

To whom it may concern,

Personal Opinion: *Online advertising and search results should be regulated by the Australian Government, as businesses such as Google and Facebook have way too much power over local companies. I have seen companies negatively impacted by these entities with poor support and little recourse for reimbursement or very little if it occurs.*

My Experiences:

Part of my business is running Google and Facebook Ad campaigns for clients; my longest campaigns for a client is over ten years.

The businesses I have managed Ad campaigns for usually rely on 60% to even 95% of clients coming from these Online Ads.

Some issues I have encountered:

- **Google Stopping Ad Traffic**

During a period of 3 weeks in 2019 one of my clients had their Google Ad traffic stopped, and it was not until four months later we found out why Google tech team had stopped the account without notification, Google support staff didn't even know at the time.

During the three weeks, the company lost an estimated \$10K to \$15K in revenue; Google would not recognise nor believe that to be the case, and after four months gave credit to the amount that would have spent on the ad campaign, which is a fraction of what was lost.

Initially, the Google support staff had no idea, I spoke to 5 different people, sent many emails, and the issue was escalated multiple times, yet Google support has no idea why and the escalation to Tech Support didn't help until weeks later.

After three weeks, the Ad traffic started up again, without explanation. I requested compensation for my client, I was told they would look into it, I continually checked every 2 to 4 weeks what was happening, around four months later they passed me onto another support staff who looked into it, and I was able to get a small compensation for my client.

Consider working without clients, I did pivot to Facebook ads for my client, which reduced the impact, yet this is an additional cost to them, and it isn't like a light switch; this should have been a high priority case for Google, yet the support was a mess, Tech support was prolonged and to obtain compensation was a waiting game, as in them waiting to see if I go away.

Additional Issues:

- No Support Ticket numbers given on phone calls
- Some emails were not replied to
- Change of Account Manager a couple of times
- Support not understanding the issue
- Support not understanding fundamental issues, I had to explain to them how aspects of Google ads worked

- **Google Ad Traffic dropping**

This was a few years ago, over a period of 3 months. I noticed the traffic to an ad campaign drop gradually as if it was not natural, and had been interfered with programmatically.

The drop was on a perfect angle, over three months, after emailing Google, the next day, the traffic went back to what it was three months ago.

- **Google Lead Quality**

I have noticed Lead Quality drop, and I contact Google, and it would improve.

- **Google Clicks**

Competitors can click on your adverts, Google tries to capture these, yet I have spoken to Google, and they confirmed that if someone uses a randomised proxy, you can waste a competitor's adverts budget and Google can't stop them.

A few years ago, a client of mine had a massive reduction in leads; the traffic was still occurring, yet no-one was filling in the lead form... I checked everything, and all was fine, a week later it was working again as usual (without intervention), then a week after that it happened again. I looked into the traffic and found abnormal clusters of pageviews, yet Google was not able to do anything. Over a period of close to a year, the company experienced usual Lead Numbers, like a switch being turned on and off ever so often....

Google stated that we could ban individual IP addresses, yet as the IPs were different and it is hard to identify which are proper ad traffic, and there were a hundred in a day, it would have become a full-time job.

There are services out there now that restrict such advert misuse, yet Google doesn't do it, besides a general check. Google needs to look after its customers better as many companies would not know this is occurring to them.

- **Google Checks Accounts Yearly**

This year (2020), Google support told me that Google reviews all Ad Accounts every year. Consider the Ad traffic issue was due to a yearly account check, now consider this and the other issues and how many companies may have been impacted negatively over the years, with some not knowing and may have put it down to market trend changes or the like!

- **Facebook Accounts**

Facebook may:

- May Reject an ad, but not specifically say why
- Ban your Ad account for breaking policy, yet not indicate why
- The avenue to discuss an issue is usually very limited, and as you usually do not know why you were banned, then it is hard to discuss the point, and they will not tell you directly, and you may only have one chance to dispute the ban.

- **Facebook Ad Complaints**

If you advertise and a group of people don't like it, they can share the Advert link and have as many people complain as possible, and Facebook will not only stop the Advert, they may also ban your Ad Account.

This occurred to myself, and it took close to 6 months to have access back to my Business Ad account, and I still do not know why it was banned, for what reason, nor why they unbanned my account.

To be honest, I believe they worked out what happened and unbanned me.

- **Facebook Pages/Groups**

In Facebook, a company may spend money to create awareness of their brand, and form

groups and followers. Yet a direct competitor may then advertise to them.

This is not made transparent to companies on Facebook.