Apple Search Ads Handbook

Table of contents

SerchAdsHQ.

SerchAdsHQ.

Apple Search Ads &
Why Advertise with It?

Since its release in 2016, Apple Search Ads has been enthusiastically adopted by developers and growth marketers across multiple spheres and in many countries. They value the ad channel for being both easy and affordable, while making it possible to acquire high-intent mobile users or re-engage them. The trick is to make it into the ad spot.

A sponsored ad appears at the top of the App Store search results, when users input their queries. Such ads have a blue background and come in different formats, depending on the user's device. Search Ads relies on the app metadata, visuals and video to shape the ad, and you pay only when the user taps on it. This is called Cost-per-Tap, or CPT, pricing.

How much does it really cost you? Apple Search Ads operates on a second-auction basis, which means you pay what your closest competitor is willing to pay, but no more than the maximum CPT bid you've specified. This well-adjusted mechanism ensures you don't overpay.

If the bid size were the only key, Search Ads would turn into a bidding battlefield. That is why Apple requires the app be relevant to the user's query. The right blend of relevance and the bid amount is what helps your app hit the ad spot.

What are the perks of promoting your app via Search Ads?

1 There are about 2 million titles available on the App Store. This is an overcrowded pool of competing apps. You have to somehow increase your visibility to be discovered and downloaded. Apple says that the developers using Search Ads enjoy the average conversion rate of 50%. Impressive, isn't it?

2 According to Apple, 65% of app installs derive from the search on the App Store. So, by running campaigns in Search Ads, you advertise in the most common app discovery place.

3 Statistics prove that those who tap on a featured app don't think they deal with an ad banner. Rather, they behave like organic users, who demonstrate a higher rate of engagement and retention. Consequently, with the sponsored ad you can receive an immediate influx of quality users.

4 Different customer types enable you to acquire first-time downloaders, as well as re-engage users who have already downloaded your app or to cross-promote your app to those who use other products you've developed.

5 Search Ads boasts a 40% lower acquisition cost compared to other ad platforms; a CPT model implies that you pay only for the users who are interested and high-converting.

So, if you're trying to put your app up on the App Store, consider investing your marketing spend in Apple Search Ads. It may have a significant bearing on your app visibility and conversion, but with certain strategies and tools applied. Let's explore them!

SECTION 2.
Apple Search Ads Account Structure.

User acquisition teams have developed different account structures and customize them up to their needs.

Why do you need to build a proper account structure? Firstly, it guarantees that your ad groups will be profitable. Secondly, it helps you spread keywords in a reasonable way. And last but not least, having a proper account structure enables you to optimize your spend and scale your campaigns.
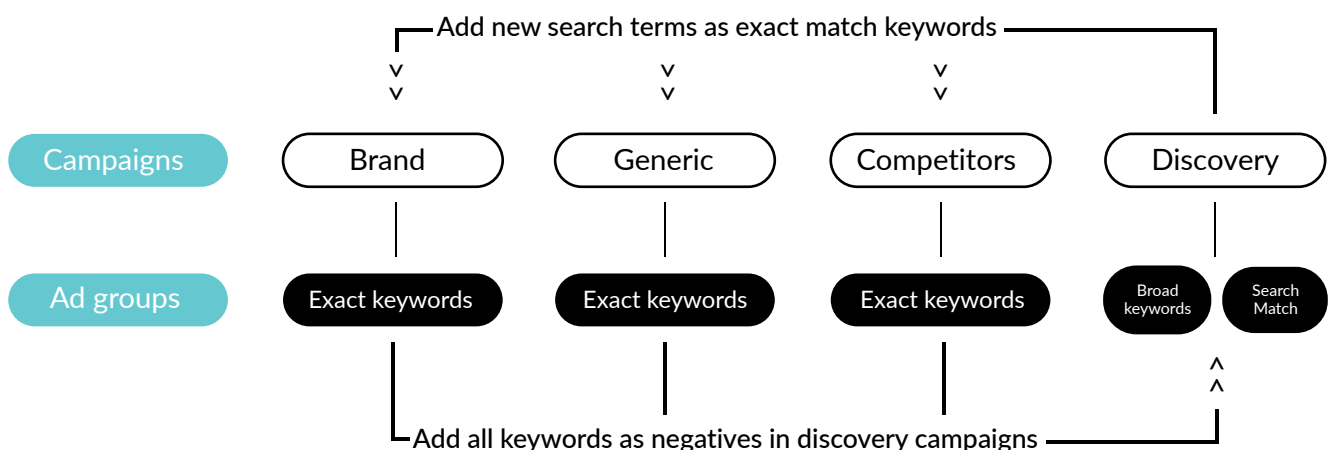
If you start your account structure from scratch, consider the one recommended by Apple. It combines **4 elements** for better reporting and bids management:

1 **Brand:** keywords that include the app and company name enable you to capture high- intent users.

2 **Generic/Non-brand:** keywords based on themes and descriptive terms for your app also help reach new users and raise your brand awareness.

3 **Competitors:** using keywords relevant to major competitors is a great way to get new users.

4 **Discovery:** discovery campaigns are used for finding new relevant keywords using broad keywords and Search Match.

Add new search terms as exact match keywords

Campaigns	Brand	Generic	Competitors	Discovery
Ad groups	Exact keywords	Exact keywords	Exact keywords	Broad keywords / Search Match

Add all keywords as negatives in discovery campaigns

How to organize ad groups within brand, generic and competitors campaigns.

Ad groups are essential elements within campaigns. They help arrange the structure of your account into a hierarchy, and if it's done effectively, you are likely to attract more traffic while boosting conversions.

Here are the criteria to organize ad groups by:

1 **Match type: Exact/Broad match.** In fact, it sмhould always be exact match type here.

2 **Device: iPhone/iPad.** iPhone/iPad Target iPhone and iPad separately to have more bidding flexibility and budget control, as bids and performance for the devices can significantly differ. Moreover, this will provide you with reliable statistics.

3 **Audience: Core/General.** When you target a specific gender or age group, Apple doesn't show your ads to users who have a "Limit Ad Tracking" (LAT) option 'On'. This is around 20% of users, many of whom are also in your target segment.

A good ad account structure for an app in the US storefront may look like this:

```
Facebook:   // campaign groups level

- FB_Brand_US:  // campaigns level
  - FB_Brand_US_Exact_iPhone_All   // for all ages and all genders to deal with LAT
  - FB_Brand_US_Exact_iPad_All    // for all ages and all genders to deal with LAT
  - FB_Brand_US_Exact_iPhone_F_18-34  // for core audience (iPhone, 18-34, Female)
  - FB_Brand_US_Exact_iPad_F_18-34   // for core audience (iPad, 18-34, Female)

- FB_Generic_US:
  - FB_Generic_US_Exact_iPhone_All
  - FB_Generic_US_Exact_iPad_All
  - FB_Generic_US_Exact_iPhone_F_18-34
  - FB_Generic_US_Exact_iPad_F_18-34

- FB_Competitors_US:
  - FB_Competitors_US_Exact_iPhone_All
  - FB_Competitors_US_Exact_iPad_All
  - FB_Competitors_US_Exact_iPhone_F_18-34
  - FB_Competitors_US_Exact_iPad_F_18-34

- FB_Discovery_US:
  - FB_Discovery_US_SearchMatch  // for search match: on
  - FB_Discovery_US_Broad  // for broad match keywords

//... the same structure for other storefronts ...
```

SECTION 3.

How to Run Discovery Campaigns.

The key purpose of discovery campaigns is to find relevant terms, misspellings, long-tail keywords, synonyms, etc., using the Search Ads match types with the widest reach.

Broad match keywords.

Search query scenarios	Customer's search term	Bidded keywords: photo edit free		Negative keywords: photo edit free	
		Exact match	Broad match	Exact match	Broad match
Words in order	photo edit free	✓	✓	⊗	⊗
Close variants	photo editor free	✓	✓		
	photo edit free	✓	✓		
Not in order	edit photo free		✓		⊗
Partial words	photo edit		✓		
	edit free		✓		
Partial words	photo edit collage free		✓		⊗
	free crop photo edit		✓		⊗
	resize edit photo free		✓		⊗
Synonyms/related words	picture edit		✓		
	picture edit text		✓		

Source: Apple

As you can see in the picture, if you create a group with several broad match keywords and set a small budget, you can generate partial words, long variants, synonyms or related search terms. Just what we need! And most importantly, these keywords will have a high relevance score.

After your campaign has run for a while, you can dive into the search term report and start generating great keyword ideas.

1 broad keyword
/ average stats
/ uncontrollable

"games"

50 Search terms

/ doctor games
/ free games war games
/ multiplayer games
/ boys free games
/ 3d touch games

Below you can see a search terms report for a broad match keyword "games". On purpose, we've selected the search terms that don't contain the word "game", in other words, these are related (new root) keywords.
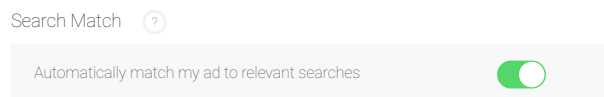

Source: SearchAdsHQ

Search Match.

Search Match

Search Match is the easiest way to get your ads up and running. We will automatically match your ad to users who are searching for apps like yours.

Search Match ?

Automatically match my ad to relevant searches

Search Match automatically matches your ad to relevant search terms without you having to identify and actively bid on keywords. It relies on multiple resources, including your App Store page metadata, the information on similar apps in the same genre, and other search data.

The basic idea of Search Match is similar to that of the broad match technique, however, there's no need to specify the list of keywords. The method helps discover keywords that could be missed, for example, search queries for competitors' apps or even localized keywords.

Search Match can be wildcard, as you never know what exactly it will come up with.

	Search Term	↓ Keyword	Default CPT bid	Ad Group Name
Filters: Match Type: not Exact ✕ Storefront: JP, KR ✕				
Total 24				
☐	dヘルスケア	—	—	Discovery ▓▓ ▓▓
☐	万歩計 無料 人気	—	—	Discovery ▓▓ ▓▓
☐	あるくと	—	—	Discovery ▓▓ ▓▓
☐	ダイエット	—	—	Discovery ▓▓ ▓▓
☐	renobody	—	—	Discovery ▓▓ ▓▓
☐	万歩計	—	—	Discovery ▓▓ ▓▓

Source: SearchAdsHQ

Thus, the most effective way to increase your traffic volume is to gradually add new relevant keywords to your ad account. Below you can find a multistep keyword expansion algorithm.

Ad groups structure within a discovery campaign.

You have to create a separate discovery campaign for each storefront and set a comfortable budget to spend on searching new keywords.

Obviously, the bigger the budget, the faster you will find more high-performing keywords. On the other hand, there's no point in cutting the budget severely, as you may miss the potential profit that the discovered keywords can bring. A good idea is to apply the 20/80 rule, i.e. allocate 20% of your budget for the discovery campaign.

Since the main purpose of a discovery campaign is to generate as many search terms as possible, there is no much point in breaking it into targeting groups. This will only produce low volume terms and make management more complicated.

Initial structure setup may look like this:

1 Create a separate **Discovery campaign** for each storefront and set a comfortable budget.

2 Within the same campaign, create a separate **Broad Match ad group** with broad match keywords and with Search Match **disabled.**

3 If you already have a list of exact match keywords, add them to the broad match group as **broad match keywords.** This will speed up the process.

4 To avoid competition for impressions, the exact match keywords from your broad match campaign should be added as **negative exact match keywords** to the discovery campaign (Shared list of negative exact keywords, as shown in the chart below).

Shared list of negative exact keywords — **Discovery_US** — Add as **negative** exact keywords <<

Search Match: **On** No keywords — **Discovery_US_SearchMatch**

Initial keywords list:

[games]
[car games]
[puzzle games]
[word games]
...

Search Match: **Off** Broad match keywords — **Discovery_US_BroadMatch** — << Add as **broad** match keywords
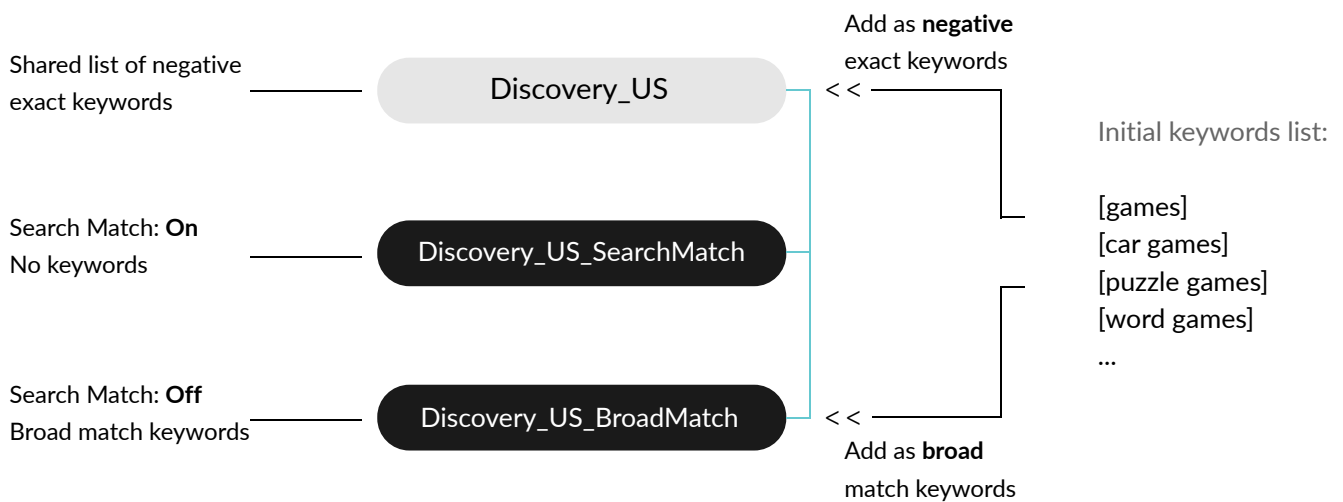
Increasing traffic volume using discovery campaigns.

Step1.

Analyze search terms performance.

Give your campaign a couple of weeks to run. This will guarantee that you collect sufficient data to analyze new search terms that Apple Search Ads matches to your ads.

	ACCOUNTS	APPS	CAMPAIGNS	AD GROUPS	AD GROUP SETTINGS	KEYWORDS	**SEARCH TERMS**	NEGATIVE KEYWORDS	CREATIVE SETS

> Total Summary

+   Actions ⌄

Filters: Match Type: not Exact ✕   Storefront: US ✕   Search term text contains game ✕

	Search Term	Keyword	Default CPT bid	↓ Spend ⓘ	Impressions ⓘ	Taps ⓘ	CPT ⓘ	TTR ⓘ
Total 784					157,033	3,850		2.45%
☐	free games for iphone	classic games			1,794	74		4.12%
☐	games for girls	—	—		4,600	114		2.48%
☐	kids games	—	—		2,366	155		6.55%
☐	kids games for boys	cool math games			1,702	132		7.76%

Source: SearchAdsHQ

Go to the "SEARCH TERMS" tab and set a 14-day timeframe. The best way is to analyze search terms every week or fortnight.

Arrange the search terms (STs) into 3 groups — **Good search terms, Bad search terms and Insufficient data** — and work with them as shown in the chart below.
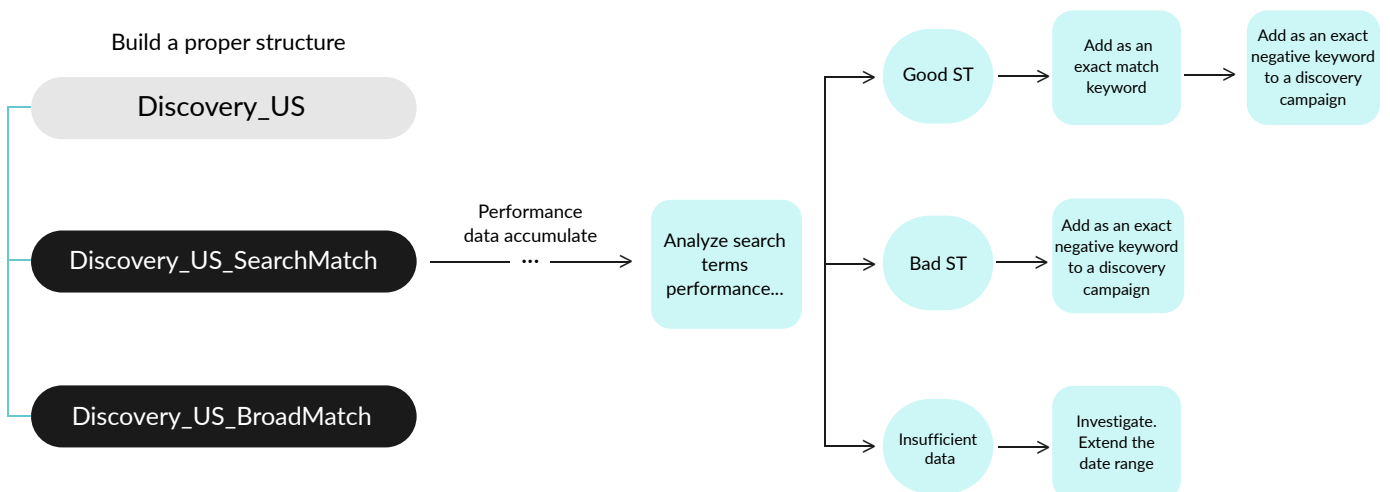
How to determine an appropriate category for a search term? Here you should keep in mind that due to the Search Ads data privacy policy, search terms which converted into installs are not reported to MMPs (only the keyword and the match type). Therefore, it is impossible to analyze post-downloads metrics.

Step 2.
Identifying Good STs.

Good STs are relevant high-performing search terms which make the traffic grow, without hurting its quality. All the steps above lead to discovering these queries. They should be moved to the exact match keywords group.
The best way to evaluate the quality of search terms is to look at their Cost per Acquisition (CPA). For example, if your CPA threshold is $5.0, then queries with Downloads > 0 and CPA < $5.0 can be considered winning ones. Below are the filters you should use to discover winning queries:

Filters: Downloads > 0 × CPA < 5 ×

Source: SearchAdsHQ

After you've found your winning query, take the following steps (see in the chart above):

1 Add the winning search term to the exact match group. Depending on your account structure, there can be several exact groups where you need to move this keyword.

2 Add the winning query as an exact negative keyword to your discovery campaign, just the way you did in Step 1. This keyword is included in the exact match group, so you have to make sure that Search Ads doesn't match ads to this search term in your discovery campaign.

Negative exact match excludes your ad for searches of the exact keyword phrase, but it may still show for searches that include related and long/short keyword versions. That's why it's reasonable to add close variants (e.g. "game" and "games") and misspellings to negatives as well.

13

Step 3.

Identifying Bad STs.

Bad STs are irrelevant or non-performing search terms. They don't bring any installs and eat up a sufficient amount of money, usually 3 x Target CPA, or their CPI is higher than our target value. Here are the examples of filters that can help find such queries:

Filters: Downloads < 1 × CPA > 15 ×

Source: SearchAdsHQ

Filters: Downloads > 0 × CPA > 5 ×

Source: SearchAdsHQ

Once you've discovered such search terms, add them to your discovery campaign as **negative exact keywords**.

Step 4.

Identifying keywords with insufficient data.

These are search terms with insufficient data to be moved to any of the categories. There are 2 cases:

1 There are no conversions and your spend treathhold hasn't been reached yet. For example, the search terms have spent less than 3 x Target CPI and haven't brought any downloads yet (e.g. Download = 0 and Spend < $15).

2 Low volume term. The data you're requesting may be below Apple's privacy threshold. For example, search terms must reach at least 10 impressions, otherwise the "low volume" value appears in your search term report. Age, location or gender reports require minimum 100 impressions before Search Ads can show any values.

If you report has returned the "low volume" value, give the data some time to accumulate or extend the date range up to 30/60/90 days to get more data.

Step 5.
Keep mining new keywords.

Take steps 2-4 every week or fortnight and use the data from the latest review up to the present moment. By following these recommendations step-by-step, you can gradually increase the number of relevant keywords and, as a result, boost your traffic volume.

Naturally, the traffic volume in discovery ad groups will start dropping in a while. It has to do with exact negative keywords which are regularly being added to discovery ad groups. To keep mining new relevant keywords, you can gradually increase the CPT bid in discovery ad groups in order to make it into the auction with more expensive keywords.

SECTION 4.
How to run re-engagement campaigns.

Why are re-engagement campaigns worth trying? A significant portion of app installs are actually re-installs. According to Tune, it's 42% across the market, however, the percentage can reach as high as 75% for some app categories.

Mobile app downloads: re-installs are 42% of all installs

42%   58%

Re-installs

Initialinstalls

Sample size: 3.1 billion installs measured from November 2017 to May 2018

Source: TUNE

If you've decided to show your ads to the users that have already installed your app, go to the ad group audience settings. In the customer type field enable the options "Have downloaded the app" or "Have downloaded the app or my other apps". With a large volume of installs, this setting allows you to run a re-engagement campaign to:

/ Improve the retention of the users that have already installed your app from Apple Search Ads and, as a result, increase profitability.

/ Protect your brand by not running ads with the keywords related to your brand name for users that have installed your app. Your competitors are likely to start running this kind of ads. Alternatively, you can set this up in brand campaigns.

How to launch a
re-engagement campaign:

1 Take the lists of keywords from your brand and competitors campaigns and enter them into your re-engagement ad group as exact match keywords.

2 Set a reasonable budget and a daily cap you're ready to spend.

3 Set a reasonable CPT bid, which is usually less than that in exact (brand/competitors/generic) campaigns.

4 To streamline the management process, don't divide your audience into groups with narrower targeting. It won't come in useful in this case.

- **FB_ReEngagement_US: // campaigns level**
  - FB_ReEngagement_US_Exact_All // All targeting + "Have download the app"

SECTION 5.
Handling Keywords with no Impressions.

By achieving a substantial share of impressions for relevant keywords, you can optimize your TTR and maximize conversions. Obviously, keywords with no impressions don't make any positive contribution. There are three main reasons why keywords don't get impressions:

/ Low technical relevance;

/ Low search volume;

/ Low CPT bid;

/ Account setup issues (limited budgets, negative keywords, too low CPA Goal).

Low technical relevance

Apple Search Ads functions on an auction basis. For your bid to make it into the auction, your app should be considered 'relevant' to the keyword that matches to a particular user query. This is called 'technical keyword relevance'. The Apple's algorithm determines this relevance based on your app category and metadata — title, subtitle and keywords.

So, if you get no impressions for a keyword regardless of a high bid, it may be that the relevance score is too low. In this situation, try to add the keyword to your metadata to improve relevance and be eligible for the auction.

Here's how a second price auction works. App 1 and App 2 have higher CPT bids, but Apple Search Ads ignores them due to low technical relevance:

Keyword: [free games]

Winner: App 4
eCPT: **$1.51**
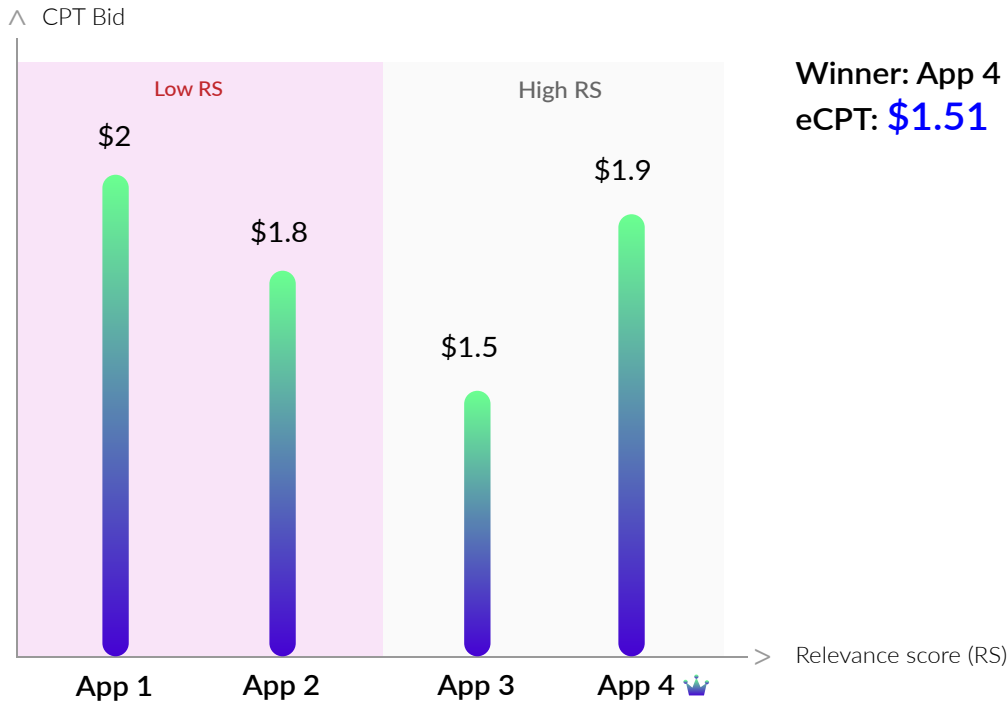
«Impression booster» technique.

Since Apple doesn't provide any insights into the lost impression share of a keyword, it's impossible to know why the keyword doesn't generate impressions. In fact, it can be caused by either low technical relevance or a low CPT bid.

The only way to find out the reason is to gradually increase your CPT bid up to your upper limit until the keyword starts getting impressions. This will mean that the keyword is relevant and the current bid is the minimum required to participate in an auction.

If you've reached your upper bid limit and the keyword has failed to get impressions, the keyword is irrelevant. The upper bid limit can exceed your target CPT, as at this stage your goal is to find out whether Apple considers the word relevant or not, rather than optimize the cost.

When it comes to a large number of keywords, this technique can take too long. That's why we recommend setting up an automated rule that can help you fully automate the process. Here're the steps you should take to set the rule:

1 Select apps or campaigns you want to apply the rule to.

Create Automated Rule for Keywords

APPLY TO

All keywords in selected apps (1) ⌄

Your rule will be applied to all keywords belonging to the current app that are enabled by the time the rule is created, including any keyword that has been added to the current app after creation of the rule.

2 Choose "Change keyword Bids". Select "Increase by" and specify the fixed value (e.g. $0.5). Place a particular upper bid limit (e.g. $5).

ACTION

Change keyword Bids ⌄

| Increase by ⌄ | $0.5 | $ | % |

☑ Upper bid limit

$5

3 Set a condition "Impressions less than 1" (or other threshold). To calculate the number of impressions, use data for the last three days.

CONDITIONS   All of the following match

| Impressions ⌄ | less than ⌄ | 1 |

+ Add another condition

FREQUENCY   USING DATA FROM

| Daily ⌄ | 9 AM ⌄ | Last 3 days ⌄ |

4 Set the rule name and click "Create Rule". Here we go!

RULE NAME

Impression Booster Rule

☑ Notify me via email when conditions of this rule are met

☑ Apply this rule right now   Cancel   **CREATE RULE**

SECTION 6.

10 Keyword Filters that Streamline Optimization.

Filters are a basic, yet efficient tool of Apple Search Ads optimization. When used properly, they can point at the areas in your ad campaign that require improvement. This is particularly important for large accounts with thousands of keywords, where it is so easy to miss something important.

In SearchAdsHQ, filters can be used at any level of the navigation structure Campaigns → Ad Groups → Keywords → Search Terms → Creative Sets. Below you can find 10 combinations of filters in our platform and a recommended action plan to take your app performance to the next level.

Account performance checkers

These are the filters that help you dive into the performance of your keywords, ad groups and campaigns, and optimize them where needed.

1 Identifying ad groups with low TTR

	Status	Ad Group Name	Impressions ⓘ	Taps ⓘ	CPT ⓘ	↑ TTR ⓘ	Downloads ⓘ
Total 166			2,665,728	82,227	$2.06	3.08%	25,369
☐	●		426	4	$1.86	0.94%	0
☐	●		289	3	$2.10	1.04%	1
☐	●		719	8	$1.75	1.11%	2

Source: SearchAdsHQ

Our research has revealed that the average tap-through rate (TTR) is approximately 7%. As a rule, however, TTR is higher for brand campaigns than for competitors campaigns. 5% (used in the example above) is a threshold level, and if TTR is below 5%, then the ad group performs worse than it could, and you need to find the reasons why.

Low TTR indicates that there's low relevance between a keyword and a creative set. By optimizing your ads, you can improve this score and thus get higher TTR.

Here're the most effective ways to increase the relevance score (and TTR):

/ A/B testing of creative sets;

/ Using creative sets more relevant to user queries;

/ Localize and adjust your app metadata to specific storefronts.

To avoid search queries with low TTR, you can:

/ Use negative keywords;

/ Exclude segments with poor performance, for example, disable non-working hours or weekends.

2 Identifying ad groups with a low download rate

	Status	Ad Group Name	TTR ⓘ	Downloads ⓘ	CPA ⓘ	↑ Download Rate ⓘ	Installs ⓘ
Total 54			3.00%	8,062	$7.81	19.82%	3,757
☐	●		2.40%	466	$16.93	8.74%	208
☐	●		2.17%	131	$15.93	10.02%	58
☐	●		2.69%	206	$11.08	10.80%	98

Filters: Downloads > 0 ✕ Download Rate < 30% ✕ Status: Enabled ✕

Source: SearchAdsHQ

Similar to the filter above, groups with low download rates show the areas that require optimization. According to Apple, the average download rate is 50%. The example above includes a more conservative rate of 30%.

Creative Sets use the assets on your App Store product page, or metadata, such as texts, screenshots, icons. Thus, by optimizing metadata you can improve the tap-through rate of an ad (TTR) and the number of downloads (Download Rate).

Optimization techniques are very similar to those in point 1) and are often used together. Some elements have a bigger impact on the TTR of a creative set (icon, name, rating), others on the download rate (screenshots, description).

3 Identifying an install rate and data discrepancies

	Status	Ad Group Name	CPA ⓘ	Download Rate ⓘ	Installs ⓘ	CPI ⓘ	↑ Install Rate ⓘ
Total 70			$4.49	44.89%	4,909	$14.56	30.83%
☐	●		$1.59	68.78%	9	$24.92	6.38%
☐	●		$0.65	67.21%	14	$9.51	6.83%
☐	●		$0.81	74.07%	8	$8.10	10.00%

Filters: Installs > 0 ✕ Install Rate < 40% ✕

Source: SearchAdsHQ

According to Apple, the discrepancy between the data provided by MMPs and Apple Search Ads can reach 60% for some apps. Here are the key reasons:

/Limited Ad Tracking (LAT);

/Re-downloads;

/A different approach to counting installs that MMP has, compared to Apple Search Ads.

If the install rate is under 40%,

/Make sure that enough time has passed, that you've received enough data available from MMP or downloaded the historical data;

/Check the MMP attribution window settings for Apple Search Ads; the window should be 30 days;

/Consider Search Match as a reason for such a discrepancy;

/Keep in mind that installs and conversions have a delayed effect, meaning that users do not always tap and buy on the same day. Analyze the data for the previous periods: they will typically show a higher rate.

4 Identifying the share of keywords with no impressions

Apple Search Ads functions on an auction basis. For your bid to enter the auction, your app should be 'relevant' to the keyword that was matched to a particular user query. This is called 'technical keyword relevance'. The Apple's algorithm determines this relevance based on your app category and metadata — title, subtitle and keywords.

How to count the share of keywords with low technical relevance?

1 Get the total number of Exact Match keywords (e.g. 23,085);

2 Use the filter to count keywords with few (e.g. from 0 to 5) or no impressions (e.g. 17,211):

Source: SearchAdsHQ

3 Divide the number of keywords with few/no impressions by the total number of keywords: 17,211 / 23,085 = 74.6%.
If this share exceeds 85%, then only 15% (or less) of keywords get impressions.

Here're some reasons for such poor performance and what can be done about it:

Problem	Solution
Low technical relevance	Review and rethink your keyword list
Low CPT bid (usually <1$)	Increase CPT bid
Few keywords (<50)	Expand the list of keywords (use our Keyword Planner)
Low volume keywords (popularity <10)	Use the Keyword Planner to find keywords with a higher popularity score

Spend wasters

There must be something wrong if keywords eat your spend up, but never or hardly ever convert. Spot the budget killers with the filters below.

5 Identifying non-converting keywords

To find keywords that never convert, set the spend filter above your threshold and goals at zero.

Suppose your target cost per goal (Target CPG) is $20, then your spend threshold will be 3 x Target CPG = $60. With such parameters, filter out the keywords with Spend > $60 and Goals < 1:

Filters: Match Type:Exact | ×   Spend > 60 | ×   Goals < 1 | ×

Source: SearchAdsHQ

What can be done? Pause such keywords and/or add them to negative keywords because they waste your spend.

6 Identifying bottom range converters

Filter out the keywords with at least one Goal and CPG > Target CPG. For example, if your Target CPG = $20, set CPG > $20.

Filters: Match Type:Exact | ×   Goals > 0 | ×   Cost per Goal > 20 | ×

Source: SearchAdsHQ

What can be done? Decrease CPT Bid by 10-20%.

Growth boosters

Use our filters that detect top converting keywords, as well as scaling opportunities for impressions, and eventually maximize your revenue.

7 Identifying top converters

Filter out keywords with at least one Goal and CPG < Target CPG. Here are the filters to be used for Target CPG = $20:

Filters: Match Type:Exact | × Goals > 0 | × Cost per Goal < 20 | ×

Source: SearchAdsHQ

What can be done? Increase CPT Bid by 10-20% for such keywords or move them to a separate ad group with higher Budgets & Bids.

8 Identifying keywords with low TTR and a big

Filter out keywords with low TTR (< 1/2/3%) and a high volume of impressions. For example, 100 impressions per day x 30 days = 3,000 impressions per month:

Filters: Match Type:Exact | × TTR < 2% | × Impressions > 3000 | ×

Source: SearchAdsHQ

What can be done? Analyze why these keywords have such low TTR. The rate may go up if you pick a more relevant creative set. Another solution is to conduct A/B testing to reflect the keyword themes in the app metadata (copies, visuals), if possible.

9 Identifying keywords with a low download rate

Filter out keywords with a low download rate (< 10%) and a large number of taps: 10 taps per day x 30 days = 300 taps:

Filters: Match Type:Exact | × Download Rate < 10% | × Taps > 300 | ×

Source: SearchAdsHQ

Management streamliners

10 Overlaps and competing keywords

Begin with finding all the keywords that match the search terms starting with 'hidden object':

Source: SearchAdsHQ

Apple Search Ads offers two Match Types — exact and broad — which work differently in Search Ads and Google Ads. In addition, the broad match type is quite aggressive and matches not only the close variants of a keyword, but also irrelevant search queries which the system considers synonymous. As a result, several keywords may end up competing with one another for a search query.

As you can see in the screenshot above, 3 different keywords of two different match types have generated one search term 'hidden objects game'.

Apple eliminates competition within one iTunes Connect account, in other words, the overlap doesn't affect the cost. However, it dilutes the statistics, which makes it difficult to assess the real performance of a keyword. All the search terms are spread across different keywords, so the chances are you can either underestimate or overestimate the keyword performance.

To fix the situation and take control of your account:

/Use broad match only to search for new keywords (discovery campaigns are used to expand the list of keywords);
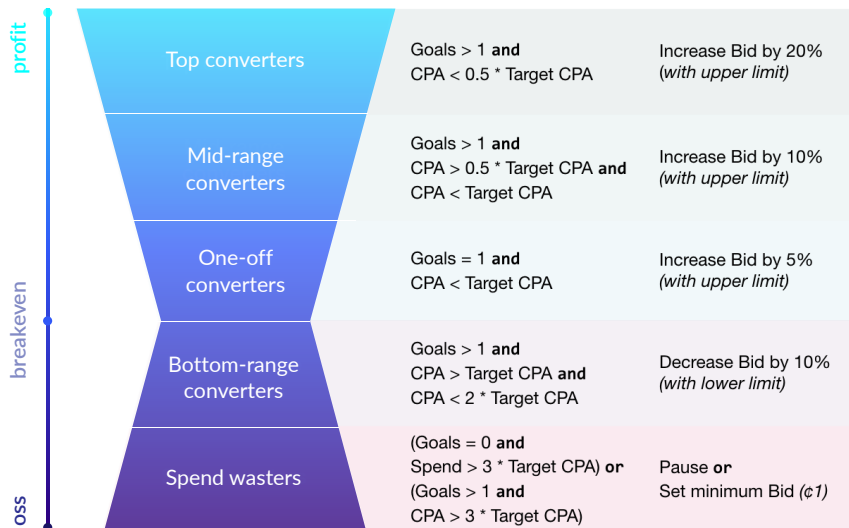
/Use negative keywords to eliminate competition between keywords in the discovery and exact match groups.

SECTION 7.

How to Use Rules to Automate Bids Management (infographic).

Keyword Bids Management

Apply to exact keywords daily* using data for the last 7* days. CPA = Cost per Action

Top converters	Goals > 1 **and** CPA < 0.5 * Target CPA	Increase Bid by 20% (*with upper limit*)
Mid-range converters	Goals > 1 **and** CPA > 0.5 * Target CPA **and** CPA < Target CPA	Increase Bid by 10% (*with upper limit*)
One-off converters	Goals = 1 **and** CPA < Target CPA	Increase Bid by 5% (*with upper limit*)
Bottom-range converters	Goals > 1 **and** CPA > Target CPA **and** CPA < 2 * Target CPA	Decrease Bid by 10% (*with lower limit*)
Spend wasters	(Goals = 0 **and** Spend > 3 * Target CPA) **or** (Goals > 1 **and** CPA > 3 * Target CPA)	Pause **or** Set minimum Bid (*¢1*)

profit — breakeven — loss

* the loopback window, the rule frequency and bids may vary for different apps.
** the same approach can be applied to Target ROAS optimization.

Impressions Booster
*Gradually increase CPT Bid to start getting impressions. Use data for the **last 3* days***

If Impressions < 2
then Increase Bid by 10%
        (*with upper limit*)

Conversions Booster
*Help low volume keywords gain enough reach to get conversions. Use data for the **last 7* days***

If Goals = 0 **and** Spend < Target CPA
then Increase Bid by 10%
        (*with upper limit*)

Monitor Conversions
*Stay on top of your performance. Monitor keywords with conversions for **yesterday****

If Conversions (*yesterday*) > 0
then Send email notification

SearchAdsHQ

SECTION 8.

Budgets, Targeting and Bidding: the Dos and Don'ts.

Dos

1 Make sure that your total budget is not too low (<80% of the current lifetime spend).

2 Make sure that the current daily cap doesn't reduce the impressions volume (<80% of the average daily spend).

3 Select the customer type "Have not downloaded the app", unless you want to retarget users. In such a situation, use a separate campaign.

4 Make sure that the ad group targeting is aligned with the ad group structural role (device/audience settings). It gives more flexibility over bidding and a better reporting structure.

5 Use tiered bids. You need to prioritize exact match over broad match and Search Match campaigns. At the same time, put the ad groups targeting your core segments on top of the general ones.

6 Remove duplicate keywords. By this means, you can improve your account management and reduce the dilution of reports:

/ Exact match already handles very close keyword variations (e.g. game vs. games);

/ Remove special characters, such as extra spaces, ™, ©, ®.

Don'ts:

1 Don't specify the end date, otherwise this setting may pause your ad groups unexpectedly.
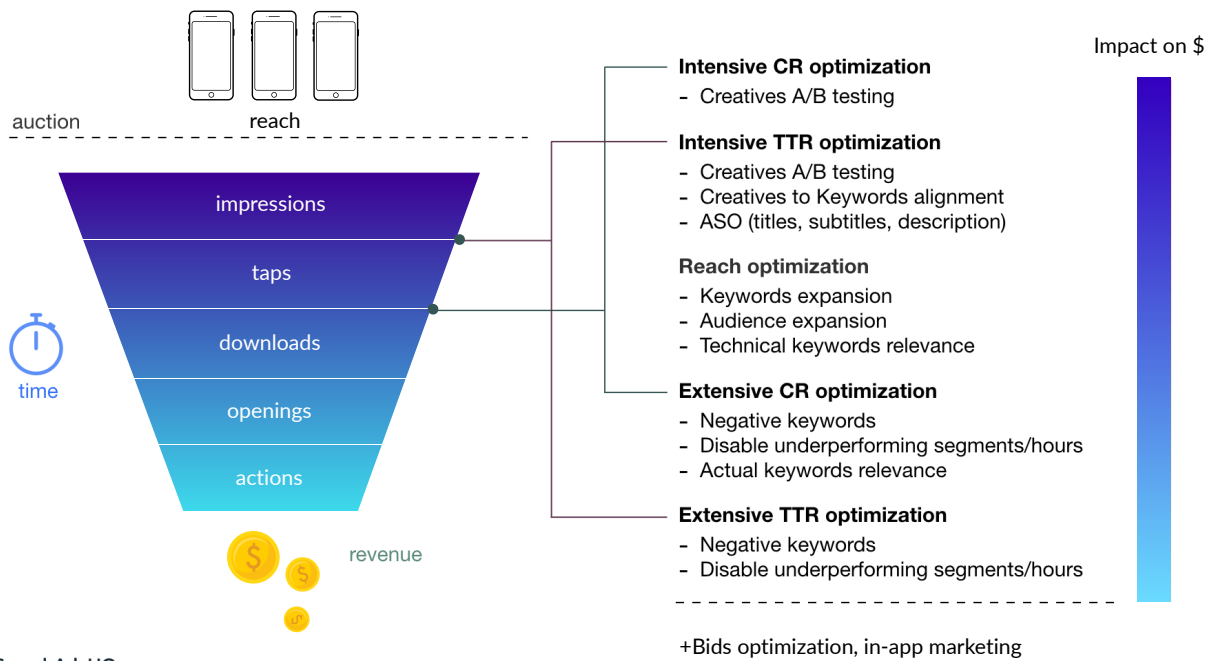
2 Unless you have enough historical data, don't use CPA Goals. This can reduce your impressions volume.

3 Don't mix targeted keywords and Search Match in one ad group to keep reports accurate.

4 Don't mix exact and broad match keywords in one ad group to keep reports accurate.

APPENDIX.

The Impact of Apple Search Ads Optimization on Revenue.

Intensive CR optimization

– Creatives A/B testing

Intensive TTR optimization

– Creatives A/B testing
– Creatives to Keywords alignment
– ASO (titles, subtitles, description)

Reach optimization

– Keywords expansion
– Audience expansion
– Technical keywords relevance

Extensive CR optimization

– Negative keywords
– Disable underperforming segments/hours
– Actual keywords relevance

Extensive TTR optimization

– Negative keywords
– Disable underperforming segments/hours

+Bids optimization, in-app marketing

Impact on $

auction   reach

impressions

taps

downloads

openings

actions

time

revenue

SearchAdsHQ

SearchAdsHQ

ROI-DRIVEN SEARCH ADS

SearchAdsHQ helps you run Apple Search Ads with maximum ROI by optimizing campaigns for post-install events, by scaling traffic volume faster and saving time on management.

SCALE SEARCH ADS BUDGET PROFITABLY

EASIER MANAGEMENT

Get full control over Apple Search Ads through the interface that unites ad creation and duplication, as well as basic and in-app analytics for data-driven optimization.

OPTIMIZATION GOALS

Use any event from your mobile measurement system as an optimization goal. Focus your ad spend on registrations and purchases, not just downloads.

AUTOMATION & BULK ACTIONS

Automate and optimize the entire media buying process for Apple Search Ads with automatic rules based on ROI, in-app events and ads dynamics.

AUTO BIDDING

Our AI-powered solution takes proper care of bidding and adjustments. All Search Ads campaigns can be run in an auto mode with a given CPA target.

KEYWORD PLANNER

One dashboard to research keywords, as well as add and run ads. Find highly relevant keywords for your ads without spending a penny on Search Match campaigns.

GET A SEARCHADSHQ DEMO