



# VITRUVIAN

## How To Stop Wasting Money On Your Google Ads Campaigns

The search term traps that are attracting the wrong audience and how to eliminate them.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kristie McDonald  
Best Selling Author of  
*Google AdWords for Dummies*

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A 20-year information technology consulting veteran, Kristie McDonald is the CEO of Vitruvian and the author of *Google AdWords For Dummies*.

Kristie's background includes tenure with McKinsey & Company and an Accenture spin-off firm. She has decades of experience in strategy consulting, project management, and general business management.

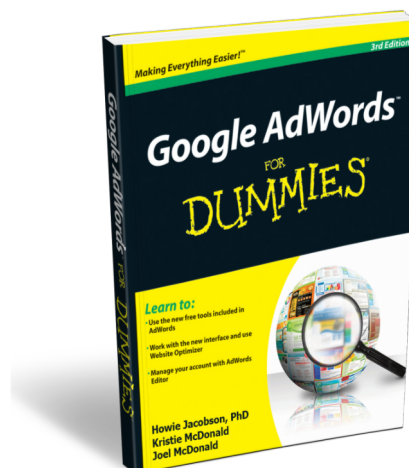
She has spent the last 10+ years working in the digital advertising field and has attained a global reputation as a Google Ads expert managing 100s of different client accounts in many different industries over the years. She has also held the Google Ads Professional Certification since 2006.

Kristie holds an engineering degree in Computer Science from the University of Illinois in Champaign. Her marketing experience and engineering background allow her to understand and teach digital advertising and the Google Ads platform from a unique "art meets science" perspective.

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Kristie McDonald doesn't just understand Google Ads.  
She wrote the book on it!

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

If you're promoting your business using Google Ads, then it's very likely you're wasting money on irrelevant search terms. Non-converting search terms are the most common source of wasted ad spend in most campaigns and can be eliminated with some simple steps.

### 3 Common Search Term Traps

The first step to stop wasting money on non-converting search terms is to analyze **three common traps** that are most likely present in your Google Ads campaigns.

1. **The Broad Trap:** Search terms that are logically irrelevant
2. **The Ambiguity Trap:** Search terms that have multiple meanings
3. **The Perception Trap:** Search terms that should work but don't

In this ebook, you'll learn what these three common search term traps are and why they negatively affect your Google Ads results. Using advanced keyword targeting techniques and relentlessly testing and reviewing your search terms reports, you'll be able to find the best balance between impressions for your ads and clicks from leads that actually convert to customers.

### 3 Steps to Drastically Reduce Your Ad Spend

The next step to stop wasting money on irrelevant search terms is to fix the problems! In this ebook, I give you three key steps to do it. Follow these steps, and you'll be on your way to significantly reducing your wasted ad spend.

**Step 1:** Track your conversions

**Step 2:** Work the Search Term Report

**Step 3:** Manage the Spending to your Goals

### Don't Let Terminology Confuse You!

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**Keywords** are the words or sets of words that you bid on within your Google Ads account.

**Search Terms or Search Queries** are the words or combinations of words that people actually type into the search box in a search engine to find what they're looking for.



# PART I

## The Problems



# CHAPTER 2

## THE BROAD TRAP

Search terms that are logically irrelevant fall into the Broad Trap in your Google Ads management strategy.

For example, a contractor who works on turning basements into livable spaces might use basement contractors as a broad match keyword in his or her Google Ads campaign. This is a very broad search term. The business ad will display on other search queries such as *basement digging contractors*, *pour new basement walls*, and *basement contractor job opportunities*. All of these are completely irrelevant and a waste of money for this contractor.

Keep in mind, broad matches can drive up your ad spend, but they can also be useful in helping you come up with search term variations that you might not have thought of otherwise (like *basement finishing contractors* for the business in the previous example).

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The solution to the Broad Trap is  
using keyword match types effectively.

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The next step to stop wasting money on irrelevant search terms is to fix the problems! In this ebook, I give you three key steps to do it. Follow these steps, and you'll be on your way to significantly reducing your wasted ad spend.

### Avoid the Broad Trap with Match Types

Several of Google's match types can allow too much leeway in which search terms your ads are shown on. As a refresher, there are four levels of match types which range from the broadest matches to the most precise matches:

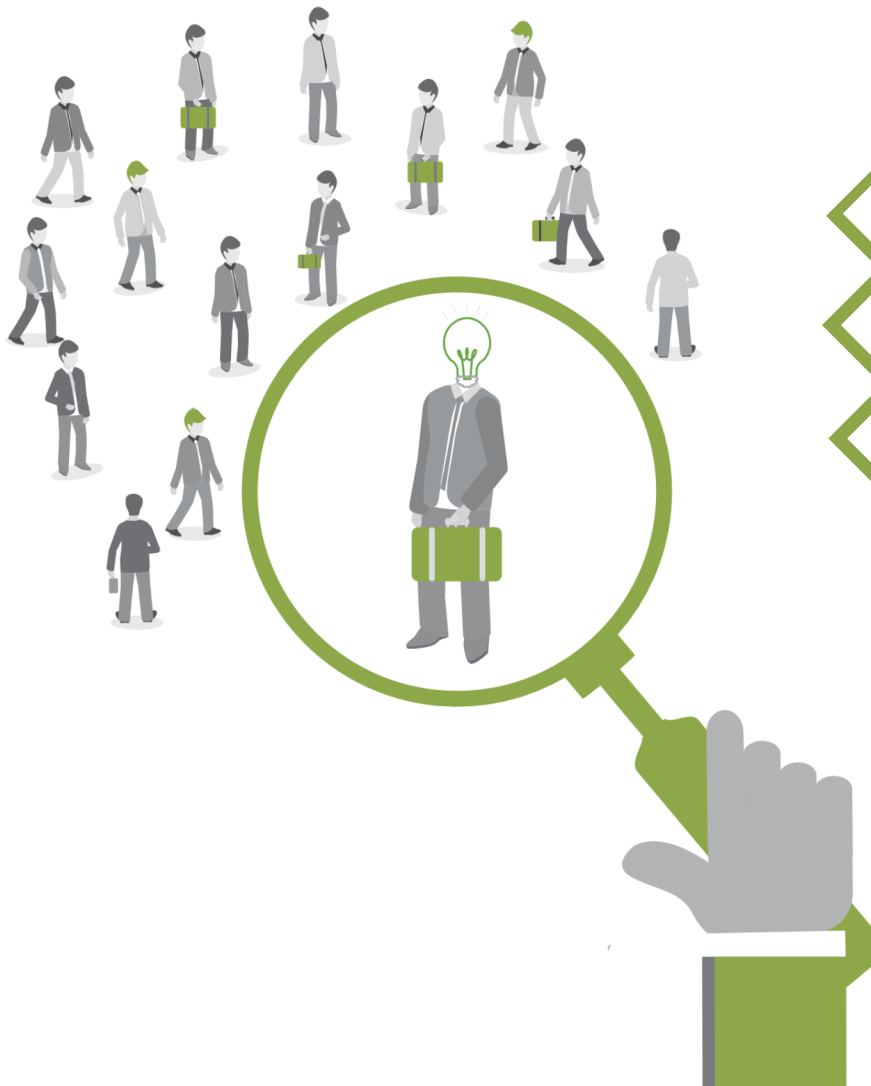
- **Broad Match:** With the broad match type, your ad is shown when someone searches for your keyword or variations of your keyword including synonyms, misspellings, plural and stemmings (such as floor or flooring). When you use a broad match type, your ad will be shown often because it broadly matches so many search queries, but the number of irrelevant searches will also increase.
- **Modified Broad Match:** With this match type, you can choose which words are critical and must appear in a search query and direct Google to cast a slightly narrower net around these words.
- **Phrase Match:** The phrase match type gives you more control of the search terms that trigger your ad by allowing you to identify specific phrases that you want to target within search queries so your ad only displays when there is an exact match of a specific phrase plus or minus extra modifiers.

- **Exact Match:** The exact match type gives you maximum control over the search terms that trigger your ads and cost you money by enabling you to target highly specific phrases that must match search queries exactly as they appear in your Google Ads account.

While broad match, modified broad match, and phrase match can be useful in learning new search terms and expanding exposure, they can also be dangerous when left on their own. Like an untended garden, these match types can grow out of control quickly and drive up your ad spend if you're not watching!

To avoid the Broad Trap, you should use the exact match type as often as possible. Experiment and analyze your results so you understand which keywords perform best. When you know what those keywords are, focus your campaign on those terms.

Use the other match types sparingly to increase exposure and to find new search terms that you haven't identified yet.





# CHAPTER 3

## The Ambiguity Trap

When people type words into the search box of their preferred search engines, they know what they're looking for. The search engine does not.

For example, without context, there is no good chance that a search for *windows* will provide results related to Microsoft's software. That would be great for someone looking for software, but what about someone looking to have new windows installed in their home? Those results would be completely irrelevant and the ads that display with those search results would be irrelevant too.

Many times, advertisers struggle with search terms that seem highly relevant but they have multiple meanings.

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If your keyword has multiple meanings, you could be wasting money on irrelevant searches!

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### Avoid the Ambiguity Trap with Clear Copy, Tight Match Types, and Negatives

To avoid the Ambiguity Trap, you can start by limiting the use of broad match types as discussed in Chapter 2 on this ebook. Using the exact match type gives you better control, especially with multiple meaning keywords.

Your next step should be to learn all of the meanings of your keywords and add negatives to your Google Ads campaigns to eliminate those irrelevant meanings as much as possible.

Third, you need to make sure your ad copy is extremely clear. Qualify your visitors by clearly explaining who you are and what you offer in your copy. Don't forget to repeat your keywords!

Fourth, keep a close eye on performance of an ambiguous term. If it's too ambiguous but attracts clicks anyway, it could be too expensive and not worth your ad dollars.







# CHAPTER 4

## The Perception Trap

Many advertisers have lists of keywords based on search terms that seem like they should work but for some reason, they just don't.

For example, if you're an attorney in the Chicago area looking for workers' compensation clients, then it would seem that the search terms *workers compensation lawyer in Chicago* should work for you. That's not always the case. It's perplexing, but we've seen it happen.

Another example is *cleaning services* for a corporate office cleaning company. The keyword seems to be targeted, but it could be too costly because it can also mean residential cleaning services, which the corporate office cleaning company does not provide.

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### Avoid the Perception Trap by Looking at Your Visitor's Perspectives

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Don't fall into the Perception Trap by letting your perception of how a keyword should perform cloud your judgement. If a keyword term isn't working for you, take a look at your visitor's experience from the perspective of the search term and see if there are any areas where you can improve.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Copy
  - What ad copy does the audience see?
  - Are your messages relevant?
- Competitors
  - How does your ad compare to competitor's ads?
  - Does your ad stand out?
  - How does your offer compare?
- Landing Page
  - What does your landing page look like?
  - Is it continuing the conversation the visitors have going on in their minds after seeing your ad or is it confusing them?
  - Does the landing page have a strong call to action?

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Beware of falling in love with your keywords, ad copy, or ad design and allowing your emotions to rule your decisions. You should trust your numbers more than your creativity!

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# PART II

## The Solutions



# CHAPTER 5

## Step 1- Track Your Results

The first step in fixing your Google Ads account to reduce your wasted spend on irrelevant searches is to make sure you're tracking which searches are bringing you leads and sales.

**Nothing measures what is relevant better than results!**

When you don't track leads, emails, and phone calls, you're flying blind. You have no idea which ad copy or keywords are successful. By not tracking, you're wasting money and you have no idea where the waste is occurring!

For example, imagine you're a plumber and you spend \$500 to advertise when people search the term fix plumbing. Sounds like a good term that should lead to customers, right? But if you don't track how many of the people who saw your ad actually called you or filled out a form requesting a call, you actually have no idea whether this term led to any new customers.

Fortunately, you can solve the problem by tracking your results.

### Track Online Form Leads

Google allows you to easily track when a lead fills out a form or completes a sale on your website.

Here's how to do it:

1. Go to Tools->Measurement->Conversions (One of the top menus on the Google Interface)
2. Select the large "+" button to add a new conversion.
3. Select the Website as the Source of the Conversions.
4. Select a category for your Conversion.
5. Enter a Conversion name.
6. Enter a value for the conversion (select Don't Set a Value if you don't have one).
7. Choose the method conversions will be counted (For lead generation, select 'One' so if a visitor fills out a form more than once, they will only count as one lead; For ecommerce stores, select 'Every' (at this time it's 90 days) so every sale is counted.
8. Select the maximum conversion window.
9. Leave "Include in Conversions" = Yes.
- 10 Check Create and Continue.

Your final settings will look similar to the image below.

Settings	Conversion name	Free Case Evaluation
	Category	Sign-up
	Value	\$500
	Source <small>Not editable</small>	Website
	Count	One conversion
	Conversion window	90 days
	View-through window	1 day
	Include in "Conversions"	Yes
	Attribution model	Last click

Once you click Create and Continue, you'll see instructions to install the necessary tracking code on your website. Follow Google's instructions on installing the code.



## Set up Call Forwarding

You can also set up a Call Forwarding number in Google so a phone number appears in your ads on both desktop and mobile devices. This phone number forwards directly to your business phone, and Google automatically tracks the phone calls back to the ad.

Here's how to do it:

1. Select the Ads & Extensions.
2. Select the Extensions tab.
3. Select the large "+" button to add an extension.
4. Select Call extension from the drop-down.
5. Select Create New.
6. Select Your Country from the drop-down.
7. Enter Your phone number.
8. Select Call Reporting = On.
9. Select Conversion Action = "Calls From Ads".
- 10 Select Save.

Your final settings will look similar to the image below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Extension	Extension type	Level	Status	↓ Clicks	Impr.	CTR	Avg. CPC	Cost	Conversions	Cost / conv.	Conv. rate
Account												
<input type="checkbox"/>	(408) 669-3443	Call extension	Account	Approved	0	0	-	-	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

1 - 1 of 1

Now your ads will display with this forwarding number. When someone calls that number from the ad, it will forward to your number and it will show up as a phone call conversion.

In the example, a single phone number was added to two different campaigns. You can and should add call forwarding to all your campaigns. You can also use multiple forwarding numbers if that makes sense for your business - for example, if you have different locations.

**A word of caution:** Google does not show the forwarding number 100% of the time. It has requirements that an ad group has a certain amount of clicks before consistently showing a forwarding phone number. In the past, the minimum has been about 30 clicks per ad group.

## Track Phone Calls from Your Website

You can also track phone calls that come from your website. Call tracking companies are very inexpensive today and will allow you to see which website phone calls were made by visitors that got to your website from your ads. Some companies to consider are Call Tracking Metrics and Call Rail. Once you've selected a company, their support will help you set up the tracking. It's slightly different for each company.

Google also offers a call tracking service for free, but do your research before you try it. Everyone loves "free" but phone calls from your website are one area of your sales pipeline you should never put in jeopardy! Make sure you have easy access to technical expertise before using a service with little or no technical support.





# CHAPTER 6

## Step 2- Review Your Search Term Report

As you learned in Chapter 2, when you choose anything but an exact match, you have to be very careful that Google isn't showing your ads on completely irrelevant terms. For example, if you're a law firm for personal injury clients and you select a broad keyword match, your ad could display with *free personal injury legal advice* search results. That would be wasted money because your services aren't free!

To save yourself from overspending on irrelevant search terms, regularly review your Search Term Report. When you find an irrelevant query, choose one or more words in the phrase to exclude so they don't cost you money in the future. When you exclude keywords, they are referred to as negative keywords.

- Select the Keywords Tab
- Select the "Search Terms" Tab to see a list of the search terms that have been used by visitors to your site.
- Sort by Cost so you can work on the most expensive search terms first.
- Review the search terms for irrelevant queries.
- When you find an irrelevant query, choose one or more words in the phrase to exclude using negative keywords.
  - Click the box on the left of the search term to select it (a checkmark appears when it's checked). You can select multiple search terms at one time to make this process faster!
  - Select the "Add as negative keyword" button.
  - If the search term is one that you would never want to see in any of your campaigns, select Add as Negative Keyword to "Campaign".
  - Select Save.

Add as negative keyword to

- Ad group
- Campaign
- Negative keyword list

Negative Keyword	Campaign
sears	Calgary  Windows   S
[window factory]	Calgary  Windows   S
*airport windows	Calgary  Windows   S

## Tips and Warnings

You can change the negative keyword to broaden your exclusion as needed. For example, if you want to only exclude an exact query that you found in your Search Term Report, then you can keep the one recommended by Google - which will be the exact match version of that search term. However, if you know that you want to exclude any search term in the future with a certain word in the query, you can shorten the recommended word and make it a negative broad match.

Negative match types are added the same way as keyword match types. As a reminder, to add exact match, use brackets such as [window factory] in the example. To add phrase match, use quotes, such as "airport windows" and to add broad match leave the keyword without any quotes or brackets.

A word of caution: Negative broad match doesn't work exactly like the regular broad match discussed in Chapter 2. It does not exclude synonyms or variations of that keyword. It only excludes that word no matter where it appears in the search string. The other match types - exact and phrase - work similarly with negatives as they do with regular keywords.

Keep in mind, this isn't a one-time analysis. To reduce the amount of money you're wasting on irrelevant search terms, consider running this report and analyzing it on a weekly or bi-weekly basis and make changes to your keywords as needed.







# CHAPTER 7

## Step 3- Manage Keywords Using Cost Goals

Your goal should always be to make data driven decisions based on testing. This is the best way to avoid wasting money on non-converting leads.

Most importantly, you need to know your Target Cost Per Conversion. What is the amount you are willing to pay for a lead or a sale? This is referred to as Cost per Conversion or "Cost/Conv" in Google's interface. Some refer to this as Cost Per Acquisition or CPA.

The timeframe that you analyze is dependent on how much traffic you see in one month. As a general rule of thumb, you should perform this analysis within 30 days of data and within 90 days of data. However, if you have a lot of traffic, you might need to use seven days of data as well.

## The Keyword Performance Report

To manage your keywords, you will be reviewing the Keyword Performance Report. To get to your keyword performance data, click on the Keywords Tab.

## Review Converting Keywords

First, review the report using all of your keywords that have conversions:

1. Sort the list by Cost/Conv (descending).
  - a. Tip : To sort any data in the Google Ads interface, click on the column name until you see an arrow indicating the type of sort you want.
2. If the Cost Per Conversion of the keyword is greater than your Target Cost Per Conversion, then you can do one of two things:
  - a. Reduce the bid and keep an eye on the keyword to see if the cost comes down closer to the Target.
  - b. Pause the keyword if the cost is significantly higher than the target.

## Review Non-Converting Keywords

Similarly, review the report for all your keywords that had zero conversions.

1. Filter the keyword list to include only keywords with zero conversions
  - a. Select the "Add Filter" button.
  - b. Select Conversions->Conversions from the Field dropdown
  - c. Select < as the operator
  - d. Type 1 as the value
  - e. Click the Apply button
2. Sort the list by Cost (descending)
3. If the Cost is greater than the Target, then pause the keyword.
4. If the Cost is still below the Target, reduce the bid and keep an eye on the keyword.

## Review Low Position Keywords

Finally, review the report for all keywords that have an Average Position of greater than four. These are keywords that are likely not being seen by anyone. Try increasing the bids to see if more exposure can help. If they're already expensive in this position, pause them.

**Tip:** If your report does not contain all of the columns referred to above, select Modify Columns button. From the Modify Columns interface, open a column category to review the columns available and click on the check box to add one.

### Below is an example of the Keyword Performance Report

In this example, the target CPA is \$150 per lead. We would reduce the bid on the top keyword and the rest of the keywords can remain at their existing bids.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword	Ad group	Status <sup>?</sup>	Max. CPC <sup>?</sup>	Impr. <sup>?</sup>	Clicks <sup>?</sup>	CTR <sup>?</sup>	Avg. Pos. <sup>?</sup>	Avg. CPC <sup>?</sup>	Cost <sup>?</sup>	Converted clicks <sup>?</sup>	Cost / ↓ converted click <sup>?</sup>	Click conversion rate <sup>?</sup>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	"basement remodeling"	Basement Remodeling   P	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible	\$8.00 (enhanced)	7,346	103	1.40%	1.6	\$11.50	\$1,184.69	6	\$197.45	5.83%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	[finish basement]	Finish Basement   X	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible	\$8.00 (enhanced)	1,758	32	1.82%	2.2	\$8.92	\$285.44	2	\$142.72	6.25%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	"basement renovation"	Basement Renovation   P	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible	\$16.00 (enhanced)	2,610	37	1.42%	1.9	\$10.81	\$399.80	3	\$133.27	8.11%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	"basement contractor"	Basement Contractor   P	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible	\$11.00 (enhanced)	2,562	33	1.29%	2.1	\$11.76	\$388.07	3	\$129.36	9.09%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	+basement +contractor	Basement Contractor   MB	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible	\$20.00 (enhanced)	2,513	67	2.67%	2.0	\$13.34	\$893.80	7	\$127.69	10.45%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	[basement finishing cost]	Finish Basement   X	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible	\$14.00 (enhanced)	522	24	4.60%	2.0	\$10.36	\$248.64	2	\$124.32	8.33%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	"basement remodel"	Basement Remodeling   P	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible	\$20.00 (enhanced)	3,668	42	1.15%	1.8	\$11.72	\$492.26	4	\$123.06	9.52%



# CHAPTER 8

## Conclusion

This ebook introduces you to a few ways you can minimize the amount of money you waste on irrelevant search terms. There are three key things you should remember:

1. Irrelevant search terms are wasting your money and should be eliminated.
2. Tracking and analyzing should be part of your daily or weekly routine.
3. Your cost goals are a critical component to deciding what stays and what goes.

If you keep these three critical points in mind, you'll be on the right path to improved Google Ads results.

Google Ads can be overwhelming, so don't feel like you have to learn everything immediately. Call in the professionals when you have the budget to do so. I guarantee you'll see your return on investment increase if you work with a reputable provider!

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If you're ready to stop wasting money and start making money with more qualified leads that actually convert, let's talk!

Schedule a Free Consultation at

[www.VitruvianAdvertising.com/consultation-request](http://www.VitruvianAdvertising.com/consultation-request) today!





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