



How to Plan & Manage a Pay Per Click Campaign in 2024

The digital media landscape seems to be in perpetual flux and keeping track of what works and is affordable is enough to make your head hurt.

The only constant is change, Google search is changing dramatically – and Google’s generative AI driven SGE (Search Generative Experience) will change things even further.

So, with all the strange new products, what’s a dealer to do to harness their full potential for driving targeted traffic, boosting leads, and maximizing sales?

On February 29, 2024, Alex Melen cofounder, CO-CEO & CFO of SmartSites shared his thoughts on how to plan a Pay Per Click marketing campaign and supercharge your online marketing efforts.



SmartSites, founded by brothers Alex and Michael Melen, bring over 10 years of digital media experience. But before SmartSites, Alex spent 3 years heading up digital analytics on the Walmart account at Starcom MediaVest Group (SMG). In the late 1990’s, Alex founded T35 Hosting – one of the first and largest free web hosting providers.

Alex has been featured numerous times in Business Week, Forbes, and other publications and in 2006, was named one of America’s Top 25 Best Entrepreneurs by BusinessWeek.

This report is a summary of Alex’s comments and suggestions.

..... see his Contact Details on the last page.

“The more things change, the more they stay the same.”

Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr - writer

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising is a game-changer in the digital landscape, and in this webinar Alex Melen, joins us to discuss PPC today, touching on the crucial types of campaigns successful dealers are running.

MTB4 - SMART SITES - How to Plan & Manage a Pay Per Click Campaign in 2024

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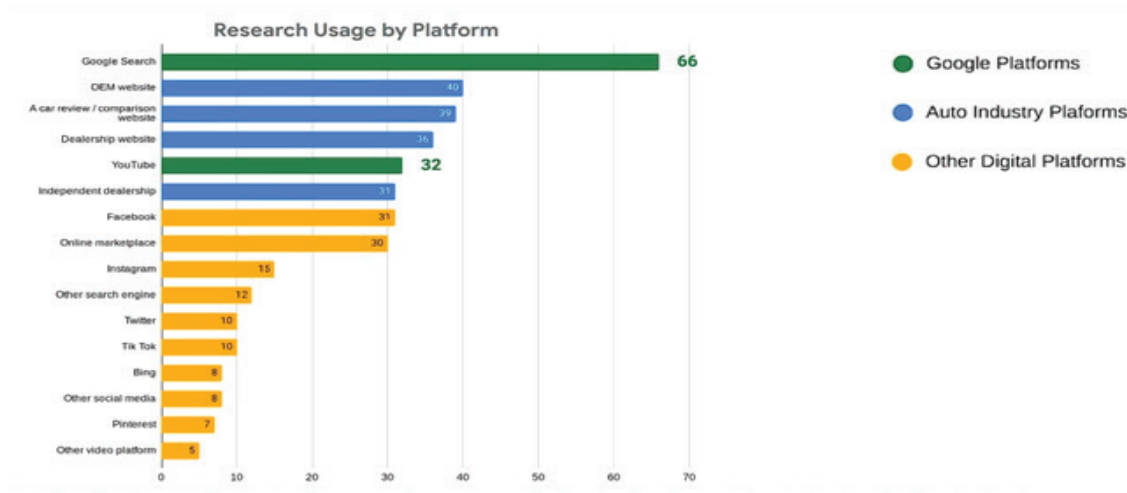
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The takeaways from today's workshop are:

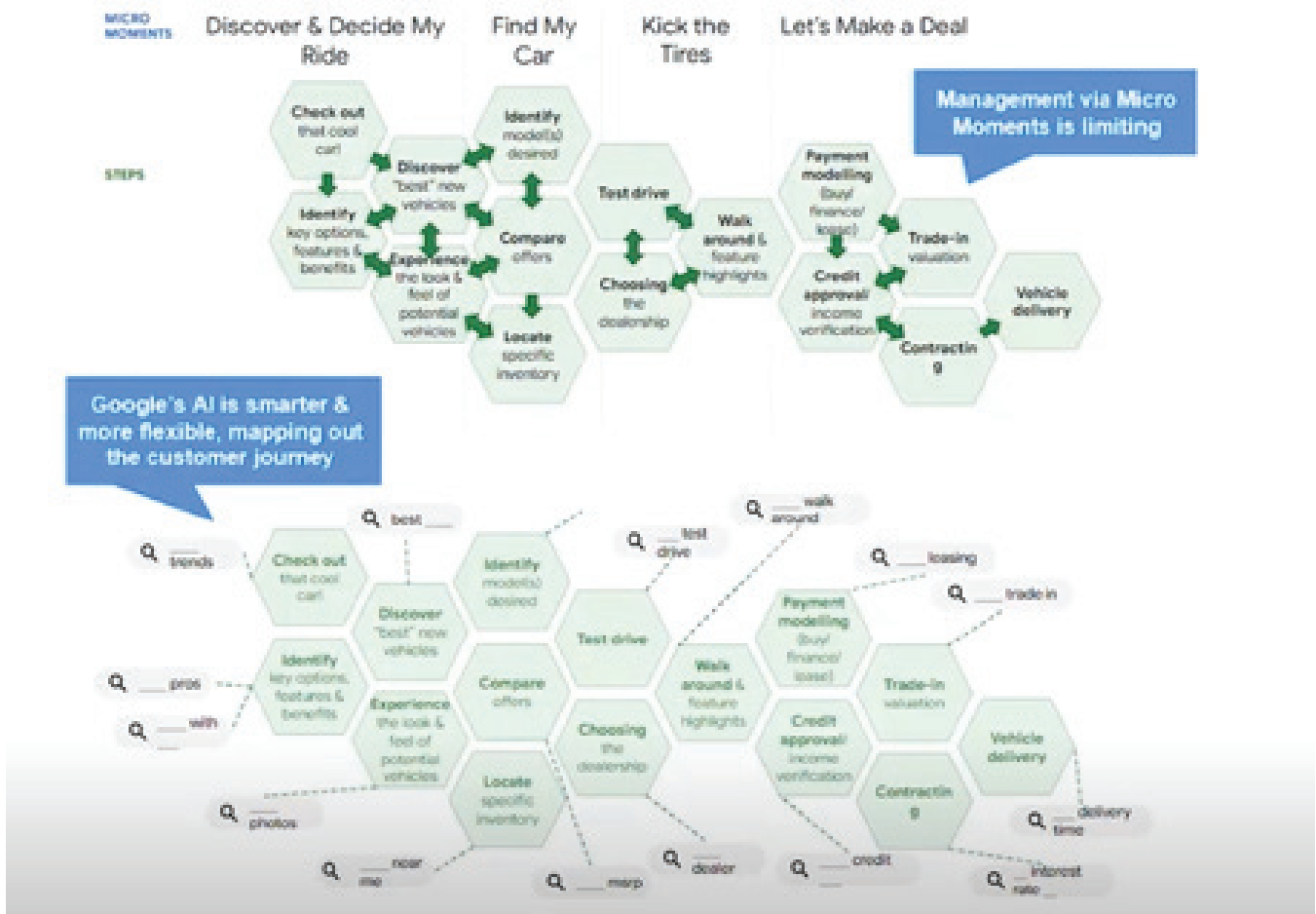
- ☑ PPC in 2024
 - Pulse check on Search Marketing in 2024.
- ☑ Lowest Hanging Fruit
 - How to quickly improve your results.
- ☑ Vehicle Listing Ads
 - VLAs continue to be one of the best types used car advertising.
- ☑ Opportunities Beyond Google Search
- ☑ The Future of Search
 - Google's Generative Search Experience

PPC in 2024

When it comes to where people conduct their searches, Google, OEM, and dealerships are the top four platforms with Google dominating at 66%.



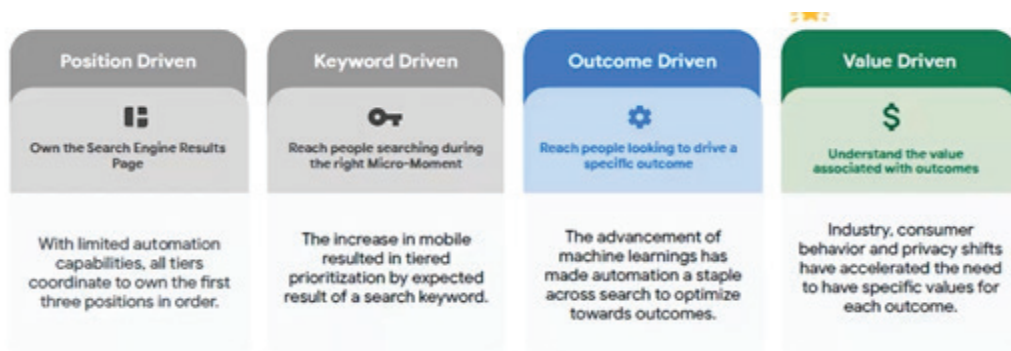
And with many more touch points, the customer journey is becoming increasingly complex, placing greater need for leveraging automation and AI to succeed.



Lowest Hanging Fruit of PPC Success

Value Based Bidding

In response to greater need for precise search marketing automotive automation has been rapidly evolving from a Position Driven to a Value Driven approach.



To better understand the evolution, Alex described each strategy.

1. **Position Driven:** Client decides what position they appear in a search. For example, dealer decides that they want to be in the top two positions.

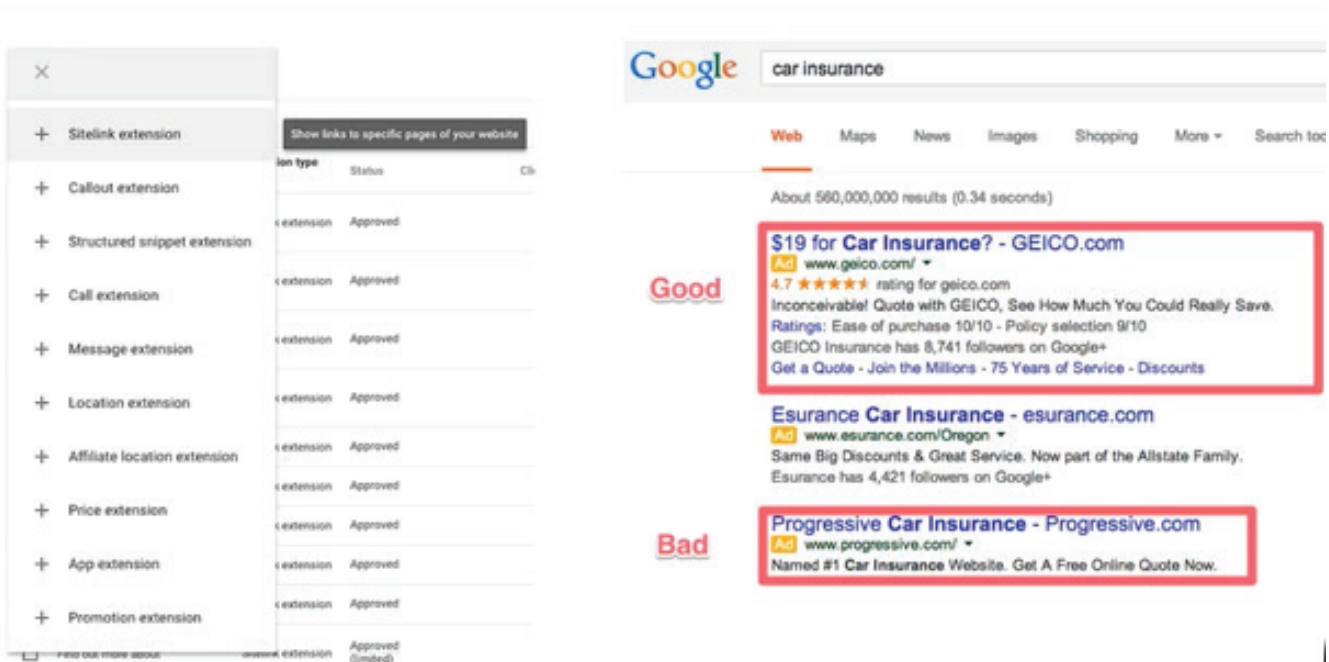
2. **Keyword Driven:** The goal is to reach searches in the Micro-moment as defined by a list of keywords that indicate interest to appear further in the customer's sales decision funnel.
3. He noted that many agencies still employ this method.
4. **Outcome Driven:** This method is designed to use AI to track specific conversion outcomes, such as Vehicle Description Pages (VDP), Forms and Phone Calls, based on the activities of the searcher.
5. **Value Driven:** Assigns specific values to specific conversion types that Google AI uses to optimize campaigns.
 - For example, if the customer comes to the dealership, the value that the dealer assigns to that conversion might be \$200. A phone call conversion might be assigned a value of \$25.
 - Because this requires assigning values to all possible conversion types, set up can be a heavy lift.
 - Alex noted that, while not as precise, simply assigning a relative value, such as "1" for a VDP up to "100" for a store visit can be a viable alternative.

Enhancing Your Presence

Google has extensions that can add value to your ads and are listed on the left side of the screenshot.

Alex recommends including ALL extensions in your campaigns to increase the size of your ad without paying more money.

For example, Geico's ad is much larger than Progressive's.



Some extensions are Beta, and may not be available to all Google users, however if you have access, they are frequently useful.

This illustration highlights an extension that allows images to compliment text ads.

About image extensions (beta)

Important

- Image extensions are in beta and may not be available to all Google Ads users.

Image extensions allow advertisers to upload rich, relevant visuals to complement their existing text ads. Image extensions can help drive performance for advertisers, with compelling visuals of products or services that enhance the message of their text ads.

How it works

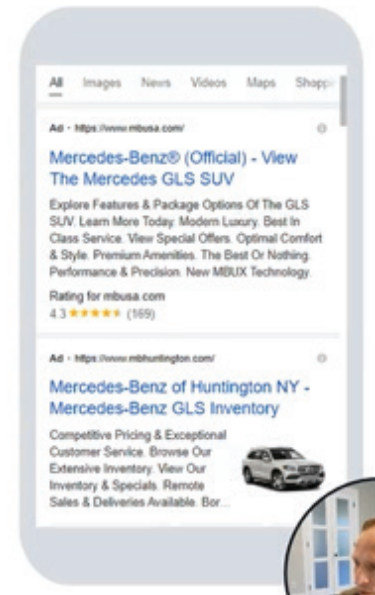
When your image extension appears on the Google search results page, potential customers see:

- Your headlines
- Your descriptions
- Your URL
- Your image

Requirements and guidelines

To best represent your products and services, you can upload up to 20 diverse, high-quality images that are relevant to your keywords. Image extension must follow a strict set of creative guidelines without exceptions. Make sure you review the guidelines below before creating your image extensions to avoid disapprovals. Images must also meet [image quality requirements](#).

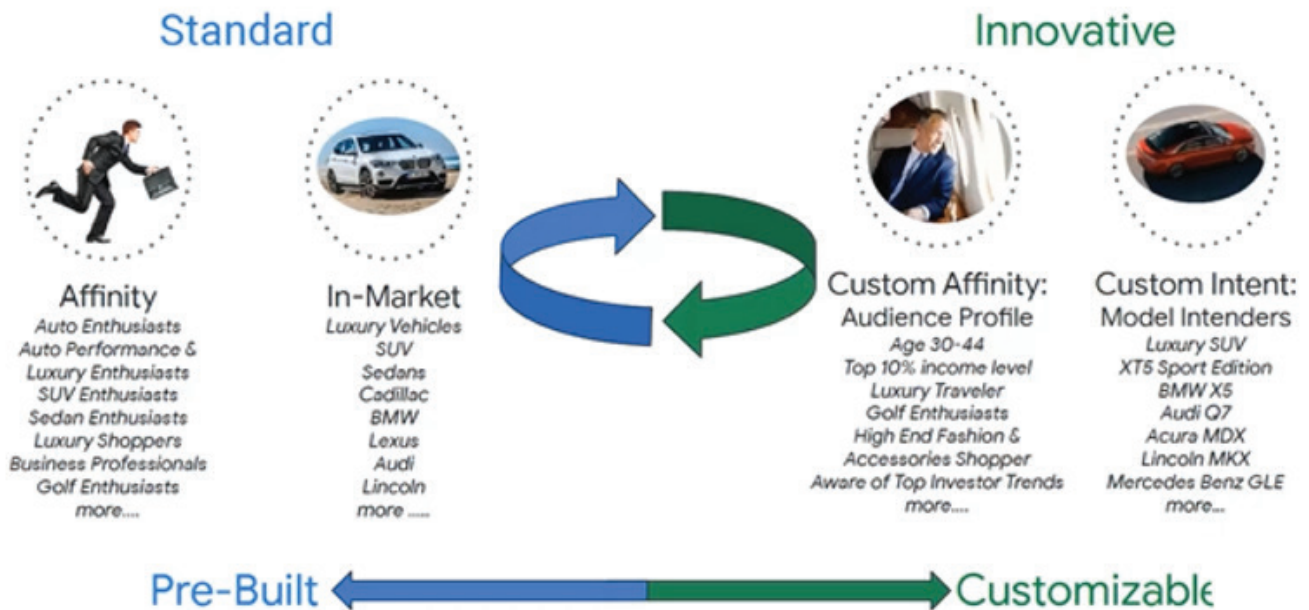
It can take up to 5 business days for images to go through quality and policy checks before being eligible to serve. You can read more [About the ad approval process](#).



Custom Audiences

Targeting audiences has been a common practice for messaging customers who have a high likelihood of conversion.

The slide shows how different methods have been used.



True custom audiences recently got a boost when Google allowed dealers to load their own audiences into Google ads and then target those people.

Custom Audiences

Offers the opportunity to move beyond Google's standard audience definitions and provides the tools to control how you define your audience



Google has many tools that dealers can use.

For example, First Party Customer Match

Scale your First-Party Data with Customer Match

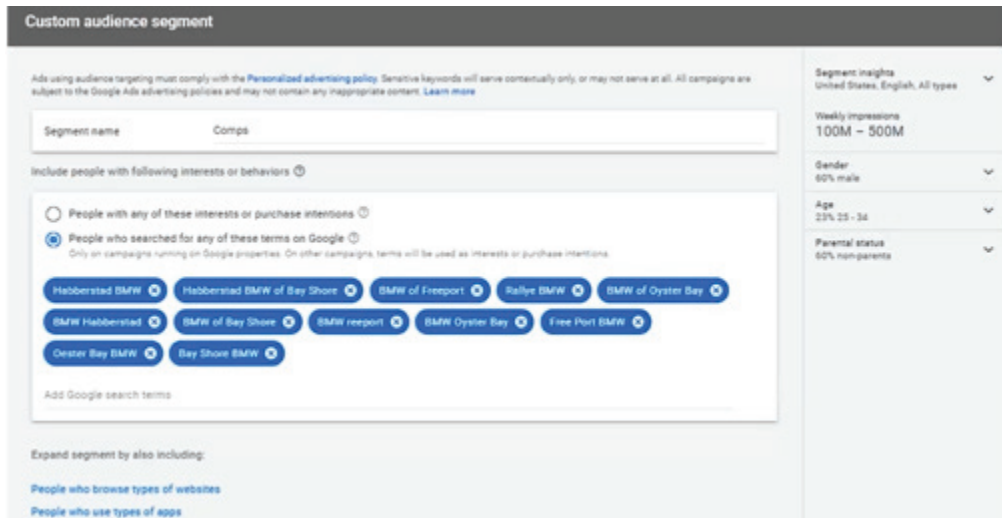
Reach custom segments of your customers and deliver a tailored message at the moment of relevance. This is achieved by uploading first-party data from people who interact directly with your business online and offline, which we match against signed-in Google users in a **scalable, privacy-first environment**.

How It Works

- 1 Advertiser segments customers utilizing any online or offline criteria
- 2 Advertiser securely uploads customer data to Google
- 3 Google attempts to match each customer record with its corresponding Google account
- 4 Matched customers are added to audience lists, which are reachable across **Search, Shopping, Display, Display & Video 360, Discovery, and YouTube**

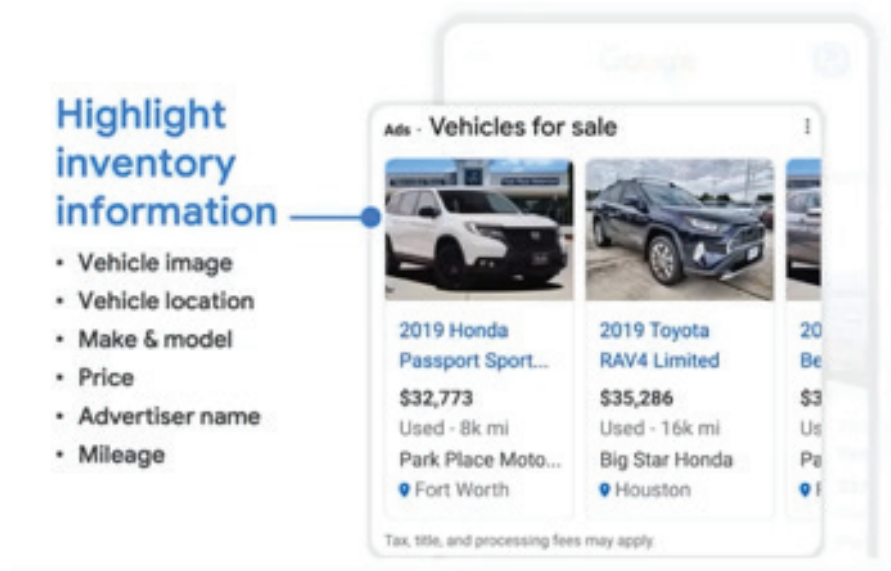


Another tool allows dealers to generate audiences based on selected search terms. In this example, the dealer's audience choice is customers who searched for their competition.

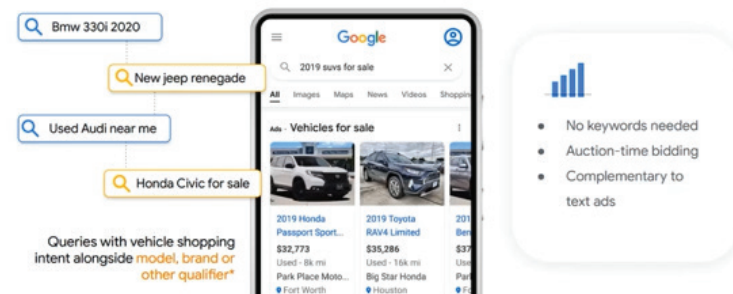


Vehicle Listing Ads (VLA)

Highlight key vehicle information before users click, helps acquire more qualified leads.

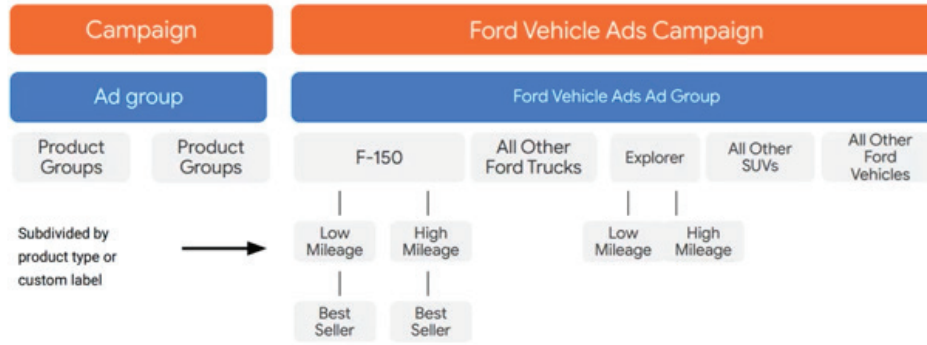


Simple but powerful intent based serving for increased performance on lower-funnel queries.



Campaign Structure

This illustrates how a Single Brand Dealer / OEM might set up a campaign.



Beyond Google

While Google is still the dominant player in the search space, it is by no means the only.

Other alternatives are useful for reaching customers who are using other platforms.

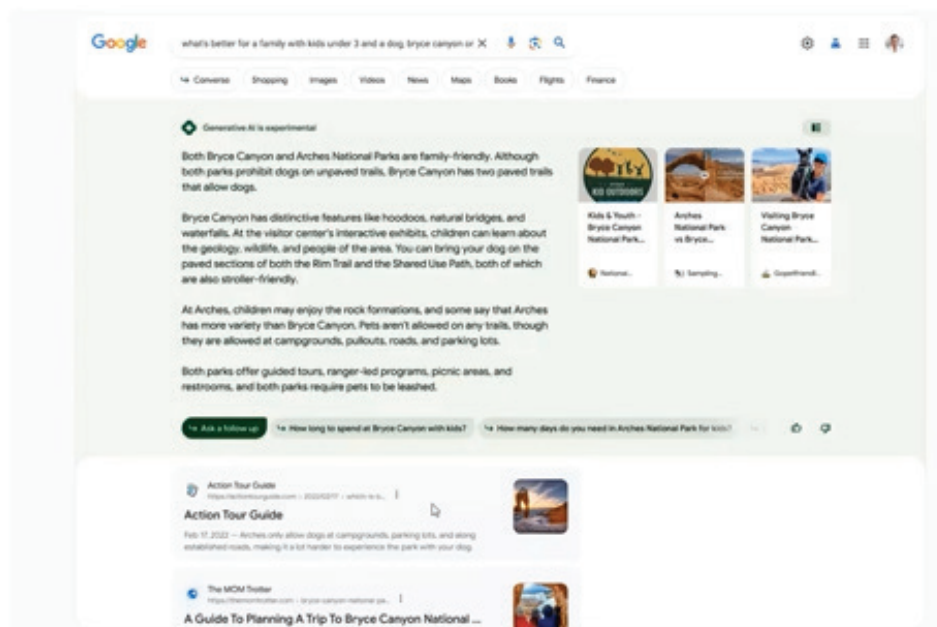
- Microsoft Bing with their partnership with ChatGPT has grown significantly.
- Other ways to boost Microsoft's reach are.
 - Duck Duck Go
 - LinkedIn
 - Microsoft Auto Inventory Ads reach beyond Search Engine Results Pages (SERP)

The Future of Search

AI is expected to feature prominently in new search products.

- Google's Generative Search Experience

Search results will be AI generated with a different look.



Microsoft Co-Pilot



Conclusion

Web advertising and marketing has been migrating from traditional print, radio and TV mediums for many years and continues to accelerate and evolve.

This presentation was a condensed version of a larger presentation, and even that only scratched the surface.

Because there was so much to absorb in a relatively short period of time, Alex encouraged attendees to reach out if they have questions.



Alex Melen

😊 Co-Founder at SmartSites 🏆
Award-Winning Entrepreneur 🗣️ Keynote ...



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