

THE AD BUDGET AUDIT

9 checks. 15 minutes. Find where your Google or Meta budget is actually going.

Why this

Most WA small businesses running ads can name their cost per click — but not their cost per qualified lead. That gap is where the money disappears.

We audited a Rockingham service business spending \$4,000/month on Google Ads. The owner said leads were "steady." We installed proper conversion tracking and found 60% of the budget was going to clicks that never even filled a form.

Three months later: same lead volume, \$1,800/month spend.

The leak was tracking, not traffic.

A Busselton trades business we looked at was running ads to Perth metro by default — about 70% of their spend was on customers they couldn't physically serve. One settings fix, immediate halving of cost per lead.

Who this is for

If you're spending \$500+/month on Google or Facebook/Instagram ads, this is your sheet.

If you're not running ads — read The Google Profile Weekend Reset instead. Most WA service businesses get more from a finished Google Business Profile than from paid traffic.

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Servicing Perth metro + Bunbury and the South West

Properly built. Properly looked after.

The 9-point check

1. Tracking — the most expensive layer to skip

- ☐ **1a. Google Ads conversion tracking installed.** "Clicks" is not a conversion. Form submits, calls, bookings are.
- ☐ **1b. Meta Pixel installed (if running FB/IG ads).** Without Pixel + Conversions API, Meta optimises against clicks not customers.
- ☐ **1c. Phone calls from ads tracked separately.** Set up call tracking — otherwise you can't tell which keyword paid for the \$2k job.
- ☐ **1d. You can name your cost per qualified lead.** If you can't say it in 5 seconds, your reporting isn't set up.

2. Targeting — where most budget gets wasted

- ☐ **2a. Ads point to a dedicated landing page (not homepage).** Suburb + service-specific page converts 2–3× better.
- ☐ **2b. Negative keywords list in place.** Block "DIY", "jobs", "wages", "free" — keep your budget for buyers.
- ☐ **2c. Geo-targeting matches your actual service area.** Defaults are wide. Recheck monthly.

3. Maintenance — the part nobody does

- ☐ **3a. At least 2 ad variants running per campaign.** Without variants, you can't tell what's working.
- ☐ **3b. Search terms report checked in the last 30 days.** This shows the actual queries Google matched you against.

SCORE: ____ / 9

What your score means

6+ — Top 20% of advertiser hygiene

You're measuring what matters. Optimise.

3–5 — Paying for clicks you can't measure

Don't increase spend until items 1a–1d are ticked.

Under 3 — Pause your campaigns this week

Until tracking is in, you're scaling the leak. Even a 2-week pause to set this up pays for itself in a month.

Fix order

Don't try to fix all 9 at once. This order actually works:

Week 1 — Install conversion tracking

- Google: GA4 + Google Ads conversion (via Google Tag Manager).
- Meta: Pixel + Conversions API.
- Cost: free DIY (1 day) or 2–4 hours of an agency.

Week 2 — Build ONE dedicated landing page

- For your top-spending campaign only.
- Suburb-specific. Service-specific. One next step.
- Cost: a Saturday on Unbounce / Carrd / your CMS.

Week 3 — Negative keywords + geo tightening

- 30 minutes per campaign. Recurring monthly job.

Week 4 — Open the search terms report

- Add 10+ new negatives.
- Find 2–3 new high-intent queries you're not bidding on.

Quick maths

If your tracking is broken and 30–40% of your budget is wasted (typical for unaudited campaigns), fixing it is the highest-value move in this whole audit.

\$3,000/month × 35% wasted = \$1,050/month saved.

Or kept and reinvested into the campaigns that work.

Want a fresh set of eyes?

The Look-See Audit (\$400) includes a full ad account review — campaign structure, conversion tracking, search terms, landing page conversion rate, competitor ad analysis, and what your return on ad spend should be for your service in WA.

50% credited if you continue with Swan Ops within 60 days.

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