

# Talk America found five times the conversion rate with Google AdWords.



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Kyle Maddock  
Online Marketing Manager



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## ABOUT GOOGLE ADWORDS

Google AdWords is currently used by thousands of businesses worldwide to gain new customers in a cost-effective way. AdWords uses keywords to precisely target ad delivery to web users seeking information about a particular product or service. The program is based on cost-per-click (CPC) pricing, so advertisers only pay when an ad is clicked. Advertisers can take advantage of an extremely broad distribution network and choose the level of support and spending appropriate for their business.

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For more information, go to [www.google.com/ads](http://www.google.com/ads)

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Founded in 1989, Talk America ([www.talk.com](http://www.talk.com)) started out as a long distance provider to residential and small business customers. By 1997, the Reston, Va., company had built its own nationwide long distance network, and in 2000, expanded its product line to offer a bundle of local and long distance phone services to residential and small business customers. Today it is a multimillion dollar company with 1,300 employees nationwide. In 2003, Talk America won a coveted J.D. Power and Associates Award for customer satisfaction, and ranked highest among all local telephone services ranked in the survey.

## Approach

Online Marketing Manager Kyle Maddock says Talk America has long used online advertising in its marketing mix, starting with an exclusive arrangement with AOL in 1997. By 1999, he says, the company began to expand into such web channels as banner advertising as well as agent and affiliate programs, multi-level marketing, email, lead generation and other tactics.

All of these efforts are meant to “target prospects in the regions where we provide service,” says Maddock. Seeking ever-better results from online marketing, Talk America launched its first Google AdWords™ campaign in 2002. The immediate goal: “promote sales of our local and long distance bundled plans at our target cost of acquisition.”

Maddock says implementation was “very simple and straightforward. The campaign was up and running within a week.” Even more impressive, he notes, “We were able to see results and optimize the campaign within a month.”

## Results

“Our e-commerce leads have increased almost seven percent, our post-click conversion rates are approximately five times higher than standard campaigns, and our channel-wide churn rates are very low,” Maddock says. “AdWords has delivered a very successful campaign.” He adds that the AdWords campaign has also resulted in cutting cost per sale in half – even, he notes, as it “dramatically increases overall sales.”

In generating these new highly qualified leads, Maddock says, AdWords demonstrated real advantages. “With over 700 keywords and virtually real-time access to campaign reporting online, we have been able to quickly and efficiently optimize our marketing.” He especially liked being able to use local targeting to divide his AdWords campaign into regionally focused groups. “We could focus our spending by prioritizing our keywords at an individual level,” he says, which meant his team “successfully increased Google keyword sales 10 times versus our first month campaign, while cutting our cost per acquisition in half.”

As for Google’s account management team, Maddock says they have been “best in class,” adding, “They make smart decisions fast to help optimize our campaigns and work diligently to resolve issues, increase sales, and always make sure we are aware of changes in network technology that affect our business.”

Summing up his AdWords experience to date, Maddock says, “It’s the best way to gather qualified leads for your product when they are interested. And it drives prospects efficiently from broadcast media and other offline campaigns to your site.” Which is why Talk America will “definitely continue to use Google advertising in the future,” he continues. “In my opinion, if you can’t convert prospects to customers using keyword advertising on Google, you’re in the wrong business.”