

PREPARED FOR

Potomac Debate Academy

From a Pandemic Pivot to a National Debate Academy

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ACCOUNT SNAPSHOT

INDUSTRY

Education - Debate & Tutoring

BUSINESS MODEL

Online Debate Academy (National)

PLATFORM

Google Ads

WEBSITE

potomactutoring.com

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IN PAVEL'S OWN WORDS

“When the pandemic hit, which is when our relationship started, we had about 200 to 300 debaters at our debate academy. And now a few years later, we're up to 900 to 1,000 students. Our enrollment has grown 2, 3, 4 times as much as it was — and I think that is a large part to the advertising we've been doing. We've been able to find students all around the country that I don't think would have found us without BrandRocket's experience with Google Ads.”

— Pavel Sukhobok | Potomac Debate Academy

From Pavel Sukhobok's on-camera testimonial.

1. The Client

Potomac Debate Academy is a debate and academic-skills education company that specializes in providing online debate services to middle school and high school students nationwide. The academy combines competitive debate training with public speaking, critical thinking, and academic enrichment -- offering parents both an academic-enrichment program and a social-skills builder for their students.

Most of Potomac Debate Academy's classes are delivered online, which means the academy can serve students anywhere in the United States. That national-online posture became a structural advantage when the pandemic forced families to look for high-quality online enrichment -- and it has remained the academy's growth engine in the years since.

At a glance

- Category: Online debate and academic-skills education
- Student profile: Middle school and high school
- Delivery model: Live online classes, summer camps, special programs
- Reach: National (students enroll from across the United States)
- Primary contact: Pavel Sukhobok, Founder

BrandRocket has managed Potomac Debate Academy's Google Ads continuously since early 2020 -- the engagement began when the pandemic created a national surge in demand for online academic programs. Six years and counting.

2. What They Came To Us With

When the pandemic hit in early 2020, Potomac Debate Academy faced an unusual challenge for an educational services business: **demand was rising fast, and the academy needed to figure out how to reach families it had never had a way to reach before.** The interest in online debate was real -- families were searching for academic and social-skills programs their students could do from home. But scaling beyond the academy's regional starting audience meant putting ads in front of the right parents in the right cities at the right moment -- and the academy didn't have a paid-acquisition partner who could do that.

Before BrandRocket, the academy interviewed a number of paid-acquisition providers. A few were hired. None of them worked out. Either the managers weren't keeping an eye on the campaigns, they were rarely checking in, or it didn't seem like they cared. That's the operating context BrandRocket walked into in early 2020 -- and that's the bar BrandRocket needed to clear.

3. What We Built — The Measurement Foundation

The first thing BrandRocket built for Potomac Debate Academy was the measurement layer.

Most paid acquisition programs run on what feels like measurement but isn't really measurement -- they track clicks, they track form submissions, and then they hope. They cannot answer the question that actually matters: *which ads produced the students who enrolled?* Without that answer, every dollar of ad spend is a guess.

We built conversion tracking that ties paid clicks to actual student enrollment events. We built reporting that surfaces cost-per-acquired-student at the campaign level. We built the budget-allocation discipline that flows from being able to see, in real numbers, which campaigns produce paying students and which campaigns produce noise. That foundation -- which sounds basic but most accounts never have -- is what lets every other decision in the program be data-driven instead of intuition-driven.

"I think a lot of companies are just kind of blindly spending money on ads and hoping that somehow that leads to sales. But in this case, BrandRocket was able to make sure that the leads were generating sales. We could see exactly how much money we were spending, what the cost of acquisition per client was, and how to allocate our marketing budget to make sure we were getting the most bang for the buck."

— Pavel Sukhobok | Potomac Debate Academy

4. What We Built — A Cadence Of Updates And Experiments

The second thing BrandRocket built for Potomac Debate Academy is something most agencies do not actually deliver: **a steady, transparent operating cadence.**

Every month, the academy receives a video walkthrough of the account. The video shares the screen and walks Pavel through exactly what BrandRocket is seeing in the data -- which campaigns are performing, where the bottlenecks are, what changes were made in the prior period, and what changes are queued for the next one. Each video ends with a concrete set of options for the academy to choose between -- not vague "we should do more" recommendations, but specific bid-strategy moves, audience adjustments, or campaign-type experiments that can be executed in a short amount of time.

Alongside the cadence runs a constant cycle of experiments. Google Ads itself changes meaningfully every year -- Performance Max, value-based bidding, audience signals, ad formats -- and the academy's program has tested most of them. Some work. Some don't. The discipline is in trying them honestly, measuring the result, and feeding the verdict back into the budget allocation.

Most paid programs stall because nobody is paying attention. Potomac Debate Academy's program compounds because BrandRocket is.

5. What We Built — A Long-Term Operating Partnership

The third structural advantage BrandRocket has built for Potomac Debate Academy is the engagement itself: **six continuous years of management with the same team, the same operating cadence, and the same accountability.**

That's rare. Most agency relationships turn over inside three years. Internal marketing hires turn over even faster. Every turnover means a few months of lost momentum while the next person learns the account -- which campaigns are working, which keywords matter, which experiments have already been tried, which messaging resonates with the academy's parent audience. Continuity is itself a competitive advantage.

"We interviewed a number of different companies and ad managers and actually hired a few prior to BrandRocket. Unfortunately, it just didn't work out — either the managers weren't really keeping an eye on the campaigns, they were rarely checking in, or it didn't seem like they cared enough. This relationship has been going on for years and it's still going strong. Transparency is key when it comes to advertising — there's a knowledge gap — and BrandRocket has always been very transparent."

— Pavel Sukhobok | Potomac Debate Academy

6. The Six-Year Arc

Across six years of BrandRocket management, the paid program has scaled significantly -- both in budget the academy entrusts to the program and in the conversion volume the program produces. The headline outcome, in the academy's own words, is that enrollment grew from roughly 200-300 students at the start of the engagement to roughly 900-1,000 students today -- a 2x to 4x increase that the academy attributes "in large part" to the paid acquisition program.

Annual paid-acquisition volume (indexed vs. 2020 baseline)

Year	Annual Conversion Volume vs. 2020 baseline
2020 (engagement begins)	Baseline (partial year, pandemic-era ramp)
2021	Approximately 1.2x baseline
2022	Approximately 0.8x baseline (planned pullback year)
2023	Approximately 2.3x baseline
2024	Approximately 4.2x baseline (program high-water mark)
2025	Approximately 1.9x baseline

The trajectory was not linear. 2022 was a planned-down year. 2024 was the program's high-water year for conversion volume. The shape that matters is the long arc: by the program's peak year, conversion volume had grown more than 4x relative to the engagement's first partial year -- which lines up with the academy's report that student enrollment grew 2-4x over the same window.

7. What This Means For The Academy

After six years of BrandRocket management:

- The academy reports enrollment has grown from approximately 200-300 students at the start of the engagement to approximately 900-1,000 students today — a 2x to 4x lift attributed in large part to the paid acquisition program.
- Measurement is in place: every paid click is tied to enrollment outcomes, every campaign has a cost-per-acquired-student that can be evaluated, and budget moves between campaigns based on data, not intuition.
- A monthly operating cadence keeps the academy informed in detail without requiring the founder to live inside the Google Ads interface.
- Six continuous years of management means none of the institutional knowledge about which strategies work for this academy and its parent audience has been lost to turnover.

"It allows me to focus what I do best — running other parts of the business — without getting into the weeds about which specific search terms or campaigns we need to run. BrandRocket has saved me hours each week. That time I can spend on other parts of my business, or with my family."

— Pavel Sukhobok | Potomac Debate Academy

The pandemic pivot is long since complete. Potomac Debate Academy is now a national debate academy -- and the paid acquisition program that helped get it there is built to keep compounding.