

BLOG

How AI is changing the paid search marketing landscape

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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AI, automation and addressability are all disrupting the space.

Paid search marketing has experienced a few disruptions in recent years courtesy of new forms of attribution modeling, the development of hyper local ads in omnichannel marketing, the introduction of RLSA/audiences and the expansion of query growth on mobile devices, just to name a few.

Yet an even more profound transformation of paid search is on the way as we reimagine a landscape evolved from simple keyword/demo targeting to one with the ability to bring together intent and people based marketing while taking advantage of automation and artificial intelligence (AI).

This next wave of disruptive technology in search marketing is about to hit hard. Here are some trends to look out for:

Mobile-first to AI-first approach

Today, as AI and machine learning become more available and grow smarter over time through increased automation, search marketers are more able to focus on key initiatives while AI is put to work to improve efficiencies and minimize errors. Consider, for example, that a whopping 16 percent of all queries engines see on a daily basis are brand new.

Products like Dynamic Search Ads, Real Time/Smart Bidding (eCPC), Smart Campaigns etc. make it possible for advertisers to capture lower funnel, long tail queries and serve the right ads to the right user without bidding on keywords or even creating an ad copy.

Keyword-based to intent-based approach

Consumers today use different devices — at different touchpoints in the journey — for different purposes and expect relevant and often personalized information to make a shopping decision, a purchase or simply receive a response to a question.

For an advertiser, understanding the user intent based on the user's actual query (v/s keyword) and delivering the right message to provide the most relevant user experience is often the key to success. With the evolution of paid search and advanced machine learnings, systems are able to more accurately predict user intent based on search behaviors and patterns that lead to conversion while applying smart bidding through complex bidding algorithms to further enhance the experience.

Cookie-based to people-based marketing

What better way to market your product than to target and have the ability to retain the audience who matters the most while also acquiring new customers? With identity/people based marketing you can do just that by sharing your CRM List of existing customers to Engines and take advantage of this rich data set. Selecting the right keyword set, ad copy, landing page etc. is just half the battle. The other half is selecting the right audience and providing a relevant and meaningful experience to those users.

There are three key buckets in which audiences are primarily divided: Known — which is the most qualified audience and includes first party data / CRM lists for customer match; Semi-Known — cookie based audiences along with engine segments like in-market, similar audiences, demographic targeting etc; Unknown — includes users for whom you have no data available. Ironically, most advertisers still have a large percentage of investment allocated to this bucket.

For a long time in paid search, most advertisers have used cookie-based audiences to remarket users. However, the ability to use CRM Lists to target existing customers, takes SEM to a whole new level. And paid search, a lower funnel tactic, becomes more powerful while providing personalized experiences to these users. Moreover, it helps connect the dots along your customer's purchase journey and allows you to engage with them consistently while creating a customer-centric approach.

Voice search

The entire search landscape is evolving and becoming increasingly complex with ever-changing user behaviors not only in terms of what device they use but also in terms of how they search. Think speaking versus typing.

The on-the-go, in-the-moment nature of mobile devices as well as the use of digital assistants is extremely different than a desktop. There has been a lot of speculation as well regarding how fast voice search would continue to grow. Some predict 30 percent ([Gartner Study](#)) and maybe as much as even 50 percent of all searches will come through personal assistants by 2020. Either way, voice search is gaining strong momentum and is expected to continue to change how users interact.

So, whether it be re-engaging with existing customers, cross-selling different products, building brand awareness or maintaining consistent brand messaging across platforms, these trends/features will give you the ability to provide personalized experiences with precision and stay connected with your most valuable customers while embracing the future.

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