

CASE STUDY: LAUNCHING A GOOGLE ADS CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW PLATFORM – SKILLAREA.ONLINE (AGENCY EXPERIENCE)

1. BRIEF AND OBJECTIVE

Client: SkillArea.online — an international skill-gaming platform where users compete in skill-based games (chess, strategies, puzzles) and win real money.

Initial situation:

- The product was brand new — no audience, no brand history, no behavioural data.
- The budget was limited, so every dollar had to be spent efficiently.
- The primary business goal was user acquisition (Sign-ups). Monetisation was a secondary objective at this growth stage.

Agency task: to develop and execute a traffic acquisition strategy via Google Ads, set up end-to-end analytics, and ensure a steady flow of new subscribers to the platform.

2. STRATEGY AND APPROACH

Main challenge: complete lack of data on which channel, region or audience segment would perform best. The product's uniqueness meant we couldn't rely on existing benchmarks.

Our approach — "Test & Scale":

1. Structured hypothesis testing. Instead of a single campaign, we launched several parallel campaigns to quickly identify winning combinations of "region + campaign type + audience".
2. Focus on registrations. In the first phase, the primary conversion was "Sign-up". This allowed Google Ads algorithms to learn faster and find users willing to interact with the platform.
3. Geographic experimentation. We deliberately tested different regions — from developed European markets to emerging countries (India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Asian countries). This gave us not only cheap traffic but also insights into where the product had the greatest potential.
4. Micro-budgets at the start. Each campaign started with a daily budget of \$15–\$50, minimising risks and allowing us to quickly reallocate funds to winning directions.

3. TOOLS AND CHANNELS

A. Campaign types and their objectives

Campaign	Type	Objective	Daily Budget	Region
Sign-Up_P-Max_EU	PMax	Main traffic driver in Europe	\$30	18 European countries
Sign-Up_P-Max_Test GEO	PMax	Testing emerging markets	\$15	India, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Afghanistan

Sign-Up_P-Max_Test GEO 2	PMax	Testing Asia	\$20	Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand
Sign-Up_P-Max_Cripto	PMax	Testing crypto-interested audience	\$15	Europe + USA
Sign-Up_P-Max_USA	PMax	Testing the US market	\$50	USA (5 states excluded)
Sign-Up_P-Max_DE-IT	PMax	Testing Germany and Italy	\$40	Germany, Italy
DemGen_Sign Up	Demand Gen	Broad reach	\$90	Global
Display_SkillArea	Display	Brand awareness support	\$30	Europe + USA

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B. Audience signals

To help PMax algorithms find the right audience faster, we uploaded:

- Search Themes: "win money playing games", "skill based gaming platform", "competitive gaming tournaments", "real money strategy games", and others.
- Custom Audiences: segments based on interests in skill-gaming, esports, strategies, and online tournaments. For each key country, we created a separate audience (e.g., "general — usa", "general — germany") to increase ad relevance.

C. Analytics setup

We configured end-to-end analytics:

- Google Ads → GA4: full data transfer on campaigns, spend, and conversions.
- Google Ads goals: primary — "Sign-up", secondary — "Game lost" and "Game won" (engagement indicators).
- GA4 event funnel: we tracked the path from page_view to purchase, which allowed us to see drop-off points and adjust the strategy.

4. RESULTS

Over 4 months of work (March – June 2026):

Metric	Value
Total spend	\$7,638
Impressions	610,546
Clicks	20,496
CTR (average)	3.36%
CPC (average)	\$0.37
Conversions (Sign-up)	3,022.5
Cost per registration (CPA)	~\$2.5

Key achievements:

- Over 3,000 new users in 4 months with a limited budget.
- 72x scaling — from \$50 in March to \$3,640 in June.
- CPA of \$2.5 — extremely low for an international product.

5. KEY INSIGHTS AND LESSONS

What worked:

1. Performance Max was the best tool at the start. PMax automatically tested all formats (search, display, YouTube, Discover) and quickly found winning combinations.
2. Geographic testing paid off. Emerging markets delivered huge traffic volumes at minimal cost, while Europe provided stable quality. This allowed us to build a balanced regional portfolio.
3. Audience signals accelerated algorithm learning. Pre-uploaded search themes and custom audiences helped PMax identify the right audience faster, even in new regions.
4. Micro-budgets saved money. Ineffective campaigns (Display, DE-IT) were stopped before they spent significant amounts.

What can be improved in the future:

- Pass order value (Revenue) from GA4 to Google Ads to switch optimisation from "number of registrations" to "revenue".
- Deepen LTV work: after the first registrations, segment users by activity and set up retargeting campaigns for those who are already playing but haven't topped up their balance.
- Develop a separate strategy for the USA with a larger budget and localised creatives — the market is promising but expensive.

6. CONCLUSION

This project is a successful example of launching advertising for a new digital product from scratch by an agency. In 4 months, we:

- Acquired 3,000+ new users.
- Achieved steady budget growth from \$50 to \$3,640 per month.
- Reached a CPA of \$2.5 — significantly lower than the market average for similar services.
- Gathered data for scaling: we now know exactly which regions, formats, and audiences work best.

This case demonstrates that with the right structure, systematic testing, and proper analytics setup, you can quickly launch and scale a Google Ads account even on a minimal budget, delivering quality traffic and a growing user base.

Tools used: Google Ads (Performance Max, Demand Gen, Display), Google Analytics 4, Google Tag Manager, custom audience and search theme creation tools.