



CLOUDSWITCHED

FREE RESOURCE — CRO GUIDE

Conversion Rate Optimisation Guide

A practical guide to improving your Google Ads landing-page conversion rates through testing, optimisation, and data-driven decisions. Apply the frameworks, checklists, and templates to your own pages for immediate gains in lead quality and cost per acquisition.

3.75%

AVERAGE
GOOGLE ADS
CONVERSION
RATE

+50%

POTENTIAL
UPLIFT
FROM CRO
PROGRAMMES

7

CORE CRO
TOPICS
COVERED

60%

OF ADS CLICKS
COME FROM
MOBILE

CRO

GOOGLE ADS

LANDING PAGES

UK SME

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00

How to use this guide

Work through each section in order to build a comprehensive CRO strategy for your Google Ads campaigns. The guide covers the full journey from understanding your conversion funnel to measuring and reporting on optimisation results. Apply the frameworks, checklists, and templates to your own landing pages for immediate improvements.

Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) is the systematic process of increasing the percentage of visitors who complete a desired action on your landing pages. For Google Ads campaigns, even a small improvement in conversion rate can dramatically reduce your cost per acquisition and improve return on ad spend.

What this guide covers

- Understanding conversion funnels and where prospects drop off.
- Landing-page best practices: hero alignment, trust signals, and CTAs.
- A/B testing frameworks, including the ICE prioritisation model.
- CTA and form optimisation tactics that lift conversion.
- Mobile conversion strategies for the 60% of clicks that arrive on mobile.
- Page speed and technical factors that influence Quality Score.
- Measuring, reporting, and proving the business impact of CRO.

COMMON CRO MISTAKES

Testing without enough traffic volume · changing multiple elements at once · ignoring mobile · no clear hypothesis · ending tests too early · focusing on vanity metrics, not revenue · slow landing pages losing paid traffic · misaligned ad copy and landing pages.

WHY CRO MATTERS FOR GOOGLE ADS

You are already paying for every click. Improving conversion rate means more leads or sales from the same budget. A page converting at **5% instead of 2.5%** effectively halves your cost per acquisition without spending an extra penny on ads.

01

Understanding conversion funnels

Every Google Ads conversion follows a journey from impression to action. Understanding where prospects drop off lets you focus optimisation efforts where they matter most — you cannot fix what you cannot see, and most teams optimise the wrong stage of the funnel because they never map it.

The Google Ads conversion funnel

FUNNEL STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	TYPICAL RATE	DROP-OFF TO NEXT
Ad impression	Your ad appears for a search query	100% reach	↓ CTR 3–8%
Ad click	Visitor arrives on the landing page	3–8%	↓ 40–60% bounce
Engagement	Visitor scrolls, reads, and interacts	40–60%	↓ 50–70% drop-off
Conversion	Form submit, call, or purchase	2–5%	End of funnel

Key metrics at each stage

STAGE	KEY METRIC	BENCHMARK	WHAT IT TELLS YOU
Impression	Impression share	> 70%	Are you appearing for your target searches?
Click	Click-through rate (CTR)	3–8%	Is your ad compelling enough to earn the click?
Engagement	Bounce rate	< 40%	Does the landing page match the ad promise?
Conversion	Conversion rate	3–5%	Is the page persuading visitors to take action?
Post-conversion	Cost per acquisition (CPA)	Varies	Is the full journey cost-effective for your business?

FIX THE WEAKEST STAGE FIRST

A 1% lift on a 50% drop-off step beats a 10% lift on a 5% drop-off step every time. Identify the worst-performing stage in your funnel, then concentrate your testing budget there until it matches benchmark before moving on.

02

Landing-page best practices

Your landing page is where ad spend becomes revenue. These fundamentals should be in place before you begin any A/B testing programme — testing on a broken foundation just gives you faster ways to lose money.

Hero & headline alignment

- **Message match** — the landing-page headline mirrors the ad copy that brought the visitor (same keywords, same promise).
- **Clear value proposition above the fold** — visitors should understand your offer within 5 seconds of arrival.
- **Supporting subheadline** that expands on the main headline with a specific benefit or outcome.
- **Relevant hero image or video** that reinforces the message — not generic stock photography.

Trust signals

- **Customer reviews and testimonials** with real names, companies, and specifics — not vague praise.
- **Trust badges**: Google Partner, industry certifications, security seals, payment logos.
- **Client logos or case-study snippets** demonstrating proven results.
- **Star ratings** from Google Reviews, Trustpilot, or industry platforms displayed prominently.

Call-to-action (CTA)

- **Single clear CTA per page** — avoid competing actions that dilute focus.
- CTA visible **above the fold** and repeated after key content sections.
- **Action-oriented button text** — “Get My Free Quote” outperforms “Submit” or “Click Here”.
- **Minimal navigation** — remove site menus to keep visitors focused on converting.

CRITICAL RULE

Never send Google Ads traffic to your homepage. Always use dedicated landing pages that match the specific ad group's keyword theme and intent. **Homepage traffic typically converts at 50–70% lower rates** than purpose-built landing pages.

03

A/B testing framework

Structured testing eliminates guesswork. Use this framework to plan, execute, and learn from every test you run on your landing pages — whether the result is a win, a loss, or an inconclusive flat line.

Setting up a proper A/B test

Hypothesis. State what you are changing, why you believe it will improve conversion, and what metric you will measure.

Isolate the variable. Change only one element per test. Testing multiple changes simultaneously makes results unreadable.

Split traffic 50/50. Send equal volumes to control (A) and variant (B). Ensure traffic sources and timing are identical.

Measure and learn. Wait for statistical significance (95%+). Document results regardless of outcome for future reference.

What to test (priority order)

ELEMENT	WHAT TO VARY	TYPICAL IMPACT
Headlines	Benefit-led vs feature-led, question vs statement, keyword inclusion	High — 10–30% lift
CTA button	Text, colour, size, placement, urgency language	High — 5–25% lift
Form length	Number of fields, single vs multi-step, required vs optional	High — 10–40% lift
Social proof	Testimonials, review count, client logos, case-study data	Medium — 5–15% lift
Images / video	Hero image, product shots, explainer video, before/after	Medium — 5–15% lift
Page layout	Single vs two column, content order, whitespace	Medium — 3–10% lift
Copy length	Short-form vs long-form, bullets vs paragraphs	Low–Medium — 3–10% lift

03

A/B testing framework (continued)

ICE prioritisation framework

You will always have more test ideas than capacity to run them. Use the ICE framework to score and rank your backlog — rate each factor from 1 to 10, then average them to determine the order of work.

SCORE EVERY IDEA ON THREE DIMENSIONS

I — Impact. How much will this change move the conversion rate if the hypothesis is correct?

C — Confidence. How confident are you that this change will produce the expected result?

E — Ease. How easy and quick is it to implement and launch the test?

Statistical significance explained

Statistical significance tells you whether a test result is real or just random noise. A result is considered statistically significant at **95% confidence** when there is less than a 5% chance the difference is due to random variation.

30,000

VISITORS PER
VARIANT
FOR A 10% LIFT

7,500

VISITORS PER
VARIANT
FOR A 20% LIFT

95%

MINIMUM
CONFIDENCE
TO CALL A WINNER

100+

CONVERSIONS PER
VARIANT
BEFORE DECIDING

MINIMUM SAMPLE-SIZE RULE

For a test to detect a 10% *relative* improvement (e.g. 3% $\rightarrow$ 3.3%) at 95% confidence, you need roughly **30,000 visitors per variation**. For a 20% lift, about 7,500 per variation. Low-traffic pages require longer durations or larger expected effects to reach significance — otherwise you are reading noise.

03

A/B testing framework (continued)

Test documentation template

Capture every test in the same structure so you can search, learn, and avoid running the same experiment twice. The fields below are the minimum — add columns for owner, page URL, or audience segment if your programme runs across multiple properties.

FIELD	WHAT TO RECORD
Test name	Short, descriptive identifier (e.g. "Quote-CTA-colour-Q2")
Hypothesis	If we change X then Y will happen because Z
Element tested	Single page element (button, headline, form, hero image)
ICE score	Impact / Confidence / Ease (each 1–10)
Start & end dates	Include the calendar dates and total days running
Control vs variant CR	Conversion rate for each arm, with confidence level
Result	Win, Loss, or Inconclusive — plus the learning to reuse

DOCUMENT LOSSES, NOT JUST WINS

A failed test is still data. Most CRO programmes lose visibility because losses are never written down, so the same idea gets retested by a different person twelve months later. Treat the test log as **institutional memory** — the most valuable artefact your team produces.

04

CTA & form optimisation

Your call-to-action and forms are the final barrier between a visitor and a conversion. Small changes here deliver outsized results, and they are usually the cheapest changes to test.

Button best practices

- **High-contrast colour** — the CTA button should stand out from the page palette. Test contrasting colours, not just brand colours.
- **Action-oriented text** — use first-person language: “Get My Quote” beats “Request a Quote” by 25%+.
- **Generous sizing** — minimum 44px height for touch targets, visually prominent on the page.
- **Urgency or scarcity** — where genuine, add time-limited offers or availability indicators.
- **Reduce anxiety with micro-copy** beneath the button: “No credit card required”, “Free, no obligation”.
- **Repeat the CTA** at multiple points — after the hero, mid-page, and at the footer.

Form-field reduction

Every unnecessary form field creates friction. Research consistently shows that reducing form fields increases conversions.

+120%

LIFT FROM
REDUCING
11 FIELDS TO 4

+26%

LIFT FROM
REMOVING
ONE FIELD

-10%

DROP FOR EACH
ADDITIONAL FIELD

3-5

OPTIMAL FIELD
COUNT
FOR LEAD-GEN
FORMS

04

CTA & form optimisation (continued)

Form-design principles

- **Only ask for essential information** at the point of conversion — collect more later in the sales process.
- **Use smart defaults and autofill** where possible (browser autofill, postcode lookup, pre-selected dropdowns).
- **Mark optional fields clearly** — or, better, remove them entirely.
- **Show real-time validation** so users fix errors before submitting, not after.

Multi-step vs single forms

Multi-step forms

- Lower perceived effort (commitment bias)
- Progress bars increase completion
- Capture partial data if a user abandons
- Best for 5+ fields or complex flows
- Can increase conversions by 20–30%

Single-page forms

- Simpler to build and maintain
- Full visibility of what is required
- Best for 3–4 simple fields
- No risk of mid-step abandonment
- Higher quality leads (more committed)

PICK FORM TYPE BEFORE YOU START TESTING

Whether multi-step or single-form is right for your page depends on the field count and the complexity of the questions, not on which style is currently trending. Decide first, then test the details within that format — do not waste cycles A/B testing the wrong format against itself.

05

Mobile conversion optimisation

Over **60% of Google Ads clicks come from mobile devices**. If your mobile experience is poor, you are wasting more than half your ad budget — and the people clicking those ads are exactly the people you are paying the most to reach.

Mobile conversion checklist

- **Thumb-friendly tap targets** — all buttons and links minimum 48px × 48px with 8px+ spacing between elements.
- **Simplified forms** — fewer fields on mobile; use appropriate input types (`tel` , `email`) for correct keyboards.
- **Click-to-call enabled** — prominent phone button for users who prefer calling over forms.
- **Fast mobile loading** — under 3 seconds on 4G connections (53% of mobile users abandon after 3s).
- **No horizontal scrolling** — all content fits within the viewport width; images resize correctly.
- **Readable text without zooming** — minimum 16px base font size, adequate line height and contrast.
- **Sticky CTA on mobile** — a fixed button at the bottom of the screen keeps the action always one tap away.

PHONE VS FORM — THE MOBILE MULTIPLIER

For service-based businesses, a prominent click-to-call button on mobile can outperform form submissions by **3–5×**. People searching from a phone are often in a buying moment. Ensure call tracking is configured in Google Ads to attribute these conversions correctly — otherwise they vanish from your CPA maths and you under-fund what is working best.

Mobile-specific friction to remove

Interstitial pop-ups. Google penalises intrusive interstitials on mobile — both for SEO and Quality Score. Use slim banners instead.

Long forms above the fold. Replace with a single “Get Started” CTA that opens the form on the next view.

Auto-playing video with sound. Increases bounce, hurts speed, drains data — disable on mobile breakpoints.

Hover-only menus. Hover does not exist on touch — rebuild as tap-and-hold or expand-on-click.

06

Page speed & technical factors

Technical performance directly impacts both conversion rates and Quality Score. Google penalises slow landing pages with higher CPCs and lower ad positions — speed is not a developer concern, it is a marketing budget concern.

The impact of load time on conversions

Page speed is not just a technical metric — it is a direct revenue driver. Research from Google and others consistently shows:



Core Web Vitals targets

METRIC	GOOD	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	POOR	WHAT IT MEASURES
Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)	≤ 2.5s	2.5s – 4.0s	> 4.0s	Loading speed of main content
Interaction to Next Paint (INP)	≤ 200ms	200ms – 500ms	> 500ms	Responsiveness to user input
Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS)	≤ 0.1	0.1 – 0.25	> 0.25	Visual stability during load

QUALITY SCORE CONNECTION

Landing-page experience is one of three factors in Quality Score (alongside expected CTR and ad relevance). A slow page directly lowers your Quality Score, **increasing your CPC and reducing your ad position**. Improving speed lowers costs and boosts conversions simultaneously — the rare lever that helps both sides of the equation.

06

Page speed & technical factors (continued)

Speed-optimisation checklist

- **Image optimisation** — compress all images, use WebP/AVIF, serve correct dimensions (no oversized images scaled down in CSS).
- **Lazy loading** — defer loading of below-fold images and videos until the user scrolls.
- **Minimise JavaScript** — remove unused scripts, defer non-critical JS, avoid render-blocking resources.
- **Browser caching** — set appropriate cache headers for static assets (images, CSS, fonts) to avoid re-downloading.
- **CDN usage** — serve assets from a CDN (Cloudflare, Fastly, AWS CloudFront) for global speed.
- **Reduce server response time** — target TTFB under 200ms with fast hosting, database optimisation, and edge caching.
- **Font optimisation** — use `font-display: swap`, subset fonts, limit font weights loaded.
- **Minimise third-party scripts** — audit analytics tags, chat widgets, and tracking pixels; each one adds latency.
- **Critical CSS inlining** — inline above-fold CSS to eliminate render-blocking stylesheet requests.
- **Preconnect and preload** — use resource hints for critical third-party domains and key assets (fonts, hero images).

COMMON SPEED KILLER

Chat widgets, heatmap tools, and multiple analytics tags are often the biggest speed offenders on landing pages. Audit all third-party scripts and remove anything that does not directly contribute to conversion. **A single chat widget can add 500ms–2s to load time** — usually for a feature less than 2% of visitors use.

06

Page speed & technical factors (continued)

Speed audit tools

Use these tools at every stage of a speed audit — lab data from synthetic tests to find issues, then field data from real users to confirm those issues affect your actual traffic.

TOOL	BEST FOR	URL
Google PageSpeed Insights	Core Web Vitals, field + lab data	pagespeed.web.dev
GTmetrix	Waterfall analysis, historical tracking	gtmetrix.com
WebPageTest	Advanced testing, filmstrip view	webpagetest.org
Chrome DevTools (Lighthouse)	Local testing, performance profiling	Built into Chrome
Google Search Console	Real-user Core Web Vitals data	search.google.com/search-console

COMBINE LAB AND FIELD DATA

Lab tools (PageSpeed Insights synthetic test, Lighthouse) show you the technical floor under ideal conditions. Field tools (Search Console CrUX data, real-user monitoring) show what your actual visitors experience over a real network. Optimise for the field number — that is the one that affects revenue and Quality Score.

SET A SPEED BUDGET PER PAGE TEMPLATE

Pick an LCP target (e.g. 2.0s) for each template (home, product, landing) and treat new asset requests as items that must fit inside it. Without a budget, page weight only ever grows. With one, every new script has to displace an existing one.

07

Measuring & reporting CRO results

Proper measurement and reporting ensures your CRO efforts are credited, funded, and continuously improved. Set up tracking correctly from the start — retrofitting analytics on a live programme is one of the most expensive mistakes a marketing team can make.

Conversion-tracking setup

- **Google Ads conversion tag** fires on all thank-you / confirmation pages with the correct conversion-action ID.
- **Enhanced conversions enabled** to capture first-party data and improve attribution in a cookieless world.
- **Google Tag Manager** used for all tag deployment — avoid hardcoding for easier management and debugging.
- **Conversion values assigned** to each action (purchase revenue, estimated lead value by type).

GA4 event tracking for CRO

- **Scroll-depth events** configured (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%) to understand engagement patterns.
- **Form interaction events** — track form starts, field focus, and form abandonment, not just submissions.
- **CTA click events** on all buttons and phone links to measure interaction rates independently of conversions.
- **Video engagement events** (play, 25%, 50%, 75%, complete) if landing pages include explainer videos.
- **Custom audiences** built from engaged non-converters for remarketing campaigns.

TRACK THE STEPS, NOT JUST THE FINISH LINE

Submissions tell you who converted. Field-level events tell you *why* the others did not. A form that loses 60% of starters at the “phone number” field is a fixable form — but only if you measure starts and abandonment, not just completions.

07

Measuring & reporting (continued)

Creating a CRO dashboard

A good CRO dashboard answers three questions: **What are we testing?** **What is winning?** **What is the business impact?**

DASHBOARD SECTION	METRICS TO INCLUDE	FREQUENCY
Overall performance	Conversion rate, CPA, ROAS, total conversions (week-on-week)	Weekly
Active tests	Test name, variant performance, sample size, days running, significance %	Real-time
Test results log	Completed tests, winner, lift %, confidence level, date implemented	Monthly
Page-level metrics	Bounce rate, avg session duration, scroll depth by landing page	Weekly
Technical health	Core Web Vitals scores, mobile usability, broken elements	Monthly
Revenue impact	Incremental conversions, revenue gained, CPA saved from CRO wins	Monthly / Quarterly

Stakeholder reporting — monthly structure

Executive summary. Key wins, conversion-rate trend, revenue impact.

Test results. Each test with hypothesis, result, confidence, and next steps.

Active tests. Currently running experiments and expected completion dates.

Pipeline. Upcoming test ideas prioritised by ICE score.

Recommendations. Strategic next steps for the coming month.

07

Measuring & reporting (continued)

Deciding when a test is finished

Ending a test too early invites a false positive that you then ship into production. Use the two checklists below as a gate — only declare a winner when every condition on the left is true; otherwise keep collecting data.

When to call a winner

- 95%+ statistical confidence reached
- Minimum 100 conversions per variant
- Test has run for at least 1 full week
- Result covers all days of the week
- No external factors skewing data

When to keep testing

- Confidence below 95%
- Fewer than 7 days of data
- Results flip-flop between variants
- Conversion volume is very low
- Major external event during test period

BEWARE THE PEEKING PROBLEM

Checking results every day and stopping the moment confidence crosses 95% inflates your false-positive rate dramatically. Set a fixed sample-size target at the start and resist the urge to call the test until you reach it — or use sequential testing that is mathematically designed for early peeking.

Need expert CRO for your Google Ads?

Our team delivers landing-page optimisation, A/B testing, and conversion-rate improvements that reduce your CPA and maximise ROAS.

info@cloudswitched.com

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CONVERSION & PERFORMANCE MARKETING

info@cloudswitched.com

New London House, 6 London St
London EC3R 7LP · United Kingdom