What to Track in Google and Facebook Ads for Derby Businesses

Understanding the Metrics That Matter

Running paid ads on Google and Facebook can feel like a lot of guesswork if you are not sure what to look at. Many businesses click publish and then just watch the spend go up without knowing if the money is working. The real value comes from knowing which numbers actually tell you something useful. This article explains what to measure, how the measurement works, and what it means for a small or medium business in Derby.

The Difference Between Vanity and Value

It is easy to get drawn into looking at impressions and likes. Those numbers feel good but they do not pay the bills. A better approach is to focus on metrics that connect directly to your business goals. If you are paying for clicks, you want to know that those clicks are turning into something real. That means tracking conversions, not just visits. A conversion could be a sale, a phone call, a form submission, or a sign-up. The key is to define what a conversion means for your specific business before you start spending.

For Google Ads, the most useful metrics often begin with cost per click and click-through rate. But those are just the start. You need to see what happens after the click. Does the visitor stay on the landing page? Do they take action? That is where conversion tracking comes in. Without it, you are essentially flying blind. The platform can show you how many people saw your ad and how many clicked, but only conversion tracking tells you if those clicks led to a result that matters.

Facebook Ads work a little differently. The platform lets you target very specific audiences based on interests, behaviours, and location. That is powerful for a local business in Derby because you can narrow your ads to people within a few miles of your shop or service area. But the same principle applies: you need to measure what happens after someone sees your ad. Facebook gives you metrics like reach, engagement, and video views, but the real test is whether those interactions turn into customers. That means setting up the Facebook pixel on your website and tracking events like purchases or leads.

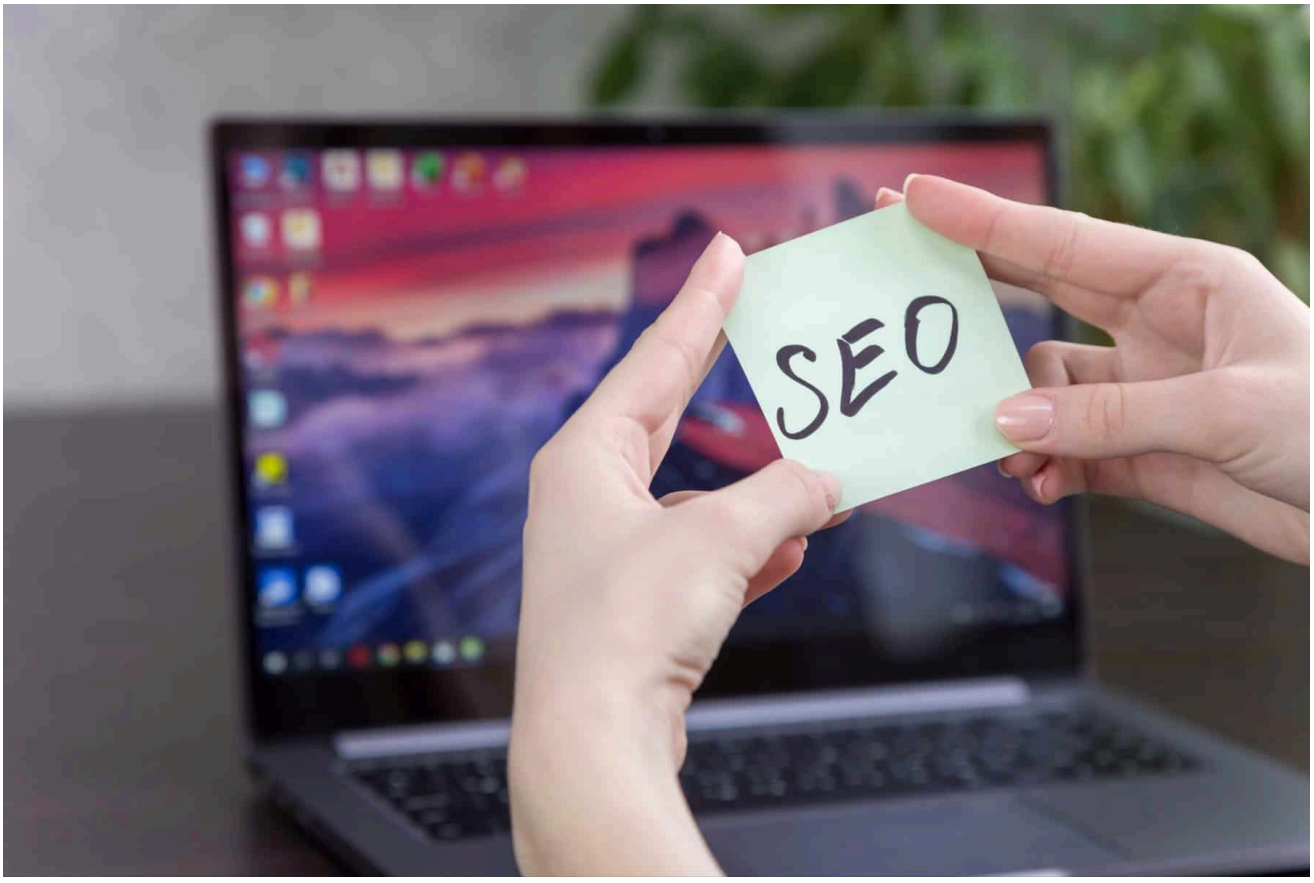
Key Metrics for Google Ads

When you run a Google Ads campaign in Derby, you want to look at a few core numbers. The first is cost per click. This tells you how much you pay each time someone clicks your ad. It varies by keyword and competition. If you are bidding on high-intent terms like "plumber Derby"

or "emergency electrician Derby", the cost per click may be higher because other businesses are also bidding. But that is not necessarily bad if the conversion rate is high.

The second metric is quality score. Google rates your ad, keywords, and landing page experience on a scale from one to ten. A higher quality score can lower your cost per click and improve your ad position. It rewards relevance. If your ad copy matches the search query and your landing page delivers what the ad promises, your quality score goes up. That is worth paying attention to because it directly affects how much you pay per click.

Third is conversion rate. This is the percentage of clicks that result in a conversion. If you get 100 clicks and 5 people buy or call, that is a 5% conversion rate. Knowing this number helps you decide whether your ad spend is reasonable. If your cost per click is £3 and your conversion rate is 2%, you are paying £150 per conversion. That might be fine for a high-ticket service, but it would be too much for a low-margin product.



Fourth is return on ad spend, often shortened to ROAS. This compares the revenue you earned from the ad campaign to what you spent. If you spend £500 and generate £2,000 in sales, your ROAS is 4:1. That is a simple way to see if the campaign is profitable. It is not always straightforward to calculate if you have offline sales or phone calls, but it is still a useful benchmark.

Finally, look at impression share. This tells you the percentage of times your ad appeared when someone searched for your keywords. A low impression share might mean your budget is too small or your bids are too low. It can also indicate that your ad quality is poor. Improving your quality score can help you capture more impressions without raising your budget.

Key Metrics for Facebook Ads

Facebook Ads work on a different model. People are not actively searching for your product; they are scrolling through their feed. So the first thing to measure is engagement. How many people liked, commented, shared, or clicked on your ad? High engagement can indicate that your ad creative and copy are resonating with your audience. But engagement alone does not pay the rent. You need to see if that engagement leads to a website visit and then a conversion.

Cost per click on Facebook tends to be lower than on Google, but the intent is lower too. Someone who clicks a Facebook ad may just be curious, not ready to buy. That makes conversion tracking even more important. You want to set up events in the Facebook pixel: a purchase, a lead, a page view that matters. Then you can see your cost per conversion and compare it to your Google Ads numbers.

Another useful metric is frequency. This shows how often the same person sees your ad. If frequency goes above three or four, people start to ignore the ad or even feel annoyed. That can drive up costs because the platform has to show the ad to less responsive people. Keeping frequency low by rotating creative or expanding your audience can help maintain performance.

Audience targeting is where Facebook shines. You can create a lookalike audience based on your existing customers. That lets you find people in Derby who behave like your best clients. Measuring the performance of these audiences separately from your general targeting can show you where your best returns come from. If one audience gives you a high conversion rate and low cost per conversion, you can put more budget behind it.

How to Set Up Measurement Properly

None of these metrics matter if you do not have tracking in place. For Google Ads, you need conversion tracking set up in Google Ads and Google Analytics. That means installing the Google tag on your website and defining your key conversions. For Facebook Ads, you need the Facebook pixel installed on your site. That pixel tracks actions people take after clicking your ad. Without these pieces, you will see numbers in the dashboard, but you will not know which campaigns are actually working.

It is also worth checking that your landing page is relevant to the ad. If someone clicks an ad for "cheap car insurance Derby" and lands on a general homepage, they will probably leave.

That hurts your quality score on Google and your conversion rate on both platforms. Each ad group or campaign should have its own landing page that matches the promise in the ad copy. That is one of the simplest ways to improve performance without spending more money.

For businesses in Derby, local targeting matters. Google Ads lets you set a geographic radius around your location. You can target people searching within Derby or the surrounding areas. Facebook Ads lets you target people who live in or recently visited Derby. That focus helps you avoid spending money on clicks from people who cannot use your service. It also makes your ad copy more relevant. Mentioning Derby in the ad can improve click-through rates because it signals local relevance.

What the Numbers Mean for Your Business

Once you have the data, the next step is interpreting it. A low cost per click is not good if your conversion rate is also low. A high conversion rate is not good if your cost per click is so high that you lose money on every sale. The balance is what matters. You want to find the sweet spot where your return on ad spend is positive and sustainable.

It is also normal for campaigns to take time to settle. When you start a new campaign, the platforms need data to optimise. Google and Facebook both use machine learning to find the best placements and audiences. That learning phase can last a week or two. During that time, cost per conversion may be higher than you want. That does not mean the campaign is failing. It means you need to let the system gather enough data to improve. If you change things too quickly, you reset the learning period.



Another thing to watch is the relationship between ad copy and audience. If your ad says one thing and your landing page says another, people will bounce. That wastes money. Make sure the message is consistent from the headline to the call to action. A simple test is to ask a friend to read your ad and then describe what they expect to see on the landing page. If their description matches what is actually there, you are on the right track.

Some businesses in Derby work with a provider like peakdistrictseo.co.uk to help manage their Google and Facebook campaigns. That can save time and bring experience that a busy business owner may not have. A good provider will set up proper tracking, monitor the key metrics, and adjust bids and targeting based on what the data shows. But even if you handle it yourself, understanding these metrics puts you in control of your advertising spend.

The goal is not to have perfect numbers from day one. It is to have clear numbers that show you where to improve. If your cost per click is high, look at your quality score and ad relevance. If your conversion rate is low, look at your landing page and audience targeting. If your return on ad spend is negative, look at your pricing and your funnel. Every metric points to a next step.

A business that tracks the right things can make small adjustments that add up over time. A 10% improvement in conversion rate or a 10% reduction in cost per click can double your profit margin. That is the kind of return that makes paid advertising worth the effort. The businesses that succeed are the ones that treat their ad spend like an investment, not an expense. They measure, learn, and improve.

For a small or medium business in Derby, paid search and social ads can be a direct line to new customers. The key is knowing what to measure and why. Focus on conversions, return on ad spend, and relevance. Ignore the vanity metrics that make you feel good but do not pay the bills. With the right tracking and a willingness to learn from the data, you can make your advertising budget work harder. If you need support setting up or refining your approach, a local specialist like peakdistrictseo.co.uk can help you get the most from your campaigns without the guesswork.