

Online Sales

A complete guide to grow online sales and amplify your ecommerce experience

Stand out this season with a little help from Google

Learn how with our latest Ads innovations



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As we look ahead to the second half of 2020, we know this holiday season will be unlike any other.

How people shop has changed, permanently. COVID-19 has fundamentally changed shopper behavior as consumers increasingly engage with brands in an online-first world. People are seeking safer, more convenient, and digitized ways of shopping for the holidays – shoppers who normally head in-store for Black Friday will stay home, browse for gift ideas online, and choose curbside pick up more than they did in previous seasons. And our research shows that when people do shop in stores, they'll plan ahead and research online first.

This shift means it will be vital for retailers to be discoverable online. As businesses rush to meet this exponential increase in demand, differentiation with best-in-class online marketing and ecommerce experiences is no longer optional, it's essential. If your business hasn't yet made this digital transformation, the time is now because this season will be about who can adjust and respond most quickly.

Automation will be key to a successful holiday strategy. Traditional periods of peak demand, like back to school and Black Friday, will be more unpredictable this year as online and in-store traffic continue to fluctuate. Businesses that have grown during COVID-19 used automation to understand what their customers need in real-time and delivered better, more relevant experiences that drove performance. Investing in these capabilities can future-proof your business, allowing you to adapt more effectively to a fluid environment.

73%

of US shoppers say they **will shop online more for the holidays** than they did in previous seasons.[1]

46%

of US shoppers say they're **discovering new brands** more than prior to COVID-19.[2]

70%

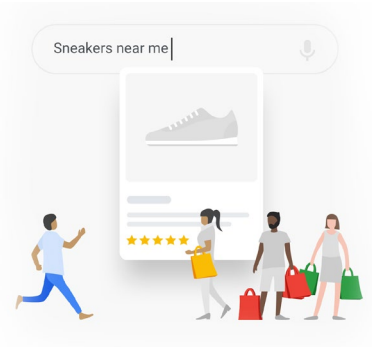
of global consumers **plan to shop for seasonal periods earlier** to avoid crowds.[3]

67%

of US shoppers **will confirm online that an item is in stock** before going to buy it.[4]

Google has invested in **new products** to drive online sales and amplify your ecommerce experience

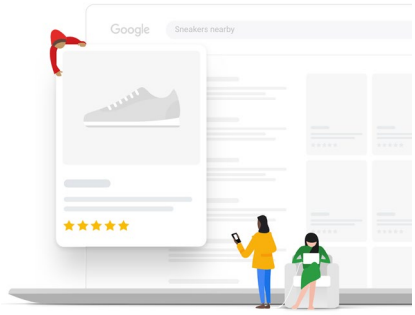
Our three latest product innovations will help you connect with shoppers and achieve **three key goals:**



SHOPPING

Optimize your campaigns to acquire new customers

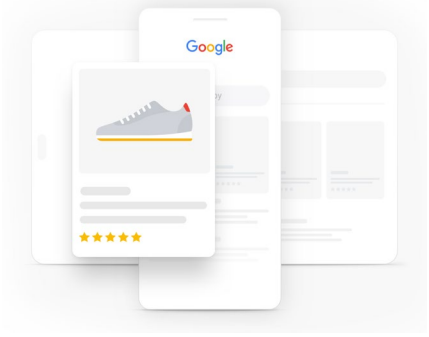
Drive online sales specifically from new customers with automated bidding through the new customer acquisition value feature in Smart Shopping campaigns.



SEARCH

Show shoppers more relevant ads

Dynamically highlight time-sensitive sales and promotions in your responsive search ads.



SEARCH

Help shoppers take action faster with visuals of your products

Engage more potential customers by complementing your Search ads with rich, relevant visuals of your products and services. Reach out to your Google account team for more details about the image extensions beta.

Google can help you accelerate what matters and guide your digital transformation. Turn your consumer signals into immediate action in a dynamic market so you're ready for what comes next.

The time for digital transformation is now. We want to invest alongside you to maximize short-term growth as you build for sustained success.

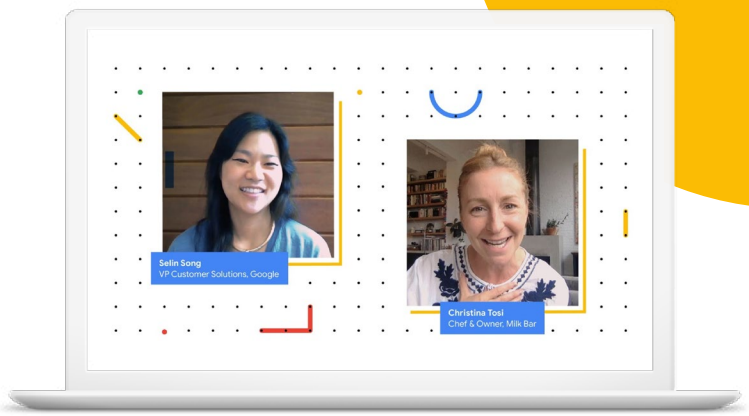
Learn more about these product announcements and read on for more of the latest insights, tools, and resources.

Find inspiration from best-in-class retailers and new consumer research

Use automation to meet shopper demand in real-time

The Update: How Milk Bar's digital transformation has led to sustainable growth

Christina Tosi, chef and owner of Milk Bar, shares how she pivoted her marketing strategy to invest in ecommerce and capture increased consumer demand for tasty treat delivery, building long term growth for her business.



Key takeaways

Find that human connection with customers.

The first thing that Milk Bar did before pivoting its strategy was to understand how its customers were feeling, connecting, and celebrating during social distancing. Milk Bar identified the key moments and celebration milestones where it could show up in people's lives.

Adapt your marketing to meet these new needs.

Milk Bar became the conduit to help people connect and celebrate each other online. The brand made sure its ads were showcasing the unique and personal value that its products bring to each consumer in every special moment.

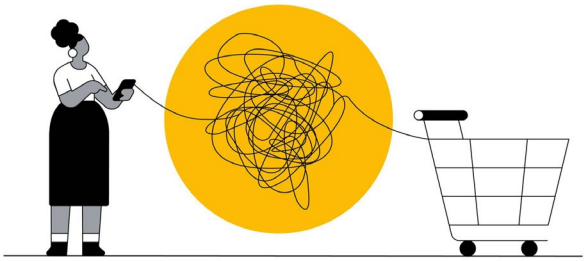
Invest in your ecommerce experience to drive sustainable growth.

Milk Bar initially pivoted its marketing strategy by investing in ecommerce to capture the increased demand around COVID-19, but the channel is now at the heart of their strategy and a long-term growth driver for the business. As consumer behavior continues to shift, Milk Bar keeps improving, pivoting, and customizing its digital strategy to reach more customers and provide a frictionless shopping experience.

WATCH

How people decide what to buy lies in the 'messy middle' of the purchase journey

The Google consumer insights team shares its latest research on the buyer decision process. The team applied behavioral sciences principles to decode how consumers decide what to buy and what happens in the "messy middle" between the trigger and the decision to make a purchase. What they found is that people loop through two mental modes of exploration and evaluation, repeating the cycle until they make a purchase decision. Cognitive biases shape shoppers' behavior and influence why they choose one product over another.



Key takeaways

- **Ensure brand presence** so your product or service is strategically top of mind while customers explore.
- **Employ behavioral sciences principles** –such as the *power of now or scarcity bias*– in a smart and responsible way to win and defend customer preference in the messy middle of the purchase decision process.
- **Close the gap between trigger and purchase** so your customers spend less time exploring other brands. Make sure cross-functional teams within your organization are working together to avoid performance silos that are likely to leave gaps in the messy middle.

READ

How the pandemic may affect holiday shopping

To help retailers start planning for this critical holiday season, we surveyed global consumers to better understand how COVID-19 will impact their holiday shopping.



Key takeaways

- **They'll discover and buy online even more.**
  Almost **75%** of US shoppers have said that they will both shop online more for the holidays than they did in previous seasons, and browse for gift ideas online and not in-store.[5] Now more than ever, it is vital for retailers to be discoverable online.
- **When they do shop in-store, they'll plan ahead and research online first.**
  Availability and local convenience has become a priority, as **67%** of US shoppers said they will confirm online that an item is in stock before going to buy it.[6] Make sure your information is up to date and easily accessible so shoppers know they can buy from you.
- **They'll seek safer, digitally-enabled ways of shopping in-store.**
  Safety is more important than ever –**54%** of US shoppers said they will choose to shop at stores that offer contactless shopping. As online and in-store traffic may fluctuate, make sure your digital strategies remain flexible and agile to dynamically shift to meet customers where and when they feel comfortable.

READ

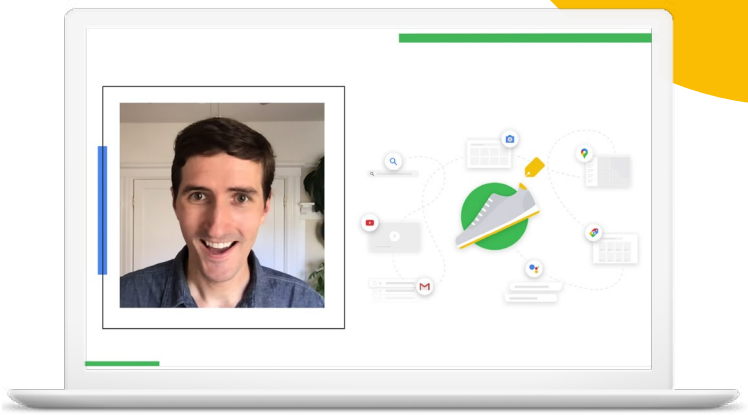
Check out the Online Sales section on The Advertising Solutions Center for more actionable content and product innovations designed to help you turn traffic into sales.

Make the most of your ads investment

Our newest deep dives with product experts

New product deep-dive: Smart Shopping campaigns*

In this session, Google product experts reveal new features with best practices and advice that will take your Smart Shopping campaigns to the next level. They explain how to set up and customize your Smart Shopping campaigns so you can deliver on your marketing goals.



Key takeaways

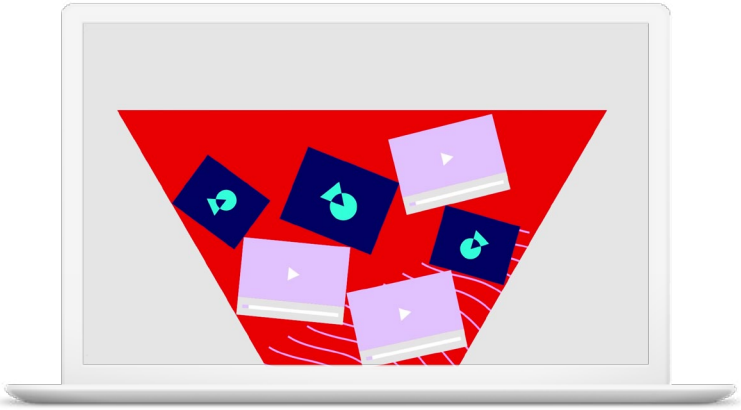
- Smart Shopping campaigns are your one-stop shop to help you drive your online and offline goals, like new customer acquisition.
- Get the most relevant reach with new formats to showcase your products across Google's sites and networks.
- Smart Shopping campaigns make it easy for you to promote your products and drive the most sales for your budget.

WATCH

**In Europe, Smart Shopping campaigns can be used with any Comparison Shopping Service (CSS) you work with. The ads will show on general search results pages and on any other surfaces the CSS has opted in to.*

Driving online sales with YouTube and Discovery ads

In this session, Google product experts discuss how launching creatives and campaigns that drive performance on both YouTube and Discovery is now simpler than ever and helps you reach more potential customers.



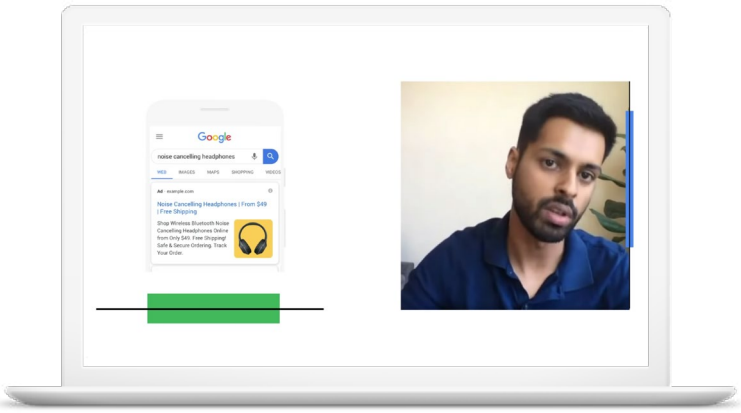
Key takeaways

- YouTube, TrueView for action, and Discovery ads can help you reach customers across every touch point in the consumer shopping journey.
- Discovery ads and YouTube for action help grow online sales for your business by reaching new audiences with ads and bids optimized for your lower funnel goals.
- With Video Builder, you can make a campaign-ready video ad in less than 15 minutes using messages, logos and images you already have.

WATCH

New product deep-dive: Image extensions on Search

In this session, Google product experts give a first look at the image extension and dynamic image extension betas for Search ads. Learn how applying relevant visuals of your products and services to your ads can help you engage more potential customers and grow online sales.



Key takeaways

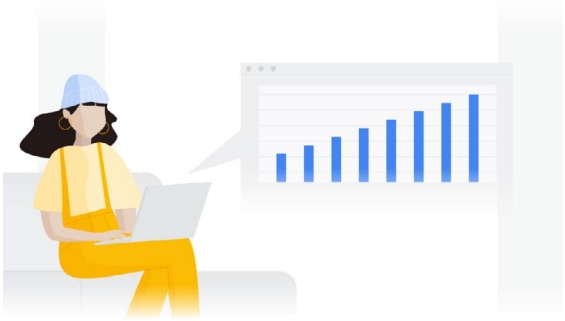
- Image extensions complement your Search ads and drive measurable results by offering people a sneak peak at what they can expect from your business.
- Upload rich, relevant visuals of your products and services by using image extensions, or automatically curate images from your ad's landing page with dynamic image extensions.
- Early results show that advertisers can see up to a 10% increase in CTR when image extensions show with their mobile Search ads in absolute top positioning.

WATCH

Improve your skills with these new digital education trainings for online sales.

Improve online sales with Google Ads through this Skillshop learning path

An introduction to the tools and strategies you can use to improve online sales for your business across Google's suite of advertising solutions. This Skillshop learning path will be most valuable for practitioners with less than one year of Google Ads experience.



Key takeaways

- Maximize performance by delivering the right message, increasing your efficiency in bidding and mastering creative fundamentals.
- Connect with your audience, master conversion data, and promote your brand to reach your goals.
- Learn how to use conversion tracking to measure your goals and ensure you stay on top of your business's results.

EXPLORE

Take your skills to the next level with Google Academy on Air: Drive Online Sales

Learn more about the ecommerce landscape and Google's unique solutions for driving online sales in this Google Academy on Air session. With a focus on the latest shopping products, you'll gain a better understanding of how to connect with customers, approach new audiences, and shift your strategy from offline to online. This session will be most valuable for practitioners with at least one year of Google Ads experience.



Key takeaways

After joining this advanced one-hour session, you'll be able to:

- Assign value to each user touchpoint and measure online sales.
- Show the right message for your current business priorities and reach more customers efficiently.
- Use automation to drive ecommerce goals and adapt to market changes in real-time.
- Apply Search and Smart Shopping campaigns best practices to help you reach your business goals.

LEARN

Learn how other brands are driving online sales

eSalon is a direct-to-consumer custom hair color company. As people were staying at home during COVID-19, eSalon experienced a surge in demand and responded by creating a comprehensive Search and Display strategy that uses automated bidding. With this approach in place, eSalon was able to automatically meet the increased demand while beating their CPA goals using Target CPA. This led to **+600%** sales growth compared to the prior two-week period. eSalon has scaled automation across Shopping, Discovery, and YouTube to continue capturing demand in real time across platforms.

+600% increase in sales

William Painter, a direct to consumer sunglasses brand, was struggling to grow globally despite its local dedicated fan base. The company was finding it hard to sell sunglasses online because shoppers couldn't try them on. To showcase their products on a global scale, for a purchase that is typically made in person, William Painter built their brand story by using YouTube's TrueView for Action ads. Testing several approaches, they landed on humor as the best way to connect with their customers, and their videos went viral. Website visitors increased **+1,500%**, with **+1,300%** more conversions, increasing their sales revenue **13x** year over year in just three months.

+1,500% increase in website visitors

+1,300% increase in conversions

Huda Beauty, a global beauty brand, saw demand shift from makeup (historically their most popular category) to skin-care. To adapt, they reallocated search budgets to bolster skin-care ad groups. Ad copy was also tailored to focus on self-care, directing audiences to a new, sitewide "Self-Love Sale." Through this tailored ad messaging and responding to the increase in skin-care demand, Huda Beauty saw a **+75%** increase in search traffic and **+262%** sales revenue increase from Search Ads when compared to the prior period.

+75% increase in search traffic

+262% increase in sales revenue

What to do next?

01

Ensure your ecommerce experience is frictionless

Use Google's free tools, like Shopping Insights and Grow My Store, to understand how demand is shifting and make sure your ecommerce site is ready to capture increased traffic in a fast and frictionless way.

02

Enable the right digital advertising fundamentals to react dynamically

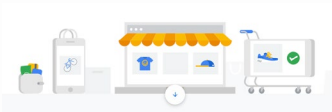
Ensure your business is set up for success prior to the holiday season by seeing how your account ranks against ecommerce best practices. To review Online Sales best practices in more depth, schedule a call with your Google team.

03

Join us for Think Retail on Air September 1-3

A four-part virtual event focused on preparing your business for the holidays. Tune in live to hear experts and product specialists share consumer insights, trends, and product strategies to help you stand out this holiday season.

Use these key tools to make the most of your Google Ads investment



User Experience

Grow My Store

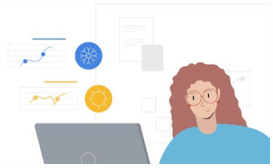
Boost your business with a quick and easy evaluation of your retail website. Explore rising industry trends, compare your business to other retailers, and get a customized report with recommendations to improve your website.



Insights and Tools

Holiday Toolkit

Last year, 58% of holiday purchases occurred online.[7] As the COVID-19 pandemic shifts consumer spending further, this year presents opportunities for retailers to reimagine their digital role. Use this toolkit to plan ahead with certainty with the best of Google's insights and tools.



Best Practices

Holiday Readiness Checklist

Use this holiday readiness checklist to evaluate your business across three best practices – automation, feed health, and budget headroom – to ensure your business is set up for success.

Sources

1. Google-commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, U.S., ~n=745 18+ online consumers who plan to shop for the holidays, June 25, 2020–June 28, 2020.

2. Google-commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, U.S., ~n=745 18+ online consumers who plan to shop for the holidays, June 25, 2020–June 28, 2020.

3. Google-commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, U.S., ~n=745 18+ online consumers who plan to shop for the holidays, June 25, 2020–June 28, 2020.

4. Google-commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, U.S., ~n=745 18+ online consumers who plan to shop for the holidays, June 25, 2020–June 28, 2020.

5. Google commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 Tracker, US n=736 consumers who plan to shop for the holiday season 18+. June 11-14, 2020.

6. Google commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 Tracker, US n=736 consumers who plan to shop for the holiday season 18+. June 11-14, 2020.

7. Google/Ipsos, U.S., Omnichannel Holiday Study, online survey, n=8,186, holiday purchases, online Americans 18+ who shopped for the holidays in the past two days, Nov. 2019–Jan. 2020.