who don't want to pop NSAIDS like candy

And so on. Our practitioner would simply run ads with headlines like:

Pregnancy Back Pain Relief
"Toddler Mom" Back Pain?
"Computer Slouch" Back Pain?
65+ Women: Back Pain Relief

Most searchers on **back pain** keywords will not respond to any of those ads. But members of each niche will respond strongly to the ad that speaks directly to them. Compare the click through rate (CTR) of each ad to identify your best niche.

Ad Testing To Determine Best Message

Let's say our myofascial release practitioner decides to niche her services to women with pregnancy- or post-partum-related back pain. She could focus her message on:

1. How relaxing it will be not to ache for a while
2. The health benefits of improved spinal range of motion
3. The tragedy of how constant back pain is ruining the experience of pregnancy and bonding with the new baby
4. How most of her treatments are covered by insurance
5. How good it feels to be touched by someone who knows what it's like to be pregnant and in pain
6. How the expectant or new mother needs this treatment in order to function and take care of everyone around her



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And so on...

Which message resonates best with her niche? Google AdWords gives you an easy way to find out: test them all.

Your assignment, should you choose to accept, is to write one ad for each of the six potential messages. (Or you can just go, "Yeah, I get it" and keep reading. Actually taking 10 minutes to do this exercise is a really good idea. But I'll never find out, so do what you like.)

So that's nichework via Google AdWords. If you want more help, buy the 3rd Edition of *Google AdWords For Dummies* and help support my rice cake and peanut butter addiction.

Or visit VitruvianWay.com/cafe and join our AdWords support club free for 49 days before we start bugging you to pay.

Or join my personal mailing list at askHowie.com.

Or like my page at Facebook.com/askhowie.

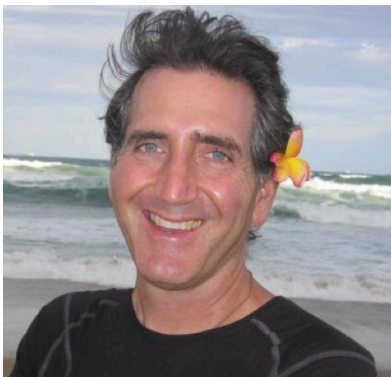
Or if you've got big bucks, you can hire me for private coaching or consulting. I accept VISA, Mastercard, AMEX, PayPal, and myofascial release.

Thanks for reading, and happy niching!

***Answer for Total Potential Impressions for Ad Group #2:**

$69,985 \div .3607 = 194,026$ possible impressions

About the Author



Howie Jacobson, PhD, is the author of *Google AdWords For Dummies*, available wherever books, cheesy calendars, and overpriced brownies are sold. He loves teaching entrepreneurs to market their businesses as an expression of their authentic selves (unless they're awful people, in which case he strongly recommends faking it).

Howie consults, coaches, trains, and trouble-makes at askHowie.com, where you can sign up for his occasional newsletter for marketing tips, strategic and tactical updates, and psychological ramblings. He frequently holds content-packed webinars with no pitch at the end because he dislikes creating order forms.

He's also the Emotional Intelligence and Empathic Inspiration Officer (EIEIO) at VitruvianWay.com, a digital marketing agency dedicated to holding creativity accountable and making accountability creative. (He's not sure what that means either.) We work with companies spending \$50,000 or more per month on AdWords.

If you want to master pay per click (PPC) marketing and you have a few bucks lying around that aren't doing anything better, check out his powerhouse course that turns beginners into PPC masters in about 12 weeks: NewbiePPC.com.

Howie divides his time between Champagne Valley, South Africa, and Durham, North Carolina. His hobbies include barefoot running, Ultimate Frisbee, racquet sports, string band fiddling, improv, and vacillating between self-doubt and self-confidence.