

A COMPLETE PLAYBOOK

Google Search Ads *for Med Spas.*

*Everything you need to set up, run, and optimize
search campaigns that bring high-intent patients
through your door.*

FIELD GUIDE

PRINT & SAVE

FOUNDERS EDITION

BUILT FOR
OWNERS,
NOT
AGENCIES

A practical, opinionated field guide.

This guide was written for the owner who has to look at the account, the front desk, the books, and the bookings on the same Tuesday afternoon. Every chapter assumes you'd rather know what to do than read another marketing article about it.

AUDIENCE	Med spa & aesthetic clinic owners
READING TIME	≈ 45 minutes
FORMAT	40-page printable field guide
COMPANION	Healthcare Compliance Guide
SET IN	Newsreader & Source Serif 4

A note on compliance: Advertising prescription treatments like Botox, Dysport, and Juvéderm on Google comes with specific rules. The key workarounds are included throughout; a full breakdown lives in the companion *Healthcare Compliance Guide*.

FROM THE EDITORS

Most med spas waste their Google Ads budget within the first thirty days. Not because Google Ads doesn't work—it works well—but because the accounts are set up to fail from the very first screen. Wrong campaign type. Wrong keywords. Wrong budget. Wrong structure. Google's default settings are designed to maximize Google's revenue, not yours.

This playbook fixes that. It walks you through every decision in the order you'll actually face it: with real numbers, real examples, and the specific toggles most accounts never find. By the time you finish, you'll know how to target the right patients, filter out wasted spend, convert clicks into booked appointments, and keep the account healthy month over month.

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Five chapters, organized in the order you'll actually use them: from the first toggle you flip in a new account to the weekly habits that compound into a profitable channel.

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INTRODUCTION

On Facebook, you *interrupt* someone while they scroll. On Google Search, you *meet* existing demand.

— THE WHOLE GAME, IN ONE SENTENCE

COST PER CLICK

≈ \$3 *on Facebook*

Paid awareness. You interrupt the feed.

COST PER CLICK

\$12–\$15 *on Google*

Paid intent. They're ready to book.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

A small book with a specific job.

Read it cover-to-cover the first time. After that, treat it as a reference: flip to the chapter that matches the decision in front of you.

If you're starting an account from scratch

Read every chapter in order. The decisions compound. Skipping Chapter 1 in particular guarantees you'll spend Chapter 4's budget on the wrong people.

If you're already running ads

Start with the **Pre-Launch Checklist** in the back. Anything you can't check off honestly is leaking money. Then jump to Chapter 5 for the weekly habits.

If you're working with an agency

Read pages 31–32. Then schedule a call. You'll have a shortlist of questions that reveals whether your account is being managed or just being billed.

■ READING LEGEND

What the boxes mean.

WATCH OUT

A common, expensive mistake.

PRO TIP

A non-obvious move that compounds.

EXAMPLE

Real keywords, real copy, real numbers.

METHOD

Step-by-step instructions to do the thing.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

90d

A well-run search campaign should generate

within ninety days
—not by week two.

◆ WATCH OUT

Two weeks is not a verdict.

Google's algorithm has a formal learning phase when a campaign launches or changes significantly. A new campaign needs data before it can optimize. Don't make major setting changes, don't kill the budget, and resist judging performance until you have at least 30 days of data. Note: the formal "Learning" status in your dashboard applies to Smart Bidding strategies (like Maximize Conversions). If you follow this guide's Phase 1 recommendation of Max Clicks with a CPC cap, the learning period is shorter — but patience still applies. (We cover exactly why in Chapter 5).

1

Setting Up Your Account & Avoiding Google's Traps.

Google's default settings can waste your budget. Before you write a single ad, turn off four toggles that route your spend into low-quality traffic.

YOU'LL LEARN

Why intent-based search beats interruption-based social for high-ticket aesthetic treatments.

YOU'LL FIX

Four toggles Google flips on by default that will waste a meaningful share of your budget in week one, plus the tracking that has to be live before anything launches.

YOU'LL DO

Create a campaign with the right type and objective, with conversion tracking live before launch.

1.0. BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE: CREATE THE ACCOUNT

The screen where most beginners get stuck.

If you are creating a brand new Google Ads account, Google will try to funnel you into a guided "Smart Campaign" setup. This hides every tool you need. You must bypass it to access the real dashboard.

01 Go to ads.google.com and click "Start Now".

Sign in with your business Google account (the same one you use for Google Business Profile or Google Analytics).

02 Bypass the campaign wizard.

Google will ask "*What is your main advertising goal?*" or "*Let's set up your business.*" Look for a small text link at the bottom of the screen that says "*Switch to Expert Mode*" or "*Create an account without a campaign.*" Click it. This is the single most important click in this chapter.

03 Confirm your permanent business details.

You will be prompted to confirm your Billing Country, Time Zone, and Currency. Check these carefully:

time zone and currency cannot be changed later

without creating an entirely new account. Your reports will be permanently skewed if your time zone is wrong.

04 Set up billing.

Navigate to *Tools & Settings* → *Billing* → *Settings* and enter your credit card. Without a valid payment method, your account will stay suspended and ads will not run.

● PRO TIP • GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

Connect it now.

If you have a verified Google Business Profile (the map listing that shows your clinic's reviews and hours), link it to your Ads account immediately. Go to *Ads & assets* → *Assets* → *Location* and follow the prompts. You need this connection for location-based ad assets later.

1.1. WHY SEARCH ADS WORK FOR MED SPAS

People are already looking for you.

Google Search Ads work because the conversation is already happening. When someone types "*Botox near me*" into Google, they have a problem they want solved. Your ad appears at the exact moment they're deciding who to call.

This is what separates search from social. On Facebook or Instagram, you interrupt someone while they scroll. On Google Search, you meet existing demand. The customer started the conversation. Show up for it.

For med spas, search advertising works best with treatments that already carry built-in demand: Botox, fillers, laser hair removal, CoolSculpting. You're not creating want. You're catching it.

Search captures people at different stages of a decision. Someone searching 'what is Botox' is researching. Someone searching 'Botox cost near me' is price-shopping. Someone searching 'Botox clinic open Saturday' is ready to book. We cover how to target exactly the right stage in Chapter 2.

● PRO TIP

You're paying for intent, not awareness.

A click on Facebook might cost \$3. A click on Google for "*lip filler near me*" can run \$15 or more. The \$15 click comes from someone ready to book. The premium is the value.

1.2. BEFORE YOU LAUNCH

Four toggles to find, four toggles to fix.

Every new account contains defaults that bleed money. Turn them off before writing your first ad.

01 Switch to Expert Mode.

If you didn't do this during account creation, look for the wrench icon or *"Switch to Expert Mode"* at the top/bottom of your screen. You cannot run a profitable med spa account in Smart Mode.

02 Uncheck the Display Network.

Every new Search campaign is opted into the Display Network by default. Display is a banner-ad network on third-party sites; it does not belong in a high-intent search campaign. In the Networks section, uncheck *"Include Google Display Network."*

03 Uncheck Search Partners.

Search Partners shows your ad on non-Google search engines and content sites that have a search box. Conversion quality is much lower than Google.com itself. Same screen as above: uncheck *"Include Google Search Partners."*

04 Disable Auto-Applied Recommendations.

The platform can apply changes—new keywords, new bid strategies, new budgets—without asking. The algorithm optimizes for more clicks, not your business. Navigate to *Recommendations* → *Auto-apply settings*, turn off **every** toggle, and save.

◆ WATCH OUT • BROAD MATCH KEYWORDS

Broad Match doesn't fit this strategy.

Broad Match lets Google show your ad for loosely related searches. Bid on Botox and your ad shows for "Botox side effects," "Botox jobs near me," or "is Botox safe for dogs." For high-intent campaigns with small budgets, use Phrase Match or Exact Match instead. Chapter Two covers how.

1.3. SETTING UP CONVERSION TRACKING

Measure what actually matters.

A conversion is a specific action a potential patient takes that indicates they are moving toward booking. For med spas, there are three that matter: a submitted form, a qualified phone call, or a completed appointment.

Everything else — page views, time on site, scroll depth — is not a conversion and should never be tracked as one.

TERMINOLOGY

Tracking vocabulary.

Conversions are the actions indicating a patient is moving toward booking. You assign each a value.

Conversion actions are the individual tracking configurations you build inside Google Ads.

Offline uploads teach the bidding model to optimize for real patients, not just form fills.

01 Create a form submission conversion action.

In Google Ads, go to Tools → Conversions → Summary → + New Conversion Action → Website. Select Submit lead form. Set the value to your average first-appointment revenue (e.g. \$250).

02 Set the Count to "One."

A patient may submit the same form twice by mistake. Setting Count to "One" ensures you record one lead per click, not two.

03 Place the tag on the thank-you page only.

The conversion tag must fire on /thank-you — never on the form page itself. Confirm your form builder is set to redirect to a URL on submission.

04 Create a call conversion action.

Go to Ads & assets → Assets → + → Call. Enable Report call conversions and set a minimum call length of 90 seconds. Calls shorter than this are not reliably patient inquiries.

● PRO TIP • PRIMARY VS. SECONDARY

Mark form submissions, qualified calls, and booked appointments as **Primary** conversion actions. Mark everything else as Secondary or remove them entirely. Google's Smart Bidding only optimizes toward Primary actions. Vanity metrics set as Primary will corrupt the bidding model.

1.3 (CONTINUED). TECHNICAL SETUP

What your developer needs to implement.

Installing the conversion tag and configuring the offline data pipeline are the two tasks to delegate to your web developer. Pass them the requirements below.

■ TAG INSTALLATION

Google Conversion Tag Requirements

- ☐ Install the global Google tag (gtag.js) in the `<head>` of every page on the site.
- ☐ Place the form submission event snippet on the `/thank-you` page only.
- ☐ Confirm the contact form redirects to the thank-you URL on submission — not an inline success message.

■ OFFLINE CONVERSION PIPELINE (ADVANCED)

Completed Appointment Data Requirements

Online conversion actions track what happens on the website. Offline uploads send real appointment outcomes back to Google so the bidding model learns from actual patients, not just form fills.

- ☐ Add a hidden field named `gclid` to the booking form, auto-filled from the URL parameter Google appends to every paid click.
- ☐ Store the GCLID in your CRM (Mindbody / Boulevard / HubSpot) alongside the lead record.
- ☐ Upload the GCLID, conversion name, and appointment value back to Google Ads when an appointment status changes to "Completed".
- ☐ This upload must occur within 90 days of the original click or Google will reject the data.
- ☐ *Optional: automate the upload via a Zapier webhook if your CRM supports it.*

1.4. STARTING YOUR FIRST CAMPAIGN

Two choices, no more.

At this stage, create only the campaign shell: nothing else. Keywords, ads, bids, and budgets all come in later chapters, after the right decisions have been made about each. Resist the urge to fill in everything on screen one.

✗ SKIP: FOR NOW

- ✗ "Add recommended keywords" wizard
- ✗ Suggested headlines auto-generated by AI
- ✗ Smart Bidding strategies on a new account
- ✗ Combining all services into one campaign
- ✗ Statewide or country-level location targeting

✓ CHOOSE

- ✓ Campaign type: **Search**
- ✓ Objective: **Leads**
- ✓ Networks: **Google Search only**
- ✓ Name: **Search — [Service] — [City]**

■ METHOD • CAMPAIGN SKELETON

The campaign you should have at the end of Chapter 1.

MODE	Expert (not Smart)
TYPE	Search
OBJECTIVE	Leads
NETWORKS	Google Search only. Display off, Partners off
AUTO-APPLY	All recommendations disabled
STATUS	DRAFT / NOT LAUNCHED

● PRO TIP • NAMING CONVENTIONS PAY COMPOUND INTEREST

Use a strict naming convention from day one.

Use *Search / [Service] / [City]* from day one. SEARCH / BOTOX / DETROIT

SEARCH / LASER / MIAMI. Six months from now when you're scanning twenty rows for the underperformer, the naming convention is what saves your Wednesday.

End of Chapter 1 You now have an account in Expert Mode with all four traps disabled, and a draft Search/Leads campaign waiting for its keywords. Next: how to structure it.