Google

Babson uses the Google Display Network to cut CPAs by 67% while driving volume

About Babson College
- www.babson.edu
- Babson Park, MA
- Leading business school offering undergraduate, graduate, and executive education

Goals
- Increase enrollment: Needed more participants for executive education programs
- Decrease costs: Sought to lower its CPA

Approach
- Created geo-targeted campaigns to advertise open-enrollment programs
- Used contextual targeting on keywords like "executive education"
- Created rich display ads with relevant landing pages

Results
- Decreased CPA: Reduced CPA by 67%
- Increased volume: Google Display Network accounted for 75% of leads during campaign

Background

If you've ever had an interest in entrepreneurship, then you've likely heard of Babson College. As the leading institution in the world for entrepreneurship education, Babson is renowned for developing entrepreneurial leaders who create economic and social value everywhere.

In addition to its core undergraduate and graduate programs, Babson Executive and Enterprise Education works with organizations of all sizes to design and deliver programs and other learning solutions that drive growth and value creation. Having tried print advertising and a mix of online advertising, Robert McDonald, Director of Marketing for Executive and Enterprise Education, decided to try out display advertising to increase enrollment for executive education programs.

The challenge

To market Babson's Executive and Enterprise Education programs to high-quality leads, Robert turned to Vanessa Elmer at AdReady, a display advertising technology company, to help manage his campaigns.

As Vanessa explains it, "We needed to drive leads and generate return on investment by reaching specific audiences across multiple programs, utilizing geo-targeting, landing pages, and program-specific creative."

Furthermore, Robert needed to hit CPA targets in order to see an ROI on his advertising spend.

"We had purchased leads from email lists, but it was very hit or miss," said Robert. "With our display campaigns we needed to make sure that we were getting quality leads at a reasonable CPA."

Trying display

Geographic targeting on the Google Display Network lets you show ads to a certain geographic area, while contextual targeting lets you show ads based on the keyword content of the page. Vanessa created geo-targeted campaigns on the Google Display Network to ensure that ads only reached a relevant and targeted audience, and then used keywords like "executive education" and "business education" to ensure that her ads only appeared on relevant websites.

"We had fourteen different campaigns, and 42 ads total, all with different calls to action. We ran those ads in targeted geographic areas," said Vanessa. "Each program campaign had a corresponding landing page, so we could track which leads were coming in from which ad units."

Results

The campaign reduced Babson's CPA by 67%, and over a two month period, the Google Display Network accounted for over 75% of Babson's leads. Robert was thrilled with the results.

"Display advertising is a more effective way to advertise and to generate leads than some of the more traditional formats -- print advertising is more expensive, and you have to make the buy in advance. But with display advertising, you modify things every day, and turn the campaign off once you've hit your targets. It mitigates risk."

By using the Google Display Network, Babson Executive and Enterprise Education was able to meet its enrollment goals while saving money on its acquisition costs.

"The Google Display Network has performed better than the other ad networks that we have tried. It will continue to be an important part of our marketing strategy."