



A VISIONARY SEARCH GUIDE FOR LAW FIRMS

The Google Ads Audit Checklist

For Personal Injury & Law Firm Marketing Accounts

Law firm Google Ads accounts carry some of the highest CPCs in the country. A single unreviewed setting — the wrong bid strategy, a tracking gap, an over-reliance on Performance Max — can cost thousands of dollars a month in wasted spend. This checklist walks through the areas that matter most for a law firm account specifically: campaign structure, bid strategy, and tracking. It's not exhaustive, but if you can check off most of these with confidence, your account is in solid shape. If you can't, that's exactly where a full audit adds the most value.

01 Search vs. Performance Max

Two very different tools — using the wrong one for the wrong goal is where budget disappears fastest.

■ Search and Performance Max Are Kept in Separate, Isolated Campaigns

Running both simultaneously without proper negative keyword isolation lets PMax and Search compete for the same auctions — often driving your own cost per click up against yourself.

■ Performance Max Is Not Quietly Bidding on Your Own Brand Name

PMax can start capturing branded search traffic you'd get for free organically, then report it as a new conversion. That inflates performance numbers without adding real new case volume.

■ Search Network Traffic From PMax Has Been Reviewed for Consistency

PMax's search-network placements are notoriously inconsistent for law firms — volume and quality can swing week to week with far less visibility than a dedicated Search campaign.

■ Keyword-Level Visibility Hasn't Been Fully Surrendered

PMax intentionally limits keyword and placement-level reporting. For a law firm account, losing that visibility means losing the ability to diagnose exactly where a case came from.

■ Geo-Targeting Matches Your Actual Practice Area and Jurisdiction

Both Search and PMax can drift toward broader geographic targeting than a firm licensed to practice in specific counties or states can actually take on as clients.

02 Demand Generation & YouTube Ads

Top-of-funnel awareness for the moment someone actually needs a lawyer.

■ YouTube In-Stream Ads Are Used for Brand Awareness, Not Direct Conversion

YouTube rarely converts like Search. Its value for a law firm is staying top-of-mind long before an accident or legal need happens — a different goal that needs a different success metric.

■ Demand Gen Campaigns Are Being Tested Separately From Core Search Budget

Demand Gen (across YouTube, Discover, and Gmail) can build a pipeline of future searchers, but it needs its own budget and its own goals — not competition with your highest-intent Search spend.

■ Video Completion and View-Through Are Tracked Separately From Signed-Case Conversions

Judging a YouTube campaign by the same conversion goal as Search sets it up to look like a failure. View-through rate and brand recall are the right early-stage metrics.

■ Video Creative Speaks to a Specific Case Type, Not a Generic Firm Message

Generic "we can help" messaging underperforms. Video built around a specific, relatable scenario (a car accident, a workplace injury) consistently earns more attention and recall.

03 Bid Strategies

The single setting most likely to be quietly working against your CPA target.

■ Bid Strategy Matches the Actual Goal: Volume vs. Control

Maximize Conversions tightens the reins on cost per conversion but limits overall lead volume. Other automated strategies (Target CPA, Maximize Conversion Value) can bring more volume, but with far more week-to-week volatility in cost and quality.

■ Target CPA Is Set From Real Signed-Case Data, Not a Guess

A Target CPA set without at least 30 days of clean conversion data behind it is a guess with a dollar sign on it. Bad inputs here directly inflate cost per lead.

■ Bid Strategy Performance Is Reviewed Monthly, Not Set-and-Forgotten

Automated bidding needs ongoing supervision. A strategy that worked three months ago can quietly drift as competition, seasonality, and case volume shift.

■ High-CPC Practice Areas Are Isolated From Lower-Value Campaigns in the Same Bid Strategy

Mixing a \$500 CPC personal injury campaign with lower-cost practice areas under one shared automated bid strategy lets the algorithm misallocate budget between the two.

04 Tracking & Attribution

If you can't see what actually became a client, the account is optimizing blind.

■ Call Tracking Is Integrated With Dynamic Number Insertion

Every paid visitor should see a unique, trackable phone number tied back to the exact campaign, keyword, and ad that drove the call — not a static number shared across every channel.

■ Contact Form Submissions Are Tracked as Distinct Conversion Events

A form submission and a phone call are different actions with different intent signals. Tracking them as separate, clearly labeled conversions gives Google's bidding algorithms better data to work with, not a single blended "conversion" bucket.

■ Custom Conversion Actions Distinguish a Lead From a Signed Retainer

A form fill and a signed client are not the same outcome. Tracking the full funnel — lead, qualified consultation, signed case — lets you optimize toward what the firm actually gets paid for, not just top-of-funnel volume.

■ Offline Conversion Import Feeds Signed-Case Data Back Into Google Ads

Most law firm value happens well after the initial click — during intake and case review. Importing that offline outcome back into Google Ads lets automated bidding actually learn from real case value, not just early-funnel proxies.

■ Spam and Duplicate Calls Are Filtered Out of Conversion Counts

Robocalls, wrong numbers, and duplicate calls from the same visitor inflate conversion counts and quietly mislead automated bidding into thinking a campaign is performing better than it is.

Ready for a Full Account Audit?

This checklist covers the highest-impact areas, but a full audit goes line by line through your entire account — campaign structure, bid strategy, tracking, and budget allocation — to find exactly where your firm's ad spend is being wasted.

Contact Visionary Search for a Free Full Audit

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