

## What Performance Max is doing behind the scenes (and how to use it properly)



Performance Max has become one of the most powerful tools in Google Ads. It's changed the way we run campaigns, and when it's used properly, it can deliver better conversions, better value and a much broader reach than traditional search campaigns.

At WebStudio Marketing, we've seen Performance Max drive strong results because it learns from everything we feed into it: your landing pages, your adverts, your audience signals, your conversion values and your CRM data. It's a truly holistic system – similar to how we used to run campaigns in the old days, combining search, display, remarketing and YouTube – but now under one intelligent engine.

### Why Performance Max works differently to normal campaigns

Performance Max doesn't run on simple keyword matching. Instead, it works across all of Google's inventory at once:

- search
- display
- YouTube
- Maps
- Discover
- Gmail
- remarketing

This means it can spot opportunities that normal campaigns miss. It learns who your ideal customers are by looking at their behaviour across Google's network, not just what they type into the search bar.

## **Performance Max now gives far more insight than it used to**

PMax used to feel like a “black box” with very limited visibility, but Google has gradually opened things up. You can now see:

- your best-performing asset groups
- the search themes your campaign is matching to
- top-performing images, headlines and videos
- audience segments and signals
- conversion paths and cross-network behaviour

This makes it much easier to optimise campaigns and understand how the system is actually finding your customers.

## **Understanding why some clicks cost more than others**

Search CPCs have become very high in many industries. Performance Max helps reduce some of that pressure by spreading your reach across cheaper inventory while still bringing in strong conversions.

You will still sometimes see high CPCs inside PMax, but this is usually a sign of quality. If the system is willing to pay £8, £12 or even £20 for a click, it's because:

- that user is highly likely to convert
- Google's AI sees strong intent signals
- your conversion data tells Google what “good” looks like
- your webpage matches exactly what that user is looking for

The AI makes these decisions using millions of real-time signals that we simply don't have access to. Your job is to give it clean, reliable data so it can make the right judgement calls.

## **PMax works best when your ads and landing pages tell the same story**

One of the strengths of Performance Max is that it reads your landing pages and matches them with your ads. If your page is clear, structured and tightly aligned with what you offer, PMax can find the right people more accurately.

This is why your earlier work – website fixes, content engine improvements, strong SEO – feeds directly into better ad performance.

Google's AI uses your page to understand:

- your service
- your audience
- your positioning
- your trust signals
- your value proposition

Pages that are vague or confusing produce vague targeting. Pages that are clear produce much higher-quality search terms and audiences.

## **Why feeding Performance Max the right data makes all the difference**

Just like with standard Google Ads, PMax learns from the conversions you give it. When you send conversion values – your bronze / silver / gold system – you're training the AI to focus on the people who create the most value for your business.

A simple example:

- **10 points:** newsletter signup (low intent)
- **100 points:** case study or guide download (medium intent)
- **500 points:** quote request or booked call (high intent)

This teaches PMax which signals lead to better outcomes. Over time, it will spend more aggressively on high-value prospects and less on low-value ones.

PMax performs at its best when two things happen:

- your website clearly explains what you do
- your conversion data clearly explains what "good" looks like

When those pieces align, your campaigns begin to scale predictably.

## **The holistic nature of Performance Max**

In many ways, PMax brings back the holistic approach we used a decade ago - when good campaigns involved search, display, remarketing, YouTube and email all working together.

The difference now is that:

- Google joins all these channels automatically
- the creative assets are tested at scale
- audience signals come from real behaviour across Google's ecosystem
- your conversion values steer the machine towards better prospects

It is a full-funnel system that learns as it goes.

## **How to use Performance Max properly**

PMax works incredibly well when you approach it with clarity and patience. The key steps are simple:

- give it good creative assets (headlines, images, videos)
- optimise your landing pages so the AI can understand them
- track meaningful conversions and assign values
- feed CRM data back into Google when deals progress
- review search themes to make sure it's on the right path

PMax isn't magic. It is a learning system. The quality of what you feed it determines the quality of what it gives you back.

## **Why you still need a human overseeing the AI**

Even with all its intelligence, Performance Max needs a steady hand. Human oversight ensures that:

- you keep the AI away from irrelevant searches
- you refresh creative assets when performance drops
- your landing pages stay aligned with your offers
- your conversion values reflect real business impact

AI can optimise your campaigns, but it can't understand your strategy or your business model. That's where you come in.

## **A simple first setup that works well**

If you want to start using PMax properly, focus on:

- one strong asset group per core service
- a clear landing page that mirrors your message
- conversion values that reflect real intent
- a weekly review of search themes and assets

With this setup, PMax becomes one of the most powerful parts of your lead generation system. It works across the whole Google ecosystem, finds the right people and uses your data to learn what a good lead looks like.

Next, we'll look at how to match your ads with your website to improve lead quality even further.