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Google Ads from Zero

A practical guide to setting up, running and improving Google Ads for a service business

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First edition, 2026

About this course

Google Ads shows your business to people who are already searching. This course takes you from the basics to a tracked, improving account.

Who it is for

Business owners and new marketers who want to understand and run Google Ads.

What you will be able to do

- Understand how Google Ads works
- Set up a first search campaign step by step
- Choose keywords and match types sensibly
- Read the search terms report and cut waste
- Track conversions and audit an account

How to use it

Read the chapters in order, do the "Try this" exercises where they appear and keep a simple log of what you change and what happens. Examples marked illustrative show method, not promises. Results depend on your business, area and effort.

Contents

1	How Google Ads works
2	Keywords, match types and quality
3	Reading and improving
4	Tracking and results

CHAPTER 1

How Google Ads works

What Is Google Ads and How Does It Work for a Small Business?

> **The short answer.** Google Ads is Google's advertising platform. You choose search terms (keywords), write ads and set a budget, and your ads can appear when people search for those terms. For most search ads you pay when someone clicks. It suits small businesses when people already search for what they sell, and it works best with tracking in place so you can see which clicks become enquiries.

How it works in four steps

1. **Someone searches.** For example “emergency plumber near me”.
2. **An auction runs.** Google considers advertisers who want to show for that search. Which ad shows and in what position depends on your bid and on quality factors such as how relevant your ad and page are.
3. **Your ad appears.** If it wins, it shows above or below the organic results.
4. **You pay if they click.** You set a daily budget and a bidding approach, and Google charges per click for search ads.

The main campaign types

Type	Where it shows	Best for
Search	Google search results	People searching for your service now. The usual starting point for a service business.
Performance Max	Across Google's channels, automatically	Broader reach once tracking and search are working
Display and Demand Gen	Websites, apps and Google feeds	Awareness and visual promotion
YouTube	Video placements	Awareness and story-led offers
Shopping	Product listings	Online stores selling physical products
Local Services Ads	A separate unit at the top of local search, in selected categories	Some local trades and services. Pay per lead.

What it costs

There is no fixed price. You set the budget, and the cost per click depends on your industry, your area and how much competition there is. The number that matters is cost per enquiry: what you pay on average for each call or form that comes from the clicks. For service businesses, about £500 a month in ad spend is a practical floor, because below that there is rarely enough data to optimise. For real examples, see what Google Ads cost for a private clinic and a good cost per lead for home improvement.

How to start properly

1. **Set up tracking first.** Count calls and form submissions as conversions before you spend.
2. **Start with search, one service and one area.** A focused account gives clean data.
3. **Choose keywords by intent.** “Plumber near me” beats a general term like “plumbing”.
4. **Add negative keywords from day one.** Words like “jobs”, “free” and “DIY” stop wasted clicks.
5. **Send people to a page that matches the ad.** One page per service beats the homepage.

6. **Review search terms weekly.** See what people actually typed, and cut what is wasting budget.

Mistakes that waste a small budget

- Choosing broad keywords with no area limit.
- Counting clicks, not enquiries.
- Sending every ad to the homepage.
- Letting Google's automatic suggestions change the account without review.
- Judging after a few days instead of weeks.

Google Ads Manager: Account, Manager Account or Person?

> **The short answer.** "Google Ads manager" can mean the Google Ads account you log in to, a manager account that links several accounts together, or a person who manages your campaigns. It is not the same as Google Ad Manager, which is a separate product for publishers who sell ad space.

Four things people mean

What people say	What it is	Who uses it
Google Ads	The advertising platform and the account where campaigns live. It was called AdWords until 2018.	Any business advertising on Google
A manager account	A Google Ads account that links and manages other Google Ads accounts under one login.	Agencies and larger businesses with several accounts
A Google Ads manager (person)	Someone who plans, builds and optimises campaigns for you.	Businesses that want it done well
Google Ad Manager	A separate product for publishers to sell and serve ad space on their sites and apps.	Publishers, not advertisers

What a Google Ads manager does

- **Builds the structure.** Campaigns and ad groups organised around the searches that lead to paying work.
- **Sets up tracking.** Calls and forms counted back to the ad, so optimisation follows real enquiries.
- **Controls waste.** Reviews search terms every week and adds negative keywords to stop irrelevant clicks.
- **Writes and tests ads.** Headlines and descriptions matched to what people searched for.
- **Advises on landing pages.** The page decides how many clicks become enquiries.
- **Reports in plain English.** What was spent, what it produced and what changes next.

Do you need a manager account?

A single business usually does not. A manager account is mostly useful to people running several accounts. When an agency or freelancer manages your campaigns, they typically request access to your account from theirs. A sensible rule is that the ad account should stay yours, with you able to see everything inside it.

How to choose a Google Ads manager

1. **Ask who will manage the account.** You want a name, not a team.
2. **Ask how calls and forms are tracked.** If the answer is vague, optimisation will be guesswork.
3. **Ask what will be cut first.** A good answer mentions search terms and negative keywords.
4. **Ask to see real account results.** Not screenshots with no context.
5. **Be wary of guarantees.** No one can promise leads or returns before data exists.

Manage it yourself, or hire?

DIY can work for a small, simple account if you have a few hours a week to learn the platform and review it. The risk is paying for the learning in wasted clicks. A specialist usually costs a management fee but saves it back in avoided waste, and frees your time. See the Google Ads consultant page for how a hands-on specialist works.

How to set up a Google Ads campaign for a service business, step by step

> **The short answer.** To set up a Google Ads search campaign for a service business, set a clear goal such as calls and forms, set up conversion tracking first, choose keywords combining service and place, write ads that match the search, target your service area, set a realistic daily budget, send traffic to a matching page and review search terms weekly.

1. Decide the goal

Pick what counts as success: calls and form enquiries. Not clicks.

2. Set up tracking first

Count forms and calls before spending. See conversion tracking step by step.

3. Choose keywords

Combine the service, the place and a buying signal. See keyword ideas by trade.

4. Write the ads

Use headlines for the service, place, proof and next step, matching what people searched.

5. Set location and schedule

Target the places you serve and, if needed, the hours you can answer.

6. Set a realistic budget

Enough to collect a meaningful number of enquiries. Many service businesses start around £1,000 to £3,000 a month.

7. Send traffic to a matching page

A page built for the ad converts better than a homepage. See the landing page checklist.

8. Review weekly

Check search terms, add negatives and watch cost per enquiry. See how to read a search terms report.

A worked example (illustrative)

A plumber in Blackpool sets a goal of 20 call outs a month, with a £35 target cost per enquiry. That implies about £700 a month of ad spend if all goes well. He sets up call tracking, builds a campaign for "emergency plumber Blackpool" and "boiler repair Blackpool", schedules ads for 7am to 9pm, adds negatives for jobs and training, and sends traffic to a page with a big phone number. Week one shows 6 enquiries at £50 each. He tightens search terms and the cost falls to £38 by week four.

Common mistakes in a first campaign

- Letting Google add broad keywords automatically with no negatives.
- Sending traffic to the homepage.
- Not tracking calls.
- Changing too much in the first week.

After launch

Review search terms weekly and wait long enough for a meaningful number of results before judging. See the audit checklist.

Want the full course?

This is a free sample of **Google Ads from Zero**. The full course has 4 chapters.

Join the waitlist at edwardeatonmarketing.com/courses/google-ads-from-zero and you will hear first when it launches.