

## CASE STUDY

**Conversion-oriented audit of an Adwords Policy: how to identify effective levers for immediate performance improvement, both from a profitability and an operational steering standpoint.**

### THE GOALS

- Sustainably grow account's ROI
- Improve account's on-going monitoring and optimisation

### THE APPROACH

- Audit and business realignment of the account structure
- In-depth Keywords Quality Score and performance audit
- Definition and roll-out of a state of the art Keywords exclusion strategy
- Spending optimisation through the roll-out of an exclusion KW strategy
- Minimisation of impression share losses
- Audit of the Ads extensions structure and content
- Overall Search Journey optimisation

### THE RESULTS (1st may- 31st oct 2016 YOY)

With an 100% increase in number of campaigns, the new structure reflects BI, is void of inactive elements, rich in exclusion KWs and boasts only performing ads with appropriate ad extensions

- +18% clicks
- +39% conversions
- +31% total conversion value
- +25% overall ROAS

### Background

Established in France in 1995, Rail Europe 4A is a leading European train ticket distributor active in 67 countries worldwide. Rail Europe offers train tickets and passes to more than 15000 destinations in Europe, covering all major train networks. In Australia, Rail Europe was one of the first European travel retailers to go online with a transactional website in 2008.

In the travel industry, a mature e-commerce sector where distributors compete in fierce Adwords bidding wars, it is recommended to implement a flawless account structure and a seamless search journey, thus integrating search engine advertising in a global conversion optimisation approach. The Australian market offered a textbook example of how to activate this strategy. Here we explore how Rail Europe Australia has markedly improved the profitability of its Adwords account.

Although Rail Europe has been solidly established in Australia, the context of its competitive sector meant that the paid search strategy was due for an overhaul after performances for this market in particular were in decline in 2015. Our mission was to identify levers for a prompt performance improvement.



## Approach

We tackled this challenge by proposing Rail Europe a two-fold in-depth audit: an account structure and management audit, followed by an editorial audit. The result of both audits was an exhaustive list of actionable recommendations. Rail Europe then requested their Search Advertising Agency to implement these recommendations.

## Campaign management Audit

### Adwords account structure realignment

The first step of the campaign management audit was to make a full analysis of Adwords performances per campaign and an analysis of the overall business performance per product. We then realigned the Adwords account to obtain an optimal structure both based on product type performance potential and on their BI products structure to improve steering and comparison with other sources and sales channels.

### Account organisation

We did a full audit of the account's keywords and removed all semantic overlaps across campaigns. Furthermore, a set of micro analyses allowed us to identify elements at keyword and ad-level that were not compliant to best practices, so that we could fill the proposed structure with only optimised elements.

### Audit of the account's overall QS (Quality Score)

This audit offers a concise measure of the account's health and consists of calculating the weighted QS (of all active elements within an account) with a breakdown per campaign and adgroup. This allowed us to pinpoint which campaigns or adgroups needed QS optimisation. Moreover, a dashboard of the account's weighted QS broken down in campaigns was set up to monitor QS evolution in time.

### Exclusion keyword strategy

An audit of all excluded keywords as well as of the account exclusion activity drove us to define an exclusion keyword process guarantying that ineffective ad spend could be kept to a minimum.

### Lost impression share

We audited the account at campaign level for both for rank and budget lost impression share, allowing us to identify which campaigns needed improvement. Akin to the QS audit, we set up a dashboard of the account's Lost IS broken down by campaign.

## Editorial audit

### Search journey optimisation

The top converting keywords were subject to an in-depth audit aimed at optimizing the full search journey from search intent and semantical coherence to ad promise accuracy and to the landing page. Next to this, we proposed an optimised ad extension structure for every adgroup.

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*“Following the implementations of Conversion&Co’s recommendations, Google paid search traffic has grown by 69% in one year and now accounts for over 33% of traffic to raileurope.com.au and for more than 45% of all transactions - this is nearly a 94% increase versus last year! The performance increase of Google paid search has been critical in boosting our online performance in 2016.”*

- Marion Nocodie, E-Marketing Manager, Rail Europe World

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### The Results

Rail Europe’s search strategy has made the most of the opportunity to drive online sales through search. Year on year, the company has seen search ads deliver a 25% increase in return on investment, a 39% increase in sales and a 31% increase in revenue. “Paid search allows us to adapt instantly to our customer’s search intent and to make an informed decision as to how to ventilate costs for an optimal return on investment,” explains Ms. Nocodie.

These efforts to integrate the Search Advertising strategy in an overall conversion-oriented approach have helped Rail Europe Australia sell more products in 2016, better steer Adwords Advertisement performances in an integrated Business Intelligence context and improve the Search agency’s campaign management. Next to this overall business performance improvement, the overhaul of Rail Europe Austalia’s account has achieved an 8% increase in their overall Quality Score in 2016.