



PITSTOP
M E D I A

Quality Score

Optimization and Best Practices

What is Quality Score?

Quality Score, also known as QS, is a dynamic variable calculated by Google to rank ads (sponsored links) on Google search results. Quality Score determines:

- whether your ad qualifies to be shown on Google, Google Search Partners, Google Content Network and on specific placement sites
- which position your ad will be display on
- how much you pay per click

Why is it Important?

In simple terms, the higher the QS, the less advertising dollars you will end up paying per click or per thousand impressions. Therefore, if you take all the necessary measures to improve the QS of your ads and keywords, you will **spend less money to acquire traffic and earn more profit from each conversion**, as a result achieving your marketing objectives efficiently through Google AdWords.

How is QS Calculated?

AdWords calculates separate QS for Google Search Partners, Content Network and Placement Network.

Quality Score				
Search Advertising	Display Advertising			
Google & Search Partners	Content		Placement	
CPC	CPC	CPM	CPC	CPM
Historical CTR of keyword and matched ad	Historical CTR of keyword and matched ad	Landing page quality	Historical CTR of ads on this and similar sites	Landing page quality
Account History (CTR of keywords & ads in the account)	Relevance of ads and keywords in the ad group to the site		Landing page quality	
Display URL historical CTR in ad group	Landing page quality			
Landing page quality	Other relevance factors			
Relevance of keyword to the ads in the ad group				
Relevance of keyword and the ads to the search query				
Account's performance in the geographical region where ads will be shown				
Other relevance factors				

Ads and keywords have separate QS. Also, there are some differences in how the QS of keywords or ads are calculated.

Keyword QS	Ad QS
Historical CTR of keyword and matched ad	Historical CTR of keyword and matched ad
Account History (CTR of keywords & ads in the account)	Account History (CTR of keywords & ads in the account)
Display URL historical CTR in ad group	Display URL historical CTR in ad group
Landing page quality	Landing page quality
Relevance of keyword to the ads in the ad group	Relevance of keyword and the ads to the search query
Account's performance in the geographical region where ads will be shown	Account's performance in the geographical region where ads will be shown
Other relevance factors	Other relevance factors

Please note that though QS is important, your keyword bid and the competition plays an important role determining which ad auctions you can participate. Depending upon how high or low your bid is and your competitors bid, you will qualify to participate in different ad auctions.

How Does Quality Score Influence Your Account

Google AdWords uses Quality Score to determine:

- First page bid estimate
- Ad Rank
- Cost per Click

First Page Bid Estimate

First page bid is the minimum amount you need to pay per click to have your ads show up on the first page of the search results. First page bids are based on the QS and current advertiser competition* for that keyword.

Note: Google AdWords uses the exact match type of the keyword to determine the keyword's QS. Ad QS and the relevance of the search query to ad and keyword is not considered when calculating first page bid estimate.

*Current Advertiser Competition: advertisers who are qualified to compete with you in the current auction for particular keyword.

Ad Rank

Ad rank is used by Google AdWords to determine which position your ad will be displayed on , on the Google's search result page when a search query matches your targeted keyword.

Ad Rank = (Ad QS) x (max CPC of the keyword)

When calculating the QS for ads, Google AdWords doesn't consider landing page quality, but it DOES consider the relevance of the search query to the ad and the keyword that triggered the ad. Apart from this, all other factors used to determine the QS of ad and keyword are the same.

CPC

CPC or Cost Per Click is the actual amount Google charges when

$$\text{Actual CPC} = \frac{\text{Ad Rank of the competitor who is one position below you}}{\text{your overall QS}} + \$0.01$$

In general, the higher the QS the lower your CPC and the better your ad position.

How to Improve Quality Score

Since QS is the aggregate of the various factors listed above, let's take a look on how you can improve each metric.

Account Set-up

- Ensure the campaigns are well structured with highly relevant keywords grouped into theme-based ad groups
- Language and geo-targeting options are set properly

Click-through rate (CTR)

- Avoid using generic keywords
- Use keywords which describe your product or service
- Create ad copies which are highly relevant to the keywords
- Pause underperforming keywords
- Use negative keywords to filter out unwanted impressions
- Run A/B tests on ad copies
- If you are running new campaigns, bid high in the beginning to get more exposure and clicks
- Test all keyword match types

Relevance

- Ensure your ads and keywords within the ad group are closely related
- Landing pages are topically relevant to the advertised keywords
- Use targeted keywords in ad copies
- Use Dynamic Keyword Insertion (caution: don't over use this feature)
- Faster landing page load times (slow load times affect quality score negatively)

Account's Performance in Targeted Geographical Region

- Have separate campaigns for different geographical regions
- Create ad copies relevant to each targeted region
- Use Geographical performance report to determine campaign & ad group performance and use the same to optimize your keyword bids

Other Factors to Consider

- Always aim for a balance between CTR and conversions. Focusing only on CTR, you will be wasting advertising dollars. Focusing only on Conversions might lead to low CTR and in turn affecting your Quality score and the actual cost per click you are paying.
- Google normalizes the CTR of an ad showing in different positions to account for the variation in clicks due to positions.

PS

If doing everything above sounds like too complicated or too much work for you, the easy alternative is to contact us at +1(778)218-2665 or email us at office@pitstopmedia.com. When you contact us, enquire about the **free AdWords audit** (conditions apply).