Google Best Practices

Winning the Second Chance

Reaching High-Value Customers with Remarketing Lists For Search Ads

Introduction

The Internet gives us more to look at every day: more information, more offers, more options. That's especially true in commerce, where 49% of customers now visit 2 to 4 sites before before they decide to buy.[1] It's no surprise, then, that 96% of shoppers won't make a purchase on their first visit to a site.[2]

So the question today is not just "How do I get shoppers to visit my site?" but "How do I bring them back when they're ready to buy?" Remarketing lists for search ads (RLSA) can help answer that question.

RLSA is a booster engine for search ads: it helps put your great ads in front of highly qualified customers who have already shown interest in your business or your products. In this paper, we'll look at how remarketing lists can help you build relationships with those customers and win their business.

Overview of RLSA Best Practices

Here's a quick preview of the RLSA best practices we cover in this paper.

Set Up Smart

☐ **1** Tag your entire desktop and mobile site.

Why: *Tags capture the customer insights that help you define your RLSA list.*

Segment Your Prospects

☐ **2** Focus your list on general visitors, recent converters and shopping cart abandoners.

Why*: Past visitors are more likely to convert than those who've never visited.*

Bid for Success

☐ **3** Raise your bids by 100% or more to compete for top ad slots.

Why: *RLSA customers are more likely to convert; it's worth bidding more to reach the top ad slots for them.*

☐ **4** Target broader keywords and match types in your RLSA campaigns.

Why: *Broader targeting can be effective since RLSA traffic is usually more qualified.*

Set Up Smart

Better remarketing begins with tagging your site to gather customer insights.

Key Takeaway

• **Tag your entire desktop and mobile site**

The more you know about your site visitors, the more effective your remarketing will be. Tags are tiny bits of code that help you learn more about your visitors and what they want.

One classic bottleneck with tags is technical: it takes time for a webmaster or IT team to add and edit site tags, delaying fast-moving marketing campaigns. The solution to this problem is container tags. A container tag is a master tag that your webmaster can add across your entire site just one time. From then on, you can then add new site tags, or adjust existing tags, all through the container tag.

The container tag itself can be managed through an easy-to-use tag management solution like Google Tag Manager. No need to bother your webmaster or touch the code on your site again.

To get started, create the container tag and place its snippet of code in the global header or footer of your website.

Next, set up your remarketing tag, and use the container tag to place it on every page of your site. That will show you how customers interact with your site, so you can create remarketing lists based on their activity. For instance, you might build remarketing lists for everyone who visited your pages for digital cameras, or for coffee makers, or for men's extra-wide dress shoes.

Segment Your Prospects

Once your site is tagged, you can define remarketing lists that really work. You want to cleanly separate new visitors from returning ones, and then create different lists based on each customer's journey.

Key Takeaway

• **Focus your list on general visitors, recent converters and shopping cart abandoners.**

Someone who has visited or converted on your site, or who put items in a shopping cart but then abandoned it, is more likely to convert in the future than someone who has never been to your site at all.

People like these can be your best prospects, so your goal is to build relevant remarketing lists that target them.

Each remarketing list needs a <u>minimum of 1000 cookies</u> before you can start tailoring your search ads and bids. Depending on your site traffic, it may take a few hours or a few weeks to generate those 1000 cookies.

Here are three of the most popular types of RLSA lists, moving from the largest and broadest to the most precisely targeted.

TIP:
Here's how to start building your list: Under the Shared Library link in your AdWords navigation bar, click on Audience and then create a new remarketing list. Choose the people who you want to add to your list by defining the rules based on specific landing pages.

1 **General site visitors.** These people have visited any page of your site, even just one page. This is the simplest starting point for remarketing lists: people who've indicated any kind of interest in your brand by visiting your site.

• **Your goal:** Increase the frequency and quality of engagement with past visitors.
• **How to do it:** With most RLSA set-ups, the <u>"all visitors" list</u> is created automatically. You'll see it in the Audiences section of the Shared Library.

CASE STUDY: Clarks

Footwear retailer Clarks saw RLSA as the perfect way to optimize search campaigns based on the behavior of website users. Clarks put the remarketing tag on every page of their website and created lists based on visitors' site interactions. Result: Clarks saw an impressive conversion rate of 4.5% for RLSA lists, compared to 0.7% for new visitors. "For every dollar we spend, we've got six back. We've had outstanding results," says John Ashton, Head of Multi-Channel Retail.

Clarks.
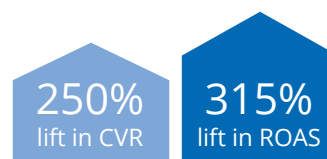
250% lift in CVR

315% lift in ROAS

2 **Shopping cart or lead form abandoners.** These people added products to a shopping cart but didn't complete the purchase. (Or if it applies to your business, they began to fill out a lead form but didn't submit it.) We call these people "abandoners."

- **Your goal:** Bring back these "almost-customers" to your website to complete their purchase. (Note: This list is usually much smaller than the "all site visitors list," so it works best for bigger advertisers with a lot of site traffic.)
- **How to do it:** A custom combination list is the best way to approach this. Start by creating a remarketing list of people who have added items to a shopping cart, and then exclude anyone who actually converted. That leaves you with a list of abandoners. (The same applies with lead forms: list those who have begun filling out a form, then exclude those who actually submitted.)

3 **Recent converters.** These people went all the way through the funnel and bought something from you.

- **Your goal:** Up-sell or cross-sell to existing customers.
- **How to do it:** Create a remarketing list for people who have reached your purchase confirmation page. Use a 180-day lookback window to reach recent buyers who'll still have you at the top of their minds.

Here are two examples of cross-selling in action:

Acme Photo sells a variety of digital cameras, from inexpensive point-and-shoots to high-end professional models. For people who buy cameras costing $200 or more, they set up an RLSA campaign cross-selling camera bags and tripods. For cameras costing $2000 or more, they set up a separate cross-sell campaign for pro lighting kits.

The Acme Bank is a successful regional bank with 200,000 customers. For those customers who have signed in recently, they created dedicated remarketing lists promoting the bank's great mortgage rates, home equity loans, and credit cards. These ads reach an audience that already trusts the bank with their money, making them higher-value prospects for the bank's other services.

There are many other possible RLSA groupings, but these three have proven popular with most remarketing users.

So, now you're ready to set up your remarketing lists. You'll have to choose one of two settings when adding a remarketing list to an ad group: "Bid Only" or "Target and Bid."

Bid Only lets you use your list in an existing ad group, where you can apply a bid adjustment to modify bids for your remarketing list members.

Target and Bid allows you to set up a separate ad group that targets only your remarketing list members. That lets you create specific messages and bids for the list.

There are pros and cons to each approach:

	Pros	Cons	Best for advertisers who…
Bid Only	• Preserve existing campaign settings, keywords and ad copy • Increase bids for specified audiences	• Doesn't allow you to differentiate the message	• Want to bid differently for remarketing lists, but not change the message easily (without having to create a separate campaign)
Target and Bid	• Broaden keywords, which may allow you to reach the user more frequently • Adjust the bid and message for your audience	• Requires that you set up and maintain a separate ad group, potentially duplicating any existing campaign	• Create separate RLSA-only ad groups to target broader keywords or offer a different message

How many campaigns should you build, and how high should you bid? Trust your ROI: it will tell you which bids and which new campaigns are worth it.

Example:
Acme Fitness offers both free trial and paid gym memberships. They'd like to have separate ads and landing pages for free trial users and for paid members. A duplicate RLSA campaign for free trial members lets them keep the groups separate and speak directly to each one.

Bid for Success

It's clear that remarketing lists tend to drive stronger conversion rates. But the list is just the start: you still have to make sure your ads are seen by the people on the list.

The bid modifier is a good way to boost your chances of being seen. You can use it to bid more aggressively for your high-value audiences on search.

Key Takeaways
• **Raise your bids by 100% or even more to compete for top ad slots**
• **Target broader keywords and match types in your RLSA campaigns**

Your hottest leads are the people who've shown strong interest in your brand or have gone deep into your conversion funnel — your recent converters and shopping cart abandoners.

Don't be shy about bid adjustments. For these strong leads, set an aggressive bid modification. Target positions one and two on the search engine results page to give your ads the best chance of being seen. Start by adding a bid modifier of +100%, then adjust up or down to compete for the top ad slots and optimize from there.

When two remarketing lists apply in the same ad group, the list with the highest bid modifier will win out. So use lower bid modifiers for your more general remarketing lists and apply higher modified bids for your very best prospects. Your list, from lowest value to highest, might look something like this:

Increasing Value →

General site visitors	Abandoned a shopping cart	Converted recently
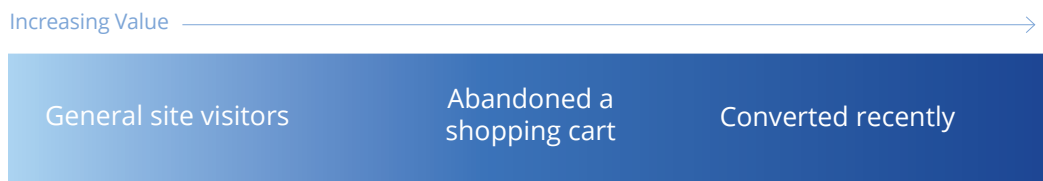
CASE STUDY: CruisesOnly

Tailored bids and ads were a game changer for CruisesOnly, a premier cruise brand of World Travel Holdings (WTH). Through its RLSA campaigns, WTH learned which cruises were of most interest to particular customers. Then they created campaigns and shared ad text with sales messages tailored to those customers. WTH also prioritized these customers with increased bids, which helped raise their ads to the top of the results page. This kept the company top-of-mind for customers, and ultimately helped close sales.

"Results were immediate and powerful," says Willie Fernandez, WTH's Vice President of Marketing. "RLSA campaigns converted better than our original campaigns as a whole. We saw a 145% increase in CTR versus our original campaigns, a 315% higher conversion rate from our audience list, and a 250% higher return on ad spend (ROAS)".

250% lift in ROAS

315% lift in CVR
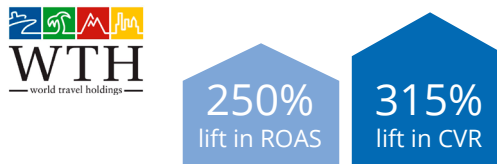
Target broader keywords and match types in your RLSA campaigns

Since remarketing reaches higher-intent customers, broader keywords and match types have a better chance to perform well with them. This can expand the reach and impact of your search campaigns.

For example, shoes might be too broad a keyword for success with a regular campaign; perhaps it's too vague or the bids are too high to drive a positive ROI. But if the searcher has visited your store and abandoned a shopping cart with running shoes in it, then a high remarketing bid for shoes might be well worth it.

Try creating a new search campaign that targets only your remarketing lists. Then add broad match versions of your existing exact match or phrase match keywords, plus any other relevant and highly-competitive broad match keywords you can see. Don't forget to watch how they perform over time and optimize accordingly.

Conclusion

How do you bring shoppers back when they're ready to buy? Remarketing lists for search ads are a powerful way to do just that.

Every customer's journey is different, and RLSA helps you speak to those whose path has already brought them close to your door. Remarketing also helps you reach existing customers and other fans of your brand in ways that can build deeper relationships and keep you top-of-mind for future sales.

To learn even more about RLSA, including how to set it up in your account, visit the [AdWords Help Center](#).

To view other Google Best Practices, check out the full collection at [g.co/GoogleBP](#).