

How to Create Call-Focused PPC Campaigns

Google Ads allows you to create two types of call campaigns: call-only and click-to-website. Each type has its own strengths and weaknesses depending on your goals, but when done right, we believe click-to-website campaigns are best for most businesses trying to generate phone calls. However, there are exceptions to this, and we're going to explore the details of each campaign type, so you know which one better suits your needs.

Let's start with looking at those strengths and weaknesses:

Call-only Campaigns

- **Advantages:**
 - **Low cost per call:** costs are lower because you're only paying for clicks. You're basically paying a click price for a call and you only pay when you get a call. You are guaranteed to get calls for your money.
 - **Easy to track and set up:** Google tracks it for you so you don't have to set up tracking. You don't even need to have a landing page, so you don't have to worry about converting clicks to calls on your landing page.
 - **Low maintenance:** set it and forget about it. Since you're not even using a landing page, it doesn't require much work on your part.
 - **Good for emergency or urgent searches where the searcher is likely to go with the first person they talk to:** call-only campaigns are best suited for situations where people don't have a lot of questions, like in the case of calling a plumber or a tow truck company.
- **Disadvantages:**
 - **Low quality and confused callers:** because haven't seen a landing page, they haven't been warmed up in any way and don't know anything about the product or service. They may have even clicked and called by accident.
 - **Callers may not know who they are calling:** people frequently just call the first number that pops up, assuming it's a match for their keyword search. Sometimes Google gets it right and it works, but this often leads to a confused caller who doesn't know who they are calling.
 - **Lower conversion rates:** your first interaction with people is on the phone, they're not warmed up like they would be with a landing page. They don't know anything about your company and they may be looking for something else entirely. This means they will convert to customers at a much lower rate.
 - **Lower call center morale due to low quality callers:** low quality callers means the people in the call center have to take a lot more calls to convert them into customers and this can get tiring; after all, they're not robots. Since a lot of the callers are low quality, the conversion rate is pretty low, and the call center employees aren't as enthusiastic about getting calls and talking to people. They can develop negative attitudes and lose interest in trying to convert callers, leading to a vicious cycle in which conversion rates are low because of low quality callers, thus discouraging call center employees who aren't converting callers, leading to lower conversion rates. With click-to-website campaigns, by comparison, the conversion happens before the call, when the landing page gets people to call; this creates a virtuous cycle with high-quality calls that



boost morale, making call center employees more enthusiastic and excited about getting calls, thus leading to more sales.

Click-to-website Campaigns with Call Extensions

- **Advantages:**

- **Top quality calls from callers who know who they are calling:** people have been warmed up and they know who they are calling because they've seen your landing page and they know what to expect.
- **Landing page pre-sells to the visitor, increasing conversion rates:** people first visit your landing page and learn more about your product or service. The landing page itself serves as an intermediate salesperson who gets visitors interested in what you're offering, so when they decide to call, they're already considering buying.
- **Used in combination with call extensions delivers a "best of both worlds" campaign type (just be sure to boost mobile device types):** call extensions deliver the best of both worlds because it allows people to call directly from the ad, while also offering them the possibility of visiting a landing page. It's generally better to let people have a choice, and this balances cost-per-call against quality callers.
- **Good for complex or high-ticket goods and services where there is a long sales cycle (e.g. lawyers, drug rehabs, selling cars/homes, etc.):** people need more information in cases like these and a certain level of trust needs to be established between them and you, which is why landing pages and calls go well together.
- **Caller quality is higher than on call-only campaigns:** as mentioned above, people have been warmed up, they've seen your landing page and they know what to expect. The call is not your first interaction with them.
- **Good call center morale and high close rates:** as opposed to call-only campaigns, the conversion happens before getting the call, when the landing page gets people to call you; this creates a virtuous cycle with high-quality calls that boost morale and make call center employees more enthusiastic and excited about getting calls, thus leading to more sales and higher close rates.
- **Best ROI:** in our experience, most phone call generation campaigns get a better ROI when combining the use of a landing page with call extensions.

- **Disadvantages:**

- **Requires a good mobile optimized landing page:** this takes time and energy. For this strategy to work, a good mobile optimized page is a prerequisite. Unless your page is optimized to convert visitors to callers, don't even bother. Split testing is also important and not every web designer can do this – you need a professional.
- **Requires a fast-loading landing page:** this can require special expertise and investment of time, specialized hosting and web development resources. We recommend landing page loads of 3 seconds or less.
- **You need skilled people to achieve high conversion rates:** conversion rate optimization is highly skilled work for which you need a conversion specialist with experience, and this can be costly and time consuming. This ensures you get a maximum number of calls per 100 clicks that you pay for.
- **Requires third-party call tracking:** in order to track all your phone calls, there will be some expense involved. Although there are a lot of low-cost options available, you

should be prepared to spend at least \$100 each month for call tracking alone, and more for higher volumes of calls.

- **Cost per call can be higher than on call-only campaigns:** when done correctly, this is offset by the increase in quality callers and an increased closing rate.

Now that you've got a better idea of what each campaign type has to offer, let's look at a few tips to make sure you get the most out of your campaigns.

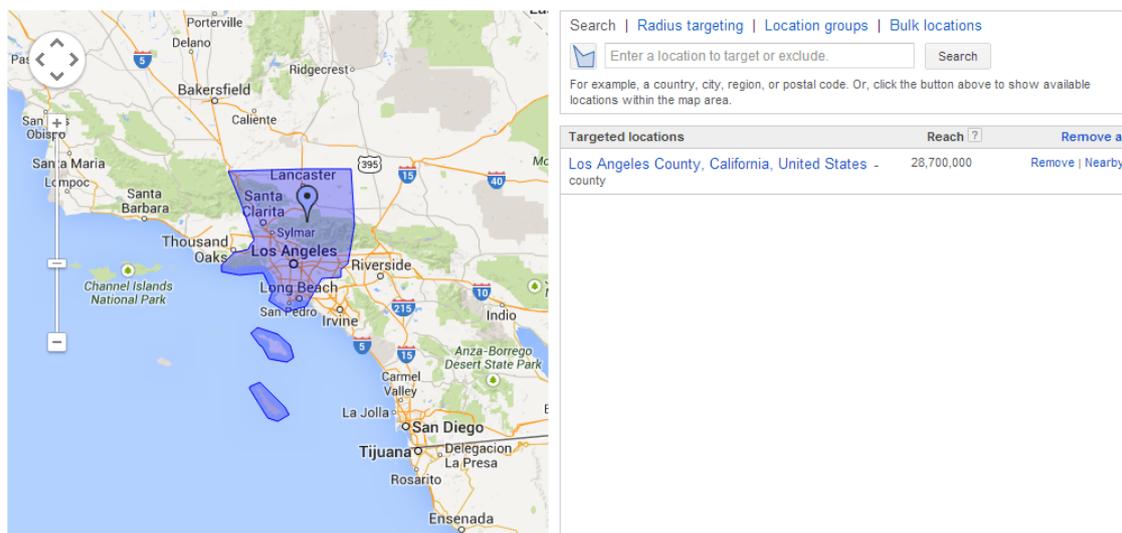
Best Practices for Call-only Campaigns

1. Focus on Call-Centric Keywords

Ensure that the keywords you're targeting appeal to the segment of your audience with the highest likelihood of calling. You should use location-based keywords for customers interested in visiting your business, or keywords that resonate with customers who are further down in the purchasing funnel. You may also discover that some people prefer to have a conversation when they are purchasing certain products or services.

Keep in mind that call-only ads don't allow people to visit your website, so your keywords should be targeting people with high-intent who are looking for quick answers or want to take immediate action without any further research.

2. Use Location Targeting Whenever It Makes Sense



The screenshot shows a map of Southern California with a blue shaded region covering Los Angeles County. To the right of the map is a search interface with a text input field containing "Enter a location to target or exclude." and a "Search" button. Below the search field is a table with the following data:

Targeted locations	Reach ?	Remove all
Los Angeles County, California, United States - county	28,700,000	Remove Nearby

Location targeting is key if you're a local business. Use a local phone number and make sure that calls are routed to the store or branch that is nearest to the caller's location. You may discover that there are more callers from specific geographic areas, or that calls in certain locations are of a higher quality than others, in which case it may be worth increasing your bids for people in those areas.

Using a local area code can really pay off for location specific services that are a good fit for call-only campaigns. There are a lot of national service providers and it can be confusing for someone trying to find a local company. The local area code allows them to see that you really are local.

Also, when using location extensions, don't forget to use a trackable phone number.

3. Make Use of the URL

Call-only campaigns don't have the same amount of real estate to work with as traditional PPC ads; you don't have a headline and you don't have a landing page. This is why your URL matters even more. Consider adding a CTA or a keyword at the end of your display URL and use those 35 characters to reinforce your message.

4. Schedule Your Ads Strategically

Edit ad schedule

By default, eligible ads may be shown at any time within a 24-hour day, any day of the week. Use the ad scheduling options below to select more specific days and times your ads can appear. [Learn more](#)

Monday to Friday	12 AM	:	00	to	7 AM	:	00	X
Monday to Friday	7 AM	:	00	to	12 PM	:	00	X
Monday to Friday	12 PM	:	00	to	4 PM	:	00	X
Monday to Friday	4 PM	:	00	to	8 PM	:	00	X

The last thing you want is to drive phone calls to a voicemail or an unmanned call center. You should use a manual bidding CPC strategy in order to limit your call-only campaign to run during business hours only. Look at peak call times and days and take advantage of trends in consumer behavior and preferences, adjusting your ads so they appear during those times.

If you want your campaign to run 24/7, make sure you're paying less for after-hours calls and measure how well they convert compared to regular calls. Depending on how much less they convert, you should bid last for after-hours calls. For some businesses this can be worth it, but you definitely want to get these calls at the lowest price. In other cases, these calls aren't worth getting at all.

5. Test Your Ad's Copy

You only have two lines of 35 characters, so your ad copy should be highly targeted and concise. Also include a CTA that encourages people to call you, and as with click ads, it's a good idea to include the keyword in the ad copy.

6. Always Measure Call Quality

When you're trying to optimize bidding, measure performance, or calculate ROI, simply counting calls won't do. You need to look at which calls are actually turning into customers and this can easily be done with a call intelligence solution that tracks the outcome of a phone number. If you're using basic call tracking, you can look at call tracking metrics such as call duration to get at least some understanding of call quality.

When you have a better understanding of call quality, you can optimize your bids to increase quality traffic, not just volume. If you don't measure quality, you could be wasting your sales agents' time with low quality calls, thus driving a negative ROI.

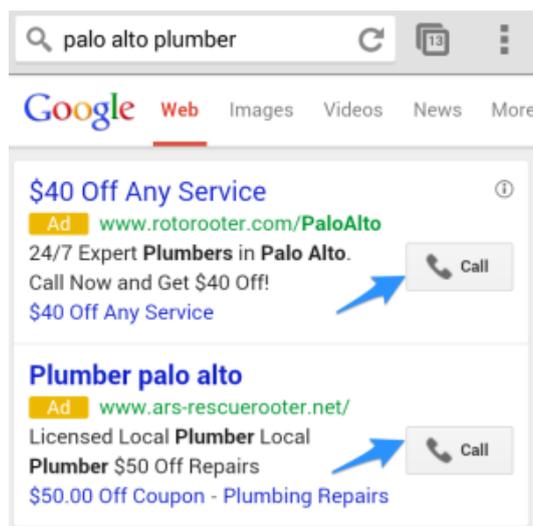
7. Don't Forget to Calculate Your Call-Through Rate

While not all clicks lead to phone calls, you're still paying for every click. When someone clicks a call-only ad, a dialer will appear on their phone, which they must then click on to actually make the call. Learn how many clicks actually result in phone calls and optimize your bids based on calls instead of clicks.

If there is a large disparity between clicks and calls, or a high call abandon rate, it may mean that your audience does not want to call, and you should probably rethink your ad copy or keyword strategy, as the keywords used to arrive to your ad might not be relevant enough. Perhaps you should also consider using click-to-website campaigns that give users a choice between directly calling you and visiting your website first.

If you're using Google's forwarding numbers and call reporting, you can add a phone-through rate (PTR) column to your reporting. This will show you how many times your number is called as a percentage of total impressions.

Depending on your business and what you think is more appropriate, a better alternative to call-only campaigns might be click campaigns with call extensions. These work best when potential customers would usually need to get to know you a little better and trust you a bit before actually calling you.



Best Practices for Click-to-website Campaigns with Call Extensions

1. Optimize Your Landing Page for Mobile

Apart from the content of your landing page, design and functionality can also influence whether a potential customer trusts you enough. Since your visitors will primarily be using mobile devices, make sure that your landing page is correctly optimized for mobile and that you've used click to call functionality on it.

2. Improve Your Page's Loading Time

Landing pages have to be fast. One of the most important aspects of call-focused landing pages is the load time. Many people don't have fast internet connections on their phones, so you need to make sure the page is as clean and quick as possible, otherwise you risk losing a large part of your mobile visitors due to slow loading times.



As page load time goes from:

1s to 3s the probability of bounce **increases 32%**

1s to 5s the probability of bounce **increases 90%**

1s to 6s the probability of bounce **increases 106%**

1s to 10s the probability of bounce **increases 123%**

Source: Google/SOASTA Research, 2017.

It can be hard to find a good developer who will improve your page's loading time, but one sure way to get good results is by using AMP for your page. This commoditizes speed, meaning you can be assured of a pretty fast page if everything is implemented correctly.

3. Use Call Tracking Software

You should also use call tracking software (Callrail, Invoca, etc.) for the phone numbers on your website. This software presents visitors with a phone number that will dynamically mask your main phone number, and that number changes depending on how your visitors found you. Visitors dial the new tracking number, the call gets forwarded to your main number, and you answer the phone just like you normally would. They also use cookies, so if a visitor returns to your site within a year, they'll see the same number. The software forwards calls to your main number and in the background, it records the conversation and gathers statistics, which you can check on in real-time.

The whole point of this is to tell which keywords bring you high-quality calls. This is critical data that can't be left out – you need it successfully target keywords driving quality calls not just quantity of calls.

4. Use Specific CTAs and Create a Sense of Urgency

CTAs in your ads and on your landing page should be about calling. The landing page should prep visitors for calling and don't be afraid to create a sense of urgency, suggesting that the sooner they call, the better. Getting people to take action now rather than at some time in the future is very important and good marketers figure out a way to build urgency into their offer.

5. Use Ad Extensions



Ad extensions show additional information about your products or services and this helps customers get to know you in an optimal way. They also improve your ads' visibility, increase their CTR, and improve your AdRank which can lead to volumes of lower cost clicks compared to your competitors. ROI.

Depending on your PPC campaigns, to benefit the most from ad extensions you need to choose the right ones for each campaign:

- **Location extensions** encourage people to visit your business by showing your location, a call button, and a link to your business details page—which can include your hours, photos of your business, and directions to get there. Don't forget to use location extensions for additional ad real estate for people within a 40-mile radius.
- **Callout extensions** add additional text to your ad, like "free delivery" or "24/7 customer support." Callouts can be used to encourage people to convert offline and to emphasize the fact that you are local.
- **Call extensions** encourage people to call you by placing a phone number or a call button on your ads.
- **Message extensions** encourage people to send you text messages directly from your ad.
- **Structured snippet extensions** add more real estate to your ads and showcase information that potential customers may find valuable.
- **Sitelink extensions** link people directly to specific pages of your website (like "hours" and "order now").
- **App extensions** encourage people to download your app. Available globally for Android and iOS mobile devices, including tablets.
- **Price extensions** can showcase services or products along with their prices, so that people can browse your offer right from your ad.

More information about all the different types of extensions can be found on [Google's support page](#).

6. Skew Bids Towards Mobile (+25-50%)

Since you're primarily targeting mobile users, it would be a good idea to focus your bids mostly on searches coming from mobile devices. People on mobile phones call more and it's worth it to bid higher for those people, since they've already got a phone in their hand and it's easier for them to call than it is for someone on a desktop.

7. Include a Call-Conversion Optimized Page

It is important that you build your landing page with mobile visitors in mind. You're targeting people who are using their phones to reach you, so you need to make sure the landing page looks and works great on mobile devices.

It is very important to write your ads while keeping in mind what is being offered on the landing page. Your ad copy and the landing page are complementary to each other and the copy will work best when it is aligned with a relevant landing page. Many advertisers make the mistake of either sending potential customers to the homepage or creating a generic landing page for all their ads, instead of using separate landing pages for each ad.

To ensure consistency, make sure you highlight the benefits and features in your landing page that you mentioned in your ad copy.



Apart from the content of your landing page, design and functionality can also influence whether a potential customer trusts you enough. Since your visitors will primarily be using mobile devices, make sure that your landing page is correctly optimized for mobile and that you've used click to call functionality on it.

Here are a few strategies in a nutshell that will help with generating calls from your landing page:

- Emphasize and sell the call, not necessarily the product or service.
- Create an emotional appeal if possible.
- Underline a low-pressure and stress-free call process.
- The call-to-action (CTA) should encourage people to call in, not to commit to anything.
- Include the operator's name and a friendly face that will encourage visitors to call.

8. Use Call Extensions to Keep the Cost per Call Down

Call extensions can keep your costs down because some of your clicks turn directly into calls, so you're essentially paying click prices for calls. Call extensions basically offer the same functionality as call-only ads, but also give people the choice to visit your landing page, thus being cheaper because they choose to call as opposed to calling being their only option.

Now that you've got a feel for what each type of campaign has to offer and how you should manage each type, it's time to go out there and optimize your campaigns and landing pages to not necessarily get more calls, but more *qualified* calls.