

Driving Incremental Conversions with AI Max for Search

New Tactics for New Museum
Deliver Bid Results

+752% AI Max Match Traffic

+40% Ticket Sales Conversions

-19% Cost-per-Acquisition



ABOUT

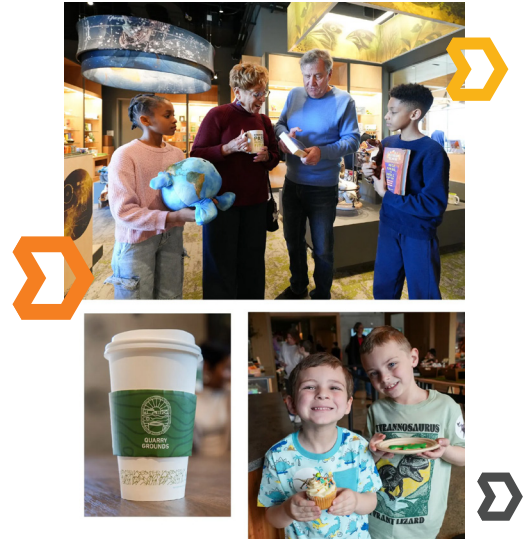
Edelman Fossil Park & Museum of Rowan University

The Edelman Fossil Park & Museum of Rowan University is a newly opened destination that blends scientific discovery, immersive storytelling, and hands-on exploration. Opened in 2025, the museum is built on an active fossil quarry where visitors can dig for real specimens and experience life as it existed 66 million years ago.

As a new institution, the museum is still building broad brand awareness. But its mission is anything but conventional. Through immersive exhibits, active research, and public engagement, the museum positions paleontology as a lens for understanding today's climate and biodiversity challenges. At its core is a clear philosophy: understanding Earth's past is essential to shaping what comes next. As the museum describes its mission, it aims to "use the past...to create future actions for good."

To learn more please visit orange142.com

That perspective shapes everything from its exhibits, such as the Hall of Extinction & Hope, to its broader role as a center for STEM education and climate awareness. It's not just a museum. It's a platform for helping visitors, especially the next generation, see how the story of extinction, survival, and adaptation continues today.



THE CHALLENGE

Drive Performance Without Increasing Costs

Edelman Fossil Park & Museum officially opened in March 2025, but demand had been building well before then. The museum partnered with Orange 142 approximately six months prior to launch to begin driving awareness, membership interest, and early ticket sales.

As a new attraction entering a competitive regional market, early search performance was driven largely by users already familiar with the brand. As the team noted, “a lot of our top performing paid search terms are branded. It’s people looking directly for the museum,” said Ryan Hallowell, Edelman’s Digital Marketing and Sales Manager.

This put a damper on growth. While branded search captured existing demand, it did little to expand reach among new audiences. At the same time, broader, non-branded queries such as “dinosaur museum,” “fossil park,” or similar discovery-based searches were more competitive and harder to scale efficiently using traditional keyword strategies.

Orange 142 needed to find a way to move beyond capturing known demand and begin identifying new, high-intent audiences, all without sacrificing efficiency or losing control over how the brand was represented in the market.

Exploring Google AI Max as a Solution

To expand beyond existing search performance, Orange 142 suggested a newer capability within Google Ads: AI Max for Search.

AI Max is an AI-driven matching and optimization feature that goes beyond traditional keyword targeting. Rather than rely solely on predefined keyword lists, it uses signals from user behavior, search intent, and landing page content to match ads to relevant queries, including ones that may not exist in the original campaign structure. Like many AI-powered tools within Google’s ecosystem, AI Max is still evolving, making it both a promising and, for many advertisers, an uncertain addition to the media mix.

To learn more please visit orange142.com

For Ryan Hallowell, that uncertainty was part of the opportunity. “Anything new and exciting, I am always open to trying. We’re never going to advance our mission if we stay stagnant,” he said.

Working together, Orange 142 and Edelman Fossil Park & Museum set out to understand three key questions:

- » Could AI-driven search matching unlock additional demand beyond traditional keywords?
- » Would AI Max improve performance without significantly increasing costs?
- » How could brand safety be preserved when introducing automation?

THE SOLUTION

A Phased Approach

Rather than applying AI Max broadly from the outset, Orange 142 opted for a more controlled, phased approach that would balance experimentation with brand safety.

Phase 1: Controlled Test Within Event Campaigns

To isolate the impact of AI Max, the team launched an initial test within event-focused campaigns. This allowed AI-driven matching to be introduced in a contained environment while closely monitoring performance.

Key setup decisions included:

- » ***Giving AI Max full flexibility, i.e., allowing Google to select landing pages and adapt ad messaging dynamically based on user intent.***
- » ***Excluding career pages to prevent low-intent traffic***
- » ***Monitoring performance at the asset level***

This structure ensured that any changes in performance could be attributed directly to AI Max.

Early results revealed an unexpected shift in behavior. While the campaigns were designed to promote events, AI Max consistently drove ticket purchases instead. As Ryan noted, “The results were surprising. We expected to see event traffic, but instead we saw a lot of ticket buyers—and those buyers were coming from non-branded searches.”

Queries such as “dinosaur museum” and “fossil park” began generating conversions, demonstrating to the team that AI Max can identify high-intent users beyond the original keyword strategy.

To learn more please visit orange142.com

Phase 2: Scaling with Guardrails

Following the success of the initial test, AI Max was expanded across all search campaigns, with an important adjustment: URL expansion and ad copy expansion were disabled.

This ensured:

- » Greater brand safety
- » Full control over the landing page experience
- » Confidence that automation would enhance—not dilute—the existing strategy

With these controls in place, the team was able to scale AI Max while maintaining oversight of how the brand was represented across campaigns. “The strategy worked. We’re reaching more qualified customers, which I think is just as important as expanding our audience,” Ryan said.

THE CHALLENGE

Incremental Demand & Conversions

Leveraging AI Max, the Orange 142 team delivered measurable performance gains in both the initial test and the scaled rollout, validating its role as both a driver of incremental demand and campaign efficiency.

Overall Performance Highlights:

- » 40% increase in conversions after scaling AI Max across all campaigns
- » 19% decrease in CPA during the initial controlled test
- » 752% growth in AI Max match traffic, indicating significant expansion beyond existing keyword reach.+

+ AI Max match traffic refers to visits generated when Google uses AI to match user searches to ads and landing pages beyond existing keyword lists.

In the initial event-focused test, AI Max drove:

- » 13% increase in impressions
- » 54% more clicks
- » 25% more conversions
- » All with +1% increase in cost

When expanded across all campaigns, AI Max continued to scale performance, delivering

- » 29% more impressions
- » 31% more clicks
- » 40% increase in conversions
- » Conversion rate improved from 13.68% to 14.59%

While total cost increased with scale (+57%), efficiency remained strong, with improved conversion rates confirming that traffic quality increased alongside volume.

To learn more please visit orange142.com

Key Insights

Campaign insights are equally important as KPIs, especially when a brand is relatively new and just beginning its advertising journey. This campaign delivered three key insights:

AI Max uncovered new, high-intent demand

Top-performing queries included non-branded searches such as “dinosaur museum” and “fossil park,” indicating that AI Max expanded reach beyond users already searching for the brand.

Growth came from outside existing keyword strategies

AI Max match behavior increased significantly, with:

- » 752% growth in match traffic
- » New conversions generated from queries not included in existing keyword lists
- » Increased landing page matches driven by content relevance

These results show that AI Max was not simply optimizing existing campaigns; it was identifying new entry points into the funnel.

Traffic quality improved alongside scale

Despite increased spend, higher conversion rates demonstrate that the additional traffic was more qualified, not just more abundant.

“AI Max for Search proved to be a powerful growth lever for Edelman Fossil Park & Museum, driving incremental conversions, expanding reach into new high-intent queries, and improving overall conversion efficiency,”



Ryan Hallowell
Sales and Marketing Manager
Edelman Fossil Park & Museum of Rowan University

About Orange 142

Orange 142 is a digital marketing and advertising company with offices across the US. We service marketers and agencies. We are part of Direct Digital Holdings, the ninth Black-owned company to go public.

We help marketers of all sizes grow their reach and revenue through data-driven media strategies. We also partner with agencies and execute campaigns on behalf of their clients.

Our team of experts deeply understands the digital landscape and the latest advertising and marketing technologies. We work closely with our clients to develop and execute custom advertising and marketing campaigns that meet specific goals.

We are committed to providing our clients with the highest service and transparency. Open communication and collaboration are essential to the success of every advertising and marketing initiative.

To learn more please visit orange142.com