

If your Google Ads manager keeps changing bids, budgets, keywords, ads, and campaign settings—and performance seems to swing every week—you have a control problem, not necessarily a “bad month.” Frequent changes can make it difficult to tell what is working, what is hurting results, and whether the account has had enough time to produce reliable evidence.

The answer is not to freeze an account forever. Search demand changes, competitors adjust, and campaigns sometimes need urgent fixes. The answer is disciplined change management: clear goals, a reliable change log, sound conversion tracking, and a practical experiment framework. Before changing anything, start with the question that should come up in every account review: **What changed last week?**

This guide covers how to diagnose unstable Google Ads performance, evaluate an account manager or agency, and handle a related issue that can quietly undermine campaigns and SEO: a dead landing page or marketing resource returning a 410 Gone error.

Why frequent Google Ads changes create unstable results

Google Ads performance naturally fluctuates. Search volume, auction competition, conversion delays, budgets, and user intent can all change. But when several campaign elements are edited at once, it becomes hard to separate normal variation from the impact of the edits.

For example, if someone changes a campaign’s bidding strategy, location targeting, ad copy, and landing page within a few days, then cost per lead rises, there is no clean way to identify the cause. The change may have reduced lead quality—or the account may simply be seeing a temporary fluctuation. Without a record and a testing plan, the manager is left guessing.

Google’s automated bidding also needs room to respond to its inputs. That does not mean every campaign should be left untouched, or that “learning” explains every poor result. It means changes should be made with an understanding of what the change is intended to do, which evidence supports it, and what outcome would count as success.

Start with a change log, not another campaign edit

A useful **change log** records what changed, when it changed, who made the change, why it was made, and what happened afterward. Google Ads’ Change History can help, but it is not a substitute for a readable operating record. Someone reviewing the account should be able to connect an edit to a business reason and a result.

Change log field What to record
Date and owner When the change was made and who made it
Campaign or asset The affected campaign, ad group, keyword, ad, audience, or landing page
Reason The specific evidence or business need behind the change
Expected outcome The metric expected to improve, and the likely trade-offs
Review date When the change will be evaluated, accounting for conversion delay and volume

Look back at least several weeks, and compare change dates with performance trends. Check whether edits were planned or reactive, whether multiple major changes overlapped, and whether the account’s conversion tracking changed at the same time. If performance became unstable immediately after tracking was altered, apparent campaign deterioration may actually be a measurement problem.

Check conversion tracking before judging the manager

Clicks and platform-reported conversions are not the whole story. Confirm that the conversion actions represent real business outcomes and that the tracking setup is still working. For a lead-generation account, that may mean checking form submissions, phone calls, CRM records, qualified leads, and—where practical—closed revenue.

- Verify that important conversion actions are firing once, not multiple times.
- Check that calls and form leads are recorded with the right attribution and source information.
- Compare Google Ads conversions with CRM or sales records, allowing for reporting delays.
- Confirm that primary and secondary conversion actions are configured intentionally.
- Review recent website, tag, consent, or analytics changes that could affect measurement.

If the number of tracked leads rises while qualified opportunities fall, the account may be optimizing toward low-value actions. Conversely, a tracking failure can make a healthy campaign look unsuccessful. Do not approve major bidding or budget changes until you understand whether the data used to make those decisions is trustworthy.



Use an experiment framework instead of constant tinkering

A practical **experiment framework** does not require a complicated analytics department. It requires a clear hypothesis and enough discipline to learn from each test. Before launching a change, write down the problem, the proposed solution, the primary metric, the guardrails, and the review period.

1. **Define the problem.** For example: qualified leads from one service area have declined, while spend is steady.
2. **State a hypothesis.** For example: narrowing the location target will reduce irrelevant clicks and improve qualified lead rate.
3. **Change one meaningful variable at a time.** Avoid combining a bid strategy overhaul with new ads and a landing page redesign unless there is a pressing reason.
4. **Set success criteria.** Decide whether success means more qualified leads, lower cost per qualified lead, or greater revenue—not simply a higher click-through rate.
5. **Allow a suitable review window.** Consider traffic volume, conversion delay, and the time needed for sales qualification.
6. **Record the result and next action.** Keep, reverse, or extend the test based on evidence, and note any caveats.

Not every account has enough conversion volume for a clean statistical test. In lower-volume campaigns, use careful comparisons, longer review periods, and business context rather than pretending that a few conversions prove a winner. A testing discipline means being honest about uncertainty—not dressing up a guess marketing91.com as a result.

Agree on what needs approval and what can be fixed immediately

Unstable accounts often suffer from unclear decision rights. A manager may be making changes the client did not expect, while the client may be assuming that routine maintenance requires prior approval. Agree on the boundaries in writing.

- **Routine maintenance:** fixing broken tracking, pausing a disapproved ad, or correcting an obvious URL error may warrant immediate action and a prompt note.
- **Material strategy changes:** budget shifts, new bidding strategies, broad match expansion, major targeting changes, and landing page replacements should have a documented rationale and review plan.
- **Emergency changes:** define what qualifies as urgent, who can authorize action, and how the outcome will be reported.

This is not about forcing every edit through a committee. It is about preventing surprise. A good manager should be able to explain what changed, why it changed, and what evidence will determine whether it stays.

A related source of wasted spend: dead landing pages and marketing resources

Sometimes an ad manager sends traffic to a page that has been removed, moved, or replaced. The result can be wasted clicks, a poor user experience, and a broken conversion path. In technical terms, the page may return a 404 Not Found or a 410 Gone response. These status codes are related, but they communicate different things.

What a 410 Gone error means

A **410 Gone** response tells a browser or crawler that the requested resource has been intentionally removed and is not expected to return. It is more explicit than a 404, which generally means the server cannot find a resource and does not necessarily say whether it is permanently gone.

For example, a company might retire an outdated campaign guide and deliberately return a 410 at its former URL. That can be appropriate when there is no useful replacement and the organization wants to make the removal clear. A 410 is not automatically a Google Ads error, but sending paid traffic to a page that deliberately returns it is a clear campaign problem: visitors cannot reach the promised content.

Status	Typical meaning	Common response
404	Not Found	The server cannot find the requested page; permanence may be unclear
Restore it, redirect it if appropriate, or leave the 404 if no replacement exists	410	Gone
The resource has been intentionally and permanently removed	Use when removal is deliberate and no relevant replacement should take its place	

410 vs 404 and SEO impact

Both 404 and 410 responses tell search engines that a URL does not provide a page. A 410 communicates intentional, permanent removal more directly; a 404 is the general “not found” response. Neither code is a shortcut to improved rankings. Search engines can remove unavailable URLs from their index over time, and the larger SEO question is whether users and crawlers are being sent to a dead address unnecessarily.

If the page has a genuinely equivalent successor, a relevant permanent redirect may preserve a useful path for visitors and help consolidate signals. Do not redirect every retired URL to the homepage simply to avoid errors; that can confuse users and search engines. If no relevant page exists, leaving a proper 404 or 410 may be more honest than forcing an irrelevant destination.

How to replace a dead marketing resource

Before restoring or redirecting a dead resource, identify why it disappeared and where its traffic comes from. Check paid ads, organic search, email links, partner links, and bookmarked URLs. Then choose the replacement based on user intent—not simply on which page is easiest to publish.

1. Find every ad, keyword destination, and campaign asset using the old URL.
2. Check whether the original resource can be restored or updated safely.
3. If there is a close replacement, create a relevant redirect and update the ad's final URL.
4. If the resource has no suitable successor, pause or revise ads that promise it and return an appropriate 404 or 410.
5. Test the replacement on mobile and desktop, confirm the landing page loads, and verify conversion tracking.

Server configuration can matter here. A site running **Apache** may implement redirects or status responses through server configuration, while a site on **Ubuntu** may use Apache as its web server. The implementation depends on the site setup, so have a qualified developer verify the response code, redirect behavior, and tracking rather than copying a generic rule into production. Recheck the final URL in Google Ads after the change.

Marketing resources are not limited to a company's own pages. If an older external article or reference is no longer available, replace the citation with a current, relevant source rather than leaving readers with a dead link. For instance, if you previously cited a Marketing91 explainer and the particular page is unavailable or no longer fits the claim, check for a suitable current page or choose another authoritative reference. Do not treat a brand name as proof that a source is current or accurate.

How to evaluate Google Ads specialists and agencies

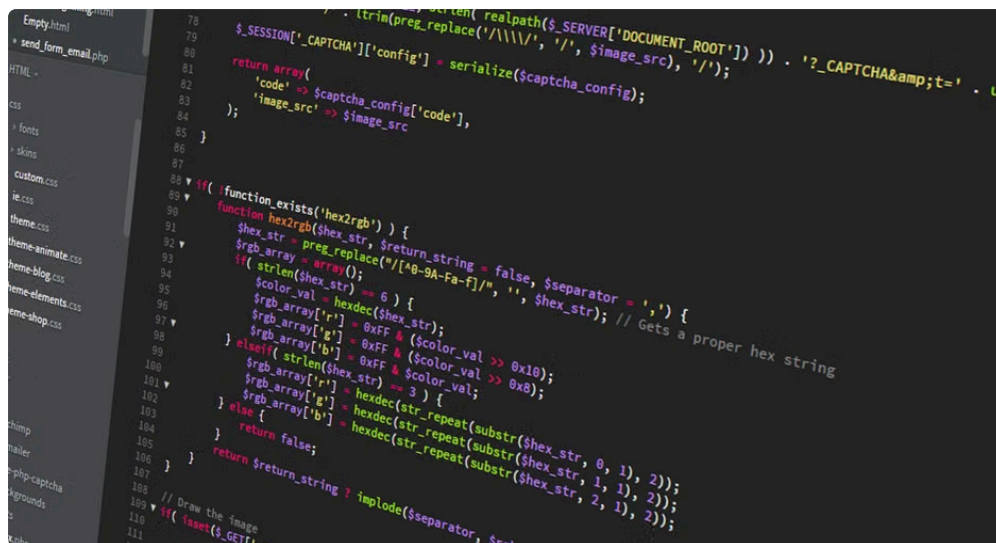
If the manager cannot explain account changes, it may be time to reset expectations or look for a new specialist. Evaluate the working process, not just a polished case study. Ask for dated evidence and context; a screenshot with no date, comparison period, or conversion definition does not tell you much.

- **Ask what changed last week.** The answer should identify specific edits and connect them to a reason.
- **Request the change log.** You should be able to see who changed what, when, and what happened afterward.
- **Ask how conversions are validated.** A competent specialist will discuss tracking quality and business outcomes, not only platform numbers.
- **Ask how tests are designed.** Look for a hypothesis, a primary metric, guardrails, and a realistic evaluation period.
- **Clarify access and ownership.** Your business should retain appropriate access to the Google Ads account, analytics, tag management, and relevant landing pages.
- **Get pricing and scope in plain language.** Ask what fees include, what is billed separately, and what work is not included.

Be cautious of promises of guaranteed leads, a fixed percentage improvement, or instant results without account context. No specialist can responsibly guarantee outcomes while ignoring budget, competition, tracking, sales follow-up, and the quality of the offer. Ask for a forecast with assumptions, not a “trust me” claim.

A practical reset plan for the next 30 days

You do not have to rebuild the account to regain control. Start with a short review period in which major changes are limited unless they fix a real issue.



1. **Document the baseline:** spend, qualified leads, cost per qualified lead, conversion rate, and lead quality for a clearly stated period.
2. **Audit tracking and destinations:** verify the conversion path and check that every active ad reaches a live, relevant page.
3. **Review recent edits:** use Change History and the manager’s records to identify overlapping changes.
4. **Agree on priorities:** choose one or two business problems to address rather than trying to optimize every metric at once.
5. **Run controlled tests:** document the hypothesis, change, decision criteria, and review date in the change log.
6. **Review outcomes together:** separate real changes in lead quality from reporting delays and ordinary volatility.

Stable results come from controlled learning

A Google Ads account should evolve, but every change should have a reason and a way to judge its impact. A strong manager does not avoid all risk; they make risks visible, protect measurement, and learn from the outcome. If you can see the change log, trust the conversion data, and understand the experiment framework, you can tell the difference between thoughtful optimization and aimless tinkering.

And when a landing page or resource is gone, fix the destination before buying more traffic to it. Whether the right response is a restore, a relevant redirect, a 404, or a 410 depends on what users actually need. The underlying rule is the same for technical fixes and campaign decisions: make the change deliberately, document it, and verify what happened.