

— MASTER —

GOOGLE SHOPPING

FOR THE HOLIDAYS

We all know that once the holiday season hits, there's no option but to put your head down and get through it. Now is the time to plan and adjust to make this the best holiday season yet. [RJMetrics](#) estimates 92% of holiday shoppers will go online to research or purchase gifts this season — that's a serious revenue opportunity. Lucky for you, this guide will equip you with the five best Google Shopping strategies to get your account set up before the holiday madness hits.





STEP 1: ANALYZE



Year-over-year data has shown a steady increase in Google's Shopping platform. Agencies found that, last year alone, retailers' investment in Google Shopping ads increased by 25%.

Start by analyzing Shopping data in your AdWords account from last October through February (to capture the ramp-up and slow-down of the season). Use the filter on the left-hand menu to look at your Shopping Campaigns only.

FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING AREAS AND ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

GENERAL PERFORMANCE

What were your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) last season?

- Transaction volume?
- Cost per conversion?
- Market Share?
- Return on ad spend (ROAS - "conv. value / cost" column)?

Did you meet those goals?

- Where did you fall short / Where did you succeed?

In what month/week did your impressions begin to increase?
(Helpful to set the graph to track impression growth)

In what month/week did your conversions begin to increase?

In what month/week did your return on ad spend begin to increase?

Would you consider last season a success...or not? Why?

CONVERSION RATE CHANGES

(IF YOU WEREN'T TRACKING CONVERSIONS, WE'LL TOUCH ON THAT LATER)

At what month/day/time were your conversion rates at their peak performance?

When were they at their worst performance?

What changes did you make in your account to capitalize on the high-points and correct the lows? CPC changes? Device changes? Day/time? Negative keywords? Ad copy?

BUDGET

Reflect on your most lucrative days, did you ever run out of budget?

When performance was consistently high, how did you adjust your overall budget?

COMPETITION

Did you actively ramp up your bids/budget for the holiday season?

Did you keep bids/budget the same?

What change did you notice in your [Auction Insights report](#) during peak times?

Did you lose or gain market share during those peak times? Did you lose or gain market share during low points?

Did you use AdWords promotional scheduling to turn on and off promos for things like Black Friday sales?

Did you keep track of your competitors promotion schedule?

How can you adjust your strategy to stay one step ahead of your competitors this season?

DEVICE PERFORMANCE



Did your Mobile convert well for you?

Did Tablet?

How did those devices compare to desktop?

Which device had the best return on ad spend?

Which device accounted for the highest cross-device conversions?
(Add that column)

Did you make bid adjustments for your best performing mobile, tablet, or computer campaigns?

PROMOTIONS

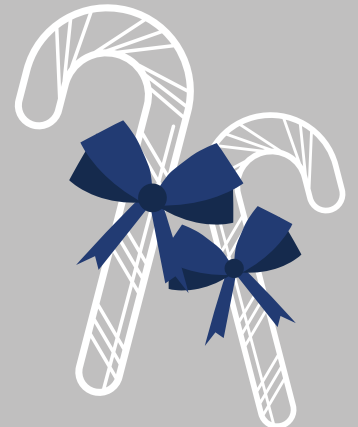
Did you run a special holiday promotion last season?

If so, how did it affect your conversion rate?

When was peak performance during your promotion?

HOLIDAY BONUS TREAT

ACCORDING TO [GOOGLE](#), 25% OF SHOPPERS SAID THEY HAD DONE SOME HOLIDAY SHOPPING BEFORE HALLOWEEN, SO IF YOU'RE WAITING UNTIL BLACK FRIDAY TO MAKE MOVES, YOU'RE A LITTLE LATE TO THIS YEAR'S HOLIDAY PARTY.





STEP 2: PREPARE



CAPITALIZE ON LAST YEAR'S MISSED OPPORTUNITIES AND USE THE DATA FROM YOUR ANALYSIS TO CONSTRUCT A PLAN OF ACTION FOR THIS SEASON. THE FOLLOWING ARE VITAL AREAS TO IMPROVE YOUR SHOPPING PERFORMANCE THAT MUST BE DIALED PRIOR TO HOLIDAY LAUNCH:

PRODUCT FEED

Get your campaigns ready by starting with the foundation — your product feed. When preparing your feed for the holidays, carefully go through your list of products (and check it twice) to ensure details are entered accurately. If you're adding new products to your feed, or prepping existing ones, be as detailed as possible when entering product descriptions and titles.

Go above and beyond and include optional information about your product. For example, use an [additional image link](#) to give users multiple images to view, or include the [availability date attribute](#), on special pre-ordered items to let users know when that product will be shipped if they were to buy it.

Brush up on [Google Shopping policies](#) well in advance to avoid potential hiccups along the way. The last thing you need is added stress due to products in your feed getting denied by Google or people trying to purchase items that are out of stock.

❄️ Gold Ball Ornament

❄️ White Silver Star Ornament

❄️ Large Blue Ornament

❄️ 3 Pack of Ornaments

❄️ Green Tree Ornament

❄️ Gold Star Ornaments

❄️ Blue Diamond Ornament

ANALYTICS & ADWORDS

Analytics and AdWords go together like turkey and gravy — they're best together. So, if you're about to head into the holiday season without [Google Analytics](#), stop what you are doing and create an account...now! A successful season requires an understanding of each platform, what they bring to the table, and how to use them together to maximize campaign performance (and flavor).



Analytics strictly reports on website performance, while AdWords is a marketing tool meant to send traffic to your site. Your website is what sells users a product, so if you're trying to utilize Google Shopping to sell a specific product, you need to shift that mindset and think about using Shopping to drive traffic to your site and get potential buyers in front of all your products. About 70% of the time, users end up buying a different product from the shopping ad they initially clicked on. Your ads are just a piece of the puzzle in guiding potential customers to purchase, and analytics shows you how those pieces fit together. From there, you can analyze the data in Analytics to see the full picture of how potential buyers are interacting with your site and products. Use that data and analysis to adjust your strategy.

TRACKING



Santa can't fly his sleigh blindfolded, nor can you have a successful holiday season without conversion and revenue tracking. Setup tracking in both Analytics and AdWords so you can accurately monitor performance across a full spectrum. The deeper into the season, the easier it will be to grow your campaigns by making gradual adjustments based on conversion data.

To set up revenue tracking in Analytics, go to "Admin" then "Ecommerce Settings" and [enable eCommerce tracking](#). Double-check that your Analytics is linked up to your AdWords account for an accurate overview of data coming from each platform. Setup your Merchant Center and input the correct [tracking parameters](#) at the end of your URLs. Create and flesh out your product feed, export your data, and submit it to Google for approval before it's ultimately uploaded to the Merchant Center you set up. The last step to locking your campaigns down for the holidays is to connect your Merchant Center to your AdWords account to see all of the working parts come together.

MERCHANT PROMOTIONS

Promotions are a great way to increase conversions during the holiday season. UPS found that 93% of shoppers take action when they see free shipping, so a holiday promotion might just be the greatest gift of all to you and your audience. List your unbeatable offer directly on your Shopping ads with Merchant Promotions and create a plan like you would for your other campaigns. Include specific dates of when to start and stop your promotion. Enter the season knowing what you're promoting and what goals the promotion will help achieve.



**93% OF SHOPPERS
TAKE ACTION WHEN THEY
SEE FREE SHIPPING**

STEP 3: ACCOUNT STRUCTURE

The trick to having control over your Shopping campaigns is account structure. Break your Shopping campaigns out to create a granular structure to harness greater opportunities to influence your performance. It's easy to find the things that aren't working — capitalizing on the things that are working is much harder. To do that, you need an organized campaign and clean data to easily decipher what is and isn't working.

Despite the number of products you have, take the time to break each product into its very own ad group. Creating this much detail in the structure of your campaigns will isolate your data so you can efficiently gather a clear reading of performance. Breaking out each product can be a very time-consuming task, so plan accordingly.

If your jaw just dropped while scanning the thousands of products in your data feed, our Google Shopping experts are here to help get your campaign structure locked in for this holiday season. [Schedule a free consultation today!](#)

SKATE CAMPAIGN

**AD GROUP
GOLD SKATES**



**AD GROUP
BLUE SKATES**



**AD GROUP
MULTI SKATES**





STEP 4: REMARKETING & SUPPORTING CAMPAIGNS



A HOLIDAY SHOPPER'S PATH TO PURCHASE CAN SPAN OVER A BROAD TIMELINE. REMARKETING AND SUPPORTING CAMPAIGNS ARE A GREAT WAY TO KEEP YOUR BRAND FRESH IN THE MIND OF POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS.

SHOPPING REMARKETING LISTS

A couple years ago, Google surprised Shopping advertisers with the gift of Shopping remarketing lists and they've since been a game-changer. These lists act like your typical remarketing lists for Search ads (RLSA), allowing you to show Shopping ads to users who have already visited your website. In your Shopping campaign, create custom remarketing lists at the campaign and/or ad group level to keep an eye on past visitors and keep them coming back until they're ready to buy.

BRANDED SEARCH CAMPAIGNS

A great way to balance out your Shopping strategy and further your reach is with Branded Search campaigns. A 2017 [Shopping data study](#) found that "businesses operating in verticals with a high occurrence of branded searches can benefit in the form of significantly higher conversion rates." Creating a branded campaign further reinforces your company's name and image to continue helping visitors along their path-to-purchase. A branded campaign further reinforces your company's name and image to continue helping visitors along their path-to-purchase.

YOUTUBE VIDEO CAMPAIGNS

A YouTube video campaign is an affordable way to get more eyeballs on your company and products. Take advantage of YouTube Shopping cards to showcase products related to the video being shown while pertaining to the viewer's interest. The common bidding method, cost-per-view (CPV), only charges you when a viewer watches 30 seconds of your video (or the the entire video if shorter than 30 seconds), so it's a clever way to still get your brand name out there if someone only watches part of your video ad.



STEP 5: CREATE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

When Grandpa drinks too much eggnog and brings up politics at the dinner table, you need a game-plan to calm the storm — same goes for your Shopping campaigns. The holidays are unpredictable, be prepared with these helpful tips to get your campaigns back on track.

☐ HAVE A LIST OF BACKUP PROMOTIONS

What if you're already halfway through the holiday season and you're nowhere near hitting the goal you've set for your campaigns? Keeping some unbeatable promotions in your back pocket could be just what you need to rev up performance and come out of the holiday season strong.

☐ CREATE AN EMERGENCY CONTACT SHEET

Put together a list of the key contacts responsible for important aspects of your company's marketing efforts. If your website is down, who do you call? If you're working with an AdWords management company and you have an emergency request, who's in charge?

☐ PLAN AHEAD FOR OUT-OF-STOCK INVENTORY

Set low-stock thresholds for popular items to be automatically reordered. That way, if items sell out, you'll already be good to keep going.

WRAPPING IT UP

Now you know what it takes to get your campaigns holiday ready, so do yourself and your business a favor and start the process early. This year, you can rest easy knowing your campaigns are going to successfully blast through the season – and you won't even break a sweat.



**RUN-THROUGH THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST TO RECAP THE KEY TAKEAWAYS
NEEDED TO TRULY MASTER GOOGLE SHOPPING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

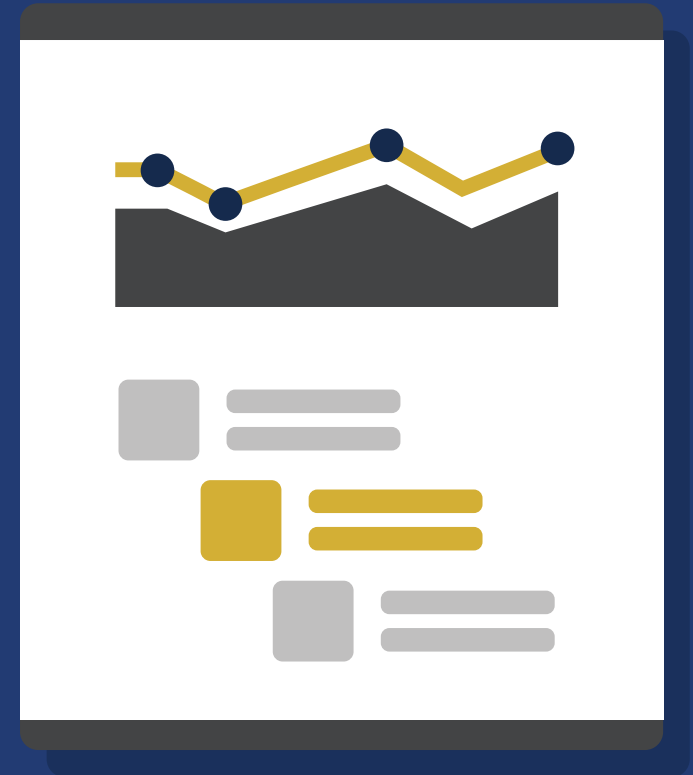
STEP 1: ANALYZE



- ☐ In your AdWords account, analyze Shopping data from last October through February (to capture the ramp-up and slow-down of the season).
- ☐ Focus on analyzing your general performance, conversion rate changes, competition, budget, and device performance.
- ☐ Identify your KPIs and goals from last season. Reflect on how you did or didn't meet those goals. Ask yourself, what strategies can you implement this year to generate a different outcome.

STEP 2: PREPARE

- ☐ Use the data from your analysis to construct a successful plan of action for this season.
- ☐ In your product feed, be as detailed as possible when entering product descriptions and titles.
- ☐ Analytics reports on website performance, and AdWords is a marketing tool for sending traffic to your website. Understand that difference between two platforms and use them together to influence and execute your Shopping strategy.
- ☐ Set up revenue tracking in Analytics, link Analytics to AdWords, and submit your data feed to Google for approval before the holiday season commences.
- ☐ Run Merchant Promotions to increase conversion rates.



STEP 3: STRUCTURE

- ☐ Break your Shopping campaigns out to create a granular structure and harness greater opportunities that influence your performance.
- ☐ Although time consuming, make the time to break each product into its very own ad group. This will isolate your data so you can efficiently gather a clear reading of performance.

STEP 4: REMARKETING & SUPPORTING CAMPAIGNS

- ☐ Create custom remarketing lists in your Shopping campaigns to stay relevant to past visitors and keep them coming back until they're ready to buy.
- ☐ Run a branded Search campaign to boost your company's name and image while helping visitors along their path-to-purchase.
- ☐ For an affordable, yet effective, strategy to create a buzz around your brand, implement a YouTube video campaign.

STEP 5: CREATE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

- ☐ Have a list of backup promotions to rev up performance in case you're not quite hitting your goal.
- ☐ Create an emergency contact sheet to let your team know who to call in case something malfunctions.
- ☐ Plan ahead for out-of-stock inventory by setting low-stock thresholds for popular items to be automatically reordered.

The holidays will be here before you know it, so if you're in need of little helpers this year, schedule a free review with our Google Shopping experts to ensure you're campaigns are ready to rock the holidays.

SCHEDULE YOUR FREE REVIEW



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