

Auto Body Shop Google Ads Mistakes: Why Most Shops Waste Money in 2026

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SUMMARY

Google Ads can be effective for auto body shops if set up correctly, contrary to the belief of some shop owners who claim they do not work. Properly configuring ad settings, particularly location targeting, and optimizing for specific conversions like phone calls and quote requests are crucial for maximizing the return on investment.

- Google Ads can generate significant traffic, with 55,000 searches per month for auto body services in Thousand Oaks, California.*
- Many auto body shop owners waste money on ads due to incorrect location settings, leading to irrelevant clicks.*
- It's essential to set Google Ads to target only users in the shop's geographical area to avoid unnecessary expenses.*
- Optimizing ad campaigns for specific conversions (phone calls and quote requests) is key to generating leads effectively.*
- A well-structured landing page focused on capturing customer information can improve conversion rates.*
- Excluding irrelevant locations and ensuring ads run during business hours can enhance campaign efficiency.*
- Google Ads can be a powerful tool for auto body shops if properly managed and tailored to local demand.*

Hey guys, stop running Google ads for your auto body shop. Seriously, if you're doing this, you're literally lighting money on fire. And the reason why I say this is I literally just got off the phone with an auto body shop owner in California who told me Google ads don't work. Okay, they do work, but only if you understand this one thing. Now, if you're an auto body shop owner and you say Google ads don't work, then this video is for you. So, before you spend another dime on Google ads, you need to watch this video first. Especially if you're running Google ads and not getting calls. Guys, this is costing you more than you think. First off, my name is James from Autoshop Marketing Pros, and we help autosshops across the country to get more calls, more quote requests, and more customers using online advertising. So, let's go over to California, right guys? Here we are in California. California, a lot of people, some people like it, some people don't like it.

It's a nice place to visit, you know. I don't live there, but hey, here it is. And right above me is this area called Thousand Oaks. I wouldn't have really known about it, but I did look it up. Over to the east is a little Port Wanimi. They got a Navy base there. It's pretty cool. Over down to the was it's right over in the right in here. My left side is LA. You're probably familiar with that. Anyway, we're not talking about LA. We're talking about Thousand Oaks. Let me circle this thing for you if I can. Maybe I can't. Maybe I can circle. We're talking about Thousand Oaks. Right there is what we're talking about. Right there.

You see that? Right above me. Boom, boom, boom.

Okay, so Thousand Oaks. The reason I'm mentioning

Thousand Oaks is because there's a guy I talked to in this area and he basically said that Google ads do not work in this area. If you're an auto body shop owner, let's talk about Google Ads, how they work in this area right here. I pulled up the data and instead of saying whether something works or not works, let's look at the actual data. So, I pulled up this data for uh Thousand Oaks, and here's what we get. We got this auto body search.

I pulled this off of Google Keyword Planner. Now, this data right here was literally pulled up here, January 2026. I've got some older data, too, from last year, which honestly, the numbers have gone up. So, what happens here is every single month, people are searching in this area. So, I said this area is basically like this circle right here. We're not even talking about LA. If we talked about LA, it'd be probably in the hundreds of thousands and who knows. We're not even talking about over here. We could maybe if your shop says, "Well, I get people from all over here." That would be interesting. But more importantly, it's just this area. There's quite a lot of volume. And here, this is 55,000 searches per month. So, every single month, people are searching. And here's stuff that they're searching for. Caliber collisions. Interesting. Auto body repairs, car repair shops near me, auto body auto car repair shops, body shop near me. These are the top searches. And if we scroll down, there's probably a couple thousand, maybe 4,000 variations on these searches. The important part is when we combine all those together, it comes out to about 55,000 searches per month. Now, granted, there are more searches in different areas. Over here, this little yellow part, this is the average cost per click. And interesting enough, people say, "Well, you know, the time of year and people aren't clicking." But if we look over here, it actually tells me every month. Now, these are averages. There's probably not exactly this stuff, but Google kind of averages it out. So, if you look at that, there might be some variations each month, but overall, look, it's pretty consistent. People are looking for these things every month, right? The important part is that's the average per month. 55,000 searches per month. How many searches does a body shop need? Not that many. This is just going to show you that it's happening. Now, let's go over to the Google Maps. How do we get on Google Maps? Well, you need a Google business. Google business profile. Used to be called Google My Business. Here in this area, let's just say I'm in in this area. And I type in body shop. Body shop. Oh, look at that. So, body shops, we got these little dots that pop up over here on the right. And these are I don't know if you can see them. I'll move it above my head right there. Those little things are Google business profiles. Google My Business, Google Maps listings. If you don't have a Google Maps listing, you got to get one. It's free. So, get that for your shop. Most people have it. Most shops have a website, Google Business, a Facebook business, you do need those on there. You don't necessarily need a website to have this, but it definitely helps. Anyway, let's get back to the search part. When someone's searching for Body Shop, I'll change this over here in a second, but look at this.

First one that pops up is sponsored. The next

one is sponsored. Now, this guy has is, you know, national chain. He's got a lot of reviews. The next one, I did this earlier and this guy actually popped up first. 41 reviews. That's pretty interesting because the next one down without an ad is 380 reviews and there's 31. 401. So, typically, if you're not running an ad, then the highest listing is typically the ones with the most reviews. It depends on your area, but typically it'll be the ones with the best reviews and then the best profile that's kind of optimized for Google. I'm not going to go into that. What we're talking today is how to get on top and how you get on the top of this maps listing and on Google search listing is an ad. Google ads does this and what happens. I'm going to explain about the wasting money part because right now guys, I'm not in California. I'm about halfway across the country right now. But I can see this ad not because I'm some kind of special person, but because these guys have an incorrect setting in their Google Ads campaign. And in that setting, it basically means that you're showing your ad to people who are not in the area. Guys, who's going to come to a body shop if you're not in the area?

Maybe you could say, "Well, I'm searching for my mom across the country." And that'd be nice for you. That'd be a nice little son, nice person to help your mom out. But in reality, the people who are looking for body shops are in this area looking for a shop. Now, me, I can I'm looking, but I can tell that your ads set up incorrectly. And going back to the wasting money, guys, here's where you're wasting money. This company is spending money. I don't know if they're getting clicks or not getting leads. I can't tell. I'm not going to click in there because if I do click, what's going to happen? If I click one of these guys, then they're going to get charged in this range. So, body shop. Okay, it was body shop. What came up? And Body Shop. Where's Body? Body Shop right there. Oh, it actually might only cost 50 cents. That's pretty good. But it could cost as much as \$5. So, it's in one of these ranges right there for Body Shop. That is the range of the click. Now, how am I seeing this ad? Once again, it's an incorrect Google Ads campaign setting for your location. This is a simple fix, but I've seen it time and time again. and I could probably pull up a shop across the country and we will see this over and over and over again. People choose the incorrect setting and you're wasting money. You're throwing money down the drain and you may not be getting clicks. And this guy I talked to also said he was getting phone calls and things from people who are not in the area. This is because your ads not set up. First off, you got to fix that setting. This is in location settings. So, I pulled up a Google Ads campaign. I'm going to show you the exact setting that messes a lot of people up. This messes up. Any shop that is doing this is burning money. Let's do a fireball. We're burning money. And here's what we're doing. You need to go in your campaign settings locations. And this is what Oh, Google. Google says they recommend this. No, we don't want to do that. Why? Because this is presence in people regularly or who've shown interest in your location. Guess what I just did, guys? I showed interest in this location. I'm interested in this location right here. So, yeah. Okay. you're interested. Go ahead and show my ad.

No, I don't want that because you're not in your area. Now, what you want to do is presence people in or regularly in your location in your included area. That means it's not going to be people who just type in across the country. So, this right

here is going to save you a lot of money. There you go. Free tip of the day is presence. Do not go with Google's recommendation. Please, guys. Google's going to recommend you spend a lot of money. They don't recommend you get leads. So going back here, that's how you avoid that pitfall. And if these guys enable that, change that setting, they're going to avoid spending money there. The next piece is just because I have this location setting correct does not mean I'm going to get calls or quote request because you want to tell Google what you're optimizing your campaign for. Now, for any auto, body shop, auto repair, paintless, dent repair, detailer, or many other shops or services, what you want to do is set up your conversions for phone calls and quote requests. Quote requests are if I click this thing here, which I'm not going to do, then ideally it comes up to a landing page and it says, "Hey, are you looking for body shop repair in this area, Thousand Oaks?"

When this comes up here, it should go to a landing page, but more likely, if I click it, it's probably going to go to the guy's website, which is also going to waste your money. Why? Because websites are good. You need a website. Typically, on your website, you might have 5, 10, 20 different options. You can click about us, services, contact us, click the little message guy, learn about our services, and all that stuff, which all that's great, but in this case, the only thing somebody wants right here is a body shop. They probably want to get a quote request. They will probably want to talk to you. Right here, the phone number is right there on my phone. I could click there and call it or I click there and get a landing page. You want that landing page to come up. The only option you want in that landing page is to get the name, email, phone number, vehicle information. You want to get them to provide that information for the quote, submit it, and then book an appointment. You do not want to provide them 20 different options. How do we ensure that we are getting those? You want to optimize this. So, you want to have a conversion set up for phone calls and a conversion set up for a quote request. Google has other conversions.

You can have store visits and you can have other things like that. Directions. Directions are good. I can click directions right there. But we don't want to optimize for that cuz now Google thinks, oh, you just want to get people directions. So, optimizing for phone calls and quote requests is the key. Let's see if I can do collision and see what happens. Collision repair. Now, if you type in near me, it is going to actually change it to your area. People do search for it, actually. Here's collision repair. Another thing. Oh, so now we see this guy's ads coming up.

That's kind of interesting. Looks like he's doing Lamborghini repairs. Looks like this is a pretty nice area. And these guys are running ads for collision repair. I don't know if they're actually doing repairs for all cars. Now, obviously, these guys are wasting money. Maybe I should give these guys a call. I don't know. These guys are still there. collision repair shop. You can try these different ones and see. You can see that it will probably change. I can basically find all the ones that are wasting money. They're showing. Maybe that's your strategy. I don't know. But typically, you don't want to have that show to me. In order

to stop wasting money on Google ads, you need to have your ad campaign set up correctly. You need to have your locations is probably the number one thing set up correctly. If you don't have location set up right, then you're going to get calls and quote requests from across the country, maybe even across the world. What if you guys got people across Europe looking for stuff there? You want them to call you and waste money there. No, you probably don't. So, you want to not only set it there, you can also exclude. Google gives you the option of excluding other places. So, you can exclude the entire world if you want, which is probably a good idea. Sometimes you don't need it, but you can exclude that.

And you want to have locations and you want to have obviously your ads and everything need to be set up correctly. Conversions set up for phone calls and quote request. Make sure your phone call asset is only really showing during your business hours unless you have the ability to have a call center answer your calls. After that, you want to make sure it's only during your business hours. Calls at least for 60 seconds as a conversion. I hope that helps you out there. The number one lesson today was that yes, Google ads absolutely work for body shops. They work for auto repair, auto body, paintless dent repair, detailers, and more. Depending on the demand, you want to check that demand for your area. If you're in a high population area kind of like this, then most likely Google ads will work because it's getting in front of people who are searching for your business right now. If you like this content, click subscribe and like below. And if you do need help with any of those things, you can also click below, watch our free training, or click in the comments or description and request a strategy call with us. We can see if we can help you out with any of those things we talked about. All right, guys. Take care. God bless. Bye-bye.