IKEA doubles sales and drives store visits with Shopping ads on Google

IKEA today is a popular and leading choice for well-designed, functional home furnishings at accessible prices in the UK and beyond. They drove 884 million visits to 375 stores worldwide in 2015 alone. Parallel to their impressive store growth, website visits nearly doubled since 2012.

“We aren’t historically a large online advertiser, but wanted to expand our digital footprint and understand its impact on offline behaviour.”
— Tania Douglas, IKEA Country Media Manager

The retailer teamed with digital performance-marketing agency iProspect UK and Google. “To extend their digital presence, IKEA wanted to increase online conversions while maintaining an efficient return on ad spend (ROAS) across all products,” says Kasia Zieba, iProspect Head of Search UK. In addition, they hoped to lower management time and gain more control over online performance.

Optimised product feed, granular campaign structure, eCPC bidding

To start, the teams came together and developed an action plan for improving product data quality and campaign management. Google took the following steps:

- Audited campaigns to recommend a more granular, effective structure based on product type, which allowed increased control over products and bids
- Optimised product data, including product categorisation and title structure tests, to significantly improve data quality and drive search relevance
- Created dynamic custom labels based on ROAS goals to help iProspect bid more effectively
- Added reporting capabilities at the product level to help IKEA assess performance clearly and accurately for making better strategic decisions
- Enabled Smart Bidding strategy enhanced cost-per-click (eCPC) across all campaigns to automate for query-level bid adjustments based on the likelihood of clicks to convert.

“Together, these steps helped to improve IKEA’s online performance significantly”, Kasia Zieba says.

“They got good results once they prioritised product data quality, which is a very daunting task.”
— Kasia Zieba, iProspect Head of Search UK
Much higher visibility
Due to the improvement in product data quality, online visibility greatly increased. Impressions, clicks, and impression share all rose—by 264, 182, and 117 percent, respectively. ROAS remained efficient, while CPC dipped 31 percent. Total online and offline conversions rose and online sales doubled, driven primarily by iProspect's effective bid management through the implementation of custom labels and the new campaign structure.

IKEA also noticed significant offline results as they began attributing store visits to their online efforts. In-store visits rose 232% when they took action to increase their mobile presence. By boosting their mobile bid multipliers, they were able to appear in top results on mobile devices to capture more impressions and drive foot traffic to stores.

New insights with attribution
In June 2015, Google provided DoubleClick Search (DS) training to both IKEA and iProspect. Thanks to this training, insights from the purchase detail report—which helps to identify products that generate high basket values—proved extremely useful to IKEA. The retailer could see, for instance, which products were clicked and bought, and which were clicked and not bought, but led to purchases of other products instead. Such insights prompted the retailer to shift from their old bid management tool to DS.

Thanks to the key tactics implemented by Google and iProspect, IKEA has shifted from focusing only on ROAS to accelerating online sales and evaluating the impact of online efforts to drive offline traffic and purchases. “We were surprised and pleased to find that several relatively inexpensive products online actually drove cross-selling of higher-end products”, said Tania Douglas.

“Our new insights into online and offline attribution pave the way to future conversations on expanding our digital strategy and promoting local inventory through online channels.”
— Tania Douglas, IKEA Country Media Manager