

CASE STUDY

Measurement First

Google Ads · Local Healthcare · Conversion Tracking

This document describes the rebuild of a Google Ads account for a local healthcare business — a channel that had been running as an afterthought, on a measurement layer that could not tell anyone what it was doing. The premise: in a neglected channel, measurement isn't the step before the strategy. It is the strategy.

Direct ownership: I built and ran this account end-to-end — tracking, structure, campaigns. Client and agency names withheld, consistent with the rest of this portfolio.

WHAT'S INSIDE

The Context — a secondary channel in the hardest vertical to advertise in

The Diagnosis — why optimizing on broken signal amplifies the error

The Rebuild — conversion actions designed before campaigns

The Results — six months, counted conservatively

THE CONTEXT

A secondary channel, a broken instrument panel

A multi-account environment in local healthcare — physiotherapy clinics and outpatient centers. Meta was the primary acquisition channel, and deservedly so: that's where demand gets created. Google, in the setup I inherited, was the afterthought — accounts existed, campaigns ran, but the channel had never been treated as something worth engineering.

The clearest symptom wasn't in any campaign metric. It was in the conversion tracking status across the fleet: **14 tags inactive, 8 registering no recent conversions, 1 unverified**. Money was being spent on a channel that, structurally, could not tell anyone what it was doing.

Healthcare is also one of the hardest verticals to advertise in at all. Google restricts personalized advertising around health: the audience-building levers most advertisers lean on — remarketing, interest-based segments, lookalike-style expansion — are largely off the table, and ad copy itself has to stay inside strict compliance lines. Add the local dimension, where the entire addressable audience is whoever lives within driving distance of a clinic, and the usual playbook shrinks to almost nothing. What's left is precisely two things: query-level intent and geography. Which makes measuring both correctly not a nice-to-have, but the whole game.

THE DIAGNOSIS

You can't optimize what you can't measure

The tempting move is to "optimize" — adjust bids, rewrite ads, restructure keywords. But optimization is signal amplification: feed the algorithm broken signal and you get confidently, efficiently wrong outcomes. In local healthcare this is especially acute, because the conversions that matter are small, physical gestures — a call, a request for directions, a contact — not the e-commerce events Google's defaults are built around.

So the strategy wasn't an optimization strategy. It was a measurement strategy: **make the channel tell the truth first, then build on what it says**.

One account, rebuilt from zero

CONVERSIONS BEFORE CAMPAIGNS

Conversion actions designed before any campaign existed. Direct contact actions defined as primary conversions — the events that represent an actual patient reaching out.

INTENT TRACKED, KEPT SEPARATE

Requests for driving directions and page views recorded as secondary actions: valuable local-intent evidence, deliberately excluded from what the bidding algorithm counts as success.

STRUCTURE ON CLEAN SIGNAL

Search campaigns capturing existing local demand — the job Google actually does well in this vertical — while demand generation stayed where it belongs, on Meta.

AUDIENCE BY INTENT & GEOGRAPHY

With health-vertical restrictions ruling out most audience tools, finding the right people means finding the right queries in the right radius — and staying compliant while doing it. The measurement layer is what proves that definition is working, instead of assuming it.

One inherited conversion action — a thank-you page event — turned out to be inflated by earlier tracking work. Rather than guess at a correction, it's excluded from every figure in this document. A case study about measurement discipline that quietly counted a contaminated metric wouldn't be worth reading.

THE RESULTS — SIX MONTHS

What clean signal produces

€0.60

Average CPC on €2,031 total spend

95

Direct contact actions — just over €21 each, counted conservatively

185

Driving-direction requests, tracked separately as local-intent signal

In a one-week benchmark snapshot, Google placed the account's spend below the sector median for comparable businesses — with roughly half the clicks of similar advertisers. Fewer clicks, comparable outcomes: the account isn't buying traffic, it's capturing intent.

The rebuild did more than fix one account: it became the reference for the rest of the fleet. The same measurement-first sequence — tracking rebuilt before anything else, primary and secondary actions separated, structure only on clean signal — is now the blueprint being extended to the remaining accounts.

THE THREAD

Channels don't fail because the ads are bad. They fail because nobody decided what the channel's job is, and nobody built the instruments to check whether it's doing it. Measurement isn't the boring part before the strategy — in a neglected channel, it *is* the strategy. It's the same conviction behind the tracking tools I've built and published: if the signal is wrong, everything downstream is decoration.

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