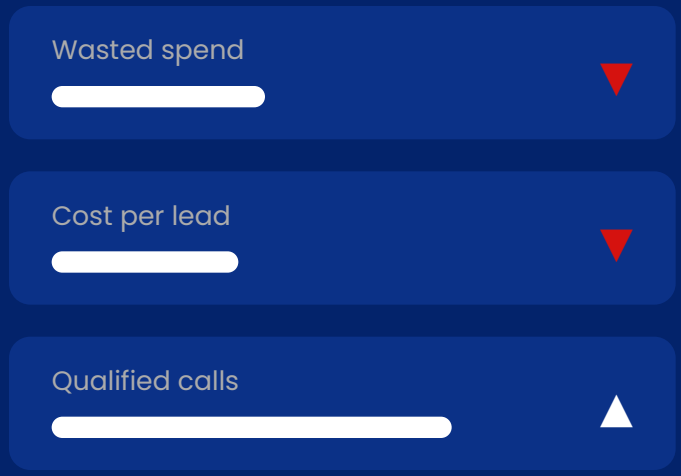
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A GOOGLE ADS PLAYBOOK FOR LAW FIRMS

How to Audit & Optimize Your Law Firm's Google Ads

A step-by-step walkthrough of the settings, reports and red flags that decide whether your ad budget turns into signed cases.



Presented by DuoDigital · duodigital.io

BEFORE WE START

This is not a Google Ads 101 guide.

It's written for managing partners, firm administrators and in-house marketers who already have a Google Ads account running and want to know whether it's actually working.

Every section follows the same pattern: **where to look** in the account, **what a problem looks like**, and **what to change**. The screens are rebuilt with sample law-firm data so you know exactly what you're hunting for in your own account.

> **Quick check:** if you can't log in to your own Google Ads account today, fix that before anything else. Your firm should own the account, the billing and the data.

You'll get the most from this if...

- You spend $3,000+ a month on Google Ads
- Leads come in, but too few become consultations
- You're not sure what your agency changes each month
- Your cost per case keeps climbing and nobody can say why

WHAT WE'LL COVER

The 9-point audit

01
Campaign settings
Networks, location options, bidding

02
Location performance
County, city and ZIP-level results

03
Audiences
Age and household income

04
Ad schedule
Hours and days that produce calls

05
Devices
Mobile vs. desktop vs. tablet

06
Assets
Sitelinks, callouts, snippets, calls

07
Search terms
What people actually typed

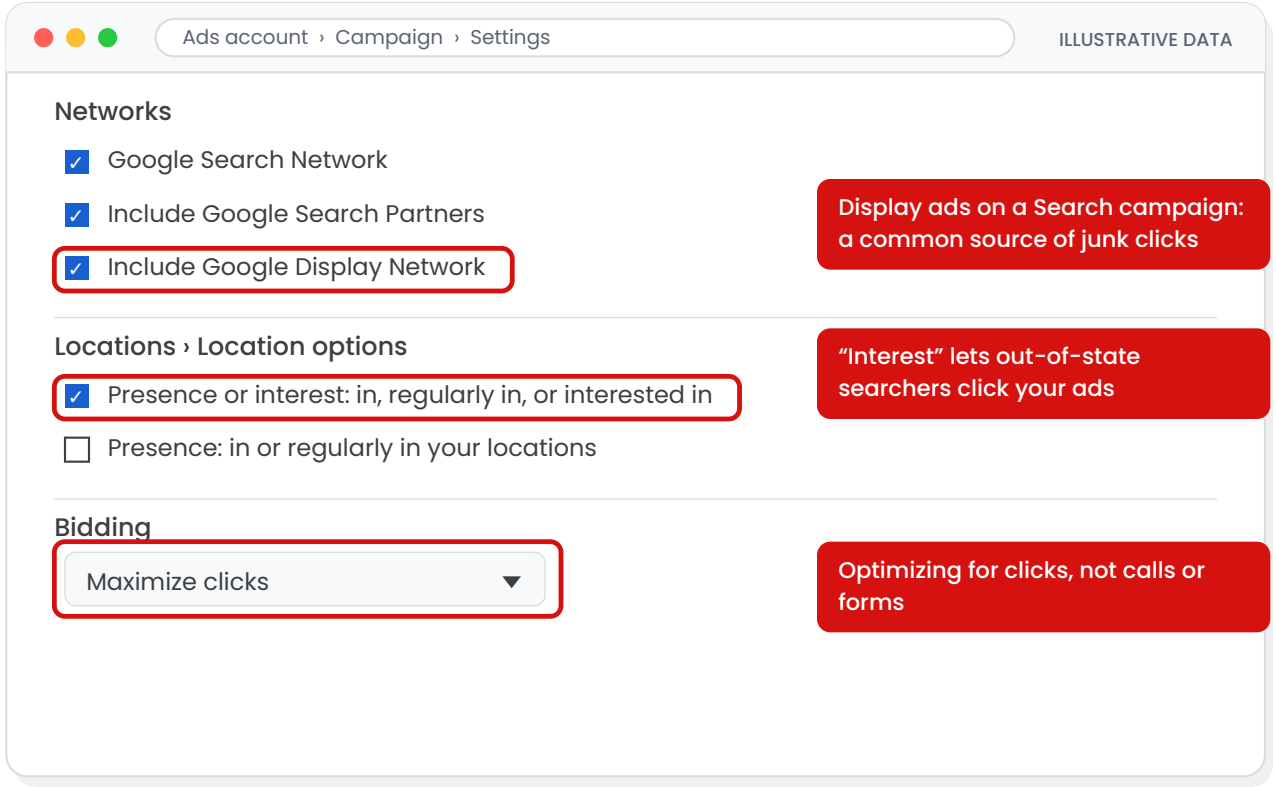
08
Conversion tracking
Counting cases, not clicks

09
Change history
Is anyone actually working the account?

01 Campaign settings

Default settings are built to spend. Three of them quietly send legal budgets to people who will never hire you.

1. **Networks:** turn off the Display Network on Search campaigns. Test Search Partners separately before leaving it on.
2. **Location options:** choose *Presence* so ads only show to people in or regularly in your service area, not people merely "interested" in it.
3. **Bidding:** move off Maximize Clicks once conversion tracking is reliable. Clicks aren't clients.



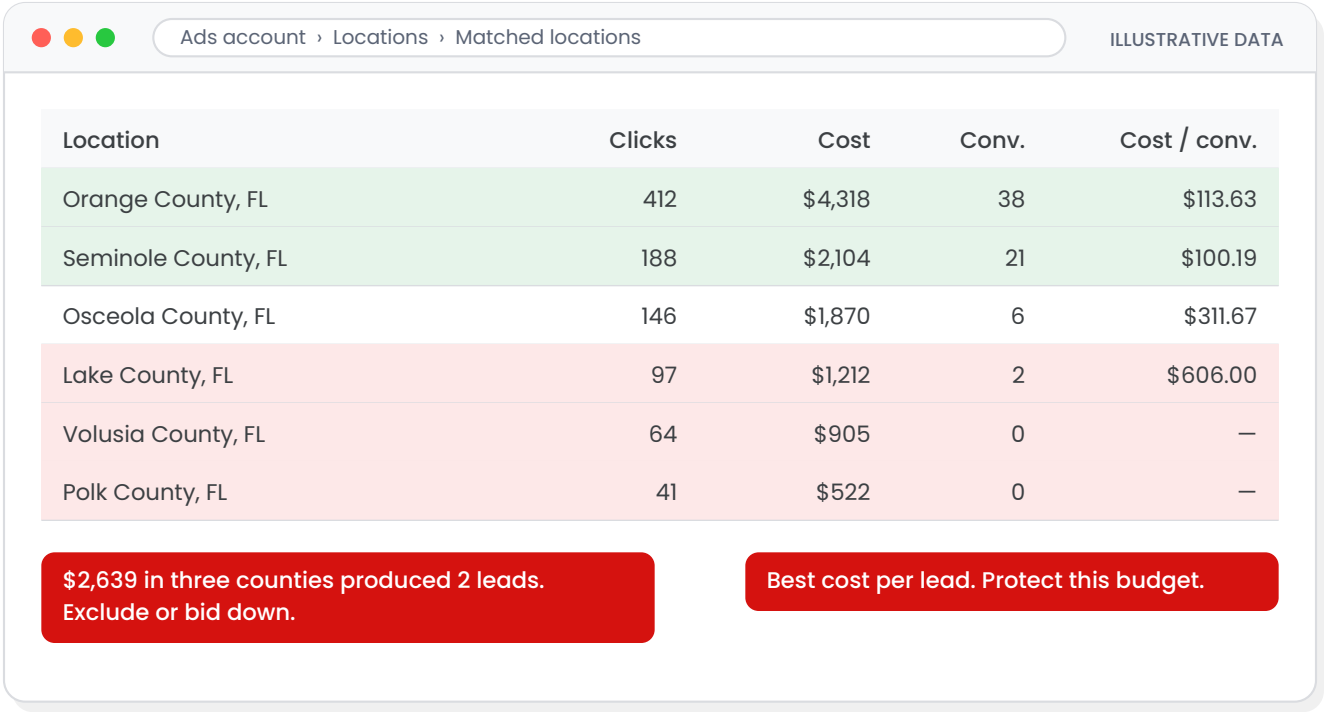
HOW TO OPTIMIZE

02 Location performance

Open **Insights & reports › When and where ads showed › Locations**. Sort by cost, then compare cost per conversion across the areas you serve.

Counties that spend without converting are the first place to trim. Top performers deserve more budget or their own campaign.

> **Smart Bidding note:** with Maximize Conversions or Target CPA, most bid adjustments are ignored. Use this data to exclude areas, split campaigns or shift budget instead.

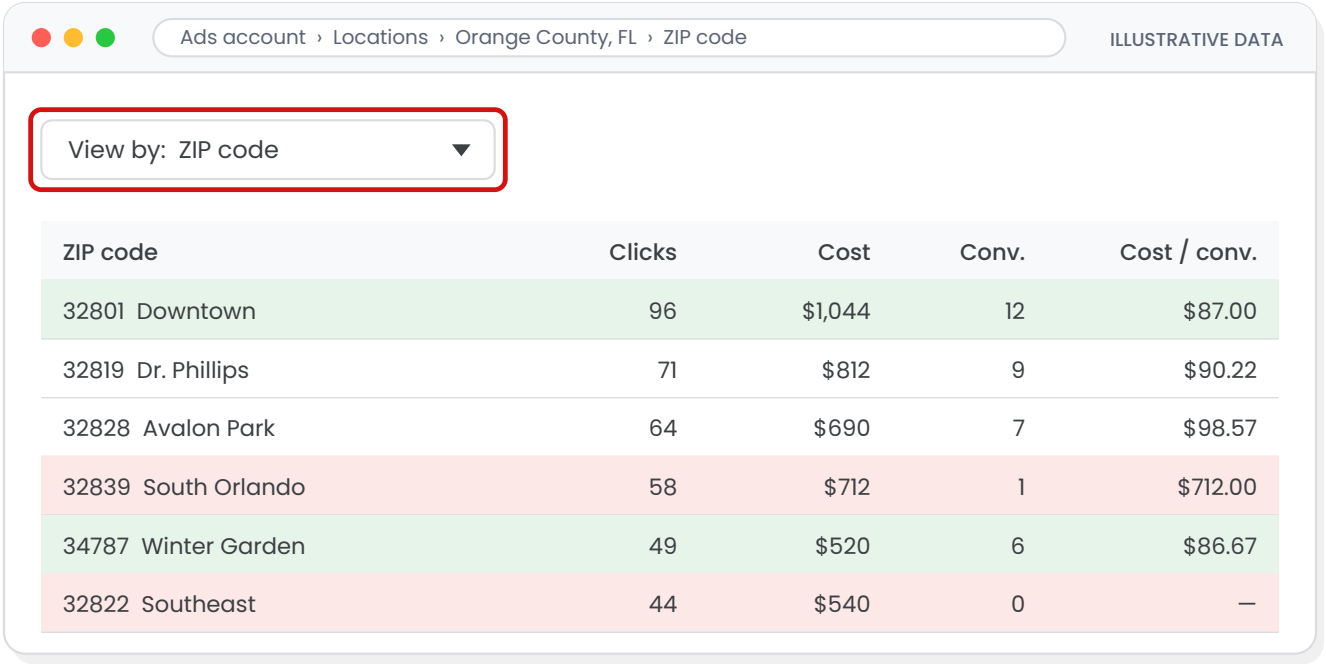


HOW TO OPTIMIZE

02 Go deeper: city and ZIP

1. Click any location in the report to open the drop-down menu.
2. Switch the view to **city**, **ZIP code** or another level for a granular breakdown.
3. Look for pockets inside a strong county that are dragging it down, and ZIPs outside your core area that convert surprisingly well.

> For family law, courthouse location and where your clients actually live often differ. Let the ZIP data tell you which one matters.



ZIP code	Clicks	Cost	Conv.	Cost / conv.
32801 Downtown	96	$1,044	12	$87.00
32819 Dr. Phillips	71	$812	9	$90.22
32828 Avalon Park	64	$690	7	$98.57
32839 South Orlando	58	$712	1	$712.00
34787 Winter Garden	49	$520	6	$86.67
32822 Southeast	44	$540	0	–

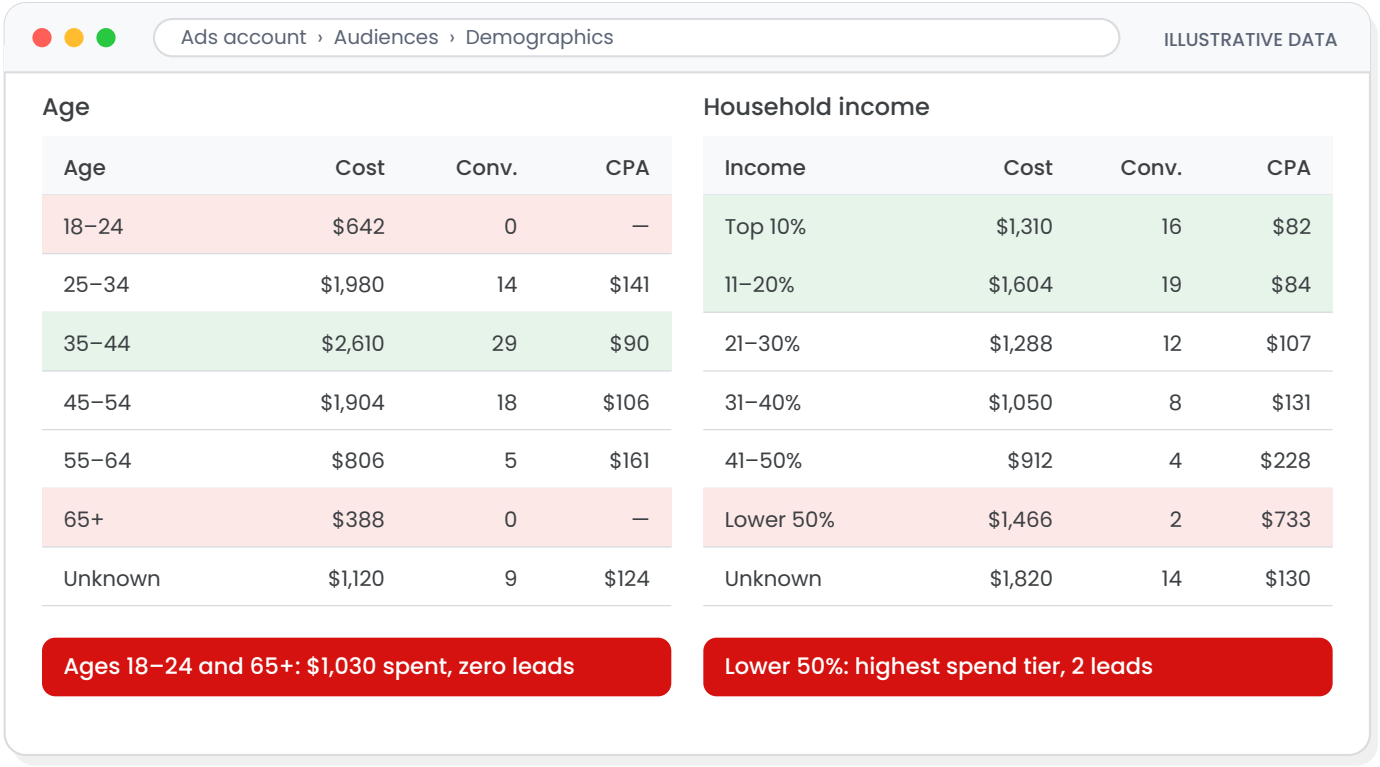
HOW TO OPTIMIZE

03 Audiences: age and income

Go to **Audiences, keywords & content › Demographics**. Review age and household income side by side.

Legal services skew toward people with the means to retain counsel. If the bottom income tiers or the youngest ages spend heavily and never convert, adjust or exclude them.

> Always keep “Unknown” switched on. It’s often a large share of real prospects.



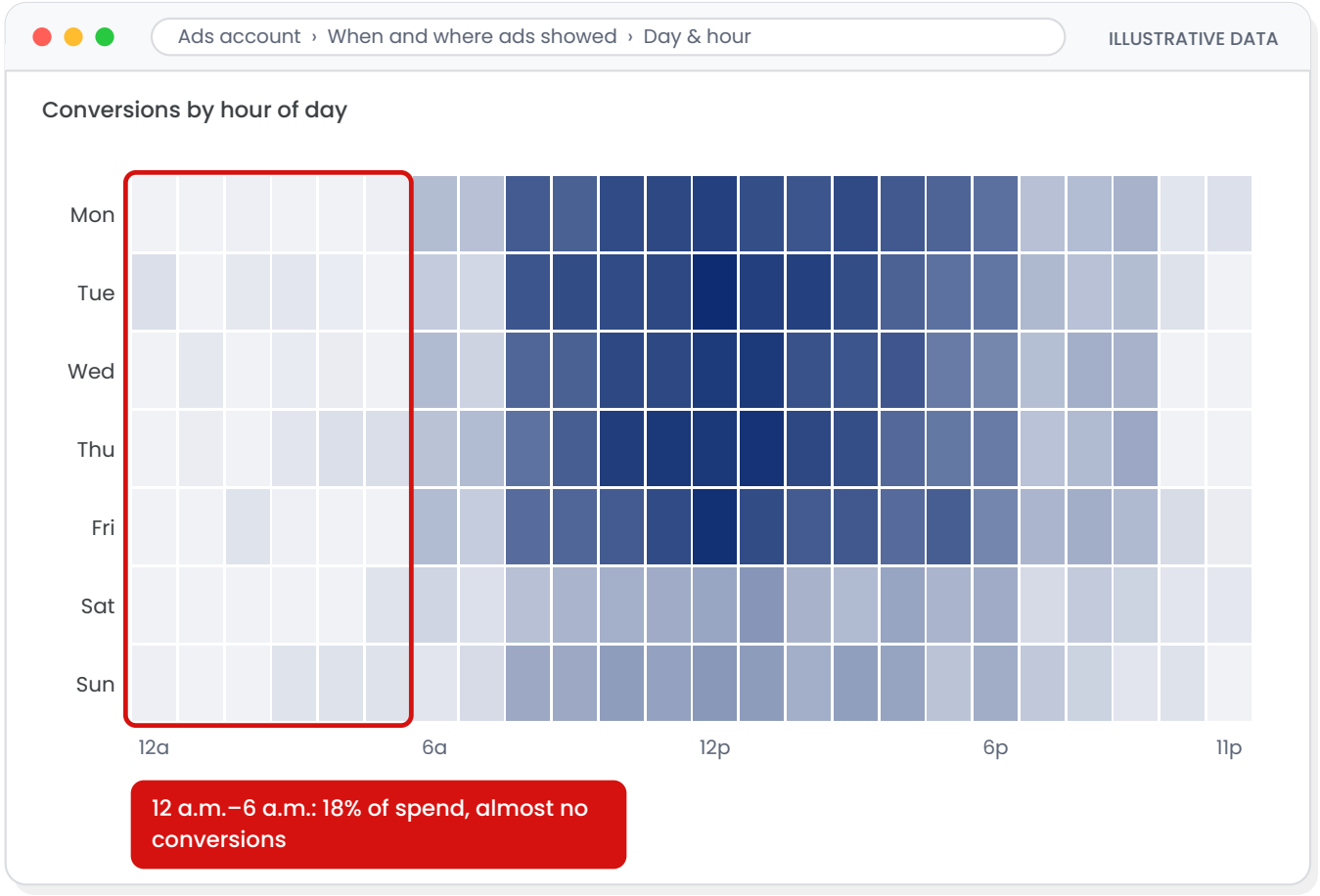
HOW TO OPTIMIZE

04 Ad schedule

Open **When and where ads showed › Day & hour** and look at conversions, not clicks.

Late-night traffic is usually browsing and research. Running 24/7 also means you can't adjust by time of day.

> **The law-firm exception:** run late hours only if a live person or reliable after-hours intake answers the phone. An unanswered 11 p.m. call is paid-for lost revenue.



HOW TO OPTIMIZE

05 Devices

Check **When and where ads showed › Devices**. For most law firms, mobile drives the phone calls, so it should carry the account.

If desktop dramatically outperforms mobile on form fills, the problem is often your mobile landing page, not the audience.

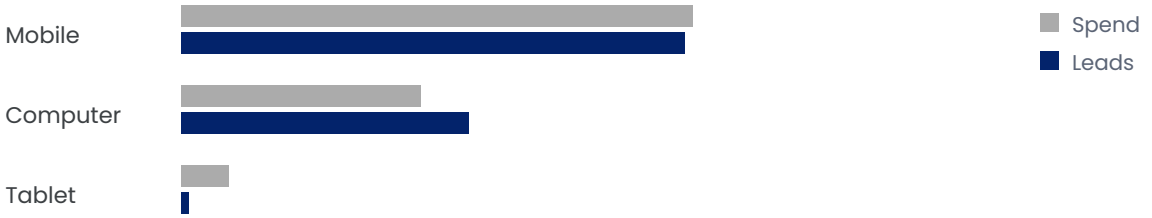
> If your mobile experience is poor, fix the page before you cut mobile. A steep negative adjustment (up to -90%, or -100% under Smart Bidding) is a stopgap, not a strategy.

Ads account › When and where ads showed › Devices

ILLUSTRATIVE DATA

Device	Cost	Calls	Forms	Cost / lead
Mobile phones	$6,840	41	6	$146.94
Computers	$3,215	8	19	$119.07
Tablets	$612	0	1	$612.00

Share of spend vs. share of leads

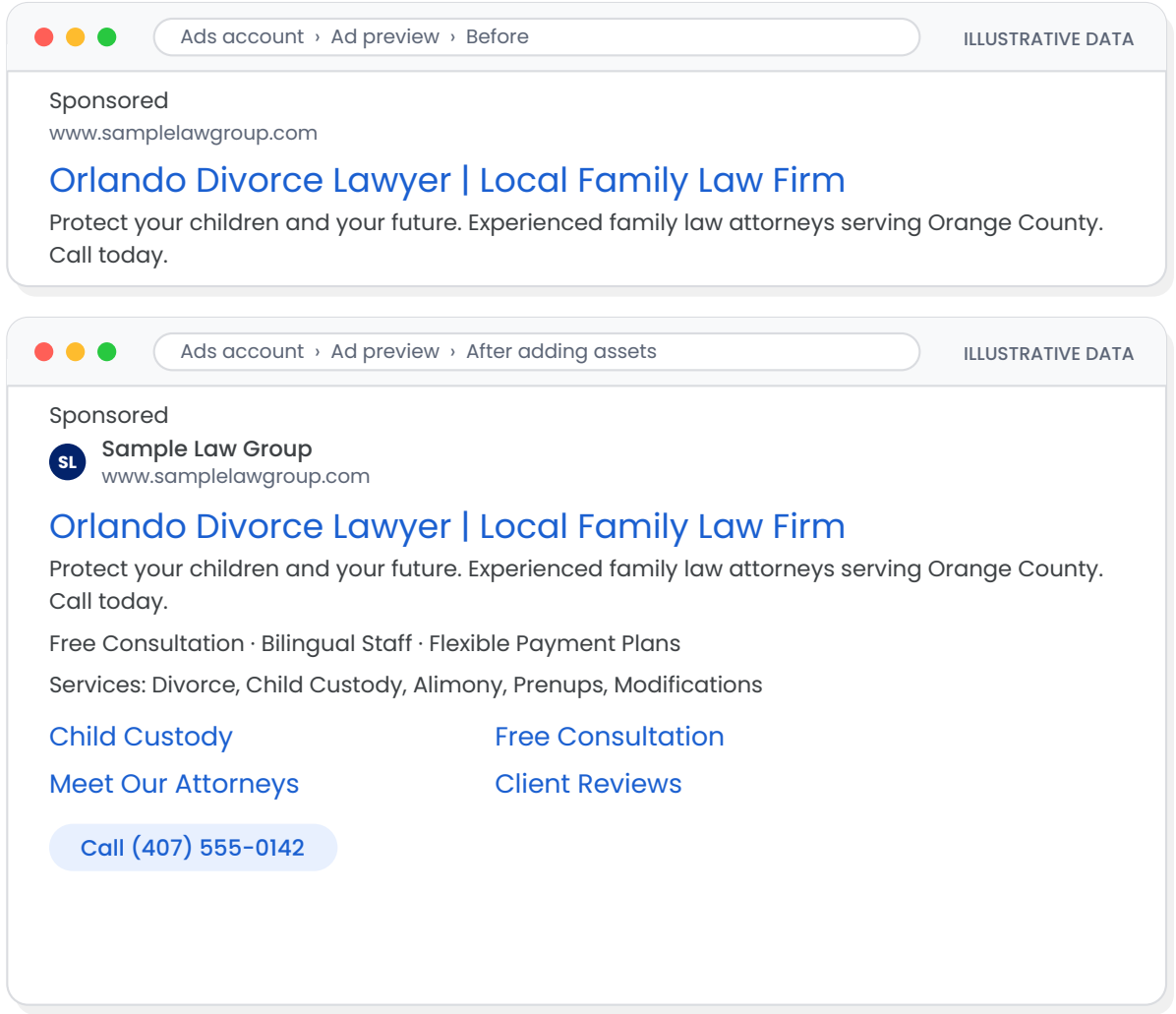


06 Assets: make the ad bigger

Assets (formerly extensions) add links, details and a phone number to your ad. They take up more of the page and give searchers more reasons to choose you.

MINIMUM SET FOR A LAW FIRM

Sitelinks: practice areas, free consultation, about the attorneys, reviews
Callouts: short trust points like “Bilingual Staff” or “Flexible Payment Plans”
Structured snippets: a “Services” list of case types
Call asset: tracked number, scheduled to intake hours
Business name & logo



HOW TO OPTIMIZE

06 Where to add each asset

Ads account › Assets › Table view

ILLUSTRATIVE DATA

Asset type	Asset	Level	Status	Impr.	CTR
Sitelink	Child Custody	Account	Eligible	12,410	4.8%
Sitelink	Free Consultation	Account	Eligible	11,980	6.1%
Callout	Bilingual Staff	Account	Eligible	14,220	—
Callout	Flexible Payment Plans	Account	Eligible	13,870	—
Structured snippet	Services: Divorce, Child Custody, Alimony…	Account	Eligible	9,640	—
Call	(407) 555-0142	Account	Eligible	8,310	3.2%
Business logo	Sample Law Group logo	Account	Eligible	15,050	—
Image	—	—	Not added	—	—

Add assets at the **account** level so every campaign inherits them, then override at the campaign level where practice areas differ. Missing asset types are free visibility you're leaving on the table.

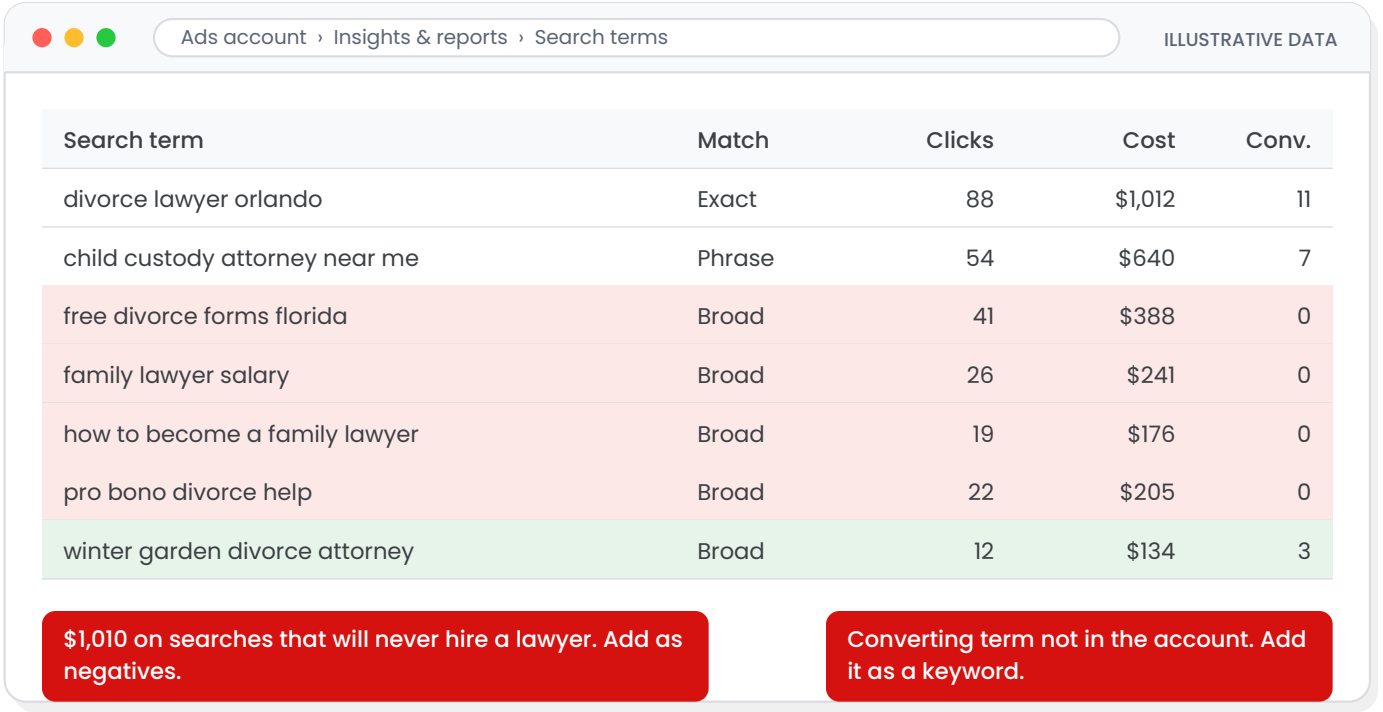
HOW TO OPTIMIZE

07 Search terms

Go to **Insights & reports › Search terms**. This shows what people actually typed before clicking your ad, which is often very different from your keywords.

Add irrelevant terms as **negative keywords**. Promote high-converting terms to their own keywords.

> Common legal budget drains: *free, forms, salary, jobs, school, pro bono, DIY, how to become*.



Search term	Match	Clicks	Cost	Conv.
divorce lawyer orlando	Exact	88	$1,012	11
child custody attorney near me	Phrase	54	$640	7
free divorce forms florida	Broad	41	$388	0
family lawyer salary	Broad	26	$241	0
how to become a family lawyer	Broad	19	$176	0
pro bono divorce help	Broad	22	$205	0
winter garden divorce attorney	Broad	12	$134	3

$1,010 on searches that will never hire a lawyer. Add as negatives.

Converting term not in the account. Add it as a keyword.

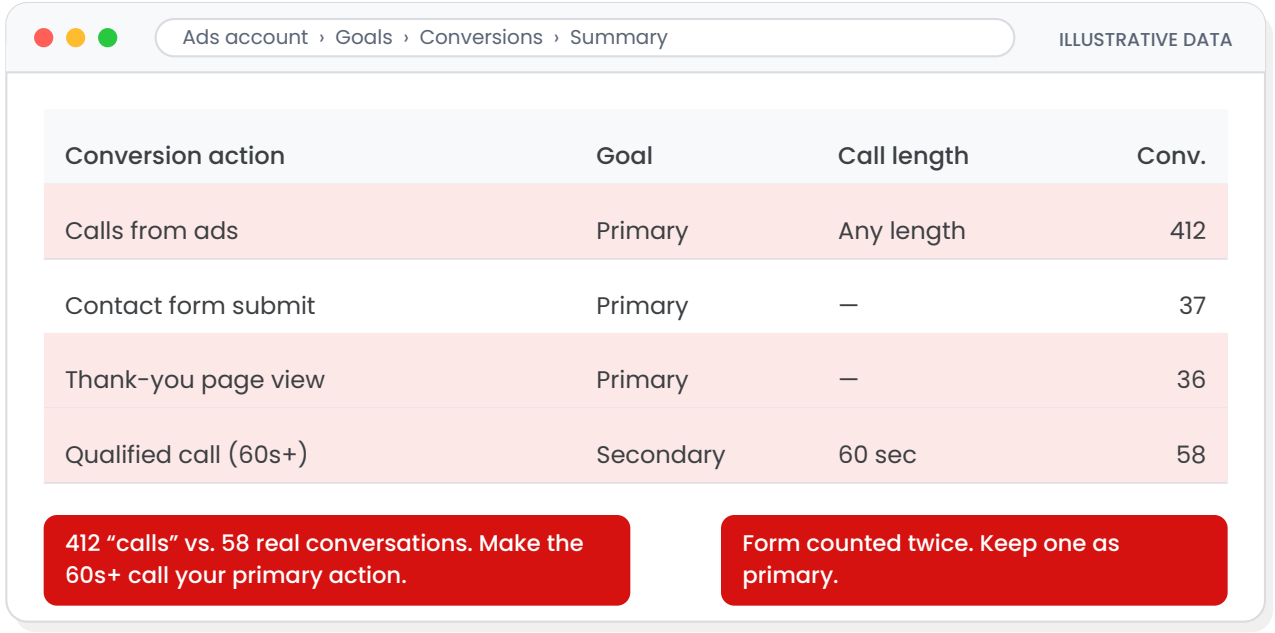
THE STEP MOST AUDITS SKIP

08 Conversion tracking

Every optimization in this guide depends on one thing: Google knowing which clicks became real leads. If tracking is wrong, Smart Bidding will optimize toward the wrong people.

WHAT TO CHECK

Call length. A 6-second hang-up is not a lead. Set a minimum call duration that reflects a real conversation.
Duplicates. A thank-you page and a form event counting the same lead doubles your numbers.
Primary vs. secondary. Only true leads should be primary actions that bidding uses.



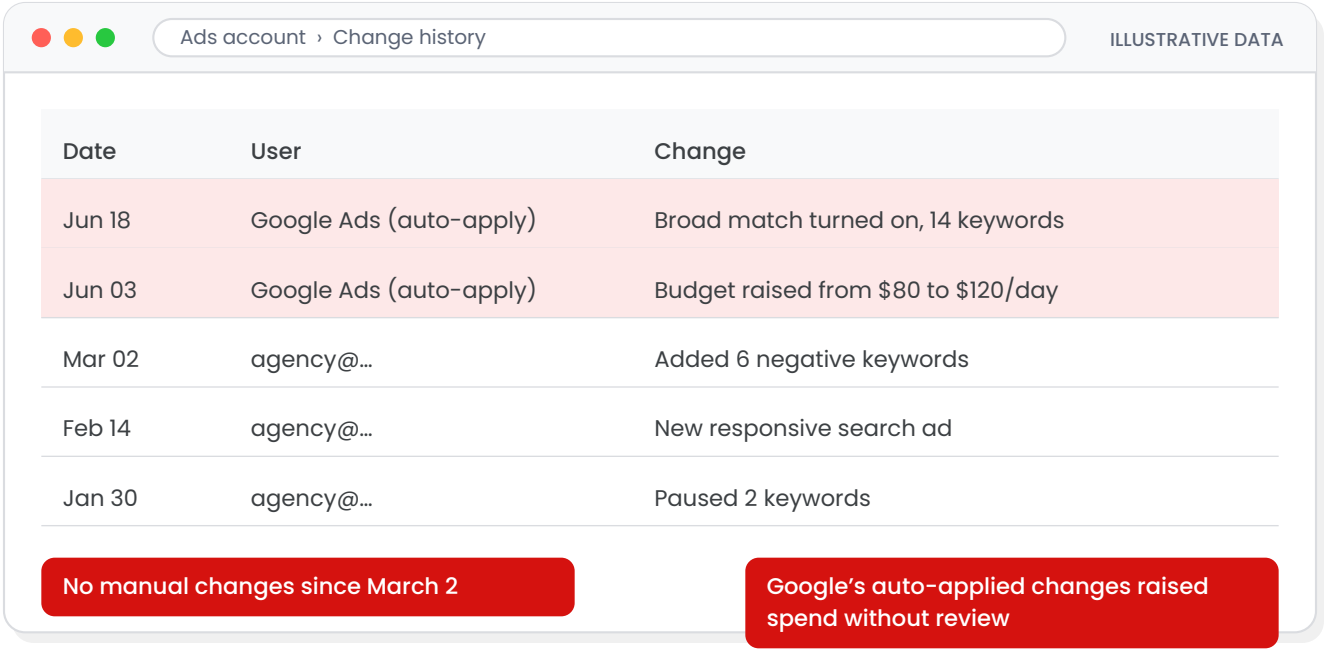
IS ANYONE WORKING THE ACCOUNT?

09 Change history

Open **Change history** from the left menu and set the range to the last 90 days. It records every edit, who made it and when.

A healthy account shows steady, weekly activity: negatives added, bids and budgets adjusted, ads tested. Long gaps or only automated changes are a warning sign.

> If you pay a management fee, this is the fastest way to see what you're getting for it.



A WORD OF CAUTION

Google’s recommendations work for Google first.

Google Ads reps and the account’s Recommendations tab are designed to increase your spend on the platform. Some suggestions help. Others, like broadening match types or raising budgets without better tracking, can drain a legal budget fast.

Review every recommendation before accepting it, and never turn on **auto-apply recommendations** without knowing exactly what it will change. Check Recommendations › Auto-apply today.

Handle with care

- ! Upgrade to broad match
- ! Raise your budget
- ! Use optimized targeting
- ! Add Display to Search

Questions to ask any Google Ads agency

Q1 Is this month-to-month, or am I locked into a long-term contract?

Q2 If we part ways, does my firm keep the Google Ads account and its history?

Q3 Will I have full access to the account while you manage it?

Q4 Do your reports show what's not working, or only the highlights?

Q5 How often do you make changes, and can I see them in change history?

Q6 Do you track cost per signed case, or stop at cost per lead?

BE HONEST

Signs it’s time to get help

- Campaigns have spent real money with little to show for it
- Nobody is making changes in the account every week
- Lead volume or quality is sliding and you can’t pinpoint why
- Your phones ring, but intake can’t keep up or follow up
- This guide felt like a lot. That’s normal, and it’s what specialists are for.

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Want us to run this audit on your account?

DuoDigital manages Google Ads, Local Services Ads and Meta for law firms, then builds the intake automation that makes sure every lead gets answered and followed up. We'll walk your account through the checks in this guide and show you exactly where budget is leaking.

Book a strategy call

duodigital.io/contact-us

All account screens in this guide use illustrative sample data. © 2026 DuoDigital.