

Next Level Mastermind Guest Expert Call: Google Adwords Insider Rob Sieracki

Rob runs the high-end PPC management firm, oxoptimal.com. His clients are usually 7, 8 & 9 figure businesses such as the Green Bay Packers, Camping World, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Here are some of the key insights from his Next Level Mastermind call with Ryan Levesque:

[video timestamp 6:15]

Keys to keeping your Survey Funnel Formula landing page Google Compliant:

Links & elements you DEFINITELY want to have on your landing page:

Privacy policy – this is required by Google, especially if you're using remarketing or Google Analytics (Bing ALWAYS requires this)

Navigation- top or footer navigation can be sufficient
according to Google – that there's ease of navigation, trustworthiness

Google Plus / Google Plus Business account linked to your page helps

Linking trust seals – if you're using trust seals from Better Business Bureau, verisign, etc., it's important to link them back to the actual page that is certifying your page... Otherwise it's considered 'unverified' which is a negative for you

Phone number & physical address– having a working phone number & real physical address adds to your trustworthiness

- key point – since all ads are scanned & scraped via Google computer before humans are involved, having text like “support available at (800) 555-555” you're your company's address helps your ad stay in Google's good graces
- Can also put in a google maps plugin showing physical location – this also helps with having a trustworthy landing page

High-scrutiny Markets – Markets that Google is especially suspicious of

- for-profit education
- vitamins & supplements
- investment advice

It can be hard to get approved in these markets – BUT – once you’re in, & up and running, it can be very lucrative

[video timestamp 16:00]

Question: For Navigation - Are there specific pages that you want to link to? Are there pages that you DON'T want to link to?

Answer: You want your landing page navigation to match the navigation on the rest of your site, ideally.

-example- if you normally have 7 nav options in your footer, but you’ve eliminated the two best ones for your landing page, just so you don’t distract people, then you might have a problem in human review

One tactic – if you want your navigation to be present and scannable, make it white text on a medium blue or green

Google prefers having top navigation, which can sometimes mess up the look&feel of these survey funnels - but we do get along without it

[video timestamp 18:15]

Ryan’s work-around – having a small nav-bar tucked away in upper right corner:

The image shows a screenshot of the Rocket Memory website. At the top left is the logo for "ROCKETMEMORY™ a program created by ivy-league grads". To its right is a promotional banner: "Improve Your Memory in 10 Days Transform Your Mind Forever™ Guaranteed Results. Or Your Money Back." Further right is a "VeriSign Trusted" logo. In the top right corner, there is a navigation bar with links for "Home", "About", "Contact", and "FAQ". Below these links, it says "Order US Toll Free: 1-800-665-8394 International: 1-512-551-0425". A red arrow points to this navigation bar, and a yellow box with the text "Nav Bar 'tucked away' in upper right" is overlaid on it. The main content area features a large white box with the text: "Is it possible to improve your memory in just **three days** using these techniques?". Below this is a red button that says "Get Your FREE Memory Tool-Kit™" with a play button icon. To the right of the main content is a list of logos for various media outlets: "THE WALL STREET JOURNAL", "USA TODAY", "The Herald", "Brown Alumni Magazine", "DAILY HERALD", "UNION LEADER", "APS SPR", and "History". A "VeriSign Trusted" logo is also present at the bottom right of the main content area.

[19:18]

Question: Should you try to take advantage of loopholes and ‘gaming’ the system?

Answer: In general, no.

You want to be in this long term, which generally means following the spirit of the law...

[23:03]

Question: How do you strike a balance between benefit-oriented copy and Google’s criteria, say for the health market?

Answer: For health traffic – most offers have moved away from Google as advertiser, most of Rob’s clients who are doing big numbers in these markets have moved towards other sources of advertising

Health & Weight Loss offers – these are very ‘wide’ in terms of the money you can make, and they’re also the most rife with potential abuse... Which means Google scrutinizes these offers VERY closely...

Key Point – if you’ve struggled to get something approved and you finally DO get something approved and it’s working, resist the urge to optimize it – because when you resubmit an ad for approval, it’s like you’re starting from scratch...

Ryan’s quote: “sometimes it’s better to be up and running at 90% of where you could be, rather than try to push the envelope to get that last 10% and get shut down.”

You can also optimize in other areas that won’t require further Google review:

- improving site speed
- colors on page
- button size/shape/color/etc
- selling more stuff on the back end to raise avg customer value

Another key for these high-scrutiny markets: **an overabundance of proof**

Ryan’s client in the weight-loss market had an overabundance of proof

- a physical business with years of happy clients

- legitimate appearances on Good Morning America & other shows
- real license to practice exactly what she was teaching on her site

...and she STILL got shut down by Google at first. BUT – after getting on the phone with Google and explaining all of this proof to them, Google approved her account.

Key Point – Sometimes it just takes having MORE proof and going the extra mile to get it approved... Which isn't the sexiest answer, but it's what actually works.

- and since 90% of other marketers WON'T go to these lengths, just taking this extra effort can be what it takes for success...

[29:30]

More on landing page compliance and site policy

Google tells you what they look for in a good landing page here:

[Understanding Landing Page Experience:](https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2404197?hl=en)

url: <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2404197?hl=en>

This is a really good starting point.

And here are a couple key terms to know:

LPQ = Landing page quality

- this is a 'pass/fail' metric – either you pass, or you're getting a significant penalty (either shut down entirely or they're going to make it VERY hard for you to actually make money)

LPR = Landing page relevance

- This is the semantic fit of the words on the landing page to the keyword & language of the ad
- This isn't as big a deal as LPQ

[32:05]

Ryan's story on how his entire account got shut down

- It got shut down for minor errors 4 years ago
- THEN it got shut down a couple months ago

- Ryan got on the phone w/ google and discovered that it was actually a 3rd party tracking tool he was using on the site that was blacklisted

Takeaway from this story – now you can get on the phone and talk to a human being to find out EXACTLY what’s going on with your account – which wasn’t the case a few years ago...

Another thing:

New Landing Page policy from Google?

- Google is Moving towards more transparency
- Now, in the event of a site policy violation, Google is going to tell you WHY there’s a problem so you can fix that specific issue

Question: is it ok to use LeadPages.net?

Answer: Software like leadpages.net & optimize.ly makes pages load slow. And when you’re running millions of dollars a year, page speed makes a huge difference.

What about unbounce?

It's maybe a bit faster than optimize.ly, plus they protect their data better (optimize.ly’s data is open to being looked at)

Question: What split testing tools does Ryan use?

Answer: Depends on the shopping cart & platform I’m using, but for split testing, I’ll use a simple php ‘coin flip’ redirect (you can get an elance developer to make your own version for around \$10 or so...)

Kissmetrics and Google Analytics for analytics

- Kissmetrics is great because you can analyze each step in the funnel

Question: Does Google look at your Analytics results to judge you as a google advertiser?

Answer: there’s no way. Google separates Adwords and Analytics, because folks who install Google Analytics on their Adwords account end up spending more money. Simple. And Google cares a ton about their bottom line.

According to a couple of Rob's old team members who now work at google, it's easier for someone to call from outside and talk to Google analytics than it is for someone at Google Adwords to call Analytics. That's how paranoid they are about keeping these two services separate.

Question: Is there a problem with having Facebook remarketing code on your landing page?

Answer: No. Not that Rob has heard of.

Question: Is there is a specific tool to verify your page's landing page relevancy? LSI software? (Latent Semantic Index software)

Answer: It exists, but Rob doesn't find it to be all that useful, because that part of relevance is very small for Google. 65% of the quality score is based on plain exact-match click thru rate.

[48:28]

Starting out with Adwords – what to do when you're just starting out...

Consider whether or not what you're selling is the kind of thing that can convert well online.

- Not everything can... Some things require a phone call
- Example – Mold remediation - \$3500 a pop – you're gonna have to follow up with a phone call before closing the sale

Also, when you're starting out...

Consider that it might be better to get someone to 'raise their hand' and tell you that they're interested in your business by giving you their email, and then market to them over time via email, versus going for the conversion right there on the front end...

- Sometimes this email side of things is more important than the Adwords traffic side of things,

(Also, consider using Marketo & Part-it lead scoring software to help manage these leads)

Do I have more of a Search or Display-oriented business?

Also, consider whether or not the problem your product is solving is a known, obvious problem...

Or is it something that you're going to have to educate prospects on before they see the value in what

your product can do for them?

If it's something that's going to need more education, display advertising could be a better bet for your business.

If someone is already looking for your problem to be solved, then you're more of a search kind of company...

Are you local?

Local search is really is easy to dominate when you actually ARE local
(e.g. if your business is a guitar repair shop in Austin, TX)

Do Calls matter?

Yes? Then turn on the call extension function for the ad to get your phone ringing.

[51:27]

Key Point → Before you turn on the traffic, know what a 'win' looks like from your funnel's standpoint.

Question: How do I validate my funnel? Let's say I've built my funnel & I have no list, where can I take my funnel to validate it? Do I take it to Google, or do I start it in a very small way and take it to Facebook traffic or another form of traffic?

Answer: Agencies are TERRIBLE at doing this – getting something off the ground and running. **It's the scrappy guy who figures it out, staying up late at night...**

Ryan's aside about Perry Belcher: Perry Belcher was talking about getting into a new market, for custom men's suits. Someone asked him...

"Perry you've got a multi million dollar company, 200+ employees, you're the leading digital marketing company in the internet marketing space... Who do you hire to build out your funnels, to get something off the ground?"

Perry's answer: "You can't hire it out." He does it himself.

Any time they break into a new business, it's him. It's not someone else. **You CAN'T outsource that scrappy, get it off the ground stage...**

[53:53]

Question: When to engage an agency?

Answer: You need to be able to get it off the ground yourself, especially when starting in a new market. The time to engage an agency is you have something working and you want to take things to the next level & scale it...

Agencies make money off of maintenance moreso than doing accelerator type work (AKA getting things off the ground)

Question: How to test a new funnel in a market where you have NO list?

Answer: In the real world, a lot of marketers will test a new offer in a new market with a list from one of their other markets... But assuming you don't have a list, a couple things can work:

Facebook traffic can work...

Also, Google has a few different kinds of search queries:

- branded traffic
- non-branded traffic
 - 1. **Informational queries:** CHEAPER terms to bid on, since the searcher isn't in as much of a buying mood... example from gardening "what is a hosta?" or "When to divide hostas?" or "Where can you buy hostas in Plano Texas?" - where the query might have a little bit of a sales component, but not a ton...
 - 2. **Product Oriented queries:** MORE EXPENSIVE terms to bid on, since searcher is in a buying mood. query will return a product listing ad, for example "Blue Mouse Ear Hosta" will give you a bunch of Google store results in the side bar ... Where if you type in "Shade Perrenial" or "Buy Shade Perrenial" it's not going to show you any specific product listing, but it is a money term...

These non-branded, informational queries can be a good place to test new offers, since traffic is relatively cheap and still relevant.

KEY POINT → If you're looking for inexpensive traffic to test a new funnel, and you want to do it in Google Search, go after the informational queries, not the queries that have commercial intent.

So instead of going after “Buy blue mouse eared hostas”, you’d go after “When to divide hostas”

Rob’s example: If you’re trying to target something like health insurance, you do “health” + “insurance” + “when” + {broad match modifier}

- That will give you the cheap, ‘crap’ traffic – but it will give you some people who are at least in the ballpark of who are looking for what you’re offering

- It’s not really a way to actually build a business (unless you follow up with a solid email marketing campaign)
- BUT – it’s a good way to see if people are interested enough to ‘raise their hand’ and opt in to learn more...

KEY POINT → This gives you a low risk of returning a false negative

Ryan’s example of client in the infomercial space who tests offers in a similar way:

They take offers to the crappiest email lists, an email list that doesn’t buy ANYTHING...

And they throw up a quick page, and send some traffic to that email list, and they see if they get any bites...

KEY POINT → They do this BEFORE they even build out the product, just to see, “Will someone even buy this piece of exercise equipment?”

And if they can get some bites there? THEN they know they have a chance...

If they get nothing, then they just move on to the next idea...

[video timestamp 1:00:00]

Question: How long do you go before you decide that something is NOT working? How much time do you spend trying to improve and optimize something before you say, “this just isn’t working”

Answer: A few things to consider:

Have you been testing on your ads regularly? If you haven’t, then that could be a problem.

Is your ad appropriate for the position it's in if it's in search? Is it on the side? Is it on top? Because that affects the 'wraparound' of the description (the D1 into the headline)

In your Analytics dashboard, look at the segmentation of 'top' vs. 'other' and learn that way to see if your ad is right for where it should be

Is your language in your ad matching your landing page?

- If not, that could be the problem.

Look at your search query history – is your search in broad match pulling in searches that are radically different from what your ad is talking about?

Example: Ryan's memory business – he had to filter out all the searches that were for computer memory, like "RAM", "Hard drives" etc. just to focus on memory related keywords that were consistent with what he's actually selling

(negative filtering for getting rid of waste)

Question: Common PPC knowledge tells you to put a negative filter on "free" to filter out the freebie seekers... Is this a good idea?

Answer: NO. You should just target the ads for this keyword differently...

-example: "Free way to improve your memory? How about affordable?" Something like that...

There's a good chance that some of these people would buy your product, just have to target ad differently.

KEY POINT → The only time you're 'dead in the water' is when you've put out every creative ad idea out there, and you're just not getting any clicks...

If no one is clicking on what you put out, then it's time to move on...

But if you're getting clicks, but you're not getting emails, opt ins or conversions...

Then you're part of the way there – you've solved that first part of the problem.

You've figured out how to get them to click. Now all you have to do is figure out how to get those people who clicked to take that first action. (opt in, survey, buy)

Then it becomes an issue of opportunity cost – is it worthwhile to continue down this path?

[1:02:00]

Question: How to prioritize your efforts to optimize your PPC campaign?

Answer: Attention as today's most precious commodity... Good book to check out:

[The Attention Economy](#) - by Thomas Davenport

But with that said, there's way more in an Adwords account than you'll ever get to. So what do you focus on, in an 80/20 type way, to get the most results from a minimum of effort?

How do you prioritize what you spend time on?

Look at:

1. Where are you spending money?

- a. Simple to look at this: just sort by 'cost' at the adgroup level, keyword level, ad level, campaign level
 - i. That's where you'll be able to spot obvious inefficiencies – there's probably going to be some waste that could be cut...

2. Where are you making money?

- a. REMEMBER → It's easier to exaggerate a positive than it is to take something from scratch and build it up...
- b. EXAMPLE (from the restaurant industry) "It's easy to make a good Friday night GREAT than it is to make a 'nothing' Tuesday night into a good night..."
- c. EXAMPLE 2: If you can take something that's converting at 25% and bring it up to 35%, you're going to make way more money than if you take something at 0% to 10%...
 - i. KEY POINT → The Money is in expanding your successes

3. Where COULD you be making money?

- a. What are all the missed opportunities?
 - i. What am I not doing that I could be doing?
 - ii. Examples:
 - 1. not ramping up campaigns/adgroups/keywords/etc that are performing
 - 2. Having inventory that's not represented on your Adwords account
 - 3. No remarketing

4. Selling physical products but don't have merchant account or on google shopping
5. Not on Bing, even though my demographic skews older and would probably be good for Bing
 - a. (PC stuff usually skews towards Bing)

[1:07:00]

Question: Say you want to get an Adwords education in 30-60 days, what books, what websites would you recommend?

Answer:

Basic Google Adwords Resources: (First steps to take if you're just getting started with Adwords)

[Google Adwords Support Tutorials](#) – Great introduction to Google Adwords, by Google

[Introduction to the Google Ad Auction](#) – Basic introduction to how the search auction works, by Hal Varian, Google's Chief Economist.

[Adwords Bidding Tutorial](#) – Basic introduction to bid management, also by Google Chief Economist, Hal Varian

[Understanding Landing Page Experience](#) – Google explains what a good landing page looks like

Advanced Google Adwords Resources:

[The Ultimate Guide to Pay-Per-Click Advertising](#) - by Richard Stokes

[Advanced Google AdWords](#)– by Brad Geddes (Rob's favorite Google Adwords book btw...)

Learn What's New with Google Adwords:

[Inside Adwords](#) – Google's official blog. It tells you in everyday language what's happening in the world of AdWords

Rob & Ryan's Recommendation: Learn by DOING...

All these resources are a great place to get started, but here's the best approach:

Start with a small budget, something you can afford to lose, and look at it like you're paying your 'tuition.'

You could sit in a class and pay a couple thousand dollars to have someone lecture at you, OR you could put that two thousand dollars and invest it in a campaign and learn as you're doing.

And you're going to learn SO much more doing it this way...

[1:10:00]

Question: When it comes to going from starting out to profitability, are there certain phases or benchmarks that you look for, or is it more of a stream?

Answer: It's usually more of a 'stream' – and one of the biggest factors is your visitor value. You're

going to need to work on that – get your visitor value up.

It's winner take all, so the higher you can get that value, the better...

KEY POINT → If you can make twice as much money, or even 5 dollars more per visitor than your competitor, in a place where maybe everybody makes \$20 a visitor, if you can bring that to \$22 or \$25...

- In this situation, it's not like you can increase your traffic by 20%
- It's like you can increase your traffic by 500%
 - o Because you can afford to spend more money than anybody else in your market, and so you can get all the traffic.

And one more thing → If you can make more money than anybody else in the market, then it becomes more profitable for your competitors to serve as an affiliate for you, then ALL the traffic comes to you...

When you can afford to spend just a little bit more money than everybody else to get traffic, then ALL the traffic is going to come to you...

Question: Regarding keyword organization – how do you find new keywords?

Answer: Look at your actual traffic off of broad-match modifiers, sometimes straight up broad... That's the best way...

KEY POINT → It's how a keyword LOOKS... NOT what it means...

When we see things on a web screen, we're scanning

Example: "Roofing Quote" in headline? You ALSO need "Roofing Quote" in body of ad, not "Roofing Estimate" in body...

(set up a different adgroup for "Roofing Estimate")

Example: (From Ryan's gardening business) in the US, we say "Caring for plants" while in UK & AUS, "Looking after plants"

So in US campaigns, he has "Caring for plants" adgroups, while in UK & AUS, he'll have "Looking after plants" adgroups

Question: Regarding long-tail keywords, can you really get a lot of traffic for pennies on the click from long-tail keywords? Or is that a hoax?

Answer: You can get a lot of traffic on the informational terms, but it's not like there's some kind of Holy Grail where they're going to be some kind of 'cash cow' for you...

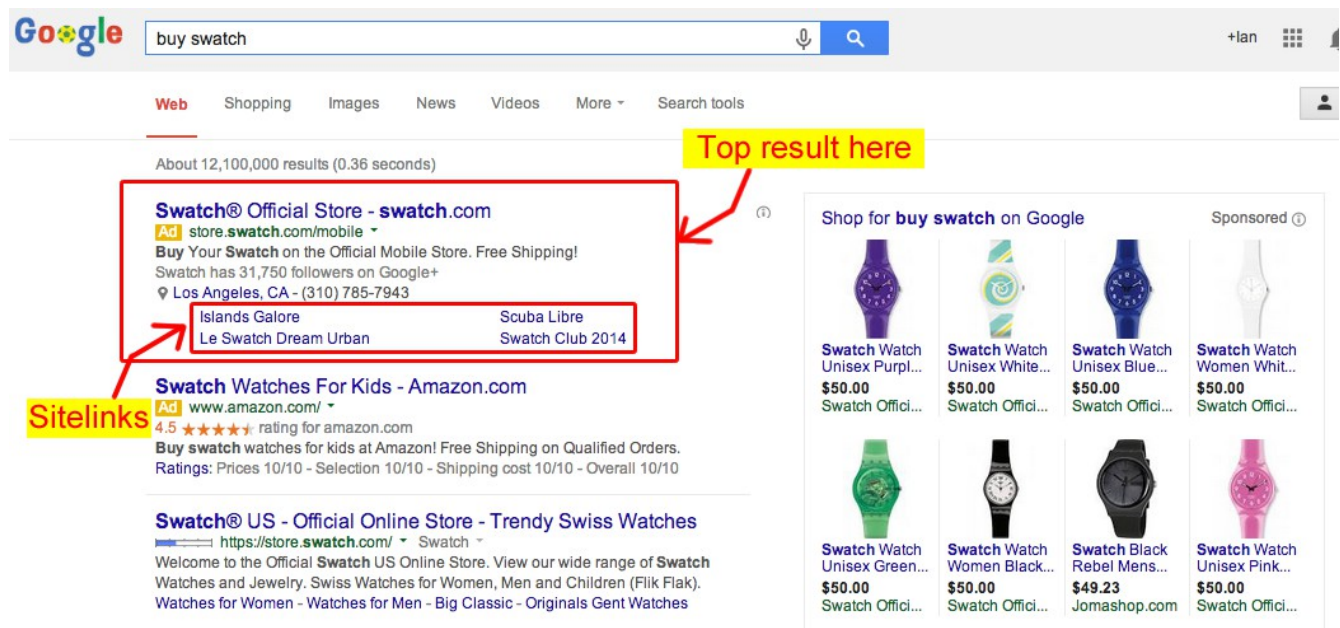
[1:16:00]

Question: Regarding keyword position... What's best? 1st position, 2nd position, 3rd position... Does it matter?

Answer: Yes. #1. Because that's where all the traffic is. This is winner-take-all... So if you go and sort your traffic by 'top versus other' you'll see that 7x or 8x of your traffic comes from when you're in that top slot...

The numbers don't lie – after MILLIONS of dollars of ad spend, #1 DESTROYS #2 and #3 for click thru AND conversion...

Why? Because Position one also has tools that you don't have on the side: sitelinks in particular (see below)



You can manipulate these winning ads by putting the benefits with a lot of white space around them, using wrapping headlines, etc. to make these ads in the #1 spot convert WAY better...

Question: How to get to the top spot? What do you do if you LOSE that top spot, maybe due to insufficient quality score? Is there a way to get back up there? Maybe by ramping up your bid price?

Answer: Click through rate is 65% of quality score, and quality score is what's going to get you there at an affordable rate. So if your click-thru rate isn't justifying a high quality score, or your quality score isn't high enough, then you have to tend to that more than to other places...

So this means making a better ad/creative...

2nd thing is this: is it converting enough, and do you have a high enough visitor value that you can AFFORD a higher bid?

So, to summarize:

1. Up your spend to what it's reasonable for you to spend, business wise
2. Up your quality score, which is almost always your Click through rate (CTR)

Question: Can you explain what “wrapping a headline” means?

Answer: If Description line 1 (D1) ends in a piece of punctuation...

Example:



If you're above the organic traffic, Google will take your D1 up into the headline as you see above.

You can also put the benefit (something like “free shipping”) immediately after the headline (in place of “Find Exactly the Widgets you Need”), so that it's surrounded by white space – which will most

likely increase conversions.

[1:19:00]

Question: Do you have a tool to look at these ads beforehand to see how they're going to look?

Answer: Just the Adwords interface. You have to do it trial and error. But I heard Adgooroo has a tool that does this.

KEY POINT - But as a way to get the 'wrap', use the less than 35 characters of D1 space, and you'll get the wrap.

Question: What is it that affiliate people usually miss in their Adwords campaigns?

Answer: It's remarketing, typically. They may have tried site abandon or cart/lead abandon, but they don't go more specific than that...

And if you can get more specific than that, then you can either highlight the people that are worth more to you and pay more for them, or you can highlight the message and be more specific with the message (that usually happens in retail)

ALSO – in the affiliate space, the overall value of a lead, when people are starting out, when there's a back-end sale, people pay too much attention to the front end, getting the initial conversion, because there's more data there...

But really, you need to pay more attention to the back-end, which is where the money is made...

KEY POINT → Because remarketing is SO profitable – remarketing is one of the biggest drivers of profit – easiest ways to make money – it should be on the FRONT END of stuff that you do... Because it's the most targeted traffic that you've got... People who landed on your site and they just weren't quite there – they were on the fence...

- And regarding Rob's point on "Spending more money depending on where someone is in your funnel..."

- Someone who goes through your survey funnel, lands on your VSL but doesn't buy?
- You might spend \$10 CPM for retargeting on that person, versus the person who lands on your landing page, doesn't even take the survey, you might spend \$2

for retargeting to that person

- You're spending more money for the guy who's gone deeper in your funnel, and who's more inclined to buy, and less money on the person who expressed SOME interest but isn't as interested... And there are a number of different permutations of this

[1:23:46]

Question: When it comes to hiring a PPC firm, when is it the right time? How do you evaluate the firm and what kind of money would you expect to spend to bring someone on to do this for you?

Answer: I would do it in-house, make it specific to the company, teach people & start them part-time and see how well they can get it... And get deep into it with them... And create a redundancy within your company with 2 or 3 people who are responsible for it and are learning it from scratch. I would use someone at that point who's more of an expert to guide the strategy, but it's cheaper to separate it like that.

(and this is from someone who gets paid to have people turn things over to him)

For Rob's own stuff, he always chooses to do it himself...

But if you don't have the aptitude or the interest? Then make sure the strategy is there, and that someone who you're taking the strategic input from has met needs like yours before...

There are agencies that specialize in big management, (Rim Kaufman group from back east) – this is the type of firm that's good at doing maintenance...

If you're looking for someone to get your operation off the ground, you need someone who's had success doing the kinds of things that you're doing...

I have an agency, called OxOptimal, and people are welcome to fire me an email at info@oxoptimal.com

And for smaller stuff, I think the guy in Australia at WebSavvy, Mike Rhodes, is great (<http://www.websavvy.com.au/>)

Most people who are really good at this aren't really on the speaker circuit – if you're really making money at these things, you're probably sitting there making money instead of just talking about making money...

ALSO – you have to have the funnel work really well...

- so when Rob needs a funnel to be fixed he goes to Ryan or Amy Africa (at eightbyeight.com) or Benji Rabhan (converteveryclick.com)

KEY POINT → At the end of the day, this stuff is sort of like copywriting. You can hire it out, but you want to have a modicum of knowledge, experience, expertise in this space so you can know what questions you should be asking when you're bringing someone on...

And since Adwords is Google's MAIN business model, this stuff isn't going away any time soon – it's WELL worthwhile to take the time to learn it.

Question: When would someone be in the right position to reach out to Rob at oxoptimal to potentially work with your firm?

Answer: Rob's firm is booked up until August, but if you're doing something that has a positive social impact, he might be able to factor that in...

Most of Rob's adspends per month are above \$150,000 per month in just Adwords, just to give you an idea of the budgets of the companies he works with...

But if you're looking for a one-time consultation, fire off an email to info@oxoptimal.com and Rob and his team will look into it...