

Search Engine Marketing

December 18, 2008, to June 30, 2009

Program Description

The search engine marketing (SEM) campaign, which generates high-quality traffic to CTTC's main visitcalifornia.com site, includes paid search listings purchased on a price-per-click (PPC) model. Paid listings are text links that appear at the top or side of search results for specific keywords. In a PPC model, CTTC only pays when a user clicks on the text link. As part of the 2008/09 SEM test strategy, search advertisements also ran alongside specific California content articles. Results from the 08/09 test campaign informed the 09/10 search campaign structure, chiefly in focusing the majority of SEM spending on out-of-state vacationers.

CTTC's search strategy includes identifying keywords, creating copy, managing and optimizing SEM, which leads to higher quality scores within the search engines, garnering increased visibility, more meaningful traffic directed at visitcalifornia.com and a cost-efficient return on investment (ROI).

SEM continues into the new fiscal year having re-launched in mid-August 2009. The 2009/10 campaign is slowly ramping up, and will run consistently throughout the year supporting brand advertising efforts along with initiative-specific ones such as Wine Month and snow season, along with international support for Canada.

Target Audience

- Undecided vacationers looking for travel ideas and information
- Decided vacationers looking for travel ideas and information on California
- Geographic targeting to out-of-state travelers
- Support of the brand in-state & nationally

Objectives & Reach

- Drive traffic to visitcalifornia.com.

- Support offline efforts with specific search support campaigns.
- Continue in-state brand support with specific campaign, but focus efforts largely on targeting out-of-state travel planners.

Results & Accomplishments

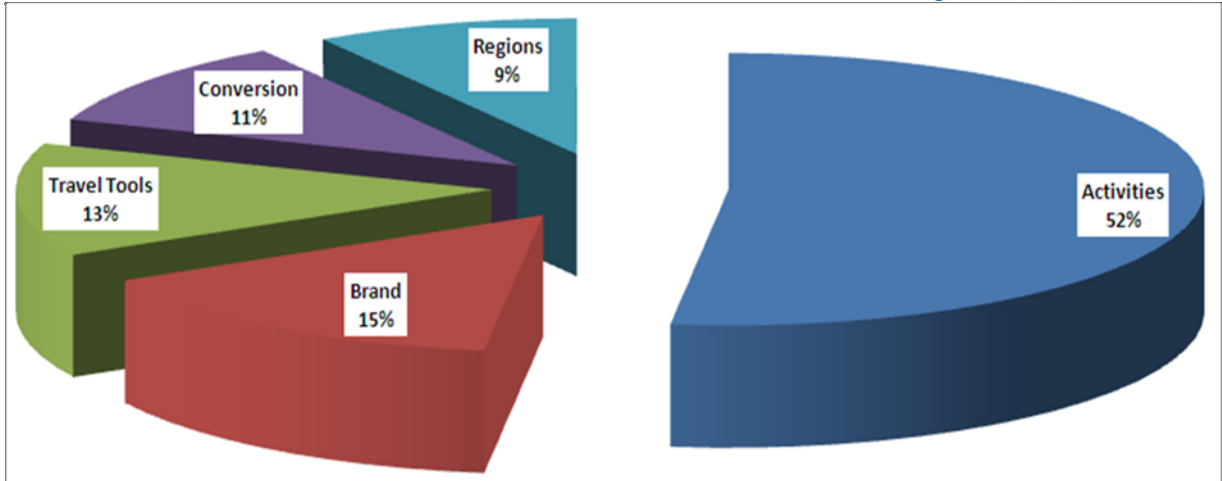
Over the course of 08/09, the paid search campaigns generated 335 million exposures (ad impressions) and over 143,000 visits to visitcalifornia.com. The campaigns were organized in two ways: search targeted placement and content targeted search placement. Search targeted campaigns place text advertisements next to search results on Google. Content targeted campaigns place CTTC advertisements next to specific California content articles using relevant keywords to target the ads (i.e., “California wine”).

A key finding from the test program in 08/09 was that SEM marketing largely reached in-state travel planners. As a result, CTTC changed the 09/10 SEM strategy to reflect that finding, targeting nearly 100% of spending on reaching out-of-state visitors. This may constrain the volume of search traffic driven to visitcalifornia.com as a result, which will be tracked throughout the year. If SEM-related traffic is lower than projected, alternative marketing vehicles will be explored to make up that lost traffic volume.

Overall performance 12/18/08 to 6/30/09:

Goal	Performance	Industry Average
Cost Per Click (CPC): \$2.50	\$1.01	\$1.25
Top Six Results Position	1.54	3.1

- 08/09 Media Expenditure: \$290,674
- Overall Campaign Performance:
 - \$0.73 CPC/0.02% CTR (click-thru rate with content placement)
 - \$1.30 CPC/1.82% CTR (click-thru rate without content placement)
 - CPC was 49% less than goal of \$2.50 CPC
 - 143,000 visits to visitcalifornia.com
 - Google generated 91% of all on-site actions
 - 8,484 actions taken (*Visitor’s Guide* orders and downloads, map downloads, My Trip views, Fun Spots coupon downloads, etc.)



- The activities campaign – targeting the entire state with long-tail activity-related keyword terms – generated highest share of response
- Activities campaign generated the greatest share of response (70% or so) among content targeted placements on travel-related websites within relevant articles
- Long-tail keyword targeting (“Napa’s top dining restaurants”) proved particularly successful at generating response volume efficiently

Program Contact(s)

Antonette Eckert
Advertising & Co-op Marketing Manager
916.319.5405
aeckert@visitcalifornia.com

Chris Kilkes
Media Director, Sapient
415.655.7416
ckilkes@sapient.com