



GUIDE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CREATING EXPANDED TEXT ADS

■ INTRODUCTION

Recently, the crew at Google made advertisers' wishes come true when they released support for Expanded Text Ads (ETAs) in the AdWords interface. This giant new ad format gives advertisers an additional **45 characters** to work with, making it easier to build a compelling case for searchers to click on their ads.

Headline 1:	30 characters		Changed from 25 to 30 characters
Headline 2:	30 characters		Totally new! An additional 30 characters
Description:	80 characters		Changed from two 35-character lines, to one consolidated 80-character line
Display URL:	Two 15-character path fields		The domain is dynamically imported from the final URL & advertisers can customize it with two 15-character description path fields

Excited for these new and improved ads? Good — because soon that's all you'll be able to use. Come October 26, you will no longer be able to edit or create your standard text ads. Shortly thereafter (likely early 2017), Google will retire ads "as we know them" altogether, making ETAs the norm. In the interim, SERPs will display a mix of standard ads and ETAs.

■ THE ANATOMY OF AN EXPANDED TEXT AD

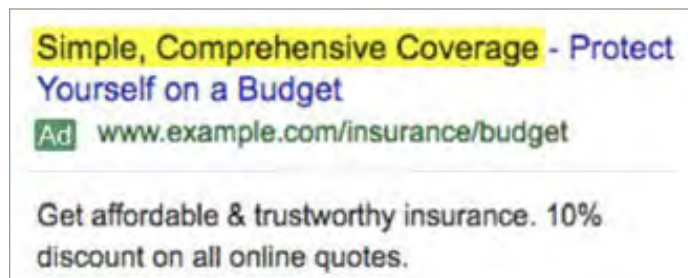
Over the past 16 years, we marketers have grown accustomed to writing super-short, succinct ad copy. Now that ETAs are becoming the "new normal," we'll have to adapt to the new formats and develop new, go-to ad formulas.

Luckily, the Managed Services team here at WordStream has been experimenting with these enormous ads for a few months now. Here's our formula for building super-clickable ETAs, line-by-line:

Final URL

Your final URL should be the landing page where you wish to drive searchers who match to keywords in this particular ad group. I love that Google kicks off the ad creation process by forcing advertisers to pick this URL before creating their copy, because it forces us to create copy with that particular page in mind.

Headline 1 – 30 Characters



This is, hands down, the most important component of your new ad. We know that humans' attention spans are abysmal. When we're on the SERP, faced with a multitude of both paid and organic listings, our attention to detail is even worse. We jump into "scan mode" and rarely make it past most listings headlines. That said, a strong, relevant headline has the power to disrupt our scanning and compel us to actually read the entire listing.

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Since Headline 1 is essentially the gateway to the rest of your ad, it deserves special attention. [🐦](#)

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Since Headline 1 is essentially the gateway to the rest of your ad, it deserves special attention. Capture your readers' attention by using language that is relevant to what they're looking for (ahem, your top keywords) and/or your key selling point. Remember, you can absolutely kick things off with a question but you can't use exclamation points in your headline.

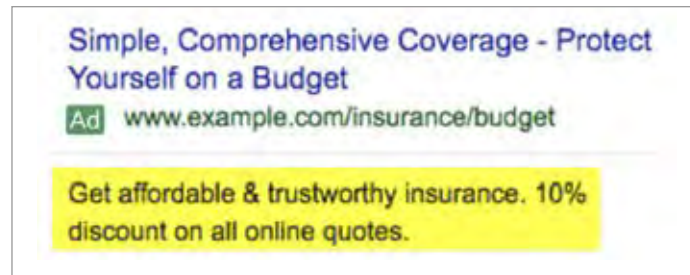
Headline 2 – 30 Characters



The challenge with Headline 2 is that it doesn't always show — at least not in its entirety. When it does appear, it has excellent visibility, so it's the perfect place to feature supporting information that complements the critical information shared in Headline 1.

Description – 80 Characters

The description section is the meat of your ad. Your headlines' mission is to capture your searchers' eyes. Once you've got their attention, it's up to the description copy to compel them to act. When it comes to body copy, the creative process should mimic that of a standard ad — you just have a little more artistic freedom, thanks to the new character limits.

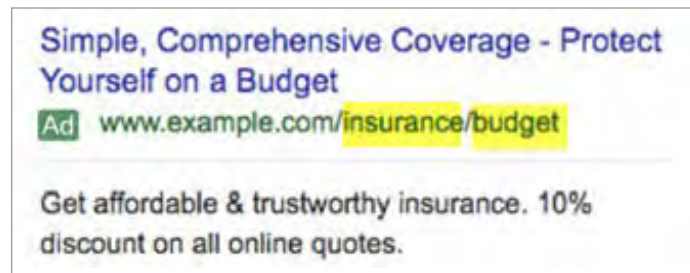


Here are a few creative strategies that we're using to create compelling new description copy:

- Using emotional triggers to push searchers to take action
- Running ad customizers to instill a sense of FOMO in searchers
- Dynamically customizing ad copy to create ads that resonate with individual searchers

Your description should also feature a clear call-to-action telling searchers exactly what you want them to do when they arrive on your landing page. Including this in your ad is critical, because it's a subtle way to invade their subconscious and push them to take action after viewing your site.

URL Paths – 15 Characters Each



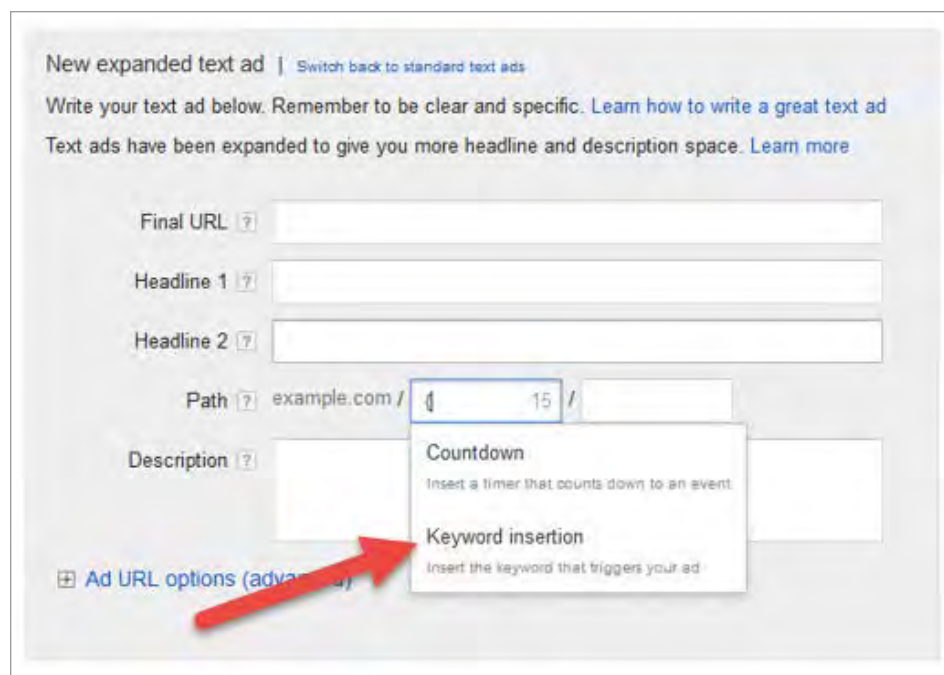
This new ad component is optional, but we highly recommend using it to your advantage. In fact, for years, we've been coaching advertisers to take advantage of the extra space alongside their domains in their Display URLs. This does not have to produce a working URL

— it's simply a vanity link to strengthen your copy and show searchers that you're sending them to view relevant content.

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With standard ads, only 35 characters were permitted in the Display URL. This was problematic for advertisers with lengthy URLs, who didn't have sufficient space to add new keywords. These new, URL paths even the playing field.

With ETAs, Google will automatically extract the domain from your Final URL and plug it into your Display URL. Then, regardless of your domain's length, you can use the two 15-character paths to enhance your URL.



New expanded text ad | [Switch back to standard text ads](#)

Write your text ad below. Remember to be clear and specific. [Learn how to write a great text ad](#)

Text ads have been expanded to give you more headline and description space. [Learn more](#)

Final URL [?](#)

Headline 1 [?](#)

Headline 2 [?](#)

Path [?](#) example.com / /

Description [?](#)

[Ad URL options \(advanced\)](#)

- Countdown
Insert a timer that counts down to an event.
- Keyword insertion
Insert the keyword that triggers your ad.

To populate each of these fields, I recommend turning to your ad group's keyword list. Identify your most popular keywords and plug them into the path fields. If you really want to get fancy, you could also try using Dynamic Keyword Insertion for one of these paths, to ensure they're truly catered toward your searchers' needs.

WANT MORE OUT OF YOUR PPC?

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Meet with one of our in-house PPC experts for a customized account analysis. Find out if there are areas for improvement or opportunities for growth to take your paid search advertising to the next level.



SAVE TIME

OPTIMIZE CAMPAIGNS
EFFICIENTLY



INCREASE ROI

STRETCH YOUR BUDGET
FURTHER



GROW BUSINESS

INCREASE TRAFFIC &
ENGAGEMENT

SCHEDULE YOUR PERSONALIZED ACCOUNT ANALYSIS

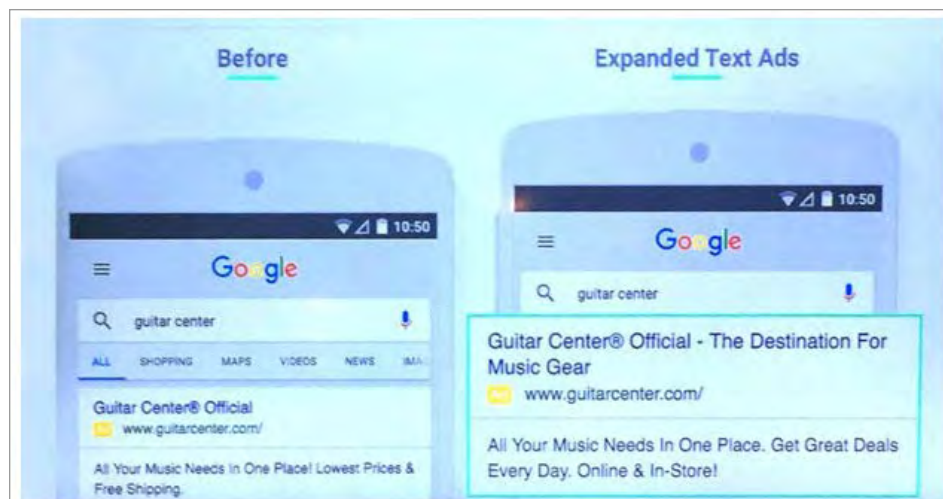
www.wordstream.com/demo

■ OUR TOP 6 BEST PRACTICES FOR WRITING EXPANDED TEXT ADS

We've had the opportunity to test out ETA's in beta and we've figured out what works and what doesn't. Follow these tips to make sure your Expanded Text Ads are optimized for clicks and conversions.

ETA Best Practice #1: Write NEW Ads!

I get it, you've worked hard perfecting your current ads. There's a big temptation to take the ads that are working well now, combine your existing description lines, add a second headline and sit back and let the shiny new ad format do all the work for you. Even Google basically did this when they first showed this Guitar Center expanded text ad during their May announcement:



The problem with this tactic though is that you're just using more words to say effectively the same thing. Guitar Center adding a second headline saying "The Destination for Music Gear" doesn't make this a more compelling ad and doesn't enhance the offer at all. Although we've seen most advertisers see at least a 28% CTR gain from expanded text ads, we've actually seen many advertisers who just add a second headline to their existing ads see their CTRs *decrease*.

As you write new expanded text ads, use the extra characters to supplement your existing offers and calls to action and include more value propositions than you could with a 95-character limit. Consider an ad like this in the old format:

ABC Car Insurance - 10% Discount on all online quotes
Ad www.example.com/Online-Discount ▼
Get ABC Protected For Less!

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If we take the challenge of writing new expanded text ads to heart and write entirely new ads, with a focus on highlighting what makes the product unique, appealing to the user's emotions, and testing a new call to action, we get something like this:

Simple, Comprehensive Coverage - Protect Yourself on a Budget
Ad www.example.com/insurance/budget
Get affordable & trustworthy insurance. 10% discount on all online quotes.

One of our clients, Namely, took the challenge and did complete ad rewrites similar to the above for their all-in-one HR software. Here's one example of an old ad:

Best Onboarding Software
Engage New Employees Right Away
With Our Easy Onboarding Solution!
namely.com/Onboarding

And here's the reworked Expanded Text Ad:

Employee Onboarding Software
Easy, Paperless, Onboarding
www.namely.com/Onboarding/Demo
Hiring is difficult. Onboarding should be easy. Schedule Your Demo Today!

The results speak for themselves — **the new ads have a CTR 400% higher than their old ads!**

ETA Best Practice #2: Feature Your Most Important Messaging in Your Headlines

Even though your new 80-character description is by far the largest field in your new expanded text ads, description lines still command the least attention. The messaging of the two headlines of your expanded text ad are the most influential in improving the CTR of your ads.

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Spend most of your time testing new ad copy focusing on your headlines and you'll quickly find the headlines that improve the CTR of your ad the most. It's worth noting though, that none of Google's ad policies have changed regarding what you can and can't include in your ads' headlines. Most notably, you still cannot include an explanation point in either headline!

That said, remember that Headline 1 trumps Headline 2. Here's why — although both headlines can technically be up to 30 characters long, there's no guarantees on exactly how the second headline shows. The second headline may extend the length of the first headline:



The second headline may appear after a line break:



Or Google may truncate your second headline:

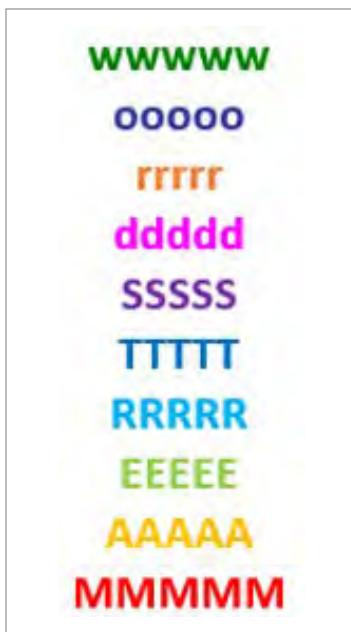


Why is Headline 2 at risk? Although Google polices the size of ad creative by character-count, it actually determines the way it's displayed on the SERP based on pixel-count.

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All of these qualify as 5 characters, but the number of pixels that they consume varies. If the combination of Headline 1 and Headline 2 exceeds the number of pixels allocated to ads on the SERP, Google will truncate your ad to save space.

If you're super-sensitive to displaying truncated ads, Google officially recommends being conservative and limiting the character count for both of your headlines to only 33 characters.

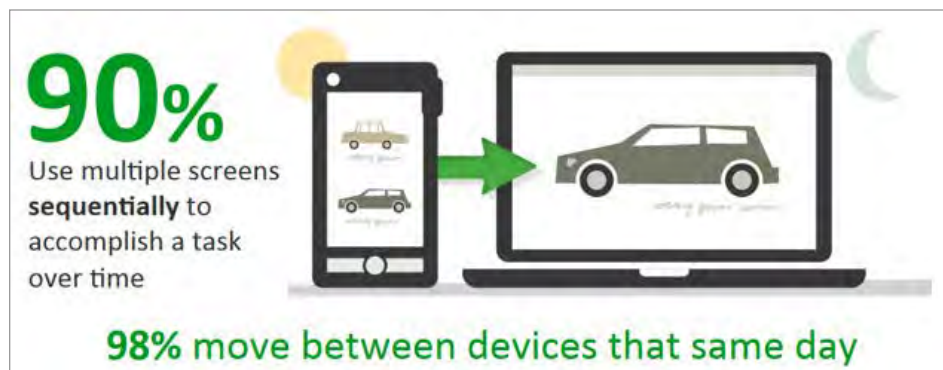
ETA Best Practice #3: Don't Pause Your Old Ads Right Away

Expanded text ads are eligible to show for all the keywords in your ad groups all the time, but you may want to hold off on pausing your old ads, at least for a bit. As with everything in paid search, just because expanded text ads are new doesn't necessarily mean they'll outperform your old ads immediately. Some advertisers saw their first try with expanded text ads have lower CTRs than their old ads.

When you create your first expanded text ads, introduce them to your ad groups alongside your old ads. If their performance isn't as good as your old ads, keep testing new expanded text ads. Once the performance of your expanded text ads is comfortably better than the old ones, you can pause your old traditional format ads.

ETA Best Practice #4: Write Copy that Speaks to Users on All Devices

Since more than half of all Google searches occur on mobile devices, it's important that your ads can speak to all users across desktop, mobile, and tablet. Google's new expanded text ads will serve to searchers on all devices, 90% of whom will use multiple devices before completing their final goal.




In the past, advertisers were able to create mobile preferred ads to serve different ads to mobile searchers. However, expanded text ads have no device preference which means the same message on desktop, tablet and mobile. Even if an advertiser has an old mobile preferred ad in their ad group, an expanded text ad is just as eligible to show that message on the mobile SERP, so make sure your offer and call to action make sense and are possible on different devices.

ETA Best Practice #5: Update Your Ad Extensions

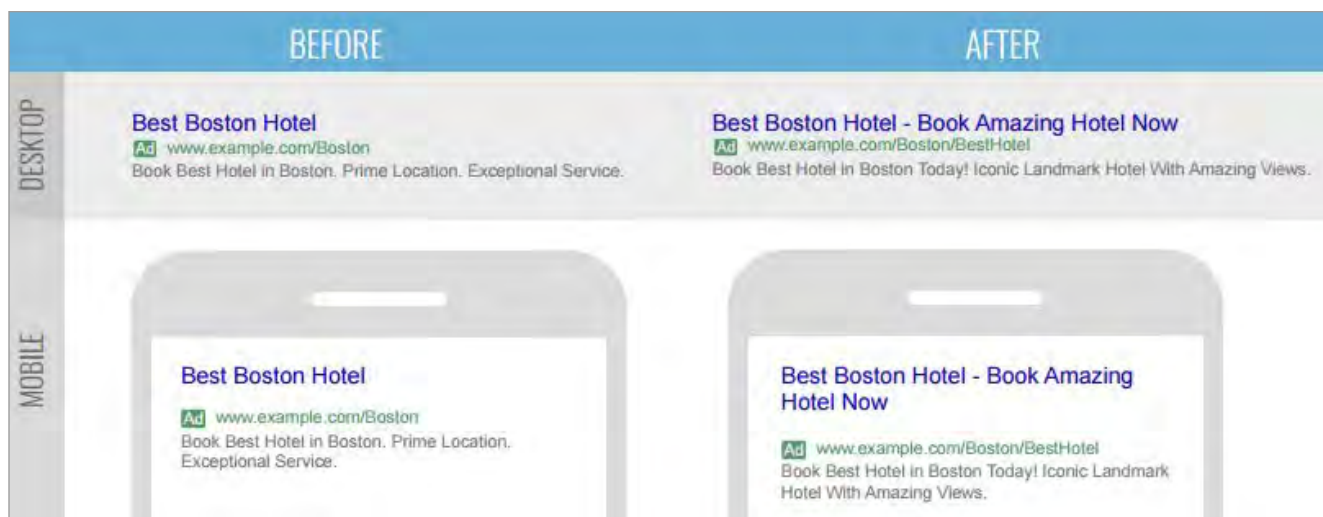
SEMs have always used ad extensions to promote alternative offers and highlight important value propositions that they couldn't include in the ads. We know that including ad extensions to appear alongside our ads can considerably improve our ad's CTR and Quality Score.

However, as you create new expanded text ads and add more detail to your offers within the body of your ads, you'll likely make many of your old ad extensions redundant. Google won't serve your ad extensions if they only serve to repeat the text already included in your ads, so make sure as you update your ads you refresh your ad extensions with new, unique content to promote alongside your new, larger ads.

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ETA Best Practice #6: Start Building Your ETAs NOW

Google will eventually sunset standard text ads and solely display ETAs. As with all major migrations (think Enhanced Campaigns), there will be a bit of a time lag between the release of the new format and the elimination of the old one, giving advertisers time to make the transition themselves. So, for the next few months, SERPs will display a mix of standard and ETA ads.



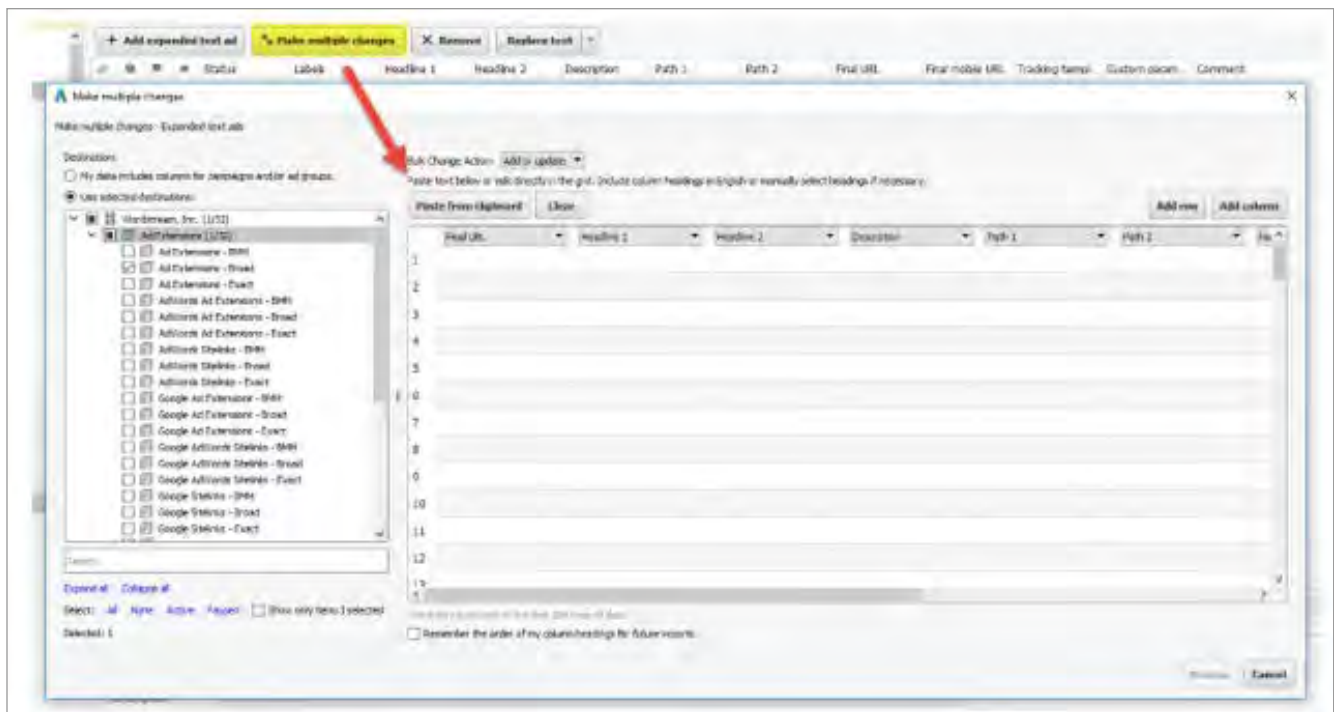
Imagine receiving these two ads alongside one another on the SERP. The ETA is basically the standard ad on steroids. It's so huge that it automatically demands more attention than the standard ad, plus its messaging is more informative and more compelling. Who wouldn't be drawn to the ETA?

In fact, our research shows that ETAs almost always win. We have multiple accounts in this beta and the vast majority have experienced heightened CTR. That said, these extraordinary trends are unlikely to continue after the mass-migration. Sure, we expect that ETAs will perform better than standard ads did in general, but will the difference be this stark when all ads look the same? Probably not.

Take advantage of this unique situation while you can. Get your ETAs up and running before your competitors do and benefit from these temporary, inflated CTRs. Not only will you score more site traffic, you'll likely see a nice little boost in Quality Scores, too!

■ CREATING EXPANDED TEXT ADS IN BULK

Ready to get started? The fastest way to do this is through the AdWords Editor interface. The creation process is simple. All you have to do is select ETAs on the ads tab, select the option to make multiple changes and then begin building your spreadsheet.



Once you've populated the spreadsheet with your new ads, submit and review your changes, then post them live to AdWords.

Not a fan of AdWords Editor? You can also build your new ETAs in Excel, then upload the document to AdWords. Download our [free ETA creation template for Excel](#) (with detailed instructions included) here!

ABOUT WORDSTREAM

[WordStream Inc.](#) provides software and services that help marketers get the maximum results from their online marketing efforts. WordStream's easy-to-use software allows for more effective paid search and social campaigns with the 20-Minute Work Week, a customized workflow that guides marketers through steps that can greatly improve their AdWords, Bing, Yahoo, and Facebook campaigns, plus tools for call tracking, keyword optimization, and more. WordStream also offers an award-winning free PPC tool, the AdWords Performance Grader, which evaluates users' Google AdWords accounts and provides valuable tips for improvement. WordStream is a Google Premier Partner.

EXPANDED TEXT ADS [CHEAT SHEET]

BEFORE

AFTER

Best Boston Hotel

Ad www.example.com/Boston

Book Best Hotel in Boston. Prime Location. Exceptional Service.

Best Boston Hotel - Book Amazing Hotel Now

Ad www.example.com/Boston/BestHotel

Book Best Hotel in Boston Today! Iconic Landmark Hotel With Amazing Views.

Best Boston Hotel

Ad www.example.com/Boston

Book Best Hotel in Boston. Prime Location.
Exceptional Service.

Best Boston Hotel - Book Amazing
Hotel Now

Ad www.example.com/Boston/BestHotel

Book Best Hotel in Boston Today! Iconic Landmark
Hotel With Amazing Views.

WHAT CHANGED: LINE BY LINE

Headline 1: 30 characters



Changed from 25 to 30 characters

Headline 2: 30 characters



Totally new! An additional 30 characters

Description: 80 characters



Changed from two 35-character lines,
to one consolidated 80-character line

Display URL: Two 15-character path fields



The domain is dynamically imported from
the final URL & advertisers can customize it with
two 15-character description path fields

8 BEST PRACTICES

1 Write NEW Ads, don't just add a second headline
Use the extra characters to say something new

2 Keep your most important messaging in headline 1
This still commands the most attention

3 Headline #1 is far more important than Headline #2
No promise how or if the second headline shows

4 Don't pause your legacy ads right away
Test and compare overall performance

5 Write all your ads to speak to users on all devices
ETAs are eligible to serve on all devices

6 Include top keywords in the path fields
This will make your display URLs more relevant

7 Update your ad extensions
Create new, unique content to promote alongside new ads

8 Begin building ETAs as soon as possible
Standard ads will be retired in early 2017