

# AdVanced AdWords CheckMate: Courting Your Ideal Customer

Google AdWords is nothing more or less than a medium of Direct Marketing. So every now and then I put away my books about the latest online techniques and reach for the classic texts.

Here's something I learned during my previous incarnation as John Caples (betcha can't disprove that claim):

**There are three elements to any direct marketing offer: the offer, the creative, and the list.**

The offer is the thing you're selling.

The creative is the copy you use to let people know about the offer.

The list is the group of people who will see the creative.

**The list is more important than the creative or the offer.**

It doesn't matter how good the product, or how well you build desire for it. If you're selling to people who aren't interested in the product, can't afford it, or don't like you, it ain't gonna sell.

The entire art of direct marketing, in fact, consists of matching offers to lists with appropriate creative copy.

So it's a useful thing to know as much about your market as you can.

Ken McCarthy says it's more important to know your market than the techniques of marketing.

Perry Marshall says that every commercial failure represents a lack of knowledge about the prospect.

Groucho Marx says, "Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."

And I say, keep reading to discover two simple exercises that can help you speak with great persuasion and emotional impact to your ideal customer.

## **What is an Ideal Customer?**

Your ideal customer is the one who absolutely should buy your product or service. It's just perfect for them. They have they need, they have the money, they have the buy-in of any other stakeholders (spouses, parents, co-workers, etc.), and they have a natural affinity for you and your company.

Here's a quick and dirty "Ideal Customer" test:

**When you think of them buying from your competitor, you become extremely agitated.**

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You hyperventilate. You sweat. You want to drive to their house and shake some sense into them.

## The 7-Step Ideal Customer Diary Exercise

1. Find a blank sheet of paper. (I recommend using pen and paper, not a computer, for this exercise.)
2. Take several deep breaths and relax your body as much as you can. (If you wake up several hours later with drool all over your paper, then you obviously needed the sleep. Get a fresh sheet and continue.)
3. Imagine you are your ideal prospect.

What's your name? (Really, give yourself a name. Don't skip this because it seems silly.)

Age? Marital Status? Do you have kids?

Where do you work? What do you do for a living?

What do you look like?

What do you believe?

What communities do you belong to?

What really pisses you off?

Who do you want to be like?

What's your role as you perform your search? Parent? Hobbyist? Employee? What's important to you about your performance in that role? To be a hero? To avoid mistakes? To look good? To have fun?

4. Now imagine your ideal customer at the exact moment they are about to search Google for your main keyword.

At the top of the paper, write the following:

"If I could only..."

5. Now complete the diary entry from the point of view of your prospect. Open up to your diary. What are you hoping for? What are you afraid of? How will you know when you've found the right solution?

Talk about the emotional as well as technical aspects of the task. Is it fun? Something you're looking forward to solving? Are you worried about failing? About making a mistake? Who might be judging or second-guessing you? What triggered your search? Your choice of keywords?

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Write at least 2 paragraphs, more if you like. Try to fill the page with the thoughts and emotions of your ideal customer, as they relate to this search.

6. When you're done, search Google for the keyword and look at the search results page from your ideal customer's eyes.

Do any of the ads or organic listings really speak to them?

What do you (as your ideal prospect) want the ad to say? What do you want to be promised? By whom?

7. Now take a fresh sheet of paper and start writing ads for your ideal customer. Don't edit or critique them – just brainstorm and come up with at least five different ones.

Pay special attention to the headlines. Can you say something in the headline that immediately shows your ideal prospect that you understand them in a deeper way than anyone else?

## **Alternative (Even More Powerful) Method:**

Do the above exercise with a partner. Tell them about your ideal customer, and read them the diary entry. Then have them sit and write ads for you for about 10 minutes.

You'll be amazed at the results!

We did this exercise at a recent Camp Checkmate live event. Three weeks later I received this email from Mark, one of the participants:

"I thought you might be interested in some ad results from our 'everybody make some ads for this person' exercise. After looking over the ads, I thought Jim's (I think he wrote it) 'Home Audio Experts' ad looked promising. It's getting about twice the number of clicks that the previous winner had been getting! So, big success."

So definitely take advantage of other people's brains when you can!

## **Lots of Brains in One Place**

In January, 31 participants in Perry Marshall's exclusive RoundTable went through a 1-hour Checkmate training with me. I was nervous, I admit. I mean, I know that newbies really appreciate my stuff, but here I was sharing a technique with some of the sharpest AdWords minds in the world.

What happened just blew me away.

Just about everyone in the room came away with breakthrough insights. They talked about "escaping from AdWords prison" and "breaking out of the Google rut."

Perry blogged about the breakthrough ad he wrote for someone else's business.

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I tell you this to impress you (let's be honest here ;), *and* to impress upon you the value of working with other people to hone your marketing messages.

Go here to watch a short video montage of the reactions to this exercise:

<http://askhowie.com/camp-checkmate-unveiled>

And if you're interested in attending an upcoming Camp Checkmate, you'll see a special coupon code on that page which will save you \$500 when you register. That coupon is set to expire next Friday, February 12, 2010.

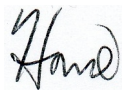
I'm working on a real sales letter (outsourcing it, actually, which is a very hard thing for me to do), but if you've seen enough to jump at the chance to spend two days with me in a small workshop environment, and you want to get very special pricing, this is your chance.

### **Dates:**

April 1-2 in Durham NC (limited to 30 people)

June 10-11 in Chicago IL (limited to 40 people)

Wishing you health, happiness, and prosperity, and hoping to see you at Camp Checkmate soon,



Howie