



AN E-BOOK FROM ALABAMA MEDIA GROUP

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SEM

UNWRAPPED

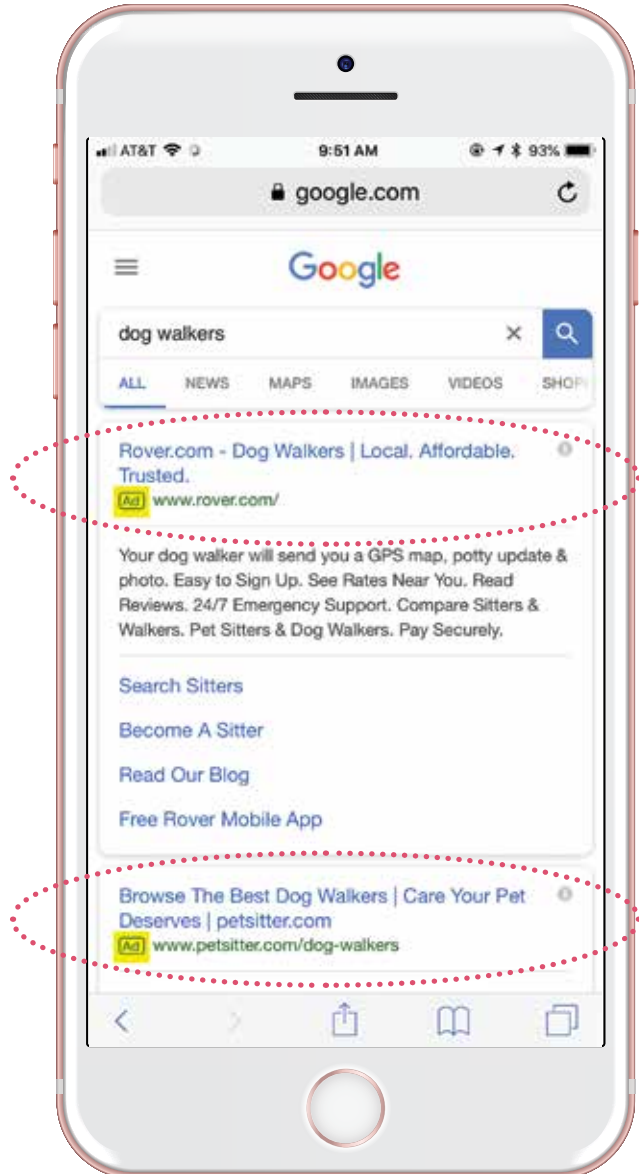
100% GOODNESS

What is SEM?

Paid search, Google ads, and pay-per-click advertising

are a few phrases you have probably heard that are interchangeable with the term 'search engine marketing' or SEM. SEM refers to paid ads placed on search engine pages with fixed positioning to grab the attention of the searcher.

For example, go to Google or another search engine and type 'dog walkers' into the search bar. 17 million results will come up, but only the paid ads will show up in the top 3 or 4 positions of the page. How do you know it's an ad and not an organic search result? Search engines make it clear to the searcher by labelling them as an "Ad.":



SEO vs. SEM:

What's the difference?

Aren't they basically the same thing? Well, not exactly. While the end goal of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and SEM are the same, the way they're achieved (and appear at the top of search engine results) is completely different.

Buying vs. renting.

Consider SEM as renting "real estate" on search engine results and SEO as buying real estate. Successful SEO is a marathon, not a sprint – you need to invest in content, link building, back-end technical website improvements – and even then, those efforts still may not allow you to surpass your competition. There are no guarantees.

Adwords campaigns allow you to pick and choose which search results will display your ads.

When SEM won't work.

If there's no one searching for your product or service, or no one knows your products exist, you first need to raise awareness about your offerings. A brand or product awareness campaign is a good place to start.

Can you have a successful campaign without search? Yes. In fact, some industries are barred from search engines for paid search campaigns, such as alcohol, guns, gambling, etc.

The image shows a Google search for "dog walkers". The search results are divided into two sections by arrows pointing from the text on the left. The top section, labeled "Rented" SEM, shows several paid advertisements (Ads) for Rover.com and PetSitter.com. The bottom section, labeled "Owned" SEO, shows organic search results for Rover.com and PetSitter.com. The SEM results are marked with "Ad" and include star ratings and promotional text. The SEO results are marked with "Ad" and include the URL and a brief description of the service.

Google dog walkers

All News Maps Images SH

About 37,100,000 results (0.72 seconds)

"Rented" SEM

Rover.com - Dog Walkers | Local
[Ad] www.rover.com/ **▼**
★★★★★ Rating for rover.com: 4.9 - 1,628 r
Your dog walker will send you a GPS map, p
Sign Up. Pet Sitters & Dog Walkers. Pay Se
Rates Near You. Services: Dog Boarding, Do

Search Sitters
See Your Local Sitters On Our Map.
Browse Profiles and Book Today.

Browse The Best Dog Walkers | C
[Ad] www.petsitter.com/dog-walkers **▼**
PetSitter.com™ is North America's Top Sourc
Your Fast & Easy Solution. Hand-Picked Pets
America's Best. Dog Sitting, Cat, Dog, and B
Find Near-By Housekeepers · Resources & B

Serious about pet sitting? | PSI ca
[Ad] www.petsit.com/freecontract **▼**
Free pet-sitting contract + bonus forms with t
Log In · View Certification · Shop Online · Find

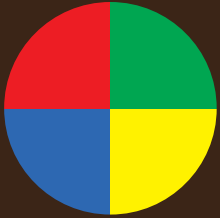
"Owned" SEO

Rover.com | Premium Dog Walker
<https://www.rover.com/dog-walking/> **▼**
Worried about your dog home alone all day? E
GPS map of their walk.
San Francisco, CA · New York City, NY · Bost

Mobile's Best Dog Boarding Sitter
<https://www.rover.com/mobile--al--dog-boa>
Dog Boarding in Mobile. ... Dog Boarding, Ho
Boarding, House Sitting, Drop-In Visits, Doggy

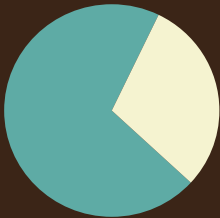
Top 10 Dog Walkers in Mobile, A
<https://www.care.com> > Pet Care > Dog Wa
Aug 8, 2018 - Find dog walkers in Mobile, AL
you and review dog walker profiles for free or

SEM Vocabulary



Google Ads

Google's advertising system where advertisers bid on certain keywords in order for their clickable ads to appear in the top of the search results.



Impression share

The amount of search ad impressions available in a certain geographic area



Cost-per-click (CPC)

Most search ads are sold on a cost-per-click basis, meaning you only pay for the clicks you get from a served ad.



Bid

The maximum amount of money an advertiser is willing to spend each time a searcher clicks on an ad. Recommended bids can vary widely based on competition from other advertisers and how often a keyword or term is searched.



Bounce Rate

The action where a searcher clicks on a search result, but quickly bounces back to the search results page. This can be a sign that the searcher did not find the desired information with that click.

How to get started

Outline your objectives.

Just like any other campaign, it's important to map out measurable objectives before anything else. What do you hope to gain from an SEM campaign? What will success look like? It could be to increase your website's traffic by 10 percent, or to increase sales by five percent for a particular product or service. You might want to segment your objectives by the different audiences you are trying to reach. Whatever it is, make sure to define your measures for success before moving on to the next step.

Once you identify your objectives, you can optimize campaigns around them. If your goal is more phone calls, some keywords and phrases may drive more calls than others. They may also be more expensive, which would require a more aggressive bidding strategy. You can also set up those goals through Google Analytics to see what worked and what didn't.

Build out relevant content.

Search engines will scan your page for relevant content once you place a bid on a keyword. If you bid for the phrase "things to do in Charleston" but when a user clicks on the ad, the information on your page is about things to do in Columbia, your ad will likely not be shown. Google and other search engines will assign a score to your bid by analyzing how well your landing page content matches the keyword you want to bid on. Called a relevancy or quality score, it will go up as you increase the amount of well-written, relevant content on your site, which ultimately increases the likelihood of your ad appearing at the top of search results.

Manage and optimize your campaigns.

If you aren't a search marketing expert, manually managing and optimizing your campaigns can become overwhelming very quickly. Bid management platforms such as MatchCraft allow you to maximize the efficiency of your campaigns by automating the process. These platforms automatically monitor and change bid prices, pause campaigns, manage budget maximums, adjust multiple keyword bids based on CTR (click-through rate), position ranking and more.

PRO TIP:

Helpful tools and tips to consider

Keyword categories

Broad, more general keywords have the highest number of searches, but also typically have lower levels of conversion. People who search for these are typically at the beginning of the research stage and aren't ready to buy. Searchers who input long-tail, more specific keywords know what they want. There is usually lower search volume for these keywords but higher conversion rates. A good search campaign has a blend of both.

Should you be bidding on your own company name?

Are competitors bidding on your name? If you search for your company and your competitor's SEM ad shows up, you should consider bidding on your own name and even on theirs as well.

Google Adwords preview tool

It's tempting to look for your ad on Google, but if you repeatedly search for your own business without clicking your ad, you may stop seeing it after a while. That's because Google's system recognizes your computer and stops showing ads that it thinks you aren't interested in. The Ad Preview & Diagnosis tool can help you view your ads the way your customers will see them on Google and allows you to see the exact same results as a Google search without affecting your ad performance. Plus, Google doesn't count views from the Ad Preview & Diagnosis tool, so you'll have more accurate view numbers in your AdWords Express dashboard.

Impression share

You want to monitor your impression share to ensure it isn't too low, because campaign performance can suffer if you don't have visibility. 50 to 95 percent impression share is the sweet spot. Try reducing your campaign to fewer keywords and geographies if your budget won't get you there.

Step-by-Step

SEM Campaign Checklist

- ✓ Utilize more than one search engine at a time
- ✓ Research your keywords
- ✓ Script and design your ads
- ✓ Manage keyword bids and budget – daily, weekly or monthly. OR use a bid mgmt. platform
- ✓ Update your keywords and ad copy over time
- ✓ Use Google Analytics to measure results
- ✓ Break campaign into segments when applicable

Sounds like a lot of steps, right? This process can get very technical and time-consuming if you don't have specialized knowledge of SEM. Looking for a solution that lets you run your business and leave the marketing to the experts? Let's talk. Call us today for a free evaluation of your marketing strategy.

We offer a dedicated solutions team that can take the guess work out of marketing. As part of a multi-tactical approach to your marketing strategy, a smart SEM campaign can set you apart from you competition. Want to know what else we can do? Keep reading.

We simultaneously manage campaigns across Google, Yahoo and Bing.

- We identify and bid in real-time on relevant keywords based on your budget.
- We create multiple versions of ad copy that are auto-optimized for performance on each search engine.
- We manage and monitor your keyword bids and budget, 24/7.
- We regularly optimize your keywords and ad copy to make sure your money is working hard for you.
- We consolidate billing to make accounting easier for you.
- We bring the analytics to you with easy-to-understand, and transparent reporting for your campaigns.

We set up every campaign with goals and conversions based on your business goals and optimize based on your desired results.

About Us

Alabama Media Group is a digitally-minded news and information company that combines the up-to-the-minute access of AL.com and gulflive.com with the long revered, award-winning journalism of The Birmingham News, The Huntsville Times and Mobile's Press-Register and The Mississippi Press.

Through award-winning brands, including "Reckon by AL.com", "People of Alabama," "It's a Southern Thing" and "This is Alabama," AMG brands craft compelling digital programming to connect the community. As both a digital marketing agency and a publisher, Alabama Media Group drives daily conversations and engages millions through stories that inform, entertain, inspire, and connect our communities to the world around them.

Alabama Media Group is part of Advance Local, one of the nations' leading media and marketing companies, attracting more than 48 million consumers across a stable of award-winning digital and print brands in markets throughout the U.S.

We sell a full range of advertising solutions including:

- Online Display Advertising
- Content Marketing
- Social Media Advertising
- Search Engine Marketing
- Print Advertising
- Video Marketing
- Email Advertising

Learn more about our multi-channel marketing solutions by contacting your Alabama Media Group marketing solutions specialist at advertise@al.com.

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