

Paid Search Drives **24,000+** **Gym Sign-Ups** Across 8 Regional Markets

Industry: Fitness & Health

Channels: Google Ads
(Search + Performance Max)



Client Goal: Improve the efficiency and scale of Google Ads to boost free trial leads, fuel new membership sign-ups, and lower cost.



A **multi-location gym franchise** came to AdMax Local to improve their **conversions for free trials** and **new membership growth**. The franchise operates clubs across eight U.S. regional markets, spanning the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast. Each region has its own unique competitive environment and varied needs for its audience, requiring **localized marketing** and **tailored budget allocation**.



The Challenge

Operating across eight regional markets meant the client needed individualized keyword planning, budget allocation, and competitive positioning. The two conversion types (free trials and new memberships) created funnel inconsistencies and required separate optimization paths. Additionally, the client lacked reliable tracking infrastructure, making it difficult to attribute conversions accurately.



Different markets, different needs: Each region had its own competitors and search behavior, which made it tough to use one clear strategy across all locations.



Funnel Fragmentation: Free trials and new memberships represented different stages of the customer journey, making unified optimization difficult.



Scale vs. Efficiently: The client wanted more sign-ups but needed to keep costs low while growing.



Tracking Limitations: Their setup created gaps in attribution, leading to uncertainty around true channel performance.



Uneven Performance: Some markets delivered strong ROI, while others struggled, making it unclear where to invest more budget.



Our Strategy

AdMax Local deployed a **dual-channel SEM strategy** through Google Search and Performance Max (PMax).

Google Search

Search campaigns were structured to **capture high-purchase-intent queries** such as 'gym near me' or 'join [Club Name]'. We deployed these across the client's eight markets with geo-targeted ad groups, RSA creative sets, and keyword match type strategies spanning Exact, Phrase, and brand-anchored Broad match.

Performance Max

PMax was used to **fill in coverage gaps** and **improve efficiency using machine-learning-driven bidding**. Audience layering was a key component,

using high-intent signals from the following categories:

Sports & Fitness: In-market for gym memberships, fitness equipment, athletic apparel.

- +40% bid adjustment resulting in **293 conversions** and **\$67 CPA**

Health & Fitness Buffs: Lifestyle affinity for wellness, nutrition, and active living.

- +40% bid adjustment resulting in **104 conversions** and **\$59 CPA**

Beauty & Wellness segments: Cross-vertical audience with strong gym-adjacent intent signals.

- +40% bid adjustment resulting in **98 conversions** and **\$64 CPA**

Campaign Goals & What We Monitored

Primary Goal: Drive free trial leads and new membership sign-ups at a target cost per sign-up below industry average (~\$40-70 for fitness).

Primary Audience: Active fitness seekers and gym membership intenders across the client's eight U.S. regional markets, captured at the moment of active search intent via branded and non-branded gym membership queries.

KPIs Tracked: Sign-Ups (Free Trial + Membership), CPA, ROAS, CVR, CTR, CPC, Budget Utilization, Regional Conversion Volume.

Channels Excluded: Paid social and display were not in scope. Search captures active purchase intent, the right moment to convert for gym memberships.



Structure & Creative Plan

To support all eight regions and every club location, we built a campaign structure that was easy to manage, aligned with how the gym franchise operates, and designed to capture both awareness-stage and ready-to-join searchers. The goal was to make sure every club had the right visibility, the right message, and the right setup to convert more members at a low cost.

How We Structured the Campaigns

- **Gym Awareness Campaigns (Search):** Focused on people looking for nearby gyms. Ads were tailored by location with keywords like “gym near me” or “gym in [City]” to drive local visibility.
- **New Membership Campaigns (Search):** Built for high-intent searchers who were ready to join. Each region and club had its own ad groups so we could control budgets and messaging at a more detailed level.
- **PMax Campaigns:** Each region had a PMax campaign with a separate asset group for every club. This helped us see which locations performed best and allowed machine learning to push the right creative to the right audience across Google’s full network.
- **Negative Keyword Strategy:** We set structured negative keyword lists to prevent overlap between campaigns (for example, making sure PMax didn’t cannibalize Search and that brand/non-brand keywords stayed cleanly separated).

Creative & Messaging Approach

- **Responsive Search Ads (RSAs):** Each ad group included 15 headlines and 4 descriptions, allowing Google to automatically mix and match to find top-performing combinations per auction.
- **Top-of-Funnel Messaging:** Localized and benefit-driven (e.g., “Gym Near [City],” “Free Trial Available,” “Join [Club Name] Today”).
- **Bottom-of-Funnel Messaging:** Focused on urgency and value, like limited-time offers, enrollment specials, and class availability, to convert people already comparing gyms.
- **Location-Specific PMax Assets:** Every club received its own headlines, images, and extensions so ads felt relevant and local, helping drive stronger engagement and store-visit intent.



Results

From **January 2025 to February 2026**, our dual-channel SEM strategy delivered strong, measurable growth across all eight regional markets.

By combining high-intent Google Search campaigns with support from PMax, the gym franchise saw significant **increases in free trial sign-ups, new memberships, and overall marketing efficiency**, all while keeping acquisition costs well below industry averages.



24,735+ Total Sign-Ups driven across all regions



6.41x Blended ROAS across the full 2025 year



\$28.82 Avg. CPA in 2025, significantly below typical fitness industry costs



32.51x ROAS from PMax, despite only receiving 11.8% of the total budget



11.87% Conversion Rate (Feb 2026), 3–5x higher than fitness benchmarks



99.2% budget utilization in Feb 2026, showing highly efficient pacing and spend management



106% new membership growth month-over-month in January 2026 from PMax contributions alone



Client Impact

AdMax Local's SEM strategy provided the client with **scalable membership growth**, generating **over 24,000 sign-ups** tied directly to our paid search efforts. The use of per-club asset groups enabled deeper visibility at the club level for the first time, improving decision-making and pattern identification. Audience bid adjustments contributed nearly **500 incremental conversions in a single month**, proving the value of layered behavioral signals.

We also laid the foundation for smarter budget reallocation by identifying high-efficiency regions and highlighting clear opportunities for future investment, especially in PMax and in the client's low-CPA markets.