

How PartSelect makes itself whole with Google advertising.



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Ben Graham

Manager of Business Development,
PartSelect.com

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.

For more information, go to
www.google.com/ads

It’s not often that a company switches from a stable business-to-business existence to become strictly business-to-consumer, but that’s just what PartSelect has done. Based in Truro, Nova Scotia, the four-year-old company began as a Maytag parts wholesaler. With warehouse inventory and the ability to ship, over time PartSelect began to sell parts and accessories for a host of home appliance brands like GE, Frigidaire, Speed Queen, HotPoint and KitchenAid. The original website, www.partselect.com, represented this wholesale business online.

Approach

To get bigger than the wholesale side allowed, PartSelect had to move beyond B-to-B sales. And that required at least two major changes: actively retooling for consumer business and, given the size of the market, expansion into the United States. “The market in the States is so much bigger, and it’s a lot easier to ship from Canada south than vice versa,” says Ben Graham, Manager of Business Development of PartSelect. “We realized the American consumer business was a big opportunity for us, especially selling direct over the web.”

“Selling household appliances online is different than selling traditional retail, because conversion rates are so much lower,” says Graham. “To succeed, we need to get as many potential customers directly to our products as possible.” He believes keyword advertising is the best way to accomplish this. “The Google AdWords™ cost-per-click model is affordable, and Google’s expert team has been crucial in managing the many thousands of keywords we have.”

A revamped site that launched in April 2002 featured a massive database (750,000 parts for 120,000 models and 30 brands) and nine different shipping locations for fast service. The new site required a new ad strategy, too. PartSelect worked with Google’s Toronto sales team to develop a Google AdWords campaign, which Graham describes as “by far the most important means we have of advertising. We can’t afford traditional ad outreach, and it wouldn’t be as effective anyway.” In the 10 months since the new B-to-C site launch, he notes Google traffic has increased site visitors – and buyers – eightfold.

Results

Graham appreciates the fact that, unlike some search advertising programs, Google AdWords eliminates frequent bidding and bid management. “AdWords is consistently more efficient, and less expensive, per click than another partner we use,” he says. “And now we are seeing clickthrough on many of our 2,000 individual keyword ads in excess of 15 percent. Our company was born out of online advertising, and we have experienced 100 percent growth every year as a direct result of it. Google has been an excellent partner in this growth.”

Graham also observes that, because search engine marketing is a relatively new concept, “The expertise Google’s account team provides has been invaluable. They have been able to project impressions and clickthroughs down to the individual keyword. We would never been able to find someone to provide those services,” Graham says.

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Since PartSelect sells products and parts ranging from a few cents to many thousands of dollars, the revenue upside from Google advertising is considerable. “We’re selling millions of dollars of goods through the new consumer site,” says Graham, “and it would have been impossible to run this business without Google AdWords.” Graham isn’t satisfied to rest on his laurels, however. “We have aggressive goals for growing the company,” he says. “We’ll definitely use Google to get there.”

