

How to use SEO to inform your paid YouTube and TikTok strategy

Article

In a video- and image-centric world, SEO is still the key to allocating marketing budgets, and Google has already done much of the research for you.

“Every time Google shows a search result, they are displaying billions of dollars in R&D to understand the customer,” **Wil Reynolds, VP of Innovation at Seer Interactive**, said at the **Paid Search Association annual conference**. “Billions that I don't have.”

Search advertisers should leverage the ascendance of TikTok and YouTube, not fear it. “If Google believes that YouTube is a good answer, then that means that video is the right answer, and if video is the right answer, you’ve got to think of all these platforms that are heavily video-driven—Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, all of those,” said Reynolds.

Will TikTok kill Google? Probably not! But that’s not the question search marketers should ask. Instead, leverage Google’s data for your TikTok strategy.

“Keyboard content versus camera-driven content is going to be a major problem for SEO,” Reynolds admitted. Still video is an opportunity because SEO professionals have the data that advertisers and marketers need to take advantage of the medium.

Paid search isn’t always the best approach.

- For example, a support query search like “monday.com tutorial” brings up an ad for the platform. That’s likely wasted money on a customer who probably already has the productivity tool.
- A search for “bedroom inspo” will bring up shopping ads for beds, when the user probably isn’t at that stage in their shopping journey.

Look instead for clues from organic results. After the paid ads, that “bedroom inspo” search offers a link to Google Images, followed by a Pinterest link. That’s a pretty good indicator the searcher is looking for images.

Reynolds suggested building out a “TikTok interest index” to determine what sort of content someone searching will engage with.

- “If Google is putting a video in the top 20, they have learned something about the customer, which is that video might be a good answer to this question,” said Reynolds.
- YouTube results are a good indicator for investing in TikTok. “Google probably doesn't want to rank TikTok that much,” Reynolds suspected. But an influx of YouTube results still indicate a customer might want to invest further in TikTok.

Does leveraging SEO for paid strategy place too much trust in Google? “Google gets some things wrong,” said Reynolds. “But broadly, they get more right than wrong.”

Marketers should gut-check SEO indicators when considering where to invest. But they shouldn’t shy away from using the information Google offers.

Use Google's information tactically. Reynolds suggests using Google's Vision API to determine tags that show up on image queries, and leveraging those results for thumbnails in YouTube and on TikTok.

TikTok's public info can also provide insights. A marketer paying for search ads on given keywords can also determine their TikTok strategy using the same keywords. For example, if a TikTok that shows up under "financial planning" has billions of views (because yes, TikTok videos can have billions of views), that could lead a marketer toward their next influencer.

Cohesion between SEO and paid marketers is vital. "When you harvest that information and combine it with your pay data, you get a competitive advantage, because you're able to use what Google has learned is the right answer against what you're showing the customer," Reynolds said.

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