A FIELD GUIDE FOR OWNERS

The Google Ads Setup Checklist.

Ten settings quietly draining your ad budget, and the thirty day plan to plug them.

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In the Google Ads accounts I measured, almost a third of search-term spend went to terms that didn't convert.

That isn't a scare tactic. It's the median across 25 live accounts I measured in Q3 2026, and the algorithm in each one was doing exactly what its tracking told it to do.

Google is not the villain. The settings are. **Most of them are on by default. Most of them can be fixed in an afternoon.**

A note on the per-flag dollar figures: they're illustrative assumptions, not measured results. Each one shows the recovery I'd expect if that one setting was the main leak in the account. They don't sum.

30.7%

Median share of visible search-term spend on terms with 2+ clicks and no conversions (N = 25, Q3 2026).

6 of 29

Lead-gen accounts counting a non-lead action or a click proxy as a primary conversion (Q3 2026).

16 of 33

Accounts with a primary website conversion that recorded zero in 30 days (to October 21, 2026).

Five things you will know by the time you finish reading.

01

Which of the ten common settings are wrong in your account.

A sixty second self assessment with a clear scoring model. No login required, no tools to install.

02

How much each broken setting is actually costing you.

Every red flag leads with the typical dollar bleed for a $25K a month account, ranked by impact.

03

How to fix each one, with the exact menu path.

No vague advice. Each section gives you the literal click path inside Google Ads or GA4.

04

A worksheet that estimates your annual waste.

Fill in the blanks. The number you get is an estimate built on my planning assumptions. You can also open it as a live spreadsheet.

05

A four week plan to clean it all up.

The same sequence I run with new clients. Quick wins on day one. Compounding lift by day forty five.

Your sixty second audit.

OPEN GOOGLE ADS IN ANOTHER TAB. CHECK EVERY BOX THAT IS TRUE.

01	☐	Every phone call counts as a conversion, including ten second hang ups, wrong numbers, and existing customers calling for support.
02	☐	"Search Partners" or "Display Network expansion" is turned on in your search campaigns. Both are on by default.
03	☐	Conversion goals at the campaign level are set to "Account Default" instead of specific revenue actions.
04	☐	Page views, button clicks, "engaged sessions," or other micro events are flagged as *primary* conversions.
05	☐	You have not pulled the search terms report and added new negatives in the last thirty days.
06	☐	GA4 is "linked" to Google Ads, but you have never confirmed conversions are actually importing.
07	☐	You report "cost per conversion," but could not tell me your real cost per *qualified* lead if asked today.
08	☐	You have no organized negative keyword lists, or just one giant catch all list, in your Shared Library.
09	☐	Performance Max is your only campaign type. No standard search campaign is running alongside it.
10	☐	Auto apply recommendations are turned on. Google is making changes for you without approval.

Tally your checked boxes. Score on the next page. / 10

What your number means.

There is no failing grade here. Almost every account I audit lands in the third bucket. The number just tells you how aggressively to act.

0–2
ISSUES

You are in good shape.

Your tracking foundation is mostly clean. A few targeted tweaks will tighten things up. Use the cheat sheet on the last page as a periodic gut check.

`My planning estimate: under 5% of spend wasted`

3–5
ISSUES

You are leaking budget.

Fixable, but it requires immediate action. Each unresolved flag is teaching Google to optimize for the wrong people. Block four hours this week and work the impact ranked list on page 18.

`My planning estimate: 15–25% of spend wasted`

6+
ISSUES

You are burning money.

The most common bucket, and the most expensive. Every month you wait is another month of compounding bad data. Knock out the top three fixes today. They take twenty five minutes total.

`My planning estimate: 30–60% of spend wasted`

The math is brutal. If you spend $20,000 a month and sit in the third bucket, my planning estimate puts the waste at $6,000 to $12,000 a month until you act. That comes straight out of cash flow.

RED FLAG 01 / 10

$1,100/mo

ILLUSTRATIVE, IF IT'S THE MAIN LEAK

Every phone call counts as a conversion.

SYMPTOM

Google counts every call the same way. A five second wrong number registers identical value to a twenty minute call that books a $50K job.

WHY IT BLEEDS

If half your "conversions" are junk, you are paying Google to find more junk. The algorithm thinks short calls are valuable because that is what your conversion data says.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Goals → Conversions → Phone calls
If "Call length" is under 60 seconds,
this red flag is live in your
account.
```

THE FIX

Filter for qualified calls only.

01 Add a call tracking platform: WhatConverts, CallRail, or CallTrackingMetrics.

02 Exclude calls under sixty seconds from conversion tracking.

03 Record every call. Review weekly. Tag as Qualified or Not Qualified.

04 Import only qualified calls back into Google Ads as the conversion event.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture an account that counts every call as a lead. ***Pull the recordings and you hear hang ups, spam and existing customers mixed in with the real prospects.*** The true cost per lead is what's left after you strip those out, and it's higher than the dashboard says.

$1,800/mo

ILLUSTRATIVE, IF IT'S THE MAIN LEAK

Search Partners and Display are turned on.

SYMPTOM

By default, Google extends your search campaigns to "Search Partners" (random partner sites) and the Display Network (banners on third party blogs and apps).

WHY IT BLEEDS

This traffic is notoriously low intent. Search Partners sends you to sketchy clones. Display shows banners to people reading articles. You get clicks, not conversions.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Campaign → Settings → Networks
If either "Include Google search
partners" or "Display Network" is
checked, this red flag is live.
```

THE FIX

Uncheck two boxes per campaign.

01 Open each search campaign's settings.

02 Find the "Networks" section near the top.

03 Uncheck "Include Google search partners."

04 Uncheck "Include Google Display Network."

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Open Campaigns and segment by network. ***If Search Partners or Display carries a real share of spend and almost none of the leads, that's the leak.*** Turn both off and move the budget back into Google search.

$900/mo

ILLUSTRATIVE, IF IT'S THE MAIN LEAK

Conversion goals are set to "Account Default."

SYMPTOM

"Account Default" tells Google to optimize toward every conversion in your account. Page views, map clicks, ten second calls, add to carts. Everything counts equally.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Tell Google a page view equals a booked consultation, and it will deliver page views all day. Smart Bidding becomes brilliant at the wrong thing.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Campaign → Settings → Conversions
If the dropdown reads "Account
Default," this red flag is live.
```

THE FIX

Pick goals at the campaign level.

01 Open each campaign. Settings tab. Conversions section.

02 Switch from "Account Default" to "Choose conversion goals for this campaign."

03 Select only revenue driving actions: purchases, qualified leads, booked calls.

04 Move every soft action to "Secondary" so it tracks but does not optimize.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a store counting add to carts and page views as "conversions." *The dashboard shows a healthy cost per conversion while the real cost per sale sits much higher.* The fix is one Primary action: the purchase.

$750/mo

ILLUSTRATIVE, IF IT'S THE MAIN LEAK

Micro conversions are your primary goal.

SYMPTOM

Button clicks, scroll depth, "engaged sessions," and time on site are flagged as primary conversions. Your dashboard looks busy. Sales does not feel it.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Micro events make the chart look great but do not pay your bills. Google optimizes for the easy actions, not for revenue, and you get a campaign that produces scrolls.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Goals → Conversions → Summary
If anything other than a sale or
qualified lead is set to "Primary,"
this red flag is live.
```

THE FIX

Demote everything except revenue.

01 Open each non revenue conversion action.

02 Change "Action optimization" from Primary to Secondary.

03 Keep only purchases, qualified leads, and booked calls as Primary.

04 Hit 25 plus primaries a month? Remove micros entirely.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a low-volume B2B account that really does need micro conversions to feed the bid algorithm. ***Keep "demo requested" as Primary and move "video watched" and "engaged session" to Secondary.*** Bidding still gets signal without being told a video view is a sale.

$1,400/mo

ILLUSTRATIVE, IF IT'S THE MAIN LEAK

No search terms review in thirty plus days.

SYMPTOM

You bid on keywords. Google matches your ads to actual searches that resemble those keywords, sometimes loosely. The search terms report shows what people really typed.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Bid on "roof repair" and you may pay for "roofing jobs," "how to fix a roof leak yourself," and "roofing training." All cost money. None bring customers.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Insights & reports → Search terms
If your last visit was over thirty
days ago, this red flag is live.
```

THE FIX

Make this a weekly habit.

01 Pull the search terms report every Monday.

02 Add clearly irrelevant queries to your negative lists.

03 Flag any term with clicks but zero conversions over thirty days. Zero conversions is a spend fact, not a relevance verdict.

04 Check every brand, product or person name against your live catalog or service list before negating it. Blocking one you sell removes the buyer.

05 Promote winning terms to their own exact match keywords.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a store whose product name also describes things it doesn't sell. *Broad match pulls in those searches, they never convert, and they quietly eat budget.* A short negative list sends that money back to the searches that do.

RED FLAG 06 / 10

$1,600/mo

ILLUSTRATIVE, IF IT'S THE MAIN LEAK

GA4 is "linked," but not importing.

SYMPTOM

You connected GA4 to Google Ads. Both accounts say "Linked." But the import switch was never flipped, or the GA4 events were never marked as conversions.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Smart Bidding is making decisions on whatever lives in Google Ads natively, usually thinner, weaker signal. You paid for the setup and got none of the optimization benefit.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Goals → Conversions → Summary
If you do not see GA4 events listed
as conversion actions, this red flag
is live.
```

THE FIX

Mark, import, verify.

01 In GA4, mark important events as "Key Events" (formerly conversions).

02 In Google Ads, go to Goals, Conversions, New action, Import, Google Analytics 4.

03 Select the events you want: purchases, demos, qualified leads.

04 Wait 48 hours. Verify data is flowing in the "Recent conversions" column.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture an account with GA4 set up cleanly and tracking that works. ***But nothing flows into Google Ads because the import was never switched on.*** Smart Bidding runs blind until someone turns it on.

$2,200/mo

ILLUSTRATIVE, IF IT'S THE MAIN LEAK

No cost per qualified lead, just CPA.

SYMPTOM

Your dashboard shows "cost per conversion." But you cannot tell me how many of those conversions actually became opportunities. Marketing celebrates. Sales hates the leads.

WHY IT BLEEDS

You make budget decisions on fantasy numbers. You think CPA is $100. It is actually $333 because 70% of "conversions" are junk. You scale a campaign that looks profitable and is not.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Ask sales: "How many of last month's
leads were real?"

If the answer is "no idea" or wildly
different from your CPA dashboard,
this red flag is live.
```

THE FIX

Define qualified, then track that.

01 Sit with sales. Define "qualified" by budget, timeline, fit, and need.

02 Export the last 90 days of conversions. Have sales tag each: Qualified, Not, Closed Won.

03 Calculate your real cost per qualified lead.

04 Pipe only qualified leads back into Google Ads as the conversion event.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture an account counting every "tour request" as a lead while sales says only some are real prospects. ***Tighten the definition so only qualified tours count, and bidding starts chasing the people sales actually wants.***

RED FLAG 08 / 10

$1,300/mo

ILLUSTRATIVE, IF IT'S THE MAIN LEAK

No themed negative keyword lists.

SYMPTOM

You have no negative keyword lists in your Shared Library, or one giant catch all that blocks too much. Negatives sit at the campaign level, never reused, never themed.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Without themed lists, you keep paying for "roofing jobs," "roofer salary," and "DIY roof repair" across every campaign you launch. Themed lists block whole categories before they hit your account.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Tools → Shared library → Negative keyword lists
If you see fewer than three lists, this red flag is live.
```

THE FIX

Build five themed lists.

01 Jobs & Careers: jobs, hiring, salary, careers, employment.

02 DIY & How To: how to, DIY, tutorial, guide, course, training.

03 Free & Cheap: free, cheap, discount, coupon, deal, promo.

04 Informational: definition, meaning, what is, examples, vs.

05 Competitors: brands you have confirmed you do not sell and have decided not to bid on. Check your catalog first, because blocking a brand you carry blocks its buyers.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a business paying for searches like "free (product)," "(industry) jobs" and "how to start a (business)." ***None of those people are buyers.*** Five themed negative lists cut that waste without touching qualified traffic.

2–3× ROAS
LIFT FROM ADDING CONTROL GROUP

Performance Max is your only campaign.

SYMPTOM

You handed your full budget to Performance Max and expected it to handle everything. No standard search campaigns. No control group. Google chooses where, who, and how.

WHY IT BLEEDS

PMAX is fine alongside good fundamentals. Dangerous on its own. With dirty conversion data it scales the wrong signals across YouTube, Display, and Discovery faster than any other campaign type.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Campaigns view → Filter by type
If you have only PMAX campaigns and
no Search campaigns, this red flag is
live.
```

THE FIX

Pair PMAX with a search control.

01 Do not kill PMAX outright. Pair it with standard search campaigns.

02 Run search on your highest intent keywords as a control group.

03 Review PMAX search terms and asset group reports weekly.

04 Add campaign level negatives to PMAX. This is now supported.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a store running everything through PMAX with add to cart counted as Primary. *PMAX will find the cheapest add to carts it can across YouTube and Display, and revenue won't follow.* Fix the tracking first, then run standard search beside it as a control.

RED FLAG 10 / 10

$600/mo

ILLUSTRATIVE, IF IT'S THE MAIN LEAK

Auto apply recommendations are turned on.

SYMPTOM

Google quietly implements its own "recommendations" without approval. Adding broad match keywords, adjusting bids, removing your negatives, expanding budgets. You wake up to changes you never made.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Google's recommendations are designed to grow Google's revenue, not yours. Auto applied broad match adds junk traffic. Auto removed negatives let waste back in. Auto expanded budgets drain accounts overnight.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Recommendations tab → Settings (gear)
If any "Auto apply" toggle is on,
this red flag is live.
```

THE FIX

Take back the keys.

01 Open the Recommendations tab.

02 Click the settings gear in the top right.

03 Open "Auto apply" settings.

04 Turn off every auto apply option. Then schedule 30 minutes weekly to review manually.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture an account with auto apply switched on. *Google can add broad match keywords like "cheap alternatives to (brand)" and "used (product)," and nobody notices until the spend shows up.*

SECTION 03 · QUANTIFY

Now put a rough number on the leak.

The next two pages turn the diagnosis into a rough dollar figure. Plug in your numbers. The rates are my planning assumptions, not measured results.

The wasted spend worksheet.

Three minutes. Type into the fields below, or open the live spreadsheet via the QR code. The number you get is an estimate, not a measurement.

Your inputs

STEP 01 · TELL ME ABOUT YOUR ACCOUNT

Monthly Google Ads spend	$
Red flags from page 4	/ 10
% of conversions sales calls "junk"	%

STEP 02 · APPLY THE WASTE RATE

Waste rate (use the table to the right)	%

Estimated waste
PER MONTH / PER YEAR $

Annualized
TWELVE MONTH PROJECTION $

WORKED EXAMPLE · MADE-UP NUMBERS

Say a $25K a month account with seven red flags uses the 45% rate.

$25,000 × 45% = **$11,250** per month

$11,250 × 12 = **$135,000** per year

Your waste rate

SCORE	CONSERVATIVE	REALISTIC
0–2 issues	3%	5%
3–5 issues	15%	25%
6–7 issues	30%	45%
8–10 issues	45%	60%

These rates are my planning assumptions, not measured results. For a measured anchor: the median account I checked spent 30.7% of visible search-term spend on terms with 2+ clicks and no conversions (N = 25, Q3 2026).

Prefer a live spreadsheet?

Scan to open the same worksheet as a Google Sheet you can save and share.

connercrowe.com/calculator

The output is direct media waste only. It does not count the lift Smart Bidding produces once it has clean signal, which compounds for months after you fix things.

Where to start, ranked by impact and effort.

If you only have an afternoon, work top down. The first three fixes take about 25 minutes total. The waste-cut ranges are my planning assumptions, not measured results.

RANK	FIX	EST. WASTE CUT	EFFORT	TIME
01	Turn off Search Partners and Display expansion (#02)	**20–45%**	Low	5 min
02	Turn off auto apply recommendations (#10)	**5–15%**	Low	5 min
03	Switch conversion goals off "Account Default" (#03)	**10–25%**	Low	15 min
04	Build five themed negative keyword lists (#08)	**15–30%**	Medium	1 hr
05	Demote micro conversions to secondary (#04)	**10–20%**	Low	15 min
06	Verify GA4 import is actually flowing (#06)	**20–40%**	Medium	30 min
07	Pull search terms report and add negatives (#05)	**15–35%**	Medium	1 hr/wk
08	Add a standard search campaign next to PMAX (#09)	**2–3× ROAS**	Medium	2 hr
09	Set up call tracking with 60 second filter (#01)	**15–30%**	High	1 day
10	Define qualified lead with sales, import only those (#07)	**Biggest unlock**	High	1 wk

Read top to bottom. The first three rows take twenty five minutes and stop most of the bleeding. Do them today, before you finish reading this guide.

A contractor whose only website conversion died on a button rename.

0	Send→Submit	86%	<1%
Website conversions recording, before	The break	Conversions on the two protected keyword themes	Rank-lost impression share, from 27 to 48%

BEFORE · WHAT I FOUND

- The only website conversion read Inactive in the conversion actions list
- It fired on a click whose text equaled "Send," and the button now said "Submit"
- Smart Bidding could see only the ad's call button, so every form lead was invisible
- Auto-applied recommendations had changed a bid strategy with no review
- 27 to 48% of impression share lost to ad rank every week

AFTER · WHAT I DID

- Trigger moved to the form plugin's mail-sent event. Verified live: conversion ping, 200 OK.
- Auto-apply recommendations turned off
- Competitor, DIY and out-of-area negatives added
- Duplicate keywords that bid against each other removed
- 90-day view at the follow-up audit: 582 clicks, 42 conversions

One account (N = 1), anonymized by agreement.
The account measures itself again.

Your thirty day plan.

The same four week schedule I run with new clients. Quick wins on day one, compounding lift by day forty five.

WEEK 01

Audit and document.

- [ ] Run the ten question audit on page 4. Screenshot every red flag you find. — 3 hr
- [ ] Meet with sales and define what "qualified" means: budget, timeline, fit, need.
- [ ] Export 90 days of conversions. Have sales tag each as Qualified, Not, or Closed Won.

WEEK 02

The twenty five minute quick wins.

- [ ] Turn off Search Partners and Display Expansion in every search campaign. — 2 hr
- [ ] Turn off auto apply recommendations.
- [ ] Switch conversion goals from "Account Default" to specific qualified actions.
- [ ] Pull the search terms report. Build the first three themed negative lists.

WEEK 03

The deep fixes, where the leverage is.

- [ ] Set up call tracking with the 60 second filter. — 4 hr
- [ ] Verify GA4 conversions are actually importing, not just "linked." Fix if not.
- [ ] Demote all micro conversions to secondary. Promote only revenue actions.
- [ ] Add two more themed negative lists (Competitors, Informational).
- [ ] If you are PMAX only, launch one standard search campaign as a control.

WEEK 04

Lock in a weekly rhythm.

- [ ] Review last week's call recordings. Tag each one. Import only qualified calls back. — 2 hr
- [ ] Calculate your real cost per qualified lead. Report on that, not "cost per conversion."
- [ ] Set a recurring 30 minute weekly block: search terms review and negatives update.

My recommended tool stack.

I get asked this on every intro call. Here is the short list, with my one line "why this one" so you do not have to guess.

CALL TRACKING	**WhatConverts** Tracks calls, forms, chats, and texts in one place. Built in lead qualification UI. Easy two way sync with Google Ads. Pricing scales gently with volume.	WHY **Best qualification UX**
ANALYTICS	**GA4 + Looker Studio** GA4 for event tracking and conversion import into Google Ads. Looker Studio for the human readable monthly reporting that does not make clients glaze over.	WHY **Free and native**
TAG MANAGEMENT	**Google Tag Manager** Server side or web. Stops you from begging your developer every time you need a new event. Required if you are doing enhanced conversions properly.	WHY **The standard**
LEAD ROUTING	**Zapier or Make** Pipes form fills and qualified call data into your CRM, then back into Google Ads as enhanced conversions. The "qualified leads only" workflow lives here.	WHY **Glue layer**
LANDING PAGES	**Unbounce or Instapage** Do not send paid traffic to your homepage. Build dedicated landing pages with one offer, one form, one CTA. Cheaper than redesigning your site.	WHY **Speed to launch**
BID MANAGEMENT	**Google Smart Bidding** Once your conversion data is clean, native Smart Bidding (tCPA, tROAS, Maximize Conversions) outperforms most third party bid tools. Save your money.	WHY **Native data wins**

Honest answers to the questions I get most.

Q. **Is this still relevant in 2026 with Smart Bidding, PMAX, and Demand Gen?**

More than ever. Smart Bidding, PMAX, and Demand Gen all rely entirely on your conversion data to decide where to spend. They are amplifiers. Clean signal in equals great results. Junk signal in equals junk results, faster than ever. The fundamentals matter more as Google takes more control, not less.

Q. **Does not Google know what works better than I do?**

Google knows what gets **more conversions according to your tracking.** If your tracking says wrong number calls and add to carts are conversions, Google will get you a lot of those. The algorithm has no idea what your sales team thinks of the leads. You have to teach it.

Q. **What if my budget is under $5K a month? Does this still apply?**

Most of it does. Skip the call tracking platform if recording from your VoIP works. Skip Optmyzr tier audit tools. But the conversion goals fix, the negatives lists, the auto apply toggle, and the Search Partners / Display fix all matter the same. They take an afternoon.

Q. **How fast will I see results after fixing this?**

The "turn off Display Network" type fixes show up in your data within 48 hours. Wasted spend just stops. The Smart Bidding compounding effect, where Google relearns on cleaner signal, takes 2 to 6 weeks depending on conversion volume. Judge the result on cost per qualified lead over the following 60 days, not on the first week.

Q. **My agency manages this. Should I trust them to fix it?**

Send them this PDF and ask them to walk you through how many of the ten they have correctly set up, with screenshots. A good agency will appreciate the prompt. A bad one will get defensive. That answer alone tells you what you need to know.

Q. **What did you leave out on purpose?**

Three settings worth checking after the ten in this guide. Ad strength and RSA quality (two to three RSAs per ad group, no over-pinning). Location targeting set to "Presence" instead of the default "Presence or interest" (the default leaks local-business spend to people outside your area). Brand and non-brand keywords mixed in the same campaign (inflates ROAS and corrupts Smart Bidding). The ten in this guide move the most money the fastest. The next three are where I look once those are clean.

If you'd rather not fix this alone.

I write a small number of free account audits each month. No pitch deck, no contract, no call needed. Add me as a read-only user and I send back 5 to 7 pages, written by me, within 24 hours of access.

- **Your conversion tracking,** checked first, because every number after it depends on it.
- **What Smart Bidding is fed,** and whether it matches what makes you money.
- **The top three leaks,** ranked by spend.
- **One change to ship this week,** whether or not you ever hire me.

Send me read-only access for the free written audit.

5 TO 7 PAGES, WRITTEN BY ME, BACK WITHIN 24 HOURS OF ACCESS. NO CALL NEEDED.

CONNERCROWE.COM/AUDIT-REQUEST →

The setup checklist cheat sheet.

Save this page. Send it to your team or agency. Use it as your monthly gut check.

SAVE AND SHARE

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01 **Every call counts as a conversion**

Fix: Call tracking + 60 sec filter + import only qualified.

02 **Search Partners and Display on**

Fix: Settings → Networks → uncheck both.

03 **Conversion goals at "Account Default"**

Fix: Switch to "Choose campaign goals" → revenue actions only.

04 **Micro conversions are primary**

Fix: Demote to "Secondary." Keep only revenue events as primary.

05 **No search terms review in 30+ days**

Fix: Weekly review. Add negatives. Promote winners.

06 **GA4 linked but not importing**

Fix: Goals → Conversions → Import → GA4 → verify in 48 hr.

07 **No cost per qualified lead number**

Fix: Define qualified with sales. Tag back. Track that, not CPA.

08 **No themed negative keyword lists**

Fix: Build five: Jobs, DIY, Free, Informational, Competitors.

09 **PMAX is your only campaign**

Fix: Add a standard search campaign as control group.

10 **Auto apply recommendations on**

Fix: Recommendations → Settings → turn ALL auto apply OFF.

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Bad tracking makes every dollar weaker. Clean data is the equalizer.

More spend does not fix bad data. It just makes the leak louder. Stop paying for fake conversions. Let Google optimize for buyer signals, not noise. Outpace the competitors who are still flying blind.

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