



FREE CHECKLIST · 2026 EDITION

# The Google Ads Audit Checklist

43 checks I run on every account I take over. Work through them in order: most wasted spend I find comes from the first two sections.

## How to use it

1. Open your Google Ads account next to this checklist.
2. Tick each item you can confirm. Circle the ones you can't.
3. Fix the circled items in sections 1 and 2 first. Conversion tracking and wasted spend affect everything else.



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## 01 Conversion tracking

If Google is optimizing for the wrong thing, every other setting works against you.

- ☐ **Every conversion action has a healthy status.**  
Check the status of each action under [Goals](#) → [Conversions](#) → [Summary](#) . Anything other than "Active" needs a look.
- ☐ **Only real business outcomes are primary conversions.**  
Leads, calls, bookings and purchases. Page views, scrolls and button clicks should be secondary or removed.
- ☐ **Nothing is counted twice.**  
The same form fill tracked by a Google Ads tag and an imported GA4 event inflates results.
- ☐ **Calls are tracked.**  
Calls from ads and from your website, with a minimum call length that filters out wrong numbers.
- ☐ **Lead conversions use "one" counting; purchases use "every".**  
Otherwise one person filling a form three times counts as three leads.
- ☐ **Conversion values reflect what a conversion is worth.**  
Especially if you use Maximize conversion value or target ROAS.
- ☐ **You know which leads became customers.**  
Even a monthly spreadsheet comparing leads to sales beats guessing. Offline conversion imports are better.

## 02 Wasted spend

This is usually where an audit pays for itself.

- ☐ **You've reviewed search terms in the last 30 days.**  
[Campaigns](#) → [Insights and reports](#) → [Search terms](#) . Sort by cost and look for queries that will never buy.
- ☐ **Irrelevant terms are added as negatives.**  
Jobs, free, DIY, training, competitors you don't want, services you don't offer.
- ☐ **Shared negative keyword lists are applied to every campaign that needs them.**
- ☐ **No keyword has spent 2–3× your target cost per lead without converting.**  
Pause it, tighten the match type or fix the landing page.
- ☐ **Location targeting reaches people in your area, not just interested in it.**  
Check the location option in campaign settings. "Presence or interest" can show ads far outside your service area.
- ☐ **Search partners and Display expansion are on only where they earn their keep.**  
Compare their cost per conversion with Google Search before leaving them on.
- ☐ **Ad schedule matches when you can answer the phone.**  
If calls go unanswered at night or on weekends, reduce spend there.

### 03 Account structure

Structure decides how much control you have over budget and messaging.

- ☐ **Your brand name runs in its own campaign.**  
Otherwise cheap brand clicks hide how expensive new-customer clicks really are.

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- ☐ **Each campaign has one clear goal and one budget priority.**  
High-value services shouldn't share a budget with low-value ones.

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- ☐ **Ad groups are tight themes.**  
A searcher for "dental implants" should see an implants ad and land on an implants page.

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- ☐ **There are no near-duplicate campaigns competing for the same searches.**

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- ☐ **Naming is clear enough that you can read the account at a glance.**

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### 04 Keywords and match types

- ☐ **Your most valuable searches are covered with exact or phrase match.**  
Broad match can work with Smart Bidding and solid conversion data, not before.

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- ☐ **Quality Score columns are added and low scores have a known cause.**  
Look at Exp. CTR, Ad relevance and Landing page exp. to see which part is weak.

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- ☐ **No keywords sit at "low search volume" or "not eligible" for months.**

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- ☐ **Keywords match how customers actually search.**  
Compare your keyword list with the real search terms report.

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### 05 Ads and assets

- ☐ **Every ad group has a responsive search ad with good or excellent ad strength.**

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- ☐ **Headlines answer: what you do, where, why you, and what happens next.**  
Prices, guarantees and real differentiators beat generic claims.

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- ☐ **Sitelinks, callouts and call assets are set up and approved.**

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- ☐ **No ads or assets are disapproved or limited by policy.**

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- ☐ **The final URL of each ad goes to the most relevant page, not the homepage.**

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## 06 Bidding and budget

☐ **The bid strategy fits your conversion volume.**

Target CPA or ROAS needs consistent conversions to learn. With very few, start simpler.

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☐ **Targets are realistic.**

A target CPA far below what you actually pay starves the campaign.

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☐ **Your best campaigns aren't limited by budget.**

Check "Search lost IS (budget)" at campaign level. Money is often stuck in weaker campaigns.

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☐ **You know your maximum affordable cost per lead.**

Customer value  $\times$  lead-to-customer rate. If you pay more than that per lead, more budget won't fix it.

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☐ **You check Auction insights to see who you compete with.**

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## 07 Landing pages

☐ **The page loads fast on a phone.**

Test it on mobile data, not office Wi-Fi.

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☐ **The headline matches the ad and the search.**

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☐ **The phone number and form are visible without scrolling on mobile.**

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☐ **The form asks only what you need.**

Every extra field costs leads.

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☐ **Proof is on the page: reviews, results, credentials, real photos.**

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☐ **You've checked the Landing pages report for pages with clicks but no conversions.**

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## 08 Performance Max (if you run it)

☐ **Your brand is excluded or measured separately.**

Otherwise PMax can take credit for people already searching for you by name.

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☐ **You review its search terms and channel performance.**

Google now reports both for Performance Max.

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☐ **It optimizes for the same real conversions as your Search campaigns.**

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☐ **For lead gen, you check lead quality, not just lead count.**

Junk form fills are the most common PMax complaint I hear.

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## Too many circled items?

I'll audit your account for you. You get a **recorded video walkthrough and a prioritized PDF** within 3 business days, for a one-time **\$120**.

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