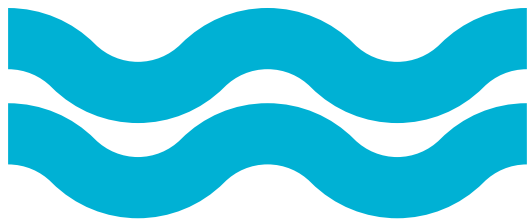


Yankee Barn Homes Beams with PPC Success

How a sixty-day hands-on learning program helped a custom home construction company (and longtime Google AdWords customer) increase the relevance, value and productivity of their PPC efforts, without having to enlist an agency.

Challenge: After working with AdWords for over 15 years and trying various tools and agencies, Yankee Barn Homes needed to regroup strategically and fix their PPC campaign before it spiraled further out of control. Thousands of keywords had accumulated without proper organization and became an overwhelming task for the in-house team to manage without help.

Solution: WordStream's JumpStart service provided a dedicated account manager to help Yankee Barn Homes set up an effective PPC campaign and get expert-level results with minimal time and cost investment. By the end of the program, the company increased conversion rates by 70% and was ready to manage the campaign in-house.



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WordStream Industry Success

A case study in how a sixty-day hands-on learning program gave Yankee Barn Homes the knowledge and tools to take back control of their Google AdWords campaign and get expert-level results with minimal time and cost investment.

About Yankee Barn Homes

Since 1969, Yankee Barn Homes has been designing and building custom post and beam homes nationwide. The company's prefabricated approach to building allows customers to design and build a custom home with all the latest energy-efficient options and still manage to save money by shortening the construction time on their site.

"The campaign just turned into an overwhelming mess after a while. There were too many unorganized keywords, not enough leads, not enough conversions—our entire strategy had spun out of control and we never saw the improved results that we had expected to see."

Tony Hanslin, President
Yankee Barn Homes

Background & Goals

Yankee Barn Homes has been working with Google AdWords since the mid 90s. Tony Hanslin and his team had relied mostly on the tools available through Google, in addition to third-party keyword tools. Over the years, they had built their keyword list to up to a few thousand keyword phrases, and the campaign quickly became overly time-consuming for the team to continue to manage in-house.

Yankee Barn Homes turned to PPC agencies for help. However, after trying several agencies, they found that they didn't see much improvement despite spending a great deal of money. As Hanslin stated, "The campaign just turned into an overwhelming mess after a while. There were too many unorganized keywords, not enough leads, not enough conversions—our entire strategy had spun out of control and we never saw the improved results that we had expected to see."

Despite how long they'd worked with AdWords, Hanslin and his team needed expert guidance to untangle their campaign and start fresh with a new AdWords strategy. Once set in the right direction, and armed with the proper tools and knowledge, they hoped to be able to resume managing their account in-house without having to spend an impractical amount of time on maintenance.

Then Hanslin learned about WordStream's sixty-day JumpStart program. Yankee Barn Homes turned to WordStream to help clean up the team's campaign and set their AdWords strategy back on the right path. To measure success, they expected to see reduced costs and attract qualified leads that would translate into solid conversions. Hanslin's ultimate goal was to be able to effectively manage a successful campaign in-house at the close of the sixty days.

Challenge

Although they had been working with AdWords for over 15 years, the team found it difficult to bring organization back to the account once it began to spiral out of control. Thousands of keywords had accumulated without proper organization, and sorting them out became an overwhelming task. In addition, too many hands had touched the account, which led to a general lack of consistency. Essentially, the account had become too big to manage after years without transparency or instruction.

"It is more expensive to bid on general terms because of the competition associated with those terms. It's much more cost-efficient to find unique, long-tail keyword phrases that have a tighter relevancy to the products or services offered."

Robert Stanley, Account Manager
WordStream

Furthermore, many of the company's ad groups had been set up with a broad general theme and a universal text ad across all keywords. As a result, Yankee Barn Homes was paying more for each click. As account manager Robert Stanley explained, "It is more expensive to bid on general terms because of the competition associated with those terms. It's much more cost-efficient to find unique, long-tail keyword phrases that have a tighter relevancy to the products or services offered."

For example, Yankee Barn Homes' ad groups were organized into general categories such as "post and beam." This not only caused an increase in bids, but also led to clicks that never seemed to convert to sales. They were also generating clicks for keywords that did not apply to their products. In one month they wasted \$1,000 on irrelevant clicks for "log cabin." Yankee Barn Homes does not build log cabins, and yet they were receiving a great deal of traffic from this keyword search.

The disorganized keywords, irrelevant, costly clicks and overly broad ad groups left Hanslin and his team feeling hopeless as to how they could efficiently bring order back to their campaign and find their way to a successful AdWords strategy.

The WordStream Solution: JumpStart to PPC Success

After learning that Hanslin wanted his team to acquire the necessary expertise to manage their PPC account in-house, WordStream recommended its unique JumpStart offering. JumpStart is a 60-day, hands-on learning program, created to help search marketers increase the relevance, value and productivity of their PPC efforts, without enlisting an agency. WordStream provides each client with a dedicated account manager who demonstrates in “baby steps” how to set up an effective PPC campaign to get expert-level results with minimal time and cost investment. Beginning with how visitors are finding the website, then moving on to how to mine that data for the right keywords, JumpStart clients get active training on how to effectively manage their keywords and optimize their PPC campaigns. By the end of the program, they are ready to take their campaigns into their own hands.

“Filtering out all of the keywords that you shouldn’t be bidding on can have a drastic impact on your overall paid search costs, both by reducing irrelevant clicks and by improving your click-through rates and Quality Scores, which further impacts your overall cost per click and first-page bids.”

Robert Stanley, Account Manager
WordStream

As Yankee Barn Homes’ dedicated account manager, Stanley worked closely with Hanslin’s team, training them how to sort through the clutter of an out-of-control PPC campaign and reorganize it into a finely-tuned account that would be far less time-consuming to maintain going forward.

Personalized Keyword Research Based on Real Data

In the first phase of cleaning up the campaign, Stanley trained the Yankee Barn Homes team to take a historical look at what was bringing people to the site, in an effort to focus more on long-tail keyword phrases. By mining real data, the WordStream tool discovered new keywords and phrases and automatically organized them into relevant ad groups. WordStream was also able to suggest negative keywords such as “log,” so that Yankee Barn Homes did not continue to waste clicks on keyword phrases such as “log cabins.”

“Filtering out all of the keywords that you shouldn’t be bidding on can have a drastic impact on your overall paid search costs, both by reducing irrelevant clicks and by improving your click-through rates and Quality Scores, which further impacts your overall cost per click and first-page bids,” Stanley explained.

As the engine began to uncover more and more long-tail keywords, Hanslin said, “I was really surprised with the keywords identified by WordStream. I had assumed that most people searched by using one or two keywords, but they are really typing in specific and unique keyword phrases that I wouldn’t have necessarily thought of.”

For example, rather than simply searching for “beams,” visitors to the site had searched for phrases such as “post and beams home tips.” Identifying these long-tail keywords and infusing them into the campaign helped Yankee Barn Homes move away from the general ad groups that had cost them so much more money and ultimately led to fewer conversions.

Identifying keywords based on real data from real prospects—those looking to spend money on the specific products built by Yankee Barn Homes—they began to yield a high return on investment as click-through rates climbed. The WordStream tools also provided daily keyword suggestions (and automatically sorted them), helping the marketing team to uncover new keywords and spend less time organizing them into tightly related keyword groups.

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Tony Hanslin, President
Yankee Barn Homes

Better Targeted, More Compelling Text Ads

As Yankee Barn Homes established new ad groups with tighter relevancy and long-tail keywords, they needed to develop new text ads for each group. Previously, they had used a generic ad for all keywords in each group. This was driving up their costs, since their Quality Score was hurt by reduced relevance.

Stanley showed them how WordStream’s ad text tools could help to write expert-quality ads by generating instant suggestions for highly relevant Google AdWords ads. By suggesting the most frequent and effective keyword phrases in each group, the WordStream solution made it simple for Hanslin’s team to write hundreds of high-quality text ads. The campaign quickly grew from a handful of ads to over 125. Each ad group rapidly benefited from multiple ads, more closely targeted to specific keywords, by improving Quality Score and producing more qualified leads.

WordStream Results

▶ Increased Conversion Rate

Up by 70% after sixty days.

▶ Increased Click Through Rate

Rose more than 20%, jumping from an average of 3.95% to 4.52%.

▶ Decreased Cost/Conversion

Down by 30% after sixty days.

End Result: The knowledge and tools to manage a successful campaign in-house.

WordStream Results

At the close of JumpStart's sixty days, Yankee Barn Homes saw meaningful results for the first time in years. First, they doubled their ad groups and increased their use of long-tail keyword phrases, which in turn resulted in higher-quality leads that cost over 30% less. Conversions that had previously cost \$43 or more were now costing closer to \$28 on average. Overall conversion rate jumped 70%.

With improved text ads, click-through rate (CTR) improved by 20%, jumping from an average of 3.95% to 4.52%.

Almost immediately, Hanslin began to see an increase in conversions take place. He stated, "I had originally focused on click-through rates but later realized that real cost is what I'm paying for someone to contact us. What really matters to me is that I'm now seeing a huge increase in the number of conversions at half the cost after using WordStream's PPC tools."

In addition, after the initial 60-day training period, Hanslin's team had the PPC expertise needed to confidently take over the account from Stanley and conveniently and affordably manage it in-house. With WordStream's powerful PPC organization tools, there was no risk of the campaign spiraling out of control again.

The WordStream solution also allowed Hanslin's team to continually grow the campaign, with new keyword phrases discovered every day. As Hanslin put it, "We were able to do in minutes what was previously taking us hours to do. It freed our time and made us extremely efficient at our jobs. Our account manager, Robert Stanley, made us feel like we were his only client, considering the time he spent coaching us day-to-day on how to best implement WordStream's powerful PPC tools."



About WordStream

WordStream is a provider of innovative, integrated keyword management solutions that simplify complex search marketing processes. Our patented software provides search marketers with a private, scalable on-line workbench for efficiently and continuously conducting PPC and SEO tasks including keyword research and negative keyword discovery; search query analytics; keyword grouping and organization; search marketing workflow and prioritization; and relevant ad copy and Web content creation.

WordStream believes that organizing, prioritizing, coordinating and executing PPC and SEO efforts around a comprehensive, well-researched and up-to-date taxonomy is the key to achieving search marketing success. The benefits of using WordStream solutions include increased productivity and greater relevance, enhancing the value of both paid and natural search marketing efforts. For more information about WordStream keyword management solutions and to sign up for a free trial, visit <http://www.wordstream.com>.