

Autobytel Finds Ready-to-Buy Consumers Using In-Market Audiences



About Autobytel

- Online leader in matching car buyers and sellers
- Based in Irvine, California
- www.autobytel.com

Goals

- Reach targeted audiences at scale
- Reduce impressions wasted on non-buyers
- Find more leads at lower costs

Approach

- Run AdWords in-market audiences on the Google Display Network
- Use keywords to fine-tune the target audience
- Craft ads designed for the ready-to-buy user

Results

- 58% lower cost per click than its other campaigns
- 17% lower cost per conversion
- More incremental traffic (fewer duplicate leads)

Autobytel turns car shoppers into car buyers by connecting them with dealers nationwide. As a trusted third-party “matchmaker,” Autobytel provides consumers with free price quotes from a variety of dealers and then connects the dealers to these ready-to-buy shoppers.

The challenge

To make its business work, Autobytel needs to reach consumers who are thinking seriously about buying—and reach them at scale. “The problem with broad-reaching campaigns is that we can waste impressions on car enthusiasts, news stories about cars, racing results, activities that have little to do with buying cars,” says Wes Rock, Autobytel’s search engine marketing manager.

To solve this problem, Autobytel turned to AdWords in-market audiences.

The approach

In-market audiences let advertisers reach people who are ready to buy right now, as identified by Google’s sophisticated ad and analytics algorithms. Users in that critical ready-to-buy window are shown relevant display ads as they look at prices, shop for deals or view websites related to the product they’re shopping for.

That approach was a good match for Autobytel’s needs. “We’re a performance-driven company,” says Wes Rock. “We’re totally focused on leads and lead quality.”

As soon as it began running in-market campaigns, Autobytel layered on relevant keywords to enhance targeting. For example it targeted “Audi” in-market audiences and layered broad match keywords such as “A4” and “Audi A4.” “The closer you get to prices, car reviews, dealers—whether it’s search or display, those keywords are strong indicators that someone is interested in purchasing a car,” says Rock.

With in-market audiences, we’re able to differentiate between those who are browsing car-related sites because they’re enthusiasts and those who are checking out specific makes and models, price comparisons and consumer reviews.

Autobytel matched that level of detail with customized calls to action and landing pages. “That reduced a lot of the clicks by people who were casually browsing, and brought us people who were actually looking to purchase a car,” says Rock.

“In-market audiences enhanced the quality of our leads tremendously. It allowed us to reach people deep down in the funnel looking at car prices and car deals. We saw that not only in conversions but also in the accuracy of the information they entered on our website.”

—Wes Rock, search engine marketing manager

The results

In-market campaigns gave Autobytel what it needed: a way to combine the robust scale of display advertising with pinpoint targeting of users who are ready to buy.

“Every good advertiser knows that one of the most important aspects of marketing is to connect with your target audience. Our objective is to connect with our target audience at the right time, at the right place and with the right experience to reach consumers ready to purchase a vehicle. Google in-market audiences has offered us that opportunity,” says Ralph Smith, vice president of consumer acquisition.

The proof of that targeting: a 58% lower cost per click for Autobytel’s in-market campaigns than for its other campaigns, and a 17% lower cost per conversion. Overall, 20% of Autobytel’s display conversions now come from in-market campaigns. Those in-market campaigns also bring in more incremental traffic, with the lowest duplicate lead rates of any of Autobytel’s online campaigns.

