

Category: 52E. Search Engine Marketing
Entry Title: Tourism Board
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1. Summary

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) is the quasi-government body whose role is to promote Hong Kong as the preferred destination amongst a group of international travelers with various needs. The Internet has become the most cost-effective means of targeting this group of travelers.

2. Marketing Challenge / Objective

Many reports suggest that websites, search engines and Internet advertising are significantly more effective in influencing the purchase decisions of potential travelers than any other form of media. The challenge at the HKTB was how to maintain a “dialogue” with potential visitors whose information requirements (airline tickets, hotel bookings, information on sites and attractions, tours, etc) varied so greatly. Secondly, the HKTB required a cost-effective marketing tool other than the more expensive conventional banner ads.

A Search Engine Marketing (SEM) campaign was mounted in seven markets (Australia, China, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, the UK and the USA) to cater for the specific and different needs of the online audience.

Objectives of this campaign:

- ✓ To increase the likelihood of travelers making Hong Kong part of their itinerary
- ✓ To increase the brand awareness of Hong Kong
- ✓ To elicit interest in Hong Kong and facilitate planning such a trip
- ✓ To generate sales leads (i.e. the sale of vacation packages)

3. Strategic Approach

Our strategy included two approaches:

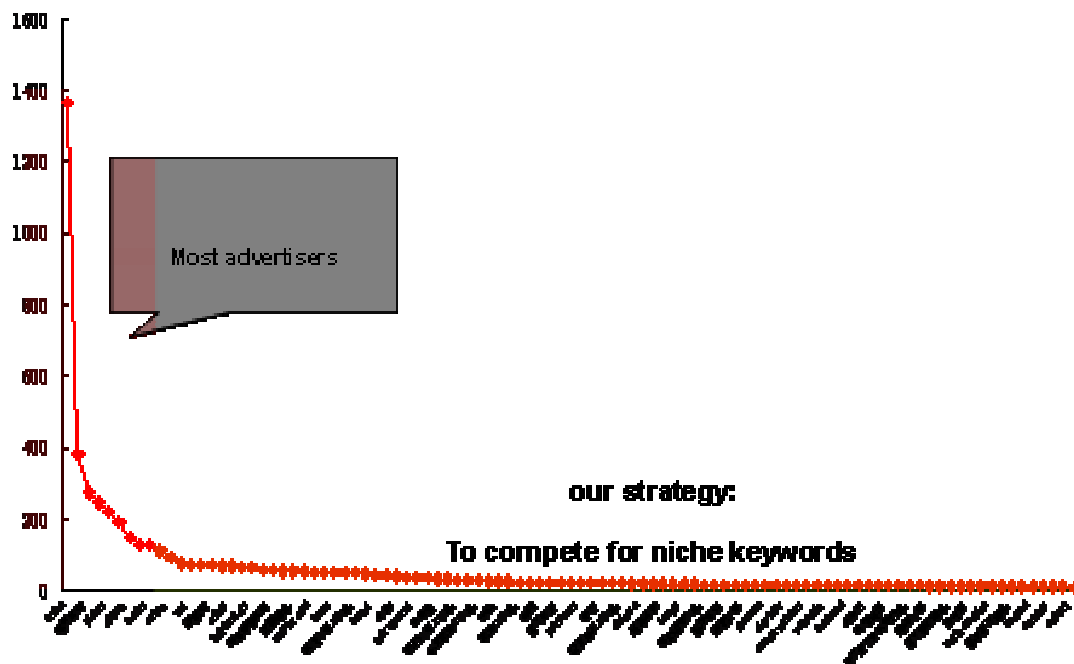
- ✓ Keyword strategy
- ✓ Search engine strategy

Keyword strategy

In order to generate keywords for the SEM campaign, we developed a keyword matrix that allowed it to target travelers at different stages of their trip planning process as well as allowing for cross-country market comparisons. It could also “tweak” the matrix based on the latest information gleaned from previous campaigns and add new keywords.

Search Engine Strategy

Most advertisers use popular keywords and place relatively high bids to increase rankings. However, we hypothesized that by using long-tail words and leveraging on the low competitiveness of niche keywords, it could achieve a result comparable to using popular keywords - but with a much lower Cost Per Click (CPC).



4. Solution

Keyword Strategy -- Building an SEM Model for HKTB

A "Travel Stage Matrix" (TSM), was developed with two dimensions - "Stages of Travel Planning", and "Purposes of Search". It was hypothesized that people would search for different kinds of information (via search engine) depending upon where they were in their trip-planning process. One final factor, country, was also relevant as people from different locations use search / keywords differently.

Search Engine Strategy

Around 54,000 keywords were submitted to the portals with the majority of them variations and combinations of the 'seeds'. As mentioned, by leveraging on low competitiveness and low CPC of the tail-end words, coupled by daily optimization, a low CPC, high rank, high impression result would be achieved.

Planning Stage/Activities	General	Places	Activities
Explore	Travel / Travel Agent	Countries / Cities	Shopping
	Transportation	Attractions/Scenery	Sports
			Festivals
Research	Travel / Travel Agent	Accommodation	Shopping Malls
	Transportation	Attractions/Scenery	Sport Destination
			Dining
Plan	Reservation (Transportation, Travel Agent)	Reservation (Hotel)	Reservation (Dining, Leisure, Sports)
	Reservation (Generic)		

5. Results

The total number of impressions was around 259 million with approximately 382,000 clicks and a CPC of around HK\$0.38.

6. Reason for Award

Thanks to our strategy of creating a multi-dimensional SEM keyword model plus capitalizing on the 'long tail' keywords, we successfully rolled out a campaign which is highly customized, cost-effective and which produced astonishing results.