Case Summary for the United Way of Greater Toledo

The United Way of Greater Toledo (UWGT) is an umbrella charitable organization that both provides its own services and supports other charitable institutions in providing theirs. In recent years, UWGT has had to grapple with a declining asset base in the face of deteriorating economic conditions in the industrial MidWest (link to the annual report). Nonetheless, in fiscal 2009, UWGT disbursed close to $15 million in the greater Toledo area (basically all of Northwest Ohio just south of Detroit).

Today’s AdWords case competition will focus on UWGT's family information network (FIN), part of its community outreach activities. In addition to FIN, UWGT’s community outreach activities also include 2-1-1, a more generally targeted, phone-based referral service. This 2-1-1 service is already the object of a successful AdWords campaign as documented in two status reports from June and August of this year.

The goal of today's AdWords case is to begin to bring a similar level of attention to FIN as the more all-encompassing 2-1-1 service has received.

UWGT’s Competition

Charitable organizations compete on the basis of effective service delivery. Effective service delivery involves making the target audience aware of available services as well as making those services easily accessible.

Specifically targeted organizations, such as the Autism Society of Northwest Ohio (on the web here) may feel that they can be more effective at delivering to their target demographic, such as parents of autistic children, because they are more attuned to their specific needs. An umbrella organization such as UWGT may feel that they can be more effective because a target demographic, such as parents of autistic children, often needs a broader range of services than more narrowly targeted “competitors” offer.

UWGT’s current AdWords strategy with 2-1-1 revolves around effectively delivering this broad range of services to narrowly targeted groups of “consumers”. You will need to use the same level of targeting in developing an effective AdWords strategy for FIN.

The AdWords Case Requirements

UWGT’s use of AdWords is funded by a Google grant. This grant allows UWGT an AdWords spend of up to $10,000 per month showing ads on Google search engine results pages. However, the grant also comes with restrictions, most significantly that UWGT is limited to bidding no more than $1 per click on its ads. As shown in the 2-1-1 AdWords status reports referenced above, a careful targeting strategy has allowed UWGT to succeed well within this limitation.

The Family Information Network (FIN)

UWGT’s materials describe FIN as follows: “FIN is a specialized information and referral network dedicated to providing education, support, and mentoring services to families of children with delays or disabilities and the professionals who serve them”. Delays and disabilities might include: autism, Down’s Syndrome, ADHD, hearing impairment, vision impairment, etc. Autism and ADHD are two widely diagnosed disabilities receiving significant attention in the last decade. To simplify matters, you will focus your AdWords development efforts on one or both of these two.
FIN offers the following kinds of specific services to families with children experiencing delays or disabilities (described in more detail on the web here):

- Parent to parent support for families in similar circumstances
- Information about and referral to community services

The target demographic is low to middle income, working parents.

**What you need to do to complete the case**

AdWords involves the following:

- Knowing what you are offering
- Knowing who is in the target audience for your offering
- Search keywords: How the target audience expresses its intent for your offering.
- Search ads: The legitimate promises that work to get the target audience to your site.

You already have a notion of the first two items. In sum, FIN offers access to parent-to-parent support and community services for parents of children with delays or disabilities. However, to develop an effective AdWords campaign, you’ll have to delve much more into the specifics of the services and ascertain their concrete benefits.

To help you more quickly grasp the services and concrete benefits offered on UWGT’s mini-site describing FIN, we have put together this itemized list of topics that should be amenable to ad campaigns:

- **Financial aid** ([link](#)): This page contains a wealth of information on financial aid and scholarships for families of children with disabilities. Of particular note is Act Today which focuses on Autism diagnosis and treatment. Focus on advertising each resource separately to its own target audience.
- **Conferences and workshops** ([link](#)): These are designed to fulfill specific information needs such as financial aid, preparation for preschool, issues related to military families, etc. Again, advertise workshops and conferences individually to specific groups.
- **Support groups** ([link](#)): Your House or Mine focuses on transitioning children with disabilities to adulthood. There are also Cystic Fibrosis and hearing loss support groups. Support groups should be advertised individually to specific target markets, not as a group.

Your ads will link to one of these specific pages (called an ad landing page). As illustrated shortly in an example, the ads will focus on one of the services offered on the page and the concrete benefits it provides a specific target segment. If your campaigns are successful, it will likely make sense for UWGT to create landing pages more specifically targeted for the particular program or service.

**AdWords keywords and advertisements with an example**

The hardest challenge with AdWords is most often finding keywords or search terms that the target audience actually uses to express their intent to consume your offering. This document summarizes what parents currently ask for when they call FIN on the phone. When reading this summary, keep in mind that the most effective keywords are often two to three words long. In other words, you will have to reduce the phrases in this document to the two to three most distinctive words to create effective keywords. To
start, you want to match the sense of what the searcher is seeking, not the exact phrase.

For example, for an ad campaign focusing on a FIN resource related to autism, the following keywords might come to mind:

- early signs of autism
- autism support
- autism therapy

Next comes writing the ads. The best ads include keywords, offer concrete solutions with benefits, and include a call to action. They go straight to the point and hit at the gut. For instance:

Early signs of autism
Speech delayed? No eye contact?
Learn the symptoms of autism here
Autism.unitedwaytoledo.org

**Ad groups**

Finally, you need to group your keywords and ads into ad groups that are only about one thing. For instance, the ad just shown should be in an ad group that only has keywords about “signs of autism” not “autism therapy” or even “autism support”. The ad appeals to people wondering if their child has autism, not those who know their child has autism and are already seeking support or therapy.

You might wonder why Toledo is not a keyword since the ad is targeted at people in greater Toledo. This ad is set to show only in the Toledo area through a map setting in the AdWords interface.

Again, as already indicated, examples of well constructed ad groups that follow these principles for United Way’s current AdWords campaigns can be found in this [presentation](#) and this [presentation](#).

**How the cases will be judged**

In completing the cases, you will create one to two ad groups. Each ad group will be focused on some aspect of autism or ADHD support. A group of judges will score the ad groups on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the (5–15) keywords and (at least two) ads per ad group target one topic only.
- The likelihood that the judge feels he or she would click on the ad.