



# **BIG SKY BRAVERY**

## **Google Ads Campaign Results**

**April 13th - May 4th, 2020**

By: Ryan L., Michael M., and Lara Zander

Funded by: Prime Incorporated (*Greg Alexander*)

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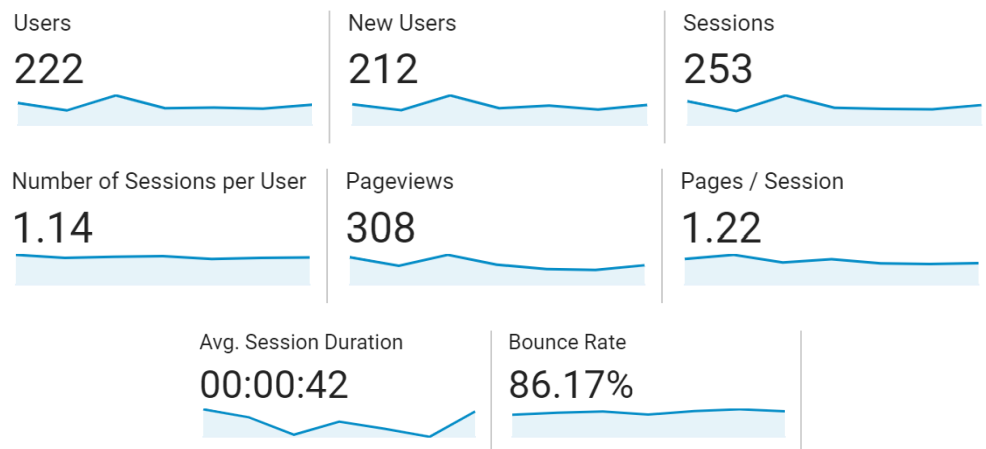
## Industry Component:

### Marketing Goals:

The primary goal of the Google Ads campaign was to stimulate Big Sky Bravery's marketing efforts by driving monetary and sky mile donations in hopes to increase the capacity of its programs. We chose to run three campaigns to work towards this goal: a Monetary Donation Campaign, a SkyMiles Campaign, and an Education Campaign. The education campaign was aimed to inform individuals about Big Sky Bravery's mission and drive them to BSB's "Silent Professionals" video. This would function as a support for the donation campaigns that were routed to their respective donation pages. We ran these campaigns for three weeks, from April 13th to May 4th, with a budget of \$250.

### Google Analytics Results:

These results represent a combined effort of all three campaigns. This information was gathered on Google Analytics, therefore, not all of the results can be attributed to the Big Sky Bravery Google Ads Campaign. We have no prior data to compare to truly understand the effectiveness of this ads campaign. Below are the results recorded during the Google Ads Campaign (*Figure 1.1*).



*Figure 1.1*

Google Analytics recorded 212 new users in the duration of the Big Sky Bravery Campaign. In this same time frame, we received 200 total clicks on our ads. It can be assumed that approximately 94% of these new users were a result of the Google Ads campaign. Each user viewed on average 1.22 pages and spent an average time of 42 seconds on Big Sky Bravery's site. The session duration proves that we were not able to inspire people to watch the "Silent Professionals" video that has a run time of 4 minutes and 21 seconds. However, session durations can reach as low as 0.01 second, meaning this duration result is not a total loss.

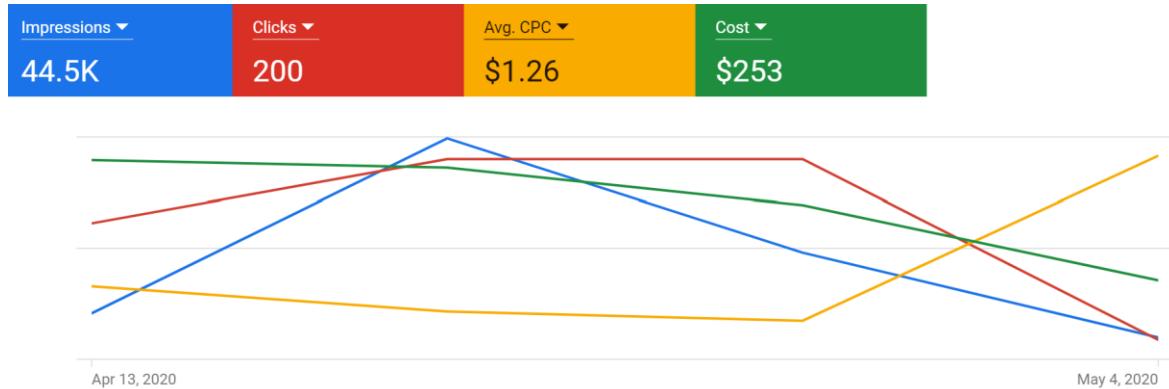
Unfortunately, the average bounce rate was 86.17%. It reached its lowest level of 78.13% on May 1st. This may have been a result of Give Big Gallatin Valley 2020. We struggled to reduce this rate

throughout the campaign, but we provided recommendations on page 14 that should help reduce this bounce rate.

When analyzing bounce rate by region, we found Ohio and Oklahoma had the lowest bounce rates followed by Missouri and Arizona. Montana placed eighth with an average bounce rate of 82.14%. Missouri users spent the most time exploring Big Sky Bravery's website, but no region managed to yield a conversion.

### Big Sky Bravery Ad Campaign Results:

The Big Sky Bravery Ad Campaign ran for three weeks, from April 13th-May 4th. During this time we spent \$253 and received 44,500 impressions and 200 clicks at an average cost per click (CPC) of \$1.26 (*Figure 1.2*). Our overall click through rate (CTR) was 0.45%. This rate is extremely low because of the outstanding number of impressions we received. Overall, we failed to reach the goals and conversions we had hoped for (as explained in our Google Analytics analysis).



*Figure 1,2*

As seen in our weekly representation of our combined campaign results, the click through rate spiked in the third week. This was our attempt to reach our desired budget of \$250. We bid on high performing, yet expensive keywords such as “Montana” and “Special Forces Operations”. We paused all ads March 4th at 11am at a total spend of \$251, Google ads recorded two more dollars after campaigns had been paused.

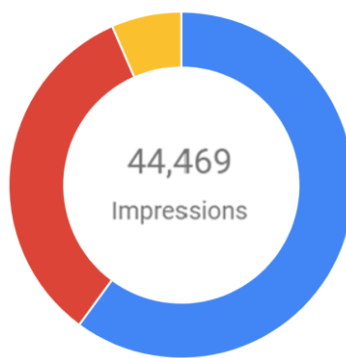
## Breakdown of Results by Campaign:

We ran three campaigns to attempt to reach our goals: Monetary Donation Campaign, SkyMiles Campaign, and Education Campaign. Below are pie charts representing each campaign's contribution to the overarching Big Sky Bravery campaign. Keep in mind that, in *Figures 1.3-1.5*, not all colors represent the same campaign, rather the color marks the highest performing ad in each given measure.



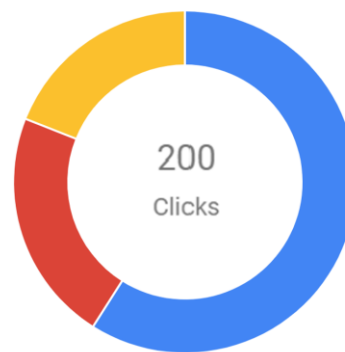
● Education 41%  
● SkyMiles Search 33%  
● BSB Donate (Give) (Monetary) 26%

*Figure 1.3*



● BSB Donate (Give) (Monetary) 60%  
● SkyMiles Search 33%  
● Education 7%

*Figure 1.4*



● Education 59%  
● SkyMiles Search 22%  
● BSB Donate (Give) (Monetary) 19%

*Figure 1.5*

Overall, the Monetary Donation Campaign had 60% of overall impressions while the Education Campaign spent 41% of the budget in the process of receiving 59% of total clicks. The SkyMiles Donation Campaign stayed in the middle ground between the other two campaigns. This one was particularly difficult because most people aren't looking to fly during the pandemic. Delta Skymiles also don't expire, making people less eager to give them up.

We have outlined detailed reports of each campaign and the contributions each one made to these results. After this detailed analysis we were able to develop quality recommendations which are thoroughly explained, starting on page 16.

*Each targeted campaign efforts contributed the following results:*

## Education Campaign:

### Campaign Overview:

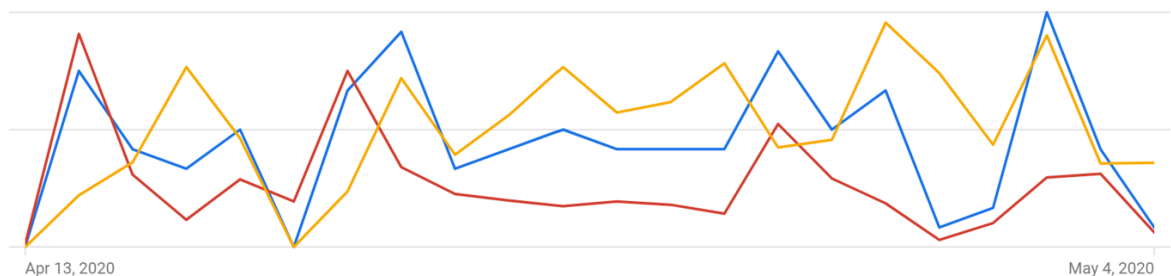
The Education Campaign was made up of seven ad groups centered around respective keywords (*Figure 4.1*). This campaign was viewed by approximately 3,000 individuals and drove 118 clicks with an average click through rate of 4.04% at an average cost per click of \$0.88 (*Figure 4.2*). The total cost of this campaign was \$103. April 27th was the most successful day for this campaign. The average cost per click reached \$0.70 with a clickthrough rate of 5.05%. This represented a great balance of cost to click ratio that produced the most effective and affordable results.

*Figure 4.2*

Education Ad Groups			
	CTR	Avg. CPC	Cost
● Our Heroes	6.57%	\$0.76	\$31.27
● Special Ops Recovery	4.33%	\$1.16	\$24.42
● Who We Are	3.93%	\$0.74	\$19.12
● Silent Professionals Recovery	3.73%	\$1.16	\$5.79
① Debt of Gratitude	2.55%	\$0.89	\$16.01
① Recreational Therapy	2.44%	\$0.97	\$4.87
① Decompression	1.98%	\$0.97	\$1.94

*Figure 4.1*

Education Campaign Results			
Clicks	Impressions	CTR	Cost
118	2.92K	4.05%	\$103



It can be seen in *Figure 4.2*, as impressions decline, clickthrough rate increases. This is good because it means the appropriate audiences are being reached. It's a sign that the ad showed to the user, given the searched keyword, was relevant to their search. As a result, they were more likely to click on the ad and land on the respective landing page.

## Evolution of Strategy:

The education campaign began with four ad groups. These four groups ran from April 13th to April 23rd. This allowed us to get a feel for what types of ads and keywords were working. The ads routed equally to Big Sky Bravery's home page and the "What we do" page.

In this time frame, several keywords began to stand out as highly effective while others had to be removed or paused due to expenses or effectiveness. Utilizing Google Analytics for further analysis, we noticed that people tended to click on more website links when landing on the "What We Do" page. These results can be found in the Behavior Flow section of Google Ads. We also noticed that the session duration was below a minute, meaning everyone routed to the homepage was not watching the "Silent Professionals" video.

We quickly developed the ad groups of "What We Do" and "Our Heroes", each were based on our most effective keywords, ads, and the information we had from exploring Google Analytics. We paused our three least effective ad groups at this time, including "Debt of Gratitude", "Recreational Therapy", and "Decompression Programs" (Refer to *Figure 4.1*). These ads were assumed to be less effective because of their vague and more personal search themes.

These changes proved successful, "Our Heroes" ad group was particularly surprising. It paired well with the search trends during the pandemic, while remaining relevant. However, the bounce rate was still too high. Our theory was the landing page put users on a picture that was, at first glance, seemingly unrelated to Big Sky Bravery's mission. After some research, we found the "Info" link that cannot be accessed from the Big Sky Bravery homepage but displays the homepage information and "Silent Professional" video without the picture. We routed two of our ad groups to this location to see if it would be more successful in both lowering the bounce rate and increasing session time.

After analyzing its effectiveness at the end of the campaign, in the Behavior Flow tab of Google Analytics, the info page had a 100% bounce rate. This was surprising and disproved our initial assumptions. This type of A/B testing still provides us with worthy data that enables us to provide quality recommendations for Big Sky Bravery's future online marketing efforts.

## Key Results:

**Most Effective Ad Groups:** "Our Heroes" was the most successful ad group, inspired by Josh McCain's email footer "Our Heroes, Our Responsibility". This ad group cost \$31.37 and received 41 clicks with a click through rate of 6.57% costing an average of \$0.76 per click. The success of this campaign was probably due to the pandemic. People were searching a lot of "Hero" based keywords. This ad group was targeted to flow with current trends while remaining relevant. An example of "Our Heros " ad is below in *Figure 4.3* and

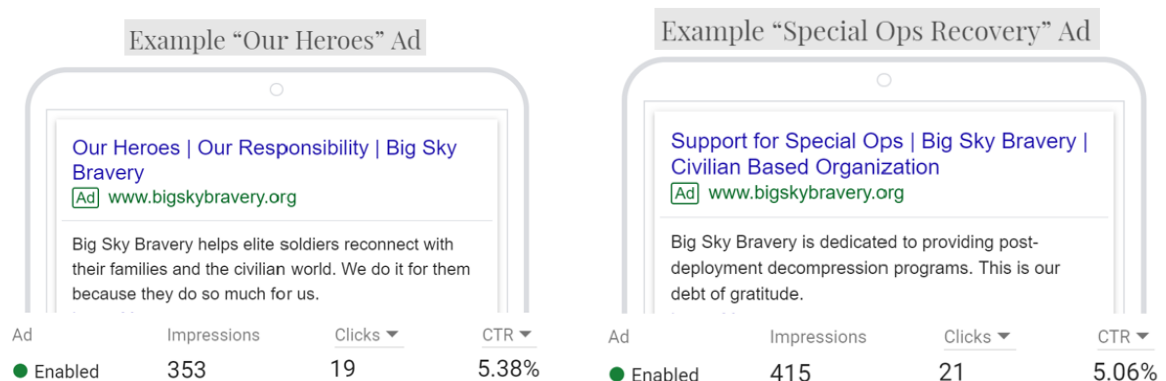


an example of “Special Ops Recovery” ad, our second best performing ad group, is in *Figure 4.4*.

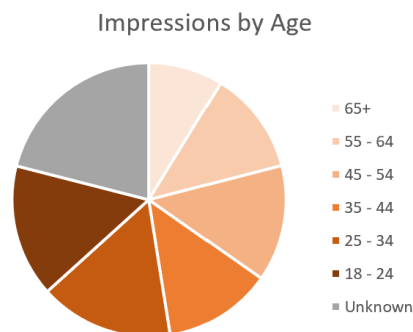
*Figure 4.3*

*Figure 4.4*

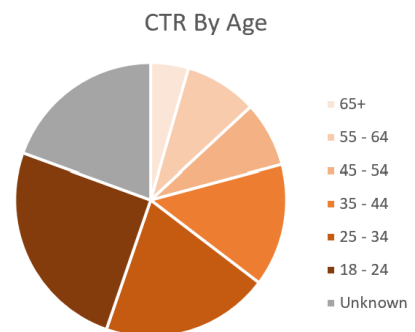
**Demographics By Age:** The education campaign attracted a younger demographic. The Figures to the left display age by color, the older the demographic gets, the paler the color gets. The grey wedge represents the unknown statistics. *Figure 4.5* displays the impression, it can be seen that all wedges are relatively equal, with an average of 417 impressions. This



*Figure 4.5*



*Figure 4.6*



means the ads were shown equally to each demographic. *Figure 4.6* displays the click through rate by age. It can be seen that the click rate is skewed towards the younger age groups of 18-34 years old. This may have contributed to the lack of conversion and less time spent on the Big Sky Bravery Webpage.

**Most Notable Keywords:** The Education campaign explored a total of 86 keywords. These can all be reviewed in our Google Ads account. *Figure 4.7* displays a consolidated version of the education campaigns most notable keywords. Green represents our most effective keywords, yellow represents our underperforming keywords with the most potential, and red

represents the most ineffective keywords. Note how our successful keyword types match with their respective ad groups, this correlation aided in the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the given keyword (*Figure 4.7*).

**Most Effective Keywords (White):** “Heroes of America” yielded the highest clickthrough rate at 15.54% with an average cost per click of \$0.66. It allowed ads to appear above all other ads at the absolute top of the search page 84.25% of the time and above organic search results 86.30% of the time. “Active Duty Soldiers” resulted in a slightly lower click through rate, 12.50%, at a third of the price but was less effective in impression rates.

**Keywords with Potential (Light Grey):** “SOF” yielded a mid-level click through rate at the high price of \$1.24 per click. It was shown at the top of the search result over 50% of the time, giving it quality impression rates. This keyword had potential to perform well, tweaking the ad shown to increase click through rate would have increased these keywords effectiveness.

**Most Ineffective Keywords (Dark Grey):** “Recreational Therapy” was a poor keyword because it proved to be too vague. It did not allow the ad to match the searchers expectations. “Elite Soldiers” was one of the least effective keywords when paired with the “Who We Are” ad group. The ads paired with the keyword was not what the user was looking for. These keywords would have performed better if paired with more relevant ads. This would have stimulated more clicks.

Search keyword ▼	Ad group ▼	↓ CTR ▼	Avg. CPC ▼	Clicks ▼	Impressions ▼	Impr. (Abs. Top) % ▼	Impr. (Top) % ▼
Heroes of America	Our Heroes	15.54%	\$0.66	23	148	84.25%	86.30%
Active duty soldiers	Who We Are	12.50%	\$0.22	1	8	25.00%	50.00%
SOF	Who We Are	2.27%	\$1.24	1	44	64.10%	69.23%
Recreational therapy	Recreational Therapy	1.22%	\$1.23	1	82	7.41%	14.81%
Elite Soldiers	Who We Are	0.00%	\$0.00	0	101	30.12%	78.31%

*Figure 4.7*

## Monetary Donation Campaign:

### Campaign Overview:

The main goal of this campaign was to get conversions for financial donations. We focused on phrases that would attract people to click on our ad that would direct them to the Give page on the Big Sky Bravery website. The inclusion of certain keywords helped rank these ads higher and draw more impressions. For increased results from targeting efforts, we set the geographic region to focus on states like Montana, Texas, Arizona, DC, California, etc. The results from this campaign can be seen below in *Figure 2.1*.



*Figure 2.1*

### Evolution of Strategy:

We started this campaign with short-tail and long-tail keywords related to the military special forces and non-profit sector. The short-tail keywords became too expensive to bid on, so we shut them down after the first day. A detailed look on those keywords can be found below in *Figure 2.2*. After the first week, we discovered a keyword that was generating a high amount of impressions. We added this keyword, *special operations forces*, and we received over 22k impressions on that alone. However, it did not generate the clicks we hoped for with a CTR of 0.07%. We paused this keyword and shifted focus to our higher performing keywords like *active duty programs*, *support active duty military* and *military non profit*. A closer look at our best performing keywords can be found below in the Key Results section. When creating Google text ads, there is a limit for characters included. We struggled in the beginning to find phrases that fit the limitation, but also summarized what Big Sky Bravery was about. After countless times of trial and error, we successfully finalized our ads. Examples are shown below in *Figure 2.3*.

Google Ads All campaigns > BSB Donate (Give) (Monetary)

SEARCH REPORTS TOOLS & SETTINGS

467-028-9509 msmarketing@bigskybravery.org

is are running - Your campaigns and ad groups are paused or removed. Enable them to begin showing your ads. [LEARN MORE](#) [HIDE](#)

Paused Type: Search Budget: \$7.14/day More details

Search Keywords All time Apr 7 - 13, 2020

1 selected Edit Search terms Label Auction insights

	Keyword	Ad group	Status	Policy details	Final URL	Impr.	CTR	↓ Cost	Clicks	Conv. rate	Conversion	Avg. CPC	Cost
Total: All but removed keyw...						750	0.53%	\$17.89	4	0.00%	0.00	\$4.47	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Military	BSB Donate Money	Campaign paused	Eligible	—	414	0.48%	\$9.83	2	0.00%	0.00	\$4.92	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Montana	BSB Donate Money	Campaign paused	Eligible	—	82	2.44%	\$8.06	2	0.00%	0.00	\$4.03	
<input type="checkbox"/>	non-profit	BSB Donate Money	Campaign paused	Eligible	—	7	0.00%	\$0.00	0	0.00%	0.00	—	
<input type="checkbox"/>	non profit	BSB Donate Money	Campaign paused	Eligible	—	10	0.00%	\$0.00	0	0.00%	0.00	—	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engagement	BSB Donate Money	Campaign paused	Eligible	—	79	0.00%	\$0.00	0	0.00%	0.00	—	
<input type="checkbox"/>	PTSD	BSB Donate Money	Campaign paused	Eligible	—	15	0.00%	\$0.00	0	0.00%	0.00	—	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elite	BSB Donate Money	Campaign paused	Eligible	—	77	0.00%	\$0.00	0	0.00%	0.00	—	

[Figure 2.2: Original keywords breakdown]

**Big Sky Bravery | Help Support Special Ops | Make A Donation Today**

**Ad** [www.bigskybravery.org](http://www.bigskybravery.org)

Our Active Duty Military Keeps us Safe. Support Them by Donating. Join the Community. Support our Military's Active Duty Special Operations Forces Today. Our Heroes. Our Responsibility.

[What We Do](#) [Our Mission](#)

[Call \(406\) 624-0066](#)

**Support Active Duty Military | Donate Today | Big Sky Bravery**

**Ad** [www.bigskybravery.org](http://www.bigskybravery.org)

Assisting our Military's Elite Active Duty Special Operations Forces. Reconnecting with Themselves, Families, and Society. Make A Difference. Donate Today. Our Heroes. Our Responsibility.

[What We Do](#) [Our Mission](#)

[Call \(406\) 624-0066](#)

[Figure 2.3: Google Text Ad Examples]

## Key Results:

Throughout the three weeks of this campaign, we constantly changed keywords and text on the ads which affected the end results. With certain keywords and ads performing better than others, we optimized to focus on them to produce the best results. Important results from this campaign are shown below in the graphics.

### Ad with most impressions:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Big Sky Bravery   Help Support Special Ops   Make A Donation Today <a href="http://www.bigskybravery.org">www.bigskybravery.org</a> Our Active Duty Military Keeps us Safe. Support Them by Donating. Join the Community. Support our Military's Active Duty Special Operations Forces Today.	Campaign paused	Expanded text ad	14	8,977	0.16%	\$0.84	\$11.82
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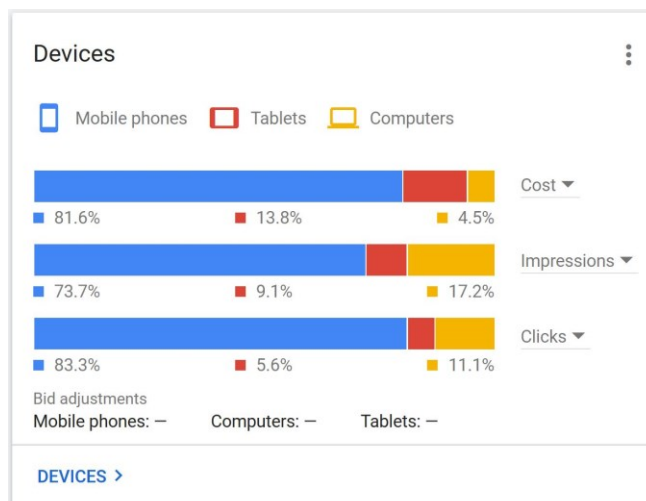
### Ad with most clicks:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Big Sky Bravery   Help Support Special Ops   Make A Donation Today <a href="http://www.bigskybravery.org">www.bigskybravery.org</a> Our Active Duty Military Keeps us Safe. Support Them by Donating. Join the Community. Support our Military's Active Duty Special Operations Forces Today.	Campaign paused	Expanded text ad	14	8,977	0.16%	\$0.84	\$11.82
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### Ad with highest CTR:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support Active Duty Military   Donate Today   Big Sky Bravery <a href="http://www.bigskybravery.org">www.bigskybravery.org</a> Assisting our Military's Elite Active Duty Special Operations Forces. Reconnecting with Themselves, Families, and Society. Make A Difference. Donate Today.	Campaign paused	Expanded text ad	7	1,173	0.60%	\$2.38	\$16.65
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### Device breakdown:



**Conclusion:**

Although we generated many impressions on this campaign, we received a low number of clicks. We believe one cause of this may have been because our keywords and ads were not relevant enough to what the viewers were searching for on Google. Focusing on keywords that generate higher CTR's is more important than the number of impressions you can get. Ultimately, the clicks are the people visiting your site and potentially becoming donors. Another cause believed to be a factor of our low CTR is that we were asking people to give financially through only a few sentences of text. A stronger emotional connection appeal to the audience would be more effective in combating this issue.

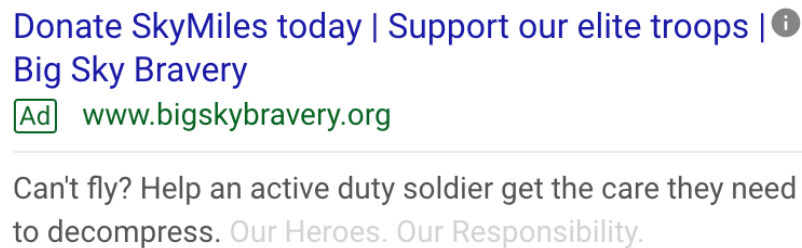
## SkyMiles Donation Campaign:

### Campaign Overview:

Our SkyMiles campaign operated one primary goal, which was to drive donations of SkyMiles to support Big Sky Bravery's greatest expense, airfare. At the beginning of the campaign, the country was hit with the COVID-19. As a team, we believed that this could create greater potential for this form of donation since people could not fly at this time. The campaign consisted of only one ad group because we did not want this campaign to be too broad. We were not trying to reach a lot of general traffic, rather, we wanted to use this campaign to drive high quality traffic.

### Evolution of Strategy:

Over time, we ran some A/B testing and made some minor adjustments to our text ads that generated positive results. On April 27th, we adjusted the headlines of some ads to move the keyword "Big Sky Bravery" to the end of headline tags (*Figure 3.1*). We theorized that when trying to attract new donors, individuals would not have any preference on **who** they are donating to and instead are more interested in **what** they are donating to. As a result, we moved headlines like "Donate SkyMiles", "Support our elite troops", and "Help active duty military" to the front of headlines. This boosted our clickthrough rate from .18% to .3% by the end of the campaign.



*Figure 3.1*

Other changes made on this campaign were mostly in respect to keyword lists. We constantly added to our keyword list to find different variations of words to hopefully improve the clickthrough rate while also removing keywords that proved ineffective. The greatest example of this was with the keyword "special operations forces." We found that "special operations forces" was getting really high impressions but very few clicks, "spec ops" was getting about half as many impressions but received zero clicks, and "sof" had the lowest impressions but the highest clickthrough rate (*Figure 3.2*). This led us to pausing the keyword "special operations forces" and using "sof" more frequently in ads for the last week of the campaign. This being said, we do not necessarily believe any of these keywords were effective in reaching our conversion goal.

special operations forces	Campaign paused	Broad match	Eligible	—	6	12,973	0.05%	\$2.71
sof	Campaign paused	Broad match	Eligible	—	3	185	1.62%	\$2.43
spec ops	Campaign paused	Broad match	Eligible	—	0	594	0.00%	—

Figure 3.2

## Key Results:

Unfortunately, the results of this campaign were not entirely in line with our goals. The campaign drew a total of 14,840 impressions and 44 clicks for a click through rate of .30% (Figure 3.4). As a team, we spent \$82.91 on this campaign making up about 33% of our total ad spend. Overall, spending on this campaign was well utilized, allowing similar spending in the other two campaigns. However, we believe our resources would have been better spent on other campaigns due to the lesser appeal of donating SkyMiles. SkyMiles donations are simply not as common as monetary donations and the education campaign may have better reinforced our goals.

Throughout our three week period, the most successful day for the SkyMiles campaign was April 30. On this date, we achieved five clicks, tied for the most of any day, on only 44 impressions for a clickthrough rate of 11.4%.

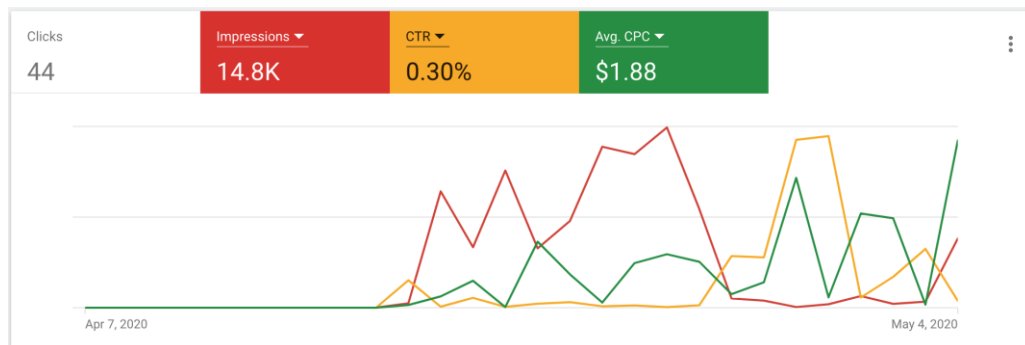


Figure 3.4

Unfortunately, only a few keywords were somewhat successful. “Big Sky Bravery” was the most successful keyword with 28 clicks on 107 impressions for a clickthrough rate of 26.17% and only cost an average cost per click of \$0.59. Keywords such as “sof” and “support active duty military” also performed fairly well relative to the rest of the campaign. However, the least successful keyword in terms of driving donations was “special operations forces.” This keyword had 12,973 impressions and six clicks for a clickthrough rate of .05%. This keyword was successful in driving awareness, but this was not a primary goal of this campaign. This keyword used 29% of our total ad spend for this campaign and was paused



on April 26th when we determined that it was not driving traffic in line with our campaign goals. Additionally, the keywords in this campaign had an average cost per click of \$1.92.

One of the greatest issues we had with the SkyMiles campaign was the issue of using trademarks within the text ad (*Figure 3.5*). The Keyword “Skymiles” is trademarked by Delta and Google does not want users to use trademarked phrases that are not from the entity that owns the trademark. Fortunately, this did not completely end the campaign, but the overall effectiveness suffered. Google still showed the ads, but presented them to searchers less often. Since this campaign had such high impressions, this likely worked out for the better since we finished so close to our budget.

Big Sky Bravery   Help active duty soldiers   Donate SkyMiles today www.bigskybravery.org A major expense for Big Sky Bravery is airfare. We can use your donated SkyMiles to bring out an sof recipient	Campaign paused Approved (limited): Trademarks in ad text
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*Figure 3.5*

### Google Ads Campaign Conclusion:

Although this campaign was ineffective in producing the desired session times and conversion rates, it proved valuable in understanding Big Sky Bravery’s most effective Google Ads strategies. We managed to produce a balance of cost to click ratio that was effective in getting customers to BSB’s website, as well as affordable. Our A/B testing provided us with quality data to analyze Big Sky Bravery’s marketing environment. This enables us to provide quality recommendations for Big Sky Bravery’s future online marketing efforts.

### Overall Recommendations:

1. **Upload “Silent Professionals” Video to Youtube:** One of Big Sky Bravery’s key goals was to encourage more people to watch the “Silent Professionals” video. This is a worthy goal, the video is emotionally stimulating and would certainly inspire people to be emotionally connected to Big Sky Bravery’s mission. This reaction would aid in increasing the number of loyal donors.

Throughout the education campaign, we had wished the “Silent Professionals” video was on Youtube because this would have allowed us to route our ads directly to the video. We attempted to route to the Vimeo location, but the routing would not cooperate with Google Ads, ultimately preventing us from creating it as a landing page.

Big Sky Bravery has posted other videos on Youtube and has recently promised to post live stream Instagram recordings on this platform. Live streaming is a wonderful marketing

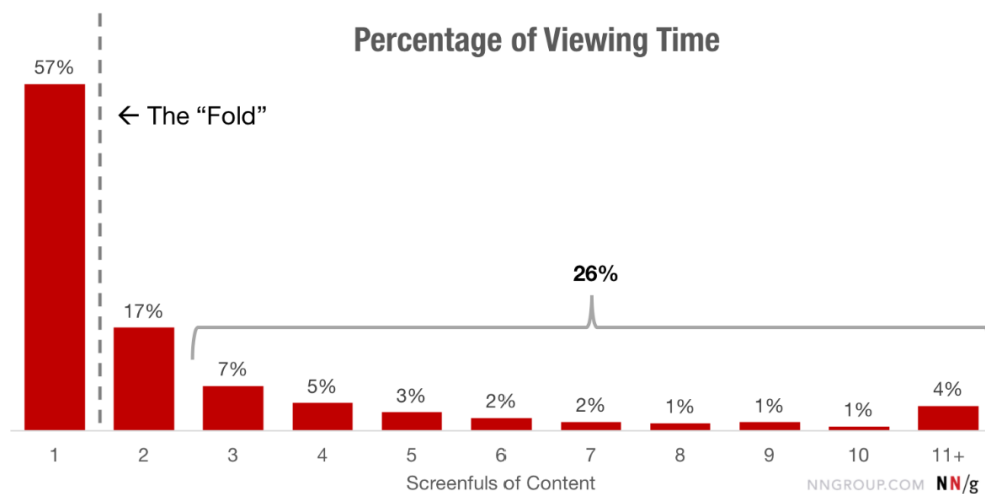
development for BSB. Having the “Silent Professional” video included would increase the probability of user viewing, much like live streaming posts. It would also enable users to engage more with its content through commenting, sharing, and liking as well as help Big Sky Bravery more easily measure marketing successes.

*Please refer to recommendation two for more information about why users have a low probability of watching the “Silent Professionals” video as it is currently posted on the Big Sky Bravery website.*

2. **Develop a web page for just “Silent Professionals” Video and testimonials:** Along with posting the “Silent Professionals” video on Youtube, we recommend creating its own webpage on Big Sky Bravery’s website. This is such a high quality emotionally stimulating video, we believe it deserves to be seen as much as possible.

We recommend a new webpage due to a 2018 Nielson study on scrolling and attention of online users. This study involved measuring users vertical scrolling paired with eye tracking data to determine attention spans of the average user. Nielson uses the term “fold” as a screen full of information. The Nielson Study found users spend 57% of their time on the first fold and 17% of the time on the second fold (*Figure 5.1*). This means that 74% of the time users spend on a webpage is on the first two folds. Big Sky Bravery’s website displays an image on the first fold of these specific pages. It is unclear how this image affects these results, but we assume it diminishes users' time spent on the relative second fold of text.

*Figure 5.1: [property of the NNGroup]*



It takes three folds to reach Big Sky Bravery’s “Silent Professional” video on the home page and eight folds to reach the “Testimonials” section on the “What We Do” page. These pages are highly valuable emotional connections to Big Sky Bravery’s mission. Creating a new page with the Silent Professionals video on the first fold and testimonials starting on the second will increase viewing on the BSB website. These two resources are natural pairs and deserve

to be seen as easily as possible to foster emotional connection to Big Sky Bravery's mission with new users.

This increase in emotional connection will likely cause an increase of donations. It is important for the video to be showcased on the Big SKy Bravery Webpage, not just Youtube, because the donation link is more accessible to individuals. This will help stimulate impulse donations.

3. **Limit False Floors:** The Nielson Study warns to "beware of false floors", this is the illusion of a completed page that can interfere with scrolling. They recommend including signifiers to inform people of information continuation below the fold. Big Sky Bravery's website, although aesthetically pleasing, displays a lot of false floors. This type of user confusion would limit session times and prevent users from reaching valuable information like testimonials. Including teasers to entice users to continue scrolling may be invaluable to Big SKy Bravery's online marketing success.
4. **Provide New Users with Page Context:** As discussed in recommendation 2, users spend 51% of their time on the first fold. It is unclear how Big Sky Bravery's images affect this time, but we can conclude when working with Google Ads, they hinder the effectiveness of landing pages. When a new visitor clicks on an ad about Special Forces and lands on a page with people on snowmobiles, it can cause confusion. This may contribute to the high bounce rate we experienced in our campaign.

The Big Sky Bravery website is a high quality website, some slight changes may decrease bounce rates. We recommend providing some sort of context for new users about the page on first sight such as a description, like on Big Sky Bravery's home page. It is more effective if everything is done for new users, even something as simple as reducing a single scroll.

5. **Get Google Ads linked to website analytics to track conversions:** Although Google Ads can supply you with a lot of useful information, conversions are arguably the most important metric for donation campaigns. Getting analytics set up to track conversions from Google Ads would give Big Sky Bravery the most accurate return on ad spend to fully understand its value. This posed some issues with our donation campaigns because we could only see how many people viewed the site from our ads, but not how many converted from our ads. This will allow Big Sky Bravery to differentiate what donations come from ads and what donations come from organic and direct searches.
6. **Optimize Google Ads campaigns:** We recommend focusing on long-tail keywords like *military non profit*, *active duty programs*, and *support active duty military*. While words like *military*, *non profit*, and *Montana* show promising results, the CPC can get as high as \$12.00 and be costly. When creating ads, utilizing the phrases you have already created on your website will not only be easier for you, but it will also keep your image consistent across all channels. We also recommend setting a budget on Google Ads so you don't overspend. Since we were only

able to run text ads, we would recommend experimenting with other forms of Google Ads like Video Ads and Display Ads. These forms of ads may be able to create an emotional connection between the viewer and Big Sky Bravery that is stronger than the text ads because of the visuals and audio.

### **Google Ads Return on Investment:**

If Big Sky Bravery were to continue utilizing Google Ads, we would recommend investing \$200 per month. Based on our testing, we would expect them to see a 20% return on investment assuming BSB made adjustments based on our recommendations. We would recommend continuing with an education campaign and a monetary donations campaign and cutting the SkyMiles donation campaign. We also suggest splitting the \$200 budget with 65% on education and 35% on monetary donations. As a national company, the most important thing for Big Sky Bravery to do is improve awareness across the country and educate them on what they do. If they can increase their national recognition through emotional connection to BSB's mission, they will be able to generate greater return on their ad spend. A strong education campaign would ultimately result in increased website traffic and improved brand recognition across the country as well as an increase in the number of donations.

If Big Sky Bravery were to continue running Google Ads, the greatest cost would be time. They would likely need to hire someone or have Josh be in charge of this. Running ads requires constant evaluation and adjustments and can be time consuming so it would likely be best to hire someone part time to run ads. Big Sky Bravery could also attract interns from the business school that wish to become more proficient with Google Ads. This would make the process more cost effective if they are willing to put Google Ads in the hands of an eager student.

## **Learning Component**

### **Objective:**

Our team hoped to learn more about Google Ads and Analytics as well as online consumer behavior. We studied Google Ads/Analytics prior to the campaign, but had never been hands on with the platform before. We were unclear about many aspects of the platforms and were excited to gain valuable experience with them.

We believe our team met all our learning expectations. Although we were not successful on conversions, bounce rates, or session times, we were able to improve the rates over our three week duration. We changed ads according to result to produce the best results possible under the circumstances. We are far more comfortable with Google Ads and Analytics platforms and text ads. Our analysis of campaign results paired with consumer research allowed us to develop our knowledge of online consumer behavior. We incorporated this learning experience into Big Sky Bravery's marketing recommendations. This allowed us to make recommendations confidently and clearly.

One outcome we will always remember was how unexpected some keyword results can be. In our initial "Our Heroes" ad group, we experienced a keyword clash with a national campaign of "Hand Washing Heroes". This campaign was a national effort to encourage individuals to thoroughly wash their hands to reduce the spread of COVID-19. If the pandemic was not in full swing, this clash would likely not have occurred. This goes to show how the environment around a keyword can drastically alter its effectiveness. After this finding, we quickly improved our keywords in this ad group and eliminated our broad match terms.

Given that this was a practicum class, we expected to have a practical aspect to it with a hands-on learning experience and Doctor Van Steenburg watching over our shoulders as we launched our campaigns. About half way through the semester, we were told we would not be able to have class in-person for the rest of the semester due to COVID-19 safety concerns. Although we were concerned about the impact this was going to have on our learning experience, we held our heads up. We were extremely impressed with how our professor handled the rest of the class in assisting us with our practical endeavors on Google Ads. We still learned a great deal about paid advertising campaigns on Google and were able to make quality recommendations for our client.

### **Group Dynamics:**

Our team decided to tackle this campaign as a competition between each person. Each of us were in charge of one campaign and were competing to yield the best results. The goal behind this strategy was to add another competitive element to push each other to do our best as individuals in order to outperform the rest of the class as a team.

We faced challenges such as unexpectedly high bounce rates and landing page limitations for valuable information , such as the “Silent Professionals” video location.

While looking further into session duration and bounce rates by city, we revealed some interesting statistics. The user that spent the longest duration, 27 minutes, on BSB’s site was from Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Upon further research, we found this is a U.S. Army training installation established in 1940. According to our records, This was the first time this user had visited Big Sky Bravery’s site. This doesn't really contribute to the overall findings of our campaign, but was unexpected and surprisingly intriguing.

### **Client Dynamics:**

We are fortunate to have had the pleasure of working with such a great client. We ran into some communication challenges in the beginning of our campaign. Google Analytics was not connected to the Big Sky Bravery website and we needed approval on our ads since Big Sky Bravery deals with such highly confidential information. We understood that our client works on a busy schedule and they connected with us as soon as they could. While we waited for our client to get back to us, we received support from another classmate that was more experienced with our issue connecting to Google Analytics. With her helping us prepare for our meeting, we were able to easily talk to our client through how to solve one of our primary issues. In the end, this delay had little effect on the outcome of our campaign and everything worked out as well as could be expected.

As expected, working with Big Sky Bravery came with some stress. We knew when we submitted our request to work with Big Sky Bravery that we would be representing a well established nonprofit with a national presence. This was not bad stress however. We believe Big Sky Bravery has a level of expectations for all of its employees and likely had some level of expectations for us as well. This pushed us to put a little more time into our campaigns and do our best to create a positive outcome. We also expected that working with a nonprofit who prides itself in caring for our most elite troops and have high levels of confidentiality would be somewhat particular with exactly what phrasing we could use in their ads. This created some restrictions for what we could do, but it ultimately gave us a roadmap of how to put together ads and supported the overall consistency of the ads across all of our campaigns.

What was unexpected was the level of support we received from Big Sky Bravery. Considering the current situation with COVID-19, it is a very stressful time for businesses, especially nonprofits. We recognize that they had several other things on their plate, but were still available and willing to help with anything we needed from their side. The two associates we worked with, Susan and Josh, were friendly and did everything they could to help us get the most out of this practicum.

## Recommendations for Future Students

1. **Play more with broad, phrase, and exact keywords:** Something our team could have tested better was the effectiveness of broad, phrase, and exact keyword types. Research informed us that broad match terms were less successful than phrase or exact match terms. We struggled to develop adequate results to replicate distinctive outcomes between the term types.
2. **Be Prepared:** To be successful in this campaign, it is important to be prepared. Be more prepared than you think you will need to. Make the most of the initial meeting with your client and plan for setting up Google Analytics at that time. This will limit issues down the road closer to campaign run times.
3. **Plan Ahead:** Plan for the best, but prepare for the worst. This class deals with a lot of new elements and it is important to be prepared for anything that might come up. Make a strategy as a team for something unexpected that may arise, what methods of contact to use, who will be the lead contact, and who will be contacted to solve the problem.
4. **Monitor Closely:** Google Ads moves fast and will change drastically on the flip of a coin. Keywords that have on average CPC of \$0.50 could change to a CPC of \$5.00 overnight.
5. **Create set dates to make A/B testing modifications as a team:** Testing needs time to develop adequate information to make informed changes. Our team chose to make our biggest changes halfway through the campaign. These changes can be done at any time, but having set time to sit down and analyze little details to make appropriate decisions as a team is important.
6. **Don't be disappointed if goals are not reached:** We did not reach any of our goals, but we learned so much and were still able to make quality recommendations. Make sure to be active with the campaign to ensure quality recommendations can be made. This, on the educational front, is more important than making conversion goals.
7. **Make constant adjustments:** We found that making minor adjustments can have a significant impact on the success of your ads. Whether it is the exact wording or the order in which you present your headlines, you can make significant improvements to the success of your ads. This is a place where we could have been better and may have given ads too much time without adjustment hoping that they would receive higher clickthrough rates over time.
8. **Ensure your ads are consistent with your business goals:** We found that some of our ads had some success but were not necessarily in line with what we wanted to accomplish. Some of our ads were good for awareness, which can be beneficial, but when the goal was to increase conversions, they were not useful in that campaign.

## **Appendix:**

### **Impact Statement:**

Big Sky Bravery is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing proactive support for active duty special operations forces. It is located at 215 Quail Run, Unit A in Bozeman Montana. They can be contacted via phone at 406-624-0066 or email Susan Ferrin, Director of Operations, at [susan@bigskybravery.org](mailto:susan@bigskybravery.org). Josh McCain is the founder and president of this honorable non-profit, he can be contacted at [josh@bigskybravery.org](mailto:josh@bigskybravery.org).

Big Sky Bravery makes a social impact by restoring the mental health of the United States elite soldiers transitioning home from deployment. This impacts the soldier, his or her family, and society as a whole. The level of trauma and stress these brave individuals face when deployed affect their ability to perform in the field and as a functioning member of the civilian world. Big Sky Bravery's decompression programs help these soldiers shift their mental focus to more constructive healthy areas, whatever that may mean to the individual. There is no other non-profit like Big Sky Bravery in the nation, much like the individuals they serve, their social impact is most likely never to be publicly seen. Testimonials are the closest proof they have to the high level of impact they have, but it is undeniable society would suffer without their honorable services.

We designed our campaigns to meet Big Sky Bravery's goals. We used powerful phrases from their website as headlines to advertise to the nation in order to stimulate new users. Our goal was to harness the emotional components within the "Silent Professionals" video and testimonials to drive donations through emotional connections. Although we were largely unsuccessful, our recommendations will help Big Sky Bravery become more successful with future online marketing efforts.

Google Ads impacted Big Sky Bravery's by displaying their mission to over 44,000 individuals across the nation. It allowed us to make informed quality recommendations for future success in online marketing efforts. We would advise Big Sky Bravery to make the recommended changes before continuing to use Google Ads. This will greatly increase the effectiveness and increase opportunities to create an effective, efficient, and affordable ad campaign.



## Definitions Reference:

**CTR:** *Click Through Rate:* The percentage of people visiting the website via an advertisement.  
(CTR= Clicks / Impressions)

**Impressions:** The amount of times an ad appears on the browsing page.

**CPC:** *Cost per Click:* Cost per every click on a given ad, (Cost/ Total Clicks)

**Bounce Rate:** the percentage of visitors who arrive on the site and leave, or “bounce”, rather than continuing to view other pages within the same site. Session duration does not have an effect on bounce rate.

**Impr. (Abs Top)%:** *Absolute Top Percent:* Measures the percent of times your ad appeared as the very first ad on the page.

**Impr. (Top)%:** *Top Percent:* Measures the percent of times your ad appeared anywhere above the organic search results.

**Keywords:** Words or phrases that are used to match your ads with terms people search. The goal is to be high quality and relevant.

**A/B Testing:** A research method by changing one variable at a time to understand how each variable effects results.

**Session:** a group of user interactions with the website that takes place within a given time from. Sessions can expire within 30 minutes, at midnight, or if a single user accesses the website from an alternate campaign.

## References:

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