

The 30-Minute PPC Audit Checklist

A structured framework for identifying wasted spend, tracking gaps, and optimisation opportunities in any Google Ads account.

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How to Use This Checklist

Set your date range to the last 30 days. Open your Google Ads account and work through each section in order. Note findings as you go. Categorise issues as Quick Fix (can be changed today) or Structural (requires campaign restructuring).

This checklist follows the same framework used to audit accounts managing over \$500M in combined ad spend. Each section includes what to check, what to look for, and the typical impact of fixing the issue.

1. Conversion Tracking (5 Minutes)

Navigate to: Tools > Conversions

Check	What to Look For	Impact
Status check	Every conversion action shows 'Recording conversions.' If any show 'No recent conversions' or 'Inactive,' tracking is broken.	HIGH
Volume validation	Compare Google-reported conversions against your CRM or backend. Significant discrepancies indicate tracking gaps or duplicates.	HIGH
Attribution model	Check which model each conversion uses. Last-click is outdated. Data-driven attribution gives Smart Bidding better signal.	MEDIUM
Conversion window	B2B: extend to 60-90 days if your sales cycle is longer than 30 days. Ecommerce: 7-14 days is usually sufficient.	MEDIUM
Duplicate actions	Check for multiple conversion actions tracking the same event. This inflates reported numbers and confuses bid strategies.	HIGH
Server-side tracking	Is Conversions API (Meta) or enhanced conversions (Google) configured? Browser-only tracking misses 20-30% of events.	HIGH

2. Campaign Structure (5 Minutes)

Navigate to: Campaigns tab

Check	What to Look For	Impact
Budget pacing	Are campaigns 'Limited by budget'? If hitting daily budget by midday, you are missing conversions in the afternoon.	MEDIUM
Campaign overlap	Search + Performance Max + Display all targeting the same products? They cannibalise each other.	HIGH
Location targeting	Check for 'People in, or who show interest in' vs 'People in or regularly in.' The first wastes budget on irrelevant locations.	HIGH
Network settings	Display Network enabled on Search campaigns? Turn it off. It almost always wastes budget.	HIGH
Ad schedule	Are ads running 24/7 in industries where customers only convert during business hours? Check conversion data by hour of day.	MEDIUM
Device adjustments	Check conversion rate by device. If mobile converts at 0.5% vs desktop at 4%, consider a mobile bid adjustment.	MEDIUM

3. Keywords and Search Terms (7 Minutes)

Navigate to: Keywords > Search keywords, then Insights > Search terms

Check	What to Look For	Impact
Top spenders	Sort by cost (highest first). Are top-spend keywords also your top converters? Zero conversions on a high-spend keyword is a red flag.	HIGH
Match types	Heavy broad match = likely spending on irrelevant queries. All exact match = may be missing volume. Aim for a balanced mix.	MEDIUM
Quality Score	Add the Quality Score column. Keywords below 5 cost you more per click. Check component scores to diagnose the issue.	MEDIUM
Search terms	Review actual queries. Add irrelevant searches as negative keywords. This single action often saves 10-20% of wasted spend.	HIGH
Negative keywords	Does the account have a negative keyword list? No negatives = guaranteed wasted spend on irrelevant clicks.	HIGH
Keyword conflicts	Check for duplicate keywords across ad groups or campaigns bidding against each other. Consolidate to avoid self-competition.	MEDIUM

4. Ad Copy and Extensions (5 Minutes)

Navigate to: Ads tab, then Assets

Check	What to Look For	Impact
Ad strength	Check RSA ad strength indicators. 'Poor' and 'Average' ads need more headline and description variations.	MEDIUM
Pinning	Excessive headline pinning limits Google's ability to test combinations. Unpin unless legally required.	MEDIUM
Ad extensions	All applicable extensions active? Sitelinks, callouts, structured snippets, call extensions, location extensions.	HIGH
Ad relevance	Does the ad copy match the keyword intent? An ad about 'cheap widgets' on a 'premium widget' keyword kills Quality Score.	HIGH
Testing cadence	When was the last ad copy test? Accounts with no new ads in 3+ months are leaving performance on the table.	MEDIUM

5. Landing Pages (3 Minutes)

Click through your top 3-5 ads to check the landing pages

Check	What to Look For	Impact
Relevance	Does the landing page match the ad promise? 'Free quote in 24 hours' ad with no quote mention on page = conversion killer.	HIGH
Page speed	Does the page load in under 3 seconds? Use Google PageSpeed Insights for a quick check. Slow pages increase bounce rates.	HIGH
Mobile experience	Check on mobile. Is the form easy to fill out? Is the CTA above the fold? Over 60% of search traffic is mobile.	HIGH
Single CTA	Is there one clear call to action? Pages with multiple competing CTAs (call, email, form, chat, download) convert worse.	MEDIUM
Trust signals	Are there reviews, testimonials, certifications, or security badges? Missing trust signals lower conversion rates.	MEDIUM

6. Bidding and Budget (5 Minutes)

Navigate to: Campaign settings > Bidding

Check	What to Look For	Impact
Bid strategy fit	Manual CPC with 50+ monthly conversions? Switch to Smart Bidding. Target ROAS with <30 conversions? Scale back to Maximize Conversions.	HIGH
Target realism	Is Target CPA/ROAS achievable based on recent performance? Unrealistic targets starve campaigns of impressions.	HIGH
Budget allocation	Compare CPA across campaigns. If Campaign A = \$30 CPA and Campaign B = \$90 CPA with equal budgets, reallocate.	HIGH
Learning phase	Has the campaign been in learning for more than 2 weeks? Something is wrong. Check for frequent changes resetting the algorithm.	MEDIUM
Branded vs non-branded	Are branded and non-branded keywords in the same campaign? Separate them. Branded inflates performance metrics.	MEDIUM

Quick Wins: Typical Impact Summary

Fix	Typical Impact	Time
Add negative keywords from search terms	10-20% budget savings	30 min
Turn off Display Network on Search	5-15% CPA reduction	2 min
Fix location targeting to presence onlk3 Q Q q 1aTm (Fix lq>l Impa?i4e7ofte cshe if5 1ntt (5 Minuteson) Tj T* ET BT 1 0 x lq>l 7975 1		

Want a Professional to Audit Your Account?

This checklist covers the fundamentals. A professional audit goes deeper: analysing historical performance trends, identifying structural inefficiencies, evaluating cross-channel attribution, and building a prioritised action plan tailored to your specific business goals.

I offer a complimentary PPC health check for businesses spending \$3,000 or more per month on Google Ads or Meta Ads. No obligation, no sales pitch. Just a clear assessment of where your account stands and what can be improved.

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