

Why haven't I seen my ads?

This isn't an uncommon question when you've just started a programmatic ad campaign and are eager to see your ads appear on your device. You've searched the keywords and are in the location that should trigger them, and yet they're not showing up. What gives?

Don't panic. Your ads are indeed running, and your target audience is receiving them. Here are some of the most common reasons why you may not have seen them.

1. It's about numbers. People perform over 5.5 billion searches on Google alone every day. A tiny fraction of those searches are likely for your industry and in your area, but even a tiny fraction of 5.5 billion is a lot. To show up for every relevant search, a small business targeting a metro area would have to spend something like \$10,000-\$15,000 a month on ads.

Does that mean you have to spend that much to be effective and grow your business? Absolutely not. Even budgets as low as \$400 a month can produce excellent results by reaching people who are actively showing interest in the kind of product or service you offer.

2. Daily and hourly budget. It may be that at the time you are searching, your daily budget has been exhausted for the day. In a monthly campaign, the server doles ads out daily from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., adjusting every hour of those 16 hours. 50,000 monthly banners a month is 1,666 banners per day, or 104 banners per hour. In any given hour, tens of thousands of banners are served, with yours a small fraction of them.

Also, by default, the system stops serving ads once it has met the hourly budget, until the next hour. That means that yours won't show up for every single search of your keywords.

3. The right location. In order to see your ads, you need to be searching from within your target area. Sounds simple? It should be, but sometimes it's a little more complicated.

Does your mobile device know you're in the parking lot of a grocery store, or does it think you're still at home as you were when last using the internet on WiFi? Did your Internet Service Provider give you an IP address at home that indicates you live in the next town over? Are you logged into a WiFi account that has the wrong location? The system may not be showing you your ads because it doesn't recognize that you're in the area.

4. You've performed too many searches. Our server wants ads to be relevant to searchers, so if a person sees an ad frequently and never clicks on it, the server may stop showing them the ads. This is common when someone is constantly searching to see if their ad is showing. Is the answer to keep searching constantly but click on your ad once in a while? Not really. If you're running Google AdWords, this could negatively impact your click-through-rate and "quality score," which could result in an increase in the price you pay each time a consumer clicks on your ad.

So... should I worry?

It's fine to ask your digital team to double check your campaign, but it's highly likely your ads are doing just fine. The data don't lie: If the DSP (demand side portal) says your ad has been seen the prescribed number of times, your ads are running as scheduled, even if you haven't seen them. Remember, it's not the number of people who see your ads that makes the difference; it's the quality of prospect. If your targeting is right, your campaign is right.