



Influencers in the Field

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How Associations Can Use Google Ads to Grow Their Memberships

Your association needs to implement modern, effective methods to attract new members. To adequately promote your association, your ads should reach ideal candidates, usually those of a particular profession or specific demographics actively looking for the products and services your membership offers.

Associations shouldn't rely on broad media channels and ad buys that reach generic audiences. There is no need to cast a wide net for your niche membership. Focusing on digital strategy can help you narrow down and reach your desired consumers.

One aspect of digital strategy is utilizing Google Ads — the search engine's advertising service that directs your marketing messages to the right people.

Google Ads for Lead Generation

Google Ads allows you to leverage large datasets and digital targeting capabilities to reach people who fit your membership base and are looking for the solutions your association provides.

However, not every campaign should be the same. In some contexts, associations need to advertise to uninformed consumers — raise brand awareness — while in others, the message might be more of a “follow-up” to a previous interaction.

There are two main campaign situations:

► **Initial Prospecting**

These campaigns create new awareness for and exposure to ideal candidates who've never interacted with your association. This group likely doesn't know about your organization; maybe they heard of it once but nothing more.

► **Retargeting**

These efforts are meant to re-engage people who have interacted with your association in some capacity. Familiarity can range from former members on your “win-back” customer list to people who visited your website once or briefly engaged with a prospecting campaign.

Campaign Types

Google Ads offers different campaign types based on the capabilities and mediums in which they work. Here are the best options for associations:

► Performance Max Campaigns

This campaign format allows you to maximize your Google Ads inventory, which enables you to reach consumers across all channels with a single campaign.

Performance Max complements keyword-based search campaigns and uses features like Google AI and Smart Bidding to gain new prospects based on your specified conversion goals.

► Search Campaigns

This is Google Ads in its simplest form. Launching [search campaigns](#) makes your ads appear as relevant search results.

Using keyword targeting, your text ads will populate for people looking for products and services related to your association's offerings. The ads will also prompt the user to click to learn more, driving traffic to your website.

► Demand Gen Campaigns

Demand Gen builds awareness for your association through education and storytelling. They help you reach new audiences at "entertainment-focused touchpoints" and on immersive platforms, such as YouTube and Discover. For associations able to create captivating, engaging content, this format ensures it will show up in the right feeds.

Google can help you narrow your base by helping you target a more precise audience using [lookalike segments](#), also known as "seed lists," which can include:

- Existing customer lists
- Activity on your digital platforms — such as your website and apps
- Engagement on YouTube content

Then, upload these lists, and Google will use the first-party data to reach similar consumers.

► Display Campaigns

[Display campaigns](#) use visually-based ads to engage your target audience on the Google Display Network, and your ads can appear on millions of websites and apps as graphic or video assets.

These campaigns also utilize responsive display features, meaning you can upload your assets, and Google AI will optimize the best combinations for each ad slot based on performance history. It will also adjust

the size and format for the different mediums in which the ads will appear.

► Smart Campaigns

Another goal-oriented format is a smart campaign, which makes launching campaigns fast and simple, minimizing the time you spend managing them.

Just set your objectives and create a few ads, and Google AI will schedule, target and optimize your messages to achieve the desired results. For associations aiming to attract new members, it would make sense to set your goal to "increase website traffic."

Creating Effective Campaigns for Your Association

We've covered the basics of Google Ads' capabilities, but how can they be utilized for your association specifically?

Here are the best practices for associations launching Google Ads campaigns:

► Organize your current member databases and build your target profiles.

Analyze patterns in your data to create a strategy around targeting people who are the right fit for your membership. This will help you create your ideal member profile, which represents a group of people who share similar tendencies based on several factors:

- Demographics
- Psychographics
- Values, attitudes and beliefs
- Program engagement, such as website traffic, benefits and events

While sorting through this information, you may discover your membership base and target audience are comprised of a few different personas that can be broken into multiple segments. For associations with a diverse member base, this will help you create precise messaging for each group of prospects.

You can never have too much information on your members, so consider deploying frequent surveys, hosting focus groups and analyzing [member engagement](#). The better you learn to use this information and drill down on specific audiences, the more you can maximize Google Ads' capabilities — help the platform help you.

► Make the benefits of your membership clear.

You are using Google Ads' features to target consumers searching for what you offer; say it loud and clear in every advertisement!

Every association is different based on its industry

and audience's demographics and psychographics, but people are generally looking for the same offerings from an association membership, such as:

- Events and networking opportunities
- Continuing education (CE) and certification programs
- Industry thought leadership, reports, data and insights
- Job openings
- Support and advocacy
- Insurance and other group benefits
- Promote your association's best offerings. Highlight benefits based on those most important to your base and distinguish your membership from other related organizations.

► **Craft messaging that speaks to your target audience(s) and is written in the appropriate context.**

An advert must resonate with your prospects. Use your unique insights into their lives to show you understand their values and challenges, as well as how your membership meets their needs.

For text ads, write compelling headlines and body text. Google is helping you find your target audience, so speak directly to their needs and values. Using AI to generate initial copy or strategy is a great way to get a piece in motion; however, it is vital you use it as a starting place only. You must revise AI-produced messaging to personalize it to your unique voice, align it with your brand and ensure it accurately fits your goals.

For **visual ads**, keep them simple. Consumers will not take the time to figure out complicated imagery, and your message will be ignored.

► **Run multiple campaigns, if necessary.**

Your prospects might be made up of a somewhat diverse group, or there may be multiple scenarios where you can promote your membership.

If applicable, launch multiple campaigns with various keywords and ads to cast a wider net!

Add More to Your Membership Offerings

It's paramount for organizations to increase the value of their membership by meeting their bases' personal and professional needs. Offering comprehensive insurance solutions — such as life and healthcare benefits, professional liability coverage and home or renters insurance — is a great way to provide more for its members.

Gallagher Affinity knows how to take insights and create an insurance coverage plan along with a dynamic member savings program that meets the unique needs of every membership base. Partner with us today and work with our team of experts to build an affordable program that gives your members the coverage they deserve.



To explore our insurance products, solutions and member savings program, or to connect with an expert to assess your current offerings, visit gallagherperks.com/mickey-herbert.



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