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MARKETING FOR HOSPITALITY

The Google Ads Setup Guide for Restaurants & Bars across Switzerland

A practical, step by step walkthrough for hospitality owners who have never touched Google Ads before. From creating your first account to the keywords, budget, targeting and tracking settings that actually turn searches into bookings.

Updated for the Google Ads interface as of July 2026.

Before you start

This guide covers everything, including the parts that are genuinely fiddly. If you reach a step that does not behave the way it does on these pages, or you simply decide your time is better spent in the kitchen, you can stop and hand it over. We set up and manage Google Ads for restaurants and bars across Switzerland, and a first campaign takes us about an hour. Book a free 30 minute discovery call at locala.ch/contact.



Two paths

Path A - You've never used Google Ads

Start at step 1 and follow every step in order.

Path B - You already have a Google Ads account

Skip to step 6. The targeting, asset, budget and tracking sections apply either way, and they are where most existing accounts are losing money.

What you need in front of you

- A Google account. A normal Gmail address works fine.
- Your venue's exact name, address and the phone number that is actually answered during service.
- A business credit or debit card.
- A page people can land on: your website, your reservation page, or at minimum your Google Business Profile.
- Ten to twenty photographs of your venue and your food. Real ones. More on this in step 8.
- About 45 minutes of uninterrupted time.

How long this really takes

The setup itself takes 45 minutes. The honest total, including photography, conversion tracking and the first round of fixes once you see real data, is closer to a full working day spread across two or three weeks.

That is not a reason to avoid it. A well built campaign is one of the cheapest ways to fill midweek covers, and restaurants pay some of the lowest click costs on the entire platform. But it is worth knowing the real number before you begin, rather than discovering it at ten at night after service.

A note on the examples. Throughout this guide the worked example is a made up restaurant in Zurich called Locala. It shares our name because every screenshot was taken in our own test account rather than a client's. Replace the bracketed parts with your own details as you go.

Part 1. Creating the account

1. Go to ads.google.com and click "Create your first campaign"

Sign in with your Google account. If you already use Gmail for the business, use that one, so the account sits with the rest of your business tools rather than someone's personal login.



Create your first campaign in a few simple steps

1. Add business information

2. Create your ads

3. Set your budget

Create your first campaign

2. Enter your business name and landing page

The business name here is the one guests know you by, not the legal entity. Trattoria Bella, not Bella Gastro GmbH.

For the landing page, choose "Your website" and enter the page where a booking can actually be made. Not the homepage. If reservations run through an external system, use the page on your own site that holds the booking widget, so Google can read the page and track what happens on it.

Add your information to get started

This is used to give better suggestions for your industry and generate ads for you to review and edit

What's your business name?

Enter your business name (optional)

locala

6 / 25

Where should people go after clicking your ad?



Your website

Consider what you're advertising and enter the most relevant URL. This might be a specific page on your website, your homepage, YouTube channel or social media page.

Enter a web page URL*

 <https://www.locala.ch/>



Your Business Profile page (optimised for ads)



Your business phone number



Your app download page

By providing or confirming a web page for your ads, you're asking Google to scan, download and enhance images from those pages. In doing so, you confirm that you own all legal rights to the images and have permission to share them with Google for use on your behalf in advertising or other commercial purposes.

Next

3. Describe your business

Google uses this to generate suggestions and pre fill assets later. Be specific. "Italian restaurant in Zurich, handmade pasta and wood fired pizza, terrace, private room" produces far better suggestions than "Restaurant in Zurich".

Describe your business to get better campaign suggestions

Google will use this to personalise your campaign and find the right audience.

Describe what makes your business unique

[Learn more about how to set your business apart from similar ones](#)

Restaurant/Bar in Zurich

24 / 3000

What specific products or services are you advertising in this campaign?

Restaurants X

1/20

Select web pages to get relevant image suggestions for your ads

☒ <https://www.locala.ch/> 

4. Smart Mode or Expert Mode

If you do not have this option just skip this step.

The wizard drops you into a simplified flow by default. At the bottom of the setup screen there is a link that says **Switch to Expert Mode**.

Smart Mode looks easier, and it is, but it hands budget, keywords and targeting to Google's automation with almost nothing left for you to adjust. For a single venue on a limited budget that usually means paying for people who were never going to book a table.

Expert Mode takes five extra minutes to learn and unlocks every setting in this guide. The screenshots that follow show the guided flow most first timers see, with notes on where to open the extra settings.

5. Choose your campaign goal

The goal determines what Google counts as success. For a venue the sensible choices are:

- **Phone call leads** if most bookings arrive by phone. Common for traditional venues and anywhere with an older guest base.
- **Submit lead form** if you take table requests through a form on your own site (**not external reservation system**).
- **Page view** as a fallback while you set up proper tracking, but treat it as temporary. Page views are not bookings, and a campaign optimised for them will buy traffic that never sits down.

Whichever you pick, step 13 is what makes it real. Until conversion tracking is installed, Google is guessing.

Choose a goal for this campaign

Focus on the goal that's most valuable to your business to create an effective campaign. [Learn more about conversion goals](#)

**Purchase**
People buy food or drinks, such as ordering a meal online

☐

**Submit lead form**
People fill out a form, such as requesting a table for dinner

☐

**Phone call leads**
People call your business in Zurich, such as asking about menu options

☐

**Page view**
People view key pages, such as checking the food and drink menu

☒

Choose how you want to measure 'Page views' conversions so that Google Ads can optimise your campaign to achieve this goal

☐

 Enter the URL for the page that you want people to visit

☒

 Set up manually using code after you create the campaign

You should set up a conversion action manually later if you want to:

- Calculate the value of each purchase dynamically
- Use transaction IDs or other custom parameters
- Measure clicks on buttons or links

If you choose this action, you will have to add an event snippet to your website code. You'll be shown instructions on how to do this after you create your campaign.

Part 2. Who sees your ads

6. Fill in your search themes

Search themes tell Google what your guests are typing when they look for a place like yours. They are not exact keywords. Google uses them as direction, combined with your website, your assets and your conversion data, to find the people most likely to book.

Write them the way a real person searches: short phrases of two to five words, in the language your guests use. You can add up to 50, but 10 to 20 well chosen themes work better than a long list, which dilutes the signal.

Replace the bracketed parts with your own city, neighbourhood and cuisine.

Cuisine and area. How people search when they already know what they want to eat.

[cuisine] restaurant [city] · [cuisine] food [neighbourhood] · restaurants near [landmark]

Occasion. The highest intent group. These guests are ready to book.

restaurant for birthday dinner [city] · date night restaurant [city] · business lunch [city] · anniversary dinner [city]

Direct booking intent.

book a table [city] · restaurant reservation [city] · plus the same phrase in your local language

Signature dish or format. Whatever you are known for.

best [dish] [city] · brunch [city] · tasting menu [city] · sunday roast [city]

Groups and private events. The highest average spend.

private dining [city] · group booking restaurant [city] · private event venue [city]

If you run a bar, replace the cuisine group with the moment people are looking for.

cocktail bar [city] · after work drinks [city] · rooftop bar [city] · wine bar [city]

!!! Avoid three things. Single broad words such as "food" or "restaurant", which spend your budget on people who will never visit. Your own venue name, since those guests already find you and here it only takes impressions away from new ones. And five variations of the same idea, which Google reads as one theme.

Write in every language your guests search in, not only English or German. In most markets that means adding the local language as well, and a second one in bilingual regions.

Describe who and where your ads should reach

Connect with the right audience based on search themes, languages and locations. Your ad will be optimised by Google AI to get more page views – or you can [view other campaign types](#)

Search themes

What words or phrases would people use to search for locala?

Add search themes (2 of 50)

restaurant zurich X

pizza zurich X

Add search themes (up to 50)

?

7. Set your locations and languages

Google preselects the whole country. For a single venue that wastes most of your budget, because someone two hundred kilometres away is not coming for dinner. Choose **Custom locations** and enter the city where your venue is.

Locations

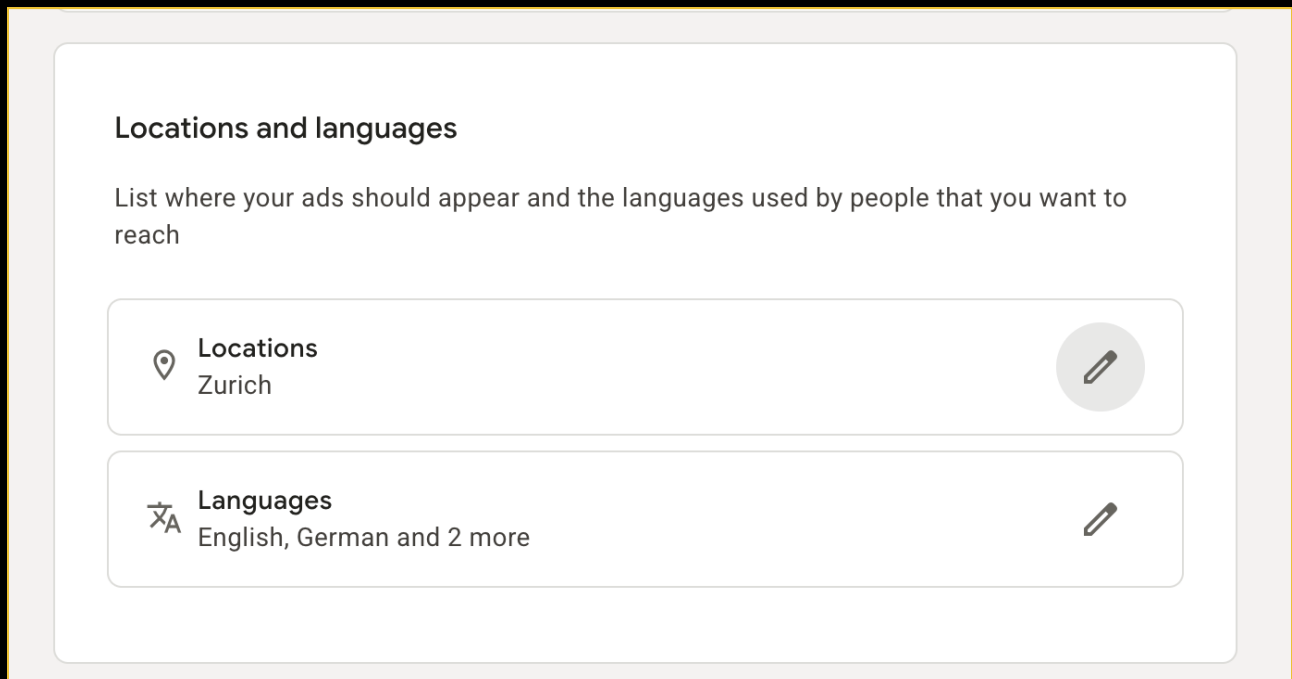
Select Custom locations, then type your city in the search field. In our example the target is Zurich, which covers the city and its surrounding area.

Two things worth doing while you are here.

Use **Advanced search** if you want a radius instead of a city boundary. Five to ten kilometres around your address works well for a city venue. Go up to fifteen or twenty if you are a destination place people travel to on purpose.

Open the location options and check that targeting is set to **Presence: people in or regularly in your targeted locations**. Google defaults to Presence or interest, which also shows your ads to someone in another country who merely searched for your city. That setting is useful for hotels. It is not useful for a restaurant that needs people who can walk through the door tonight.

Exclude nothing at first. Once the campaign has data you will see which areas actually convert and can trim from there.



Languages

Select every language your guests are likely to use, not only the one your website is written in. Google decides here by the language of the user's Google interface, not by the language of your page, so a narrow selection quietly cuts off people who would have come.

Zurich is a good illustration. Our example has **English, German, French and Italian** selected, and all four are justified. German is the local language, English covers expats, tourists and much of the international workforce, while French and Italian cover the other national language groups and visitors from neighbouring regions.

Apply the same logic wherever you are. Start with the local language, add English, then add any language spoken by a significant group in your city.

One caveat. Broadening languages only helps if the arrival experience matches. If someone clicks an ad in French and lands on a page they cannot read, you paid for a bounce. Keep your key pages, the menu and the booking flow understandable to everyone you target, even if that means a simple language switcher rather than a full translation.

X
More settings

Locations
^

Select locations for this campaign ?

☐ All countries and territories
☐ Switzerland
☒ Custom locations

Locations (1)
Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland city

Reach ?
5,060,000

Advanced search

For example, a country, city, region or postcode

Languages
^

Select the languages that your customers speak. ?

English X
German X
French X
Italian X

Done

Part 3. The ads themselves

8. Build your asset group

This is where Google gets the raw material for your ads. Performance Max does not build one fixed ad. It mixes your headlines, descriptions and images into hundreds of combinations and serves whichever performs best on Search, Maps, YouTube, Gmail and Display.

Every empty field is a combination Google cannot build, and every weak asset drags down the whole group. Fill in all of it, including the fields marked only "Recommended". The circles next to each block show completeness. Aim for every one of them filled.

Landing page (Final URL)

Send people to the page where they can act. If you take bookings, use your reservations page. If booking runs through an external system, use the page on your own site that contains the widget.

Create an ad to boost restaurant reservations for Locala

Add text and images. Google tests combinations to help people book a table [Learn more about asset groups](#)

Landing Page



Final URL

 <https://www.locala.ch/>

Required

Headlines (up to 15, max 30 characters)

Short lines that appear as the clickable title. Three are required, but write all fifteen. Google needs variety to test, and headlines that are too similar count as one.

Cover different angles rather than rephrasing the same idea:

[Venue name] · Book a Table Tonight · [Cuisine] in [City] · Fresh [Signature dish] · Open 7 Days · Reserve Online in 1 Min · Group Bookings Welcome · Weekend Brunch · Private Dining Available · Walk-Ins Welcome

Include your venue name in at least one, a clear action in another, and your strongest selling point in a third. Do not repeat the city in every line, Google already knows the location.

Review your assets

Headline (9)



locala Zurich Restaurant

Required

24 / 30

Book a Table Tonight

Required

20 / 30

Italian Dining in Zurich

Required

24 / 30

Handmade Pasta Daily

20 / 30

Reserve Online in 1 Min

23 / 30

Open Tuesday to Sunday

22 / 30

Seasonal Italian Menu

21 / 30

Wood-Fired Pizza

Long headlines (up to 5, max 90 characters)

These appear where there is more room, mainly on Display and YouTube. Write full sentences that stand on their own.

- *Handmade pasta and wood-fired pizza in the heart of [city], open for lunch and dinner*
- *Book your table at [venue] and enjoy a seasonal menu built on local produce*
- *Celebrating something? We host birthdays, anniversaries and private dinners*
- *A family run [cuisine] kitchen serving classics and natural wines since [year]*
- *Terrace seating, a private room for [number] and a kitchen open until [time]*

✓ Long headlines (5) ?



Handmade pasta and wood-fired pizza in the heart of Zurich, open for lunch and dinner

Required

85 / 90

Book your table at locala and enjoy a seasonal menu built on local produce

74 / 90

Celebrating something? We host birthdays, anniversaries and private dinners

75 / 90

A family run osteria serving Italian classics and natural wines since 2014

74 / 90

Terrace seating, a private room for twelve and a kitchen open until 22:30

73 / 90

≡ View suggestions

Descriptions (up to 5, max 90 characters, keep one at 60)

The supporting text under the headline. Give the detail that turns interest into a booking: what you serve, who you are right for, how easy it is to reserve.

- *Seasonal [cuisine] menu, natural wines and a sunny terrace. Book online in seconds.*
- *Family run since [year]. Open Tuesday to Sunday, kitchen until [time].*
- *Perfect for date nights, birthdays and team dinners. Groups up to [number] guests.*
- *Reserve your table today and taste our signature [dish].*
- *Pasta made fresh each morning. Two minutes from [landmark or station].*

Keep one description at 60 characters or under, because some placements only have room for the short version.

Seasonal Italian menu, natural wines and a sunny terrace. Book online in seconds.

Required

81 / 90

Family run since 2014. Open Tuesday to Sunday, kitchen until 22:30.

Required

67 / 90

Perfect for date nights, birthdays and team dinners. Groups up to 20 guests.

76 / 90

Reserve your table today and taste our signature ragu.

54 / 90

Pasta made fresh each morning. Two minutes from Stadelhofen station.

68 / 90

≡ [View suggestions](#)

Images (up to 20, landscape and square required)

This is the part that decides whether people stop scrolling.

Sizes to prepare:

- Landscape 1.91:1, recommended 1200 x 628
- Square 1:1, recommended 1200 x 1200
- Portrait 4:5, recommended 960 x 1200, worth adding for mobile placements
- Logo 1:1 and 4:1, on a transparent or clean background
- Maximum 5120 KB per file

What to shoot: two or three signature dishes, the room with people in it, the bar or the pass, the terrace or entrance, one shot of the team. Avoid empty rooms photographed at midday, they read as closed. Leave space around the subject, since Google crops the same file to several ratios and a plate that fills the frame will lose its edges in the square crop.

○ Images (5) ?



 Edit

A word on the suggested images

Google will offer you ready made pictures marked "**Generated**". These are AI images of a restaurant that is not yours. They may look convincing, but a guest who arrives and finds a different room feels misled, and the ad stops matching the photos on your Google Business Profile.

There is a second, more practical problem. AI generated images carry markers embedded in the file, including invisible watermarking and content credentials written into the metadata. Platforms increasingly read those markers and display an AI label next to the image. The same applies to photos you edited elsewhere. If you used generative fill, AI sky replacement, AI background removal or similar tools, that history can be written into the file and travels with the image wherever you upload it.

So the recommendation is simple. **Use real photographs of your venue, and keep AI processing off them.** Standard editing is fine: exposure, white balance, contrast, colour, crop, straightening, dust removal. What to avoid is anything that generates pixels that were never there. If your phone applies AI enhancement by default, turn it off before the shoot.

This is the step where self managed campaigns quietly underperform. Not the settings, the pictures. A perfectly configured campaign running on three phone snaps taken under service lighting will lose to a worse configured one running on good photography every time. If you do not have a usable set, this is worth solving before you spend anything on clicks.

Suggested images ?

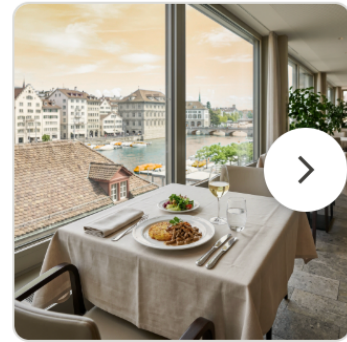
Select all



Generated



Generated



Generated

Logo and business name (max 25 characters)

Your venue name as guests know it. It shows in the ad.

✓ Logos (1) ?



1.

Edit

✓ Business name ?



locala

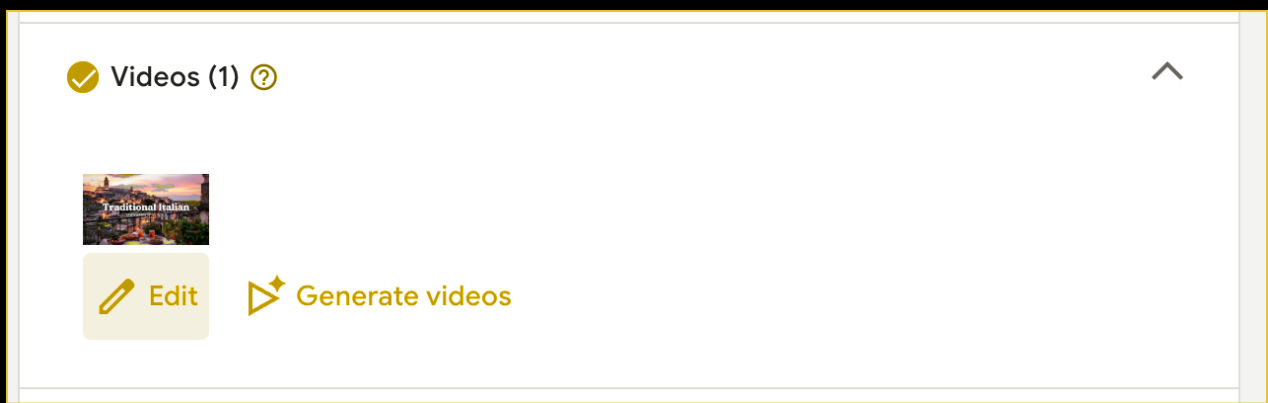
Required

6 / 25

Videos (up to 5)

If you leave this empty, Google auto generates a video from your images. Those auto videos are functional at best, and they will run on YouTube representing your venue.

A phone shot clip of fifteen to thirty seconds beats the generated one: the dish leaving the pass, the room filling up in the evening, a drink being made. Shoot vertical and horizontal if you can. Upload to YouTube, then paste the link here.

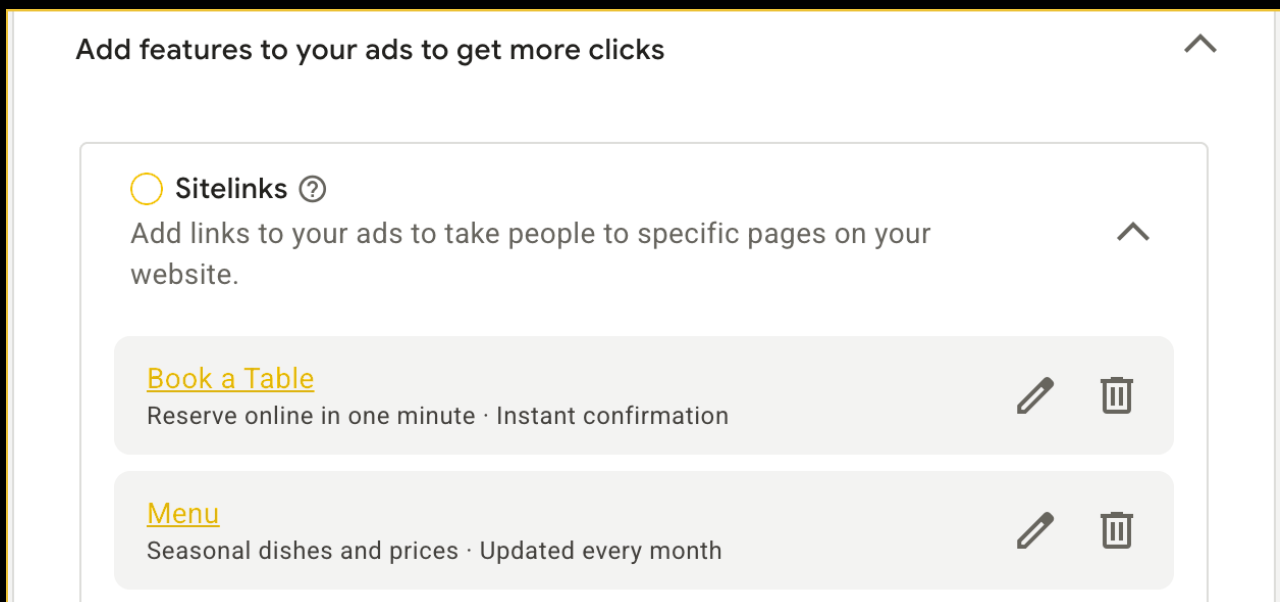


Sitelinks (at least 4)

Extra links under your ad that let people jump straight to what they want. They add real estate to your ad and usually lift the click rate.

- **Menu** pointing to your menu page
- **Book a Table** pointing to reservations
- **Opening Hours** pointing to contact or about
- **Private Events** pointing to your events page
- **Lunch Menu** or **Drinks List** if you have separate pages

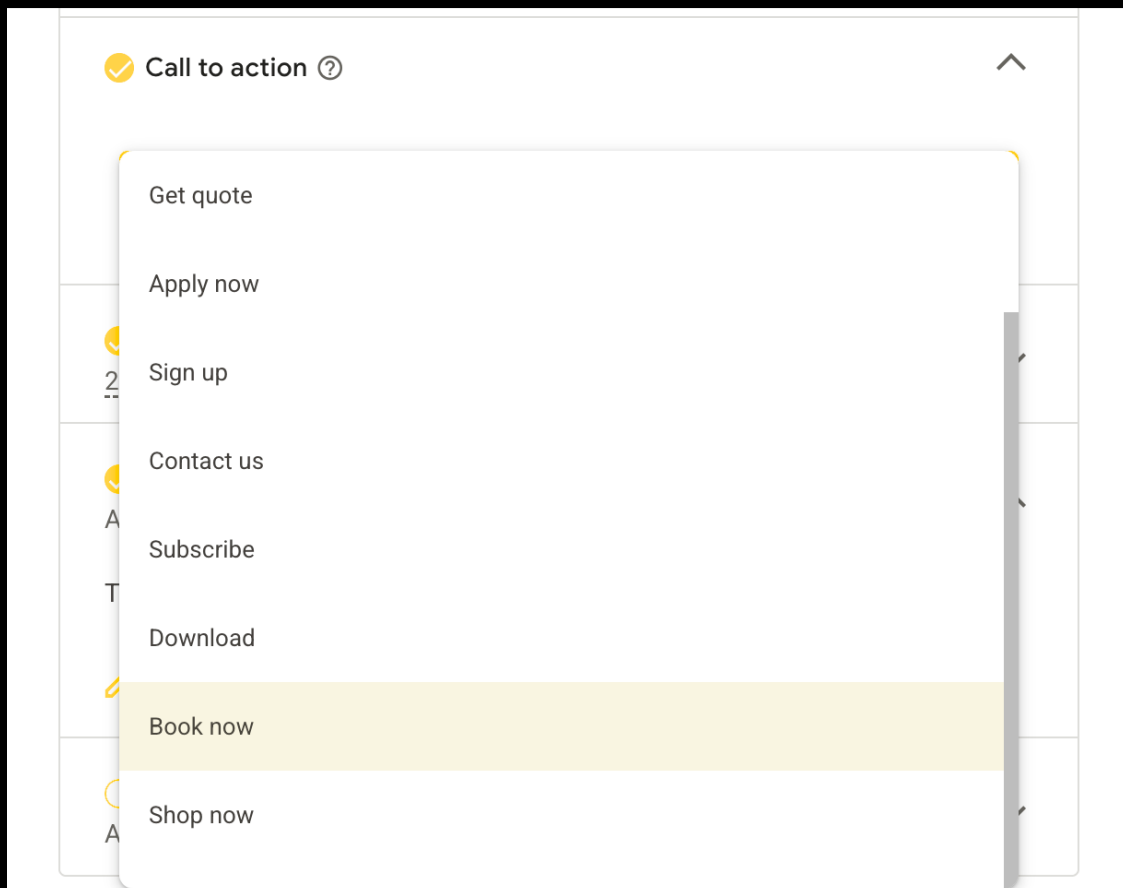
Each sitelink takes a short description of two lines. Fill those in, they show on desktop and make the ad noticeably larger.



Call to action

Google leaves this on **Automated** by default, which lets it pick any button text it likes, often something vague like "Learn more". Open the dropdown and select **Book now**. It sets expectations before the click, so the people who do click are the ones ready to reserve.

If you do not take bookings, use **Get directions** for a walk in venue, or **Order online** if delivery and takeaway are your main revenue. Avoid "Learn more", it invites browsing rather than booking.



Calls

Turn this on and add your venue's phone number. On mobile this puts a tap to call button directly in your ad, and a large share of restaurant searches happen on a phone, often within an hour of the meal. Many guests would rather call for tonight than fill in a form.

Use the number that is actually answered during service, normally the line at the host stand or the bar. Do not use a mobile that nobody picks up when the room is busy, because a missed call here is a lost booking you already paid for.

Enter the number in international format, for example +41 44 123 45 67. Google verifies it against your website, so the same number should be visible somewhere on your site, ideally in the footer or on the contact page. If it is not, verification can fail and the asset will be rejected.

Once it is live, calls over a set duration can be counted as conversions. Switch that on. For most venues phone bookings sit alongside online ones as a real source of covers, and if you do not track them the campaign looks weaker than it actually performs.

✓ Call to action ?



Book now



✓ Calls ?

2 calls (account + campaign)



Callouts

Short phrases of up to 25 characters that sit under your ad. They cost nothing and add credibility. Add at least four, each covering a different reason to choose you.

Terrace seating · Vegetarian options · Groups welcome · Walk-ins welcome · Open late · Private room available

✓ Callouts ?



Add more business information

Terrace seating, Vegetarian options, Groups welcome and 1 more

Lost the thread? Or would you rather spend this hour doing what you actually opened a restaurant to do?

We set this up for venues across Switzerland.

Scan the code or book a discovery call at locala.ch/contact.



Lead forms

Leave this off for a normal restaurant or bar. It collects contact details inside Google rather than sending people to your booking system, which adds a step and creates enquiries you then answer by hand.

The exception is if events are a meaningful part of your business. For weddings, corporate dinners or venue hire a lead form works well, because those enquiries need a conversation anyway rather than a table slot.

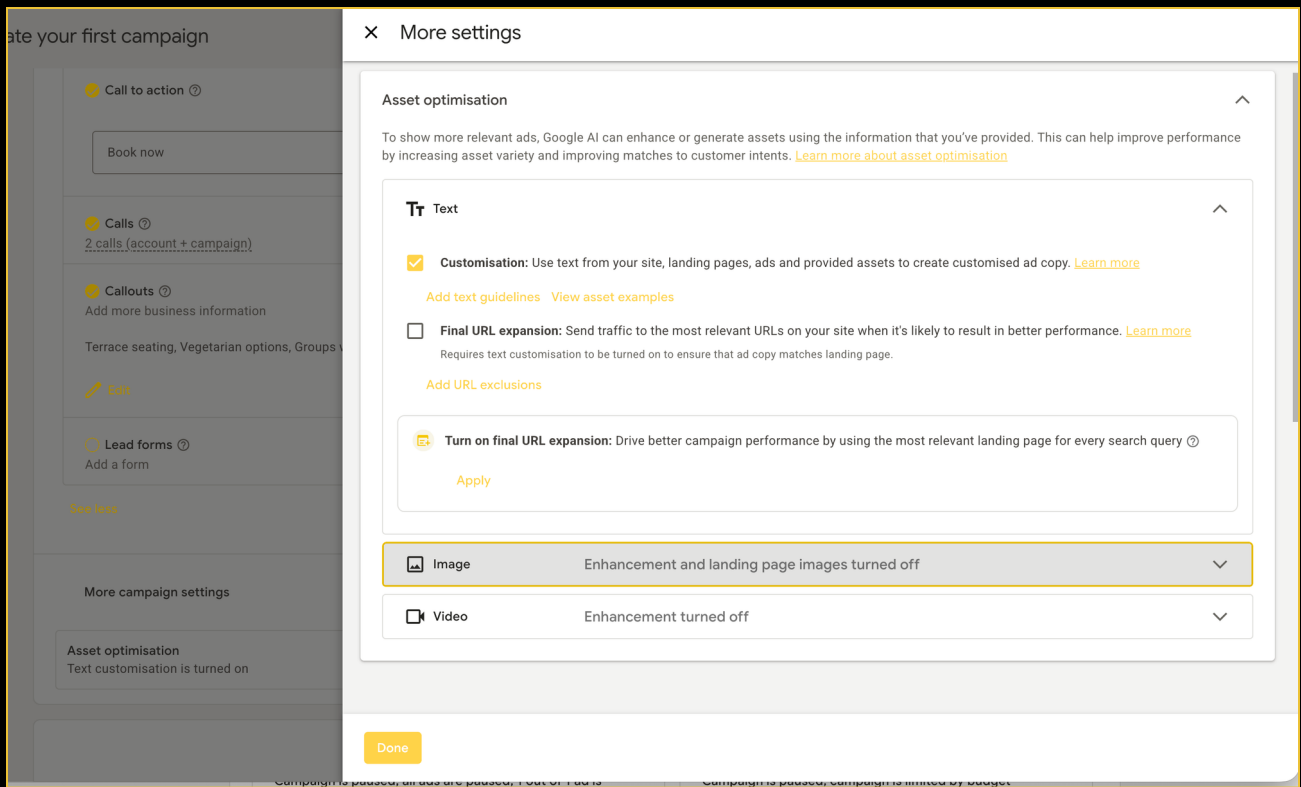
Asset optimisation (under More campaign settings)

Google turns several automatic features on by default. Open this and review them.

Final URL expansion should usually be turned **off**. Left on, Google decides to send people to whichever page of your site it considers relevant, which for a restaurant often means a blog post or an about page instead of the booking page you chose.

Text customisation lets Google rewrite your headlines and descriptions using your website content. It can improve performance, but it also means text you never approved appearing in your ads. If your brand voice matters, or you are in a market with language sensitivities, switch it off.

Automatically created assets for images and video follow the same logic as the suggested images above. If you want full control over what represents your venue, turn them off.



Before you click Next

Check that every asset block shows a filled circle, that your images are your own, and that the final URL takes you to a page where a booking can actually be made. An asset group with all fields completed typically reaches "Excellent" ad strength, and Google gives those groups more impressions than incomplete ones.

Campaign optimization score ⓘ
80.4%

Back
Next

Part 4. The money

9. Set your bid strategy

The bid strategy tells Google what to buy with your money. Everything else decides who sees the ad. This decides what Google counts as success.

Leave the default, **Maximise conversions**. It tells Google to bring in as many completed bookings as your daily budget allows, which is the right choice at launch.

Check the line above the dropdown

If it says the budget will focus on getting **page views**, that is a warning, not a setting. It means no proper conversion action is active yet, so Google has nothing better to optimise towards than visits to your site. Launch in that state and the campaign will happily buy traffic that never books.

Confirm a real conversion is being tracked before you spend anything: the confirmation page after a completed reservation, calls from ads longer than your chosen threshold, and contact form submissions for private events.

Should you set a target cost per booking

Leave it empty for the first two to four weeks. The campaign needs data before a target means anything, roughly thirty to fifty conversions. Setting a target on day one usually starves the campaign: Google restricts delivery to the cheapest auctions and you end up with almost no volume.

Once you have data, work out your own number. Here is the method, using our example venue:

- Average spend per guest: CHF 65
- Average party size from online bookings: 2.4 guests
- Revenue per reservation: about CHF 156
- Gross margin after food and drink cost, roughly 70 percent: about CHF 109
- Share you are willing to spend acquiring that booking, 15 to 20 percent: CHF 16 to 22

So a target around CHF 20 per reservation is defensible for this venue. Your figures will differ. Run the same five lines with your own numbers rather than borrowing ours, and set the target slightly above your calculation rather than below, because a target that is too tight simply stops delivery.

Two things justify paying more. A guest who returns is worth several bookings, not one. And large tables and private events carry a much higher value than a table for two, which is worth tracking as a separate conversion.

Maximise conversion value

The other option optimises for revenue rather than count. It only makes sense once you pass distinct values to Google, for example a different value for a table of two and a table of ten. Most venues are not set up for that at the start. Come back to it if your booking system can send party size or deposit amount.

Set a bid strategy

Your bid strategy determines how to focus your budget on getting page views. [Learn more about choosing a bid strategy](#)

What do you want to focus on?

Maximise conversions ▼

[Learn more](#)

[Back](#) [Next](#)

10. Set your daily budget

The figure you enter is an average, not a limit. Google can spend up to twice as much on a strong day and less on a quiet one. What is capped is the month: your daily budget multiplied by 30.4. At CHF 25 per day you will never be charged more than about CHF 760 in a month.

Ignore the estimates on this screen

The panel may promise a large number of conversions at a very low cost. Check what it is counting. If the heading still says page views, those are visits to your website, not reservations. Fix the tracking first, then read the estimate again.

What the data actually says

Restaurants sit in one of the cheapest categories in Google Ads. Aggregated 2026 search advertising benchmarks put the cross industry average cost per click at about USD 5.42, while Restaurants and Food is one of the two lowest categories at about USD 2.05. Most venues in the category see a cost per click between USD 1.54 and 2.77, a conversion rate around 7 to 8 percent, and a cost per lead between USD 23 and 41.

Those figures are in US dollars and drawn mostly from larger markets, so treat them as a shape rather than a price list. Run on a CHF 25 daily budget they suggest roughly:

- About 12 clicks a day, or 370 a month
- Roughly 26 to 30 reservations a month at a 7 to 8 percent conversion rate
- A cost per reservation in the mid twenties

That is why a modest budget works for a restaurant while the same figure would achieve nothing for a law firm or a software company. Cheap clicks and high intent do the work.

The one real constraint

Performance Max needs roughly 30 conversions in 30 days to leave its learning period and start optimising properly. That threshold, not competition, is what sets your floor.

Three levels to choose from

Minimum, CHF 15 to 20 per day. Around CHF 450 to 600 a month, producing roughly 20 to 26 bookings. The campaign works but learns slowly, so allow four to six weeks before judging it. Reasonable if you only need to fill a few quiet midweek covers.

Recommended start, CHF 25 to 35 per day. Around CHF 760 to 1,065 a month, producing roughly 30 to 45 bookings. This clears the learning threshold comfortably and gives you readable data within two to three weeks. The right choice for most independent venues.

Launch push, CHF 50 to 80 per day. For a new opening, a relaunch, or a venue entering a competitive area with no existing reputation. Also worth it if private events and large groups matter to you, since a single enquiry can be worth many times a table for two. Plan six weeks at this level, then step down.

Below CHF 10 per day the campaign delivers in fragments and the results cannot be read. If that is your ceiling, put the money into your Google Business Profile and photography first and come back to ads later.

Check your local costs before committing

Five minutes in Keyword Planner replaces every benchmark above. Enter your search themes with your own location and it will show the actual bid range advertisers are paying for those exact terms in your area. Use that number.

Set an average daily budget to get more page views and manage ad spend

Set a budget

Performance estimates are based on your campaign settings and market conditions, and assume that your campaign finishes its learning period and runs for a few weeks on the same settings

☐ CHF56.26

▼

☐ CHF19.67

Recommended

▼

☐ CHF8.46

▼

☒ Set custom budget

^

Set your average daily budget for this campaign

Swiss Franc (CHF) ▼

CHF 20.00

Weekly conv.
28

Cost/Conv.
CHF5.00

Weekly cost
CHF140.00

For the month, you won't pay more than your daily budget times the average number of days in a month. Some days you might spend less than your daily budget, and on others you might spend up to twice as much. [Learn more about average daily budget](#)

Back

Next

Part 5. Launching

11. Add payment information

Country and time zone

Both are set once and become permanent for the whole account. The time zone in particular cannot be changed later, and every report, daily budget reset and scheduling rule will follow it forever.

Select the country where your business is registered and the time zone where your venue operates. If they differ, follow the venue. A restaurant reporting on a foreign time zone shows its busiest evening split across two calendar days, which makes the data hard to read. The currency is tied to the country and is equally permanent.

Promotions

New advertisers are usually offered a credit, for example spend CHF 400 and receive CHF 400 back. It is worth taking, but read what triggers it.

The credit is not applied when you sign up. You have to spend the qualifying amount first, within a fixed window, and the credit appears afterwards. Check three things: the spend threshold, the deadline, and whether your budget will reach the threshold in time. At CHF 25 per day you spend around CHF 760 in a month, so a CHF 400 threshold is comfortably met. At CHF 10 per day you would need most of the window to qualify, and a campaign paused halfway through would miss it.

Select the promotion before you complete billing. It usually cannot be added retroactively.

Payment settings

Most accounts default to automatic payments. Google charges your card after you accumulate spend, or at the end of the month, whichever comes first. Your first threshold is low and rises as your payment history builds.

Use a business card rather than a personal one, so the spend lands in your accounts correctly from day one. Add a backup card if the option appears, because a declined payment suspends the campaign immediately, and a suspended campaign re enters the learning period when it restarts.

12. The pre launch checklist

Run through this before you press the button, because mistakes here cost money rather than time.

- Conversion tracking is live and counting reservations, not page views
- Locations set to your city with presence targeting, not the whole country
- Languages cover everyone your guests actually speak
- Final URL points to your booking page, and Final URL expansion is turned off
- Every asset block is filled, with your own photographs rather than generated ones
- Phone number added and verified against your website
- Daily budget matches the level you decided on

13. Install the Google tag and set up conversion tracking

Your ads now go into review, which normally takes a few hours and occasionally up to one working day. Nothing spends until they are approved.

Do not skip the block underneath. The Google tag is what lets Google see which clicks turned into reservations. Without it the campaign is bidding blind: it can count clicks, but it has no idea which ones filled a table, so it optimises towards traffic instead of bookings. Every recommendation in this guide about cost per reservation depends on this step being done.



Your ads will go live after being reviewed

All ads are checked to ensure that they're safe and appropriate for everyone. You can find details in your account if there are any policy issues to address.

Improve your return on investment by measuring conversions

Set up a Google tag on your website to enable key features of your Google products, including conversion measurement. [Learn more about Google tags](#)

☒ **Install with Wordpress** RECOMMENDED

Sign in and install a Google tag through Wordpress via the Wordpress

☐ **Install manually**

Next

Choose your installation method

Install with WordPress is the right choice if your site runs on WordPress. It uses the Site Kit by Google plugin. You sign in, approve the connection, and the tag is placed for you. No code, no theme files, nothing to break during the next update.

Install manually gives you a snippet to paste into the head of every page. Use it for Squarespace, Wix, Webflow, Shopify or a custom build. Most of those platforms have a dedicated field for header code under settings, so you paste it once and it applies site wide.

If someone else built your site, forward them the snippet rather than editing files yourself. Placing it in the wrong location, or on only one page, produces tracking that looks fine in the interface but reports almost nothing.

Lost the thread? Or would you rather spend this hour doing what you actually opened a restaurant to do?

We set this up for venues across Switzerland.

Scan the code or book a discovery call at locala.ch/contact.



Then define what counts as a conversion

Installing the tag is half the job. The tag collects data. You still have to tell Google which actions matter. Go to Goals, then Conversions, and create these:

Completed reservation. The most important one. Fire it on the confirmation page that appears after a booking. Mark it as your primary conversion, since this is what the bid strategy optimises towards.

Phone calls from ads. Counts calls longer than a chosen duration, usually 30 to 60 seconds, which filters out wrong numbers and hang ups. For a restaurant this often matches or exceeds online bookings.

Contact form submissions. For private events, large groups and catering. Worth keeping separate from table reservations, because one enquiry can be worth several ordinary covers.

If your booking runs through an external system

This is where most venues get stuck. If reservations go through OpenTable, Quandoo, SevenRooms or similar, the confirmation page sits on their domain, where your tag cannot reach.

Three ways around it, best first. Use the provider's own Google Ads integration if they offer one. Ask whether they support cross domain tracking and have them add your tag to the booking flow. As a temporary fallback, track the moment the booking widget opens on your own site: it overcounts, since not everyone who opens it completes a booking, but it gives the algorithm a directional signal while you sort out the proper method.

Verify it works before trusting the numbers

Go through the booking flow on your own site as if you were a guest. Then open the Conversions page in Google Ads and check that the action moves from "No recent conversions" to recording activity. It can take up to 24 hours to appear.

Do this before the ads finish review if you can. A campaign that spends for two weeks on broken tracking produces data you cannot use and a learning period you have to start over.

If one step in this guide is going to stop you, it is this one. It is the only part that touches code, it is the part that breaks silently, and it is the part where a venue can spend three hundred francs before anyone notices the

numbers are wrong. There is no shame in handing it over. It takes us about an hour, and it is the single highest value hour in the whole setup.

Part 6. The first thirty days

What happens after launch

The learning period begins, typically two to three weeks. Performance during that window is not representative, so resist the urge to fix things. Every edit restarts the clock.

Leave the budget untouched for the first two weeks. When you do scale, move in steps of 20 to 30 percent and wait a week between increases. Doubling overnight sends the campaign back into learning and performance drops before it recovers.

Day fourteen: your first proper look

Set a reminder. Then look at four things, in this order:

- **Cost per reservation.** Compare it against the number you calculated in step 9, not against a benchmark.

Clicks ▾	Impressions ▾	Conversions ▾	Cost / conv. ▾
1.2k	23.5k	147.00	CHF5.83

The screenshot above is one month from New live campaign we run for a Swiss restaurant: 23,500 impressions, 1,200 clicks, 147 reservations at CHF 5.83 each.

Put that against the number you calculated in step 9. Most venues find that a booking stops paying for itself somewhere around CHF 16 to 22. This account is running at roughly a quarter of that ceiling, which means every franc spent is returning several in covers.

Nothing exotic produced it. Tight location targeting, real photography rather than generated images, tracking that counts completed reservations instead of page views, and someone opening the account every week. Every one of those is a step in this guide.

The gap between a campaign at CHF 5.83 per booking and one at CHF 30 is almost never the budget. It is whether anyone is watching.

- **Which locations converted.** Trim the areas that spent without booking.



- **Calls versus online bookings.** If calls dominate, your phone asset is doing the work and your booking page may need attention.
- **Asset performance.** Google labels each headline and image Low, Good or Best. Replace the Low ones rather than adding more.

Make one considered set of changes, then leave it alone for another two weeks.

The mistakes we see most often

- **Tracking never installed.** The campaign runs for months optimising towards page views. Everything downstream is meaningless.
- **Targeting left on the whole country.** Two thirds of the budget spent on people who will never visit.
- **Presence or interest left on.** Ads shown to someone in Hamburg who once googled your city.
- **Homepage as the landing page.** The guest arrives ready to book and has to go looking for the button.
- **Three images, all generated.** The ad represents a restaurant that does not exist.
- **Daily edits.** The campaign never leaves learning, so it never optimises.
- **Nobody reads the results.** The most common one. The campaign runs, the card is charged, and no one opens the account for four months.

A campaign is not a setting, it is a routine. The setup is one day. Keeping it working is an hour or two every month: reading the search terms, cutting what did not convert, refreshing the images before they fatigue, adjusting the budget around your quiet weeks and your busy season. Most venues do the setup and stop there, which is exactly why the average restaurant campaign underperforms the benchmark it should be beating.

Want us to set this up for you?

locala. is a Zurich based marketing agency built exclusively for restaurants, bars and hospitality brands across Switzerland.

If you have read this far and thought "I would rather be in the kitchen", that is a reasonable conclusion. We build and manage Google Ads campaigns as part of our **Guest Growth** and **Full-Funnel Growth** packages, alongside the photography, content and tracking that make them work.

That includes the parts of this guide that are genuinely awkward on your own: conversion tracking that reports real bookings, monthly photography so your ads never go stale, and someone who actually opens the account every week.

Not ready for a package? We also run a two hour strategy session with a written plan, which is often the fastest way to find out whether paid advertising is even the right lever for your venue.

info@locala.ch · +41 77 293 21 25 · www.locala.ch

Book a free 30 minute discovery call at locala.ch/contact. No pressure, no obligation.

