Why Your Ad Clicks Aren't Turning Into Enquiries

Narrowing the gap between a click and a conversation

When you run a paid search campaign, the obvious thing to watch is the click count. A high number of clicks looks like success. But if those clicks aren't producing enquiries, something is broken between the moment someone taps your ad and the moment they decide to get in touch. The problem is rarely a single mistake. More often, it is a chain of small disconnects: the wrong audience, the wrong message, the wrong landing page, or a lack of clear next steps. Fixing each link in that chain can turn wasted clicks into real leads.

The audience mismatch

Paid search platforms let you show ads to people who type specific terms. But broad keyword bidding can pull in visitors who are curious, not ready to buy. Someone searching for "SEO tips" is not the same as someone searching for "SEO agency Derby". The first wants a blog post; the second wants a quote. If your ad shows up for both, you will get clicks from the first group, but they will never enquire because they were never in a buying frame of mind.

To fix this, tighten your keyword list. Match types such as phrase match or exact match help you avoid irrelevant traffic. Negative keywords also help. For example, if you sell services, adding "free" or "DIY" as negatives can filter out people who are not looking to pay. Audience targeting settings on the platform can also limit your ads to people who have visited your site before or who match a certain demographic profile. This is not about reducing clicks for the sake of it. It is about making sure the clicks you do get come from people who are genuinely interested in what you offer.

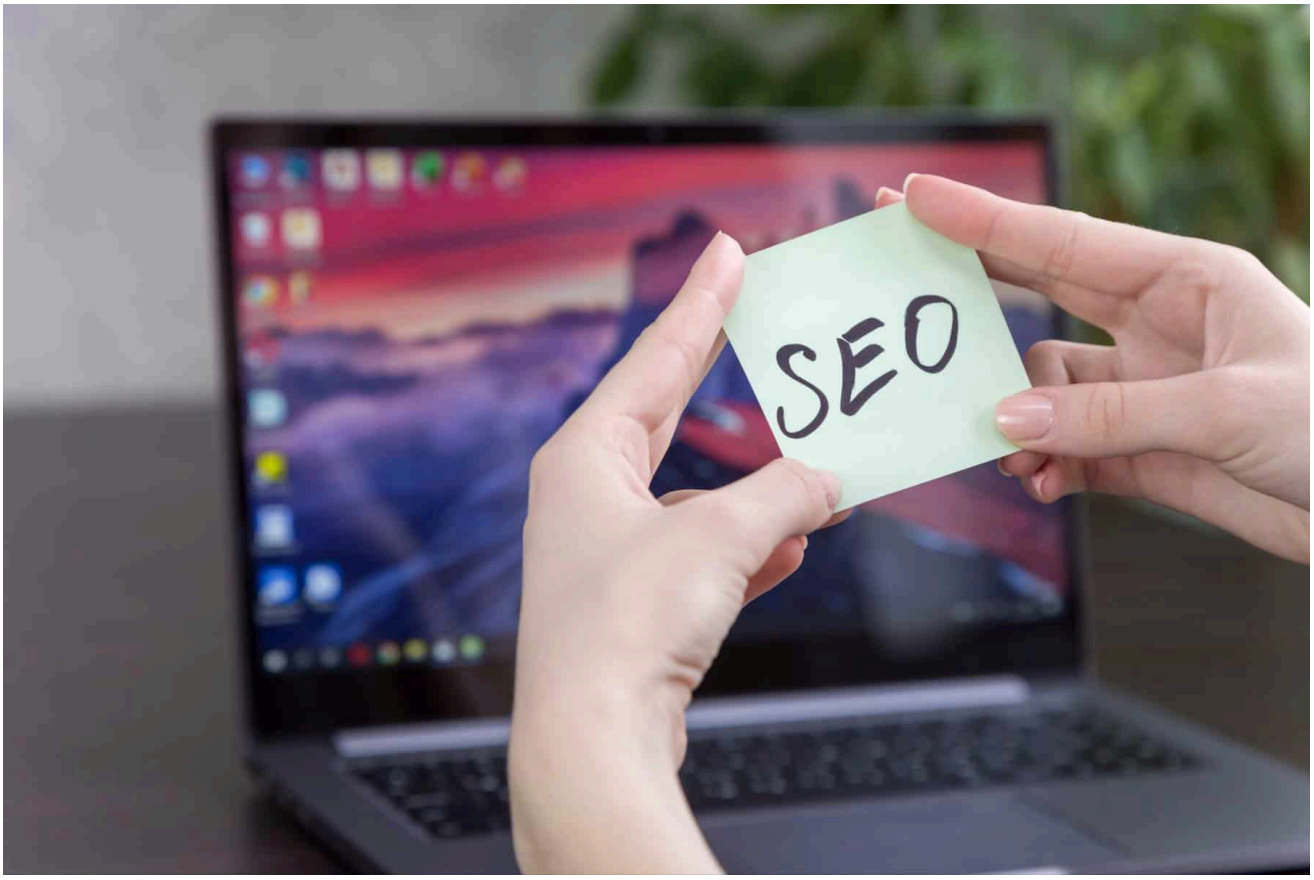
The ad copy says one thing, the landing page says another

A common reason for low enquiry rates is a mismatch between the promise in the ad and the reality on the landing page. Your ad might say "Get a free SEO audit" and then the page it sends people to asks them to fill in a long form just to see a price list. The visitor feels misled and leaves. That click cost you money and produced nothing.

Consistency is key. The headline on your landing page should echo the headline of your ad. The offer should be the same. If your ad mentions a free consultation, the landing page should make it obvious how to book that consultation. The call to action should be direct: "Book your free audit now" or "Get your quote today". Every extra step you add between the click and the enquiry gives the visitor a reason to change their mind.

Landing page speed and mobile experience

Even if your message is perfect, a slow page will kill enquiries. People click an ad because they want something quickly. If the page takes more than a few seconds to load, they assume it is broken or irrelevant and they hit the back button. On mobile, the problem is worse. Many paid search clicks come from phones, and a page that is not optimised for small screens - tiny fonts, buttons that are hard to tap, content that scrolls sideways - will drive visitors away before they see your offer.



Check your page speed using a free tool. Look at the mobile version of your page on an actual phone. If something feels slow or awkward, fix it. A fast, clean page that loads on any device gives your ad a fair chance to work.

Conversion tracking is telling you the wrong story

Another hidden issue is that your conversion tracking might not be set up correctly. If your platform reports a click but does not track the enquiry that happens later by phone or email, you are flying blind. You might be cutting a campaign that actually works, or pouring budget into a campaign that does not.

Make sure your tracking covers all the ways people get in touch. Phone calls from an ad need a call tracking number. Form submissions need a thank-you page that fires a conversion pixel.

Chat enquiries should be counted too. Without this data, you cannot tell which keywords, ads, or landing pages actually generate enquiries. You are guessing, and guessing costs money.

The ad itself lacks urgency or trust

Sometimes the problem is the ad copy itself. If your ad simply says "We do SEO - click here", it gives the reader no reason to choose you over any other result. Good ad copy addresses the reader's need, hints at a benefit, and includes something that builds trust. That could be a mention of experience, a customer rating, or a simple statement like "Serving Derby businesses since 2010". It could also include a limited-time offer or a clear next step: "Book a free 30-minute call".

Ad extensions can help too. Call extensions, sitelinks, and structured snippets give the reader more reasons to click and more confidence that you are a real business. When someone sees a phone number, a list of services, and links to specific pages all in the same ad, they are more likely to trust you and more likely to enquire.

Your landing page asks for too much too soon

Another common mistake is asking for too much information on the first contact. A long form with name, phone, email, company size, budget, and a detailed message box can feel like a barrier. The visitor has only just clicked your ad. They are not ready to fill in a questionnaire. They want a quick answer or a simple way to start a conversation.

Try a shorter form. Ask just for a name, an email address, and a brief message. Or replace the form with a prominent phone number and a clear invitation to call. You can collect more details later, once the person has shown genuine interest. Reducing friction at the first point of contact can lift enquiry rates significantly.

The offer does not match the searcher's intent

Different search terms signal different levels of intent. Someone searching for "paid search Derby" is likely looking for a provider of paid search services in Derby. They are probably a business owner or a marketing manager who wants to find someone to run their ads. If your ad appears for that term but your landing page talks about general SEO services or offers a free ebook, the visitor will not see what they came for. They wanted a service provider, not a piece of content.

Match your landing page to the specific search term. If the keyword is "paid search Derby", the page should talk about your paid search management services in Derby. It should explain how you handle campaign setup, keyword research, ad copy, and ongoing optimisation. It should make it easy for the searcher to see that you are the right person for the job and to contact you. When the page aligns with the search, the enquiry rate goes up.



Budget is spread too thin

Small and medium-sized businesses often spread a limited budget across too many keywords. The result is that each keyword gets only a few clicks per day, and none of them get enough data to tell whether they work. A better approach is to concentrate the budget on a handful of high-intent keywords. Bid more aggressively on those terms, get more clicks from them, and measure the results. Once you see which terms drive enquiries, you can expand from there. Trying to cover everything at once usually means nothing works well enough to judge.

No follow-up system for enquiries that do come in

Sometimes the ad and the landing page work fine, but the business drops the ball on the follow-up. If someone fills in a form and does not hear back for two days, they will have moved on. Speed matters. Aim to respond to enquiries within a few hours at most. An automated email acknowledging the enquiry and promising a call-back within a set time can keep the lead warm until you speak to them.

If you are not tracking how quickly you respond to leads, start now. A simple spreadsheet can show you the gap. Often, improving the follow-up process has a bigger effect on enquiry conversion than changing the ad itself.

Putting it all together

Low enquiry rates from paid search are frustrating, but they are almost always fixable. Start with the audience and the keywords. Make sure your ad copy matches your landing page. Speed up the page and make it work on mobile. Set up proper conversion tracking so you know what is working. Simplify your forms and respond quickly when someone does get in touch. Each change on its own might seem small, but together they can turn a campaign that just burns budget into one that consistently generates real business enquiries.