

Ad Testing: Research & Findings

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About Acronym Media

- Corporate HQ: Empire State Building, 55th floor
- Global Footprint: USA, Singapore, UK, Germany, Brazil, etc.
- Track Record: Search Agency Since 1995
- Focus: **Keyword-Driven Marketing™**



NOKIA



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CLARINS
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Mike Grehan
Global KDM Officer

Why Engage in Ad Testing?



- Get **quantifiable insights** in a controlled environment
- Understand **messaging effectiveness**
- Identify the most attractive product offerings/benefits
- Create the optimal search campaign that maximizes ROAS/ROI
- **Identify learnings** that can be applied across other media channels

Fundamentals: The Scientific Approach

- Isolate Your Variable

- Only test one thing at a time
- Keep bids/ad serving equal
- Run a control group

- Get Meaningful Results

- Limit the number of ads being tested
- Collect a large sample size (>1,000 clicks)
- Key metric: CTR? Conversion Rate? CPA?



**...And don't even THINK about overall
campaign performance during the test...**

Reality Check...



- Google Quality Scores
- Competition will not sit still while you test
- Limited budgets
- Seasonality may affect results
- Not all messages work with all keywords

Question: **How can we test ads in the REAL WORLD?**

Answer: Test Smarter

With a smart approach under real-world conditions, we can make **educated inferences** about the best ads for our campaigns.

- Start by testing (in Google) either Titles or Descriptions
 - Depending on budget/inventory, 2-5 ad versions
 - Significantly different messages/offers, using themes:
 - Price Points *“All Time Low Price!”*
 - Official Site *“Visit Official Site”*
 - Time Sensitive/Urgency *“Buy Now!” “Apply by Apr 12”*
 - Promotional Offers *“Save 50% With Coupon!”*
- Turn Ad Serving to “Rotate” for more-even distribution

Running The Test

While testing, you may manage bids normally.

We're only interested in real-world performance!

- Once you have enough data, start looking for trends among groups of similar keywords:

- Brand vs. Non-Brand
- Geographic Distribution
- Major Keyword Clusters
- Search vs. Content



- Make sure you're focusing on the **most important metric**—the highest CTR and highest conversion rate may come from different ads!

Four Seasons Case Study

Price Point vs. Brand vs. Informational Ads

To better understand user response across different geographical/cultural regions, same ads and keywords were tested by continental regions:

- Europe
- Asia
- North America

Shanghai Luxury Hotel

Visit Four Seasons official site.
Check availability and rates now!
fourseasons.com/shanghai

Brand

Shanghai Luxury Hotel

Enjoy Shanghai with a luxury hotel
package starting at CNY2,500/night.
fourseasons.com/shanghai

Price Point

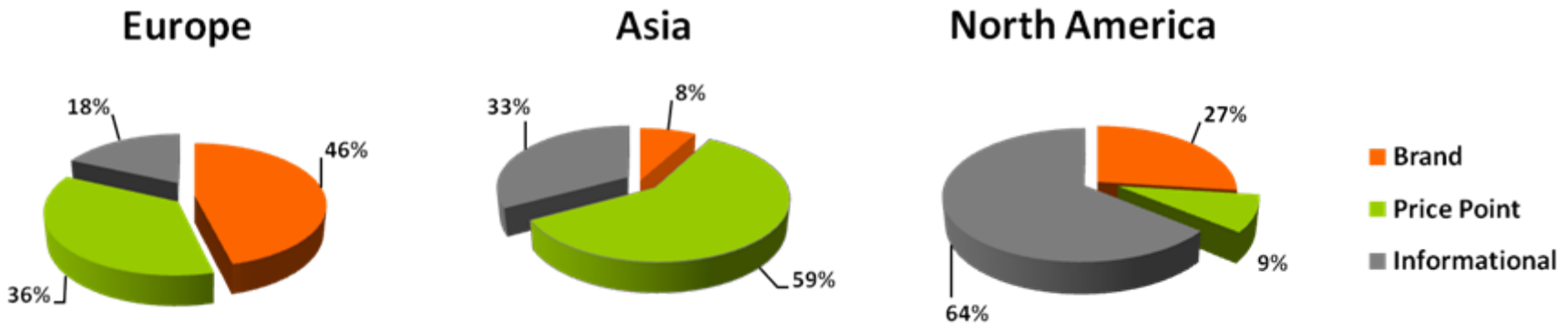
Shanghai Luxury Hotel

Book a Four Seasons hotel & enjoy
shopping, entertainment & more.
fourseasons.com/shanghai

Informational

Four Seasons Case Study -

Top Performing Ad Themes by Region based on CPA



Each continent had unique conversion results for ad copy themes tested:

- Europe: **Brand**
- Asia: **Price points**
- N. Am.: **Informational**

Round Two

Once you've selected a top-performing message for each set of keywords, test the next element of your ads.

- If you tested descriptions, test titles next
- Pause all of your old ads and start fresh to reset Quality Scores
- Customize for each set of keywords
- Control Group: keep a copy of your original ad running

Humana Case Study

We compared a variety of ads for the 2008 Medicare Enrollment Period, focusing on the brand name, program, and deadline.

Round One

		<u>CTR</u>	<u>Conv. Rate</u>
Humana Medicare Visit the official Humana site for affordable Medicare plan options. Humana-Medicare.com	Brand	1.52%	0.61%
Humana Medicare Affordable Humana Medicare Plans. Enroll Before The 12/31 Deadline Humana-Medicare.com	Urgency	1.37%	0.47%
Humana Medicare Act Quickly To Enroll In A Low Cost Humana Medicare Plan Humana-Medicare.com	Affordability	1.63%	0.33%

Humana Case Study

Testing title lines in Round Two (here, for the “Medicare” campaign), both CTRs and Conversion Rates increased as we neared the enrollment deadline.

Round Two

		<u>CTR</u>	<u>Conv. Rate</u>
Humana Medicare Visit the official Humana site for affordable Medicare plan options. Humana-Medicare.com	Brand (Control)	1.52%	0.61%
Medicare Advantage Visit the official Humana site for affordable Medicare plan options. Humana-Medicare.com	Program	1.60%↑	0.58%↑
2008 Humana Medicare Plan Visit the official Humana site for affordable Medicare plan options. Humana-Medicare.com	Time-Sensitive	1.86%↑	0.72%↑

Common Pitfalls

- **High CTR may not be good!**
 - Are you qualifying your traffic enough?
 - Is your ad misleading?
- **Are you getting enough clicks** to make accurate judgments?
- Do all ad versions work as well with your **landing page(s)**?
 - Quality Score / CPC implications
 - How do different ads affect Bounce Rates?
- **Will your improvements work** for some keywords/ad groups better than others?
 - Think about what audiences your keywords attract



Next Steps...

By now, you've got a fairly good picture of what works. That's no reason to get complacent though...

- Punctuation 'Try Free Today!' v. 'Try Free Today.'
- Display URLs www.sap.com vs. SAP.com vs. SAP.com/bydesign
- Proper Case vs. Sentence Case 'Get Free Trial Now.' v. 'Get free trial now.'
- Accent Usage Useful in foreign language campaigns
- Dynamic Keyword Insertion CTRs? Raises Conversion Rates, or just CTRs?
- Dayparting work/home? Do customers behave differently at work/home?
- Engines Beyond Google Will the same ads work in other channels?
- Banner & Email Creative How can we leverage what we've learned?

TEST TEST TEST, then INVEST



“What we have to do is to be forever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions.”



Walter Pater

English Writer and Critic, 1873

Be curious. Don't settle.

Always Be Testing.

Contact Information

Questions?

(or for a visit to the top of the Empire State Building):

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