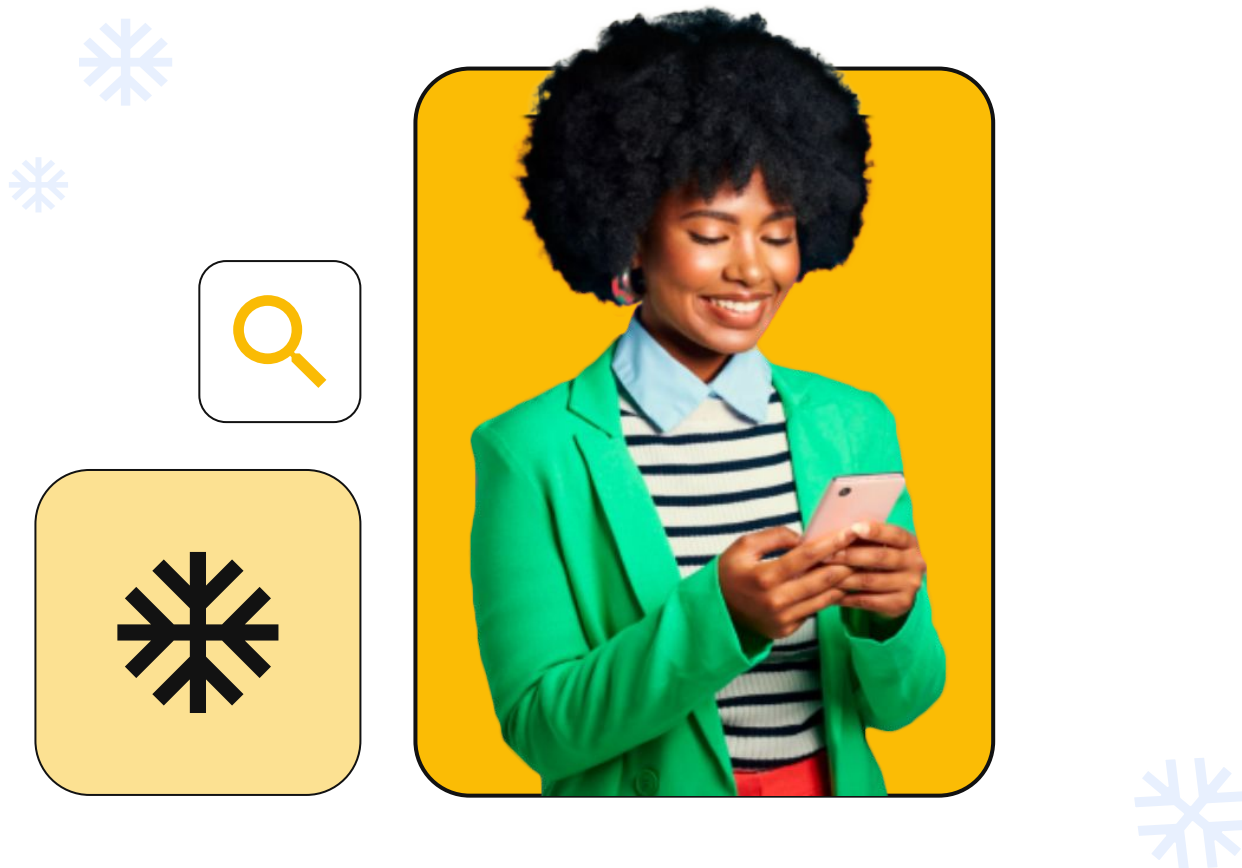Google

Think Retail →

HOLIDAY SCENARIO PLANNING PLAYBOOK

Scenario planning to help you through the holiday season and beyond

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU ADAPT AND STAY AGILE THROUGHOUT THE HOLIDAY SEASON

We know that this is a critical time for retailers like you. So critical, in fact, that the revenue opportunity is staggering, so knowing your consumer at every stage of the purchase journey is more important than ever.

Despite the challenging economic environment in 2022, retailers adapted and found success. But there's still so much opportunity for retailers to capture in the season ahead - especially as we learn from our past experiences and use those insights to fuel our strategies for long-term growth. There is still more we can do to maximize your profitability even further in the year ahead.

Our goal is to equip you with the holiday strategies and tools to help you get your next big sale profitably - whenever and wherever it happens. We're here to help you be ready for anything, including:

- To **influence** holiday shoppers who start open and undecided
- To **engage** the shoppers most valuable to your bottom line
- To **adapt** throughout the full season

To help you capture the full holiday opportunity this year, we identified common scenarios retailers may be facing, and outlined how to address them

Together, we can help you multiply your holiday performance with Google AI to make this your strongest year yet.

If you want to go deeper on any of these strategies, watch Think Retail on-demand to hear directly from product experts, or speak to your Google team - we're here to help every step of the way.

Wishing you a successful holiday season ahead!

IMMA CALVO
Managing Director, Commerce

THE FOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPER MINDSETS

Untapped opportunities to win high-value customers this holiday season

Over the past year, Google's research and insights team took a step back to observe both the peak and the everyday moments in last year's holiday season. We've observed for a few years that the holiday season is lengthening, but what we found through following over 100 days of holiday shopping behavior was that consumers fall into four distinct mindsets. These mindsets transcend demographics, and it's natural for shoppers to move between them as the season progresses.
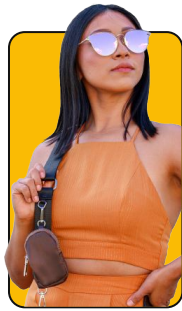
Each mindset brings a unique revenue opportunity that you can either capture this year - or lose to the competition. The takeaway? Think across the full holiday season, beyond just the Cyber period.
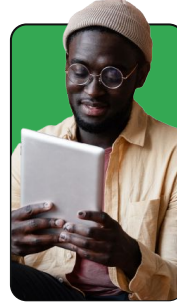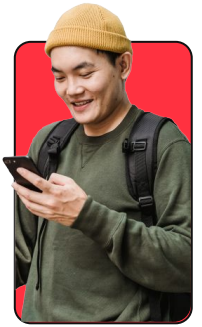
DELIBERATE	DEAL-SEEKING	DETERMINED	DEVOTED
Now - Nov	Cyber	December	Post-Season

DISCOVERY STARTS NOW
This shopper wants to get a jumpstart on **planning** their gift list, looking for reviews, and **researching** price, availability and promotions so they're ready to get the perfect gift.

READY, SET, GO
Shoppers are **ready to buy, but on their terms**. They have already done their homework - researching, comparing products, watching videos - and now they're ready to get the **best value for their money.**

LAST MINUTE SHOPPING
It's crunch time to get last minute gifts. These shoppers have high intent and are ready to purchase now **wherever** and **however** they can before shipping cut off.

LOYAL SHOPPERS
There is a significant bump in the number of **self-gifting** shopping occasions, which opens up new chances to connect with **loyal shoppers** and build momentum into 2024.

INSIGHTS

74% of holiday purchases were planned ahead of time.[1]

Online shoppers who are active on social media use, on average, 10 touchpoints to inform and evaluate purchases inspired by an influencer. [2]

During the 2022 holiday season, **87% of holiday shoppers in surveyed markets said they used a Google or YouTube property** to help with their shopping.[3]

By the end of October, half of Americans are shopping for holiday over any two-day period and an average of 28% of their holiday shopping is complete.[4]

Daily volumes for shopping-related searches containing "deals" grew by over 2,300% the week of Black Friday/Cyber Monday compared to September.[5]

Over 70% of shopping-related search volume containing "Black Friday" happened before the day itself.[5]

According to a Mastercard credit card analysis conducted by Boston Consulting Group (BCG), **last holiday US consumers spent as much in the 3 days post Cyber Monday** as they spent on Black Friday and Cyber Monday combined.[6]

The average holiday shopper in the US still had 50% of their shopping to complete after Cyber Week.[7]

More than half of shoppers used five or more channels, like video and social media, to shop over a two-day period.[8]

Online search was used before 95% of in-store holiday shopping occasions.[8]

US consumer spending on weekdays during the holidays continues to increase annually. Last holiday season, consumers spent on average $4.2B on weekdays and $4.4B on a weekend day.[9]

Per Mastercard analysis by BCG, **US consumers spent over $47 billion in retail** (excluding Auto, Grocery, and Restaurants) in the two weeks post-December 25.[10]

57% of holiday shopping occasions were self-gifting between December 26 and January 4, which is significantly higher than the year before.[11]

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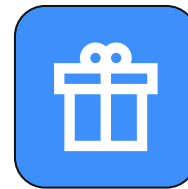
01
EXECUTIVES

Based on our discussions with retail executives, this is what we've heard is top-of-mind for you all this holiday season.

We've outlined how Google can help you and your teams address areas of friction or opportunity, based on common scenarios that we've heard from retailers.

To help you achieve your holiday goals, we've mapped all the scenarios to the **Ads Growth Formula**, a **4-step guide** that packages the best Google advertising solutions into one simple recipe for growth:

Step 1 | Set objectives

Step 2 | Get ready

Step 3 | Take action

Step 4 | Evaluate and expand

1

SET OBJECTIVES

Pinpoint your objectives and ensure all your marketing efforts
are aligned to support them.

CHALLENGE
What can we expect from the market this year that differs from last year?

SOLUTION

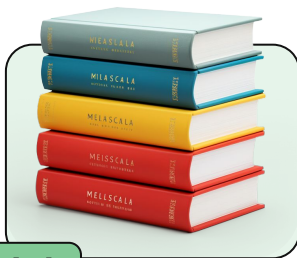This year, the holiday season will be similar to last year in many ways:

- **Modest growth**: Holiday sales are expected to grow **4.5% year-over year (YoY)**, vs. nearly 5% YoY growth last year.[12]

- **A longer season**: Last year, shoppers were cautious and discount-seeking due to inflationary pressures, so retailers kicked off holiday promotions in **October**.[12] Retailers will probably do the same this year, since shoppers are **still value-conscious** even though inflation is predicted to decline later this year.[12]

Here's what to look out for this year:

- **Always-on spending**: While there is an extra fifth holiday weekend this holiday season, retailers need to consider sustaining their advertising **throughout the week**. According to a Mastercard credit card analysis conducted by BCG, US consumer spending on weekdays during the holidays continues to increase YoY. Last holiday season, consumers spent on average **$4.2B on weekdays** and **$4.4B on a weekend day**.[9]

- **Missed opportunities from last year:** Retailers last year missed many pockets of unpredictability - and **left opportunity on the table**. Based on retailer MMM analysis conducted by TransUnion, on average, the retailer brands that reduced their Q4 share of wallet for paid search and/or YouTube from '21 to '22 could have seen a **nearly $83M increase in revenue** had they held their paid search and YouTube share of wallet constant year over year.[13]

You're not alone! This holiday season, use the four holiday mindsets paired with Google's AI-powered solutions to help you reach your highest-value customers no matter where they are.

Sources: 9. Google/BCG. Holiday Spending Analysis. Analysis of US Mastercard Credit Card Data December 26-January 8, 2022. Retail Categories included were: Apparel, Department Store, Electronics, Home Furniture & Furnishings, Home Improvement, Jewelry. Weekday and Weekend Analysis excludes Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Thanksgiving, and December 25th; **12.** eMarketer, US Holiday 2022 Review and Holiday 2023 Preview: How the Rise of October Holiday Shopping Alters the 2023 Forecast, Feb 2023; **13.** Google/TransUnion, Holiday Retailer MMM Meta Analysis, US, 10 Retailer Brands, Q4 2021 SOW on Q4 2022 Budget. SOW Simulation = Simulated Q4'21 weekly share of wallet for Search and YouTube on Q4'22 spend; dollars were reallocated from channels ranked in the bottom third by marginal ROAS

CHALLENGE
**How do we set our holiday business goals?**

SOLUTION

Double-check that your holiday goals, including topline profit and revenue goals, support your **overall business objectives**. Are they measurable? Time-bound? Tied to your customers' purchase journey?

Reflect on **last year's holiday performance** as well. Did you meet your goals? What are you doing differently this time around? What learnings are you bringing into this year?

Use **market insights** to inform your goals. The Insights page in your Ads account shows you current and upcoming trends for the products relevant to your business. See what's happening with your peers and your categories as well using Trends.

Finally, find the sweet spot for maintaining profitability during peaks. Work with your Google team to calculate your unit economics and "breakeven" return on ad spend (ROAS) for each of your key categories.
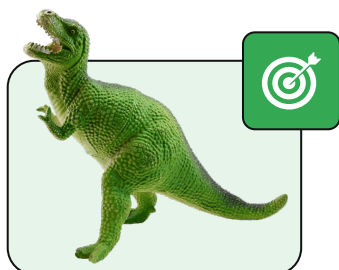
2

GET READY

Lay the groundwork for robust measurement, an automation strategy,
and powerful creative.

CHALLENGE
How can we prepare now to reach our holiday revenue and profit goals?
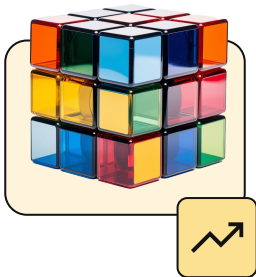
SOLUTION

Start building a privacy-safe measurement foundation now, so that you know what works for maximizing holiday results. Here's what you'll need:

Time:

- **By end of August:** Have your team set up measurement fundamentals: first-party data signals with Google tag, enhanced conversions for conversion tracking, and predictive audiences to reach your most valuable customers.
- **By end of September:** Complete at least three new tests to validate what works best for your business, so you can double-down on that during peak season.

People: Make sure you have web analytics managers, digital marketing specialists, a web developer, and a CRM administrator.

Prioritization: Drive urgency with your finance and marketing teams to invest now in measurement fundamentals.

CHALLENGE
How can we maximize the impact of AI in our marketing?

SOLUTION

AI can help you stay ahead of what you know to be predictable, while keeping up with the unpredictable - so that you're ready to reach customers no matter where they are this holiday season.

Here are the differentiating factors that will help you multiply your holiday performance using Google's AI-powered solutions:

- **Speed:** The faster you adopt AI, the more agility you'll have for connecting with shoppers throughout their journey.

- **Data:** Feed your first-party data into AI to teach it which business goals and customers matter most to you.

- **Brand value and creative:** Supply your creatives and your brand story, and AI will help you amplify that story to more shoppers.

- **Insights:** Apply the insights from AI to help make informed decisions and keep up with holiday unpredictability.

3

TAKE ACTION

Create campaigns that bring accelerated return on investment.

CHALLENGE
How do we drive sales for our priority products and categories? We have sufficient inventory for these products and want to maximize the available demand.

SOLUTION

Focus on both **capturing** and **generating demand** for your priority products.

Capture existing demand

- Unlock incremental conversions in seasonal moments using Search campaigns with Smart Bidding (with store visits for omnichannel retailers) and broad match.

- Drive more conversions across all of Google with Performance Max using a Merchant Center feed to maximize online sales, and Performance Max for store goals to increase in-store sales.

- Test Demand Gen campaigns (now in open beta) to convert customers in the right moments with immersive creative. Reach out to your Google team to learn more.

- Organize priority products into unique campaigns to allow for specific bid and budget adjustments based on the unit economics of priority products.

Generate new demand

- Highlight priority products in Video action campaigns to drive more consideration and conversions.

- If your holiday goal is new customers: Use 'New customer acquisition' for Search and Performance Max campaigns to capture new customers.

CHALLENGE
How should we continue to stay top of mind and build on the brand building we've done this year in advance of holiday?

SOLUTION

To turn the brand awareness you've built into action, use Video action campaigns to drive more conversions on and off YouTube, all in a single automated campaign.

Consider also adding a Merchant Center product feed to turn your ads into a virtual storefront. On average, advertisers that add product feeds to their Video action campaigns achieve over 60% more conversions at a lower cost.[14]

Pair these campaigns with Discovery ads to reach more potential customers when they're open to discovering something new.

CHALLENGE
We have exceeded our targets by the end of Cyber 12. What should we do next?

SOLUTION

Congratulations! Keep up the great momentum.

You created valuable demand before and during Cyber 12. Turn that demand into incremental sales in December, when shoppers are in the **Determined** mindset:

- Cast a wider on-Search net using broad match with Smart Bidding.

- Send shoppers to stores using local inventory ads and Video action campaigns, especially after shipping cut offs have passed.

- Maintain agility with Performance Max for both online and store goals.

As the holidays wrap up, build brand loyalty among **Devoted** shoppers as they pivot to self-gifting:

- Strengthen logistics with Merchant Center reporting and accurate Merchant Center feed annotations.

- Bring back loyalists with Customer Match and App campaigns.

CHALLENGE
We are over-inventoried. How do we drive sales for these products and categories to relieve inventory?

SOLUTION

Help drive sales for over inventoried categories to move product and avoid carrying costs.

- Use Merchant Center promotions, which you can customize by geography and affinity, to quickly drive sales.

- Launch a new Video action campaign plus Discovery ads to reach new untapped audiences at scale and drive more sales. Continue to drive customers to your store locations to promote holiday and end-of-year inventory with Video reach & Video action campaigns.

- Leverage Performance Planner, the Insights page in your Ads account, and Performance Max insights to understand when demand will be highest for your high-inventory products. Plan campaigns around these by understanding your break-even point by product, and how this affects your ROAS number by campaign.

- Utilize discounts strategically to move inventory quickly. Driving sales at a lower price point still provides an opportunity to capture valuable first-party data, which can be used to re-engage customers through the season and into 2024.

CHALLENGE

Cyber week has started off slow for our business. How do we ramp up over the weekend leading into peak holiday season?

SOLUTION

To ramp up over the weekend leading into peak holiday season and generate momentum:

- Change targets to allow for more aggressive bids based on profitable considerations, where possible. Talk to your Google team about how to make the most of our ROAS-based solutions to achieve the highest volume at optimal return at every stage.

- Raise budgets on campaigns that are limited by budget to capture untapped demand.

- Increase coverage across search by adding more relevant keywords, switching existing keywords to broad match, and applying Dynamic Search Ads to campaigns.

- Launch YouTube and Discovery campaigns focused on driving awareness for your priority categories to reach more qualified shoppers.

If you don't reach your Cyber period targets, don't worry! You'll still have a chance to capture valuable revenue as shoppers shift into crunch time (the Devoted mindset).

4

EVALUATE AND EXPAND

Unlock customer insights to help improve performance, identify new opportunities,
and enable maximum growth.

CHALLENGE
How do we analyze if our brand health is trending in the right direction?

SOLUTION

An effective proxy for brand health is measuring how many people are coming to Google or YouTube and searching for your business.

In fact, brand searches are directly correlated with not only brand health, but also sales volume. Try plugging your brand into Google Trends and see how searches for your business are trending and performing year over year.

Not trending in the right direction? Consider launching a brand campaign to increase the reach for your brand and drive incremental site visits, creating and capturing more demand. Speak to your Google team to learn more on how to get started.

CHALLENGE
How do we pace our performance budgets to keep up with increasing holiday demand?

SOLUTION

Use Performance Planner to help you get the most out of your holiday advertising budget quickly and easily. It uses query-level seasonal data, combined with your recent historical performance, to forecast and plan optimal target bids and budgets to help you stay ahead of the competition and capture incremental conversions during seasonal periods.

Here are the ways Performance Planner can help you reach seasonal demand:

- Plan your budget and bid settings ahead for reaching your seasonal business objectives, and adjust them regularly throughout peak season.

- Adjust forecasts to account for expected future performance changes.

CHALLENGE

How can we use our learnings from holiday and carry them into our 2024 strategy?

SOLUTION

Congratulations on making it through the holiday season! Set yourself up for success in 2024 by capturing **Devoted** shoppers who continue to spend after December 25th and into the new year.

According to a Mastercard credit card analysis conducted by Boston Consulting Group, US consumers spent **over $47 billion dollars** in retail (excluding Auto, Grocery, and Restaurant) in the two weeks post-December 25th.[10]

These shoppers are still looking for deals post-season: There were still **15% of shopping-related searches containing 'sales'** during the days post holiday and through the first two weeks of January.[15]

And, they're using this time to treat themselves. Between December 26th and January 4th, **57% of holiday shopping occasions were self-gifting,** which is significantly higher than the year before.[11]

Beyond the financial benefits of this time period, this is an opportunity for you to **build loyalty** as people treat themselves and kick off the new year on the right foot. Here's how you can connect with devoted shoppers and build momentum into 2024:

- Strengthen **logistics** to help clear the post-holiday shelves.

- Reach your **most loyal customers** through remarketing campaigns.

- Lean on **AI-powered planning tools** like Performance Planner and Reach Planner to scale your holiday learnings across your 2024 campaigns.

02
MARKETERS

Based on our discussions with retail marketers, this is what we've heard is top-of-mind for you all this holiday season.

We've created a personalized holiday blueprint for you mapped to the **Ads Growth Formula**, a step-by-step guide that packages the best Google advertising tactics into one simple recipe for growth.

Check out the **4 steps** to take, and which AI-powered solutions to use at each stage, to help you achieve your holiday goals:

Step 1 — Set objectives

Step 2 — Get ready

Step 3 — Take action

Step 4 — Evaluate and expand

1

SET OBJECTIVES

Pinpoint your objectives and ensure all your marketing efforts
are aligned to support them.

CHALLENGE
How do we set reasonable expectations for our goals this holiday season and across channels?

SOLUTION

First, double-check that your holiday marketing goals, including topline profit and revenue goals, support your overall business objectives. Are they measurable? Time-bound? Tied to your customers' purchase journey?

Use this goal-setting template to set your holiday marketing goals, keeping these factors in mind:

- Evaluate your **historical holiday performance** and goals to create a benchmark for this year. Think about what previous learnings you want to bring into this year as well.

- Use **market insights** to inform your goals. The Insights page in your Ads account shows you current and upcoming trends for the products relevant to your business. See what's happening with your peers and your categories as well using Trends.

- Use Performance Planner to help you craft **business and channel targets.** This tool enables you to create plans for your advertising spend and assess how changes to campaigns might affect key metrics and overall performance, like potential sales and profit.

2

GET READY

Lay the groundwork for robust measurement, an automation strategy,
and powerful creative.

CHALLENGE
How do we accurately measure our progress toward holiday goals in today's privacy landscape?

SOLUTION

Build a durable measurement and first-party data strategy now, so that you can accurately measure and attribute conversions to increase campaign performance.

Ensure tagging and conversion tracking are set up before the holiday season begins:

- Set up Google tag to capture valuable first-party data from your website.

- Start using enhanced conversions for web to recover any conversions lost due to privacy and browser changes.

- If you have both a physical and an online presence, connect store visits to online conversion values to track the full customer journey across online and offline channels.

CHALLENGE
How do we reach the right customers at the right time?

SOLUTION

Supplement your first-party data strategy by using predictive audiences, a feature in Google Analytics 4, to find new areas of opportunity before they happen.

Predictive audiences will help you reach customers most relevant to you during the holiday season, such as likely 7-day purchasers or predicted 28-day top spenders.

CHALLENGE
How can I link my upper and mid funnel media investment to business objectives?

SOLUTION

Understand how the various pieces of the marketing funnel work together to drive performance. Customers who have been exposed to your brand at the beginning of their shopping/research journey are more likely to buy from you when the time to purchase comes.

You can show ads to people who have already interacted with your videos or YouTube channel in order to reinforce your brand message.

To measure the effect of each touchpoint of your marketing funnel, use cross-network attribution in Google Ads, and data-driven attribution and engaged-view conversions in Google Analytics 4.

CHALLENGE
How can I see how much share of voice or category share I'm owning?

SOLUTION

Category coverage defines the universe of queries campaigns are currently entering the auction for. If it's limited, the campaigns are not eligible to serve on a large majority of queries relevant for the business. Increase coverage through:

- **Activating the Ads Power Pairing**
  Combine AI-powered Search campaigns using broad match with Performance Max campaigns to drive more conversions across all of Google.

- **Keywords expansion**
  Current campaigns could be missing out on relevant queries. Check your impression share to see if you could reach more people by increasing your bids or budget. Review recommendations in the Google Ads UI to implement keywords to improve your coverage.

- **Dynamic Search Ads**
  Dynamic Search Ads use your website content to target your ads and can help fill in the gaps of keyword-based campaigns.

CHALLENGE

We're using multiple measurement solutions, both from Google and other partners. What do we use as our source of truth?

SOLUTION

With today's evolving privacy laws and data tracking limitations, you'll need a combined portfolio of measurement solutions that leverage each other's strengths and fill each other's gaps.

It's important to triangulate data from multiple sources and build an integrated measurement strategy. For example, when your third-party multi-touch attribution tools have discrepancies with any Google channel, work with your Google team to:

- Conduct **incrementality experiments** like Conversion Lift or Geo Experiment studies to measure incremental sales.

- Determine the right **calibration multiplier** that can be factored in to optimize in-platform bids and budgets to deliver business goals.

To calculate a calibration multiplier, divide the **incremental impact** (calculated from an incrementality experiment) by the **attributed impact** (what a multi-touch attribution tool reports from the same campaign and time period as the incrementality experiment). Work with your Google team and your measurement team to calculate this multiplier for your use case.

Repeat the "test, learn, scale" approach to sharpen your marketing and measurement strategies.

CHALLENGE

How can we maximize the impact of AI in our marketing?

SOLUTION

AI can help you stay ahead of what you know to be predictable, while keeping up with the unpredictable - so that you're ready to reach customers no matter where they are this holiday season.

Here are the differentiating factors that will help you multiply your holiday performance using Google's AI-powered solutions:

- **Speed:** The faster you adopt AI, the more agility you'll have for connecting with shoppers throughout their journey.

- **Data:** Feed your first-party data into AI to teach it which business goals and customers matter most to you.

- **Brand value and creative:** Supply your creatives and your brand story, and AI will help you amplify that story to more shoppers.

- **Insights:** Apply the insights from AI to help make informed decisions and keep up with holiday unpredictability.

Check out our AI Essentials Checklist for details on how to supercharge your marketing with Google AI.

3

TAKE ACTION

Create campaigns that bring accelerated return on investment.

CHALLENGE
How can Google help me plan, promote, and maximize promotions this holiday season?

SOLUTION

We're here to help you grab shoppers' interest - and the full revenue opportunity - through promotions.

- Pivot promotional campaigns to focus on categories with the highest opportunity based on consumer trends and inventory levels.

- Add Merchant Center promotions to existing Performance Max campaigns with product feeds. You can customize these by geography via states and zip codes, or show them to shoppers who expressed interest in your product categories.

- Add sales price annotations and price extensions to existing creatives to showcase seasonal deals.

CHALLENGE
How do we drive sales for our priority products and categories? We have sufficient inventory for these products and want to maximize the available demand.

SOLUTION

Focus on both **capturing** and **generating demand** for your priority products.

Capture existing demand

- Unlock incremental conversions in seasonal moments using Search campaigns with Smart Bidding (with store visits if you're omnichannel) and broad match.

- Drive more conversions across all of Google with Performance Max using a Merchant Center feed to maximize online sales, and Performance Max for store goals to increase in-store sales.

- Test Demand Gen campaigns (now in open beta) to convert customers in the right moments with immersive creatives. Contact your Google team to learn more.

- Organize priority products into unique campaigns to allow for specific bid and budget adjustments based on the unit economics of your priority products.

Generate new demand

- Highlight priority products in Video action campaigns to drive more consideration and conversions.

- If your holiday goal is new customers: Use 'New customer acquisition' for Search and Performance Max campaigns to capture new customers.

Learn how to get ready for the holidays with **Performance Max**

CHALLENGE
I'm not sure my ideal audience is on YouTube.

SOLUTION

YouTube plays a key role in shoppers' research journeys. During the 2022 holiday season, **87% of holiday shoppers** in surveyed markets said they used a Google or YouTube property to help with their shopping.[3]

These numbers are even higher when we look at Gen Z and Millennials. According to a survey conducted by Ipsos in the US, **more than half of Gen Z are using YouTube** for their holiday shopping.[16]

YouTube can help you generate and capture demand at every stage of the purchase journey, including inspiration, comparison, and decision. Drive mass awareness through Video reach campaigns, or connect with users when they're ready to buy with Video action campaigns.

CHALLENGE
Our cyber week has started off slow. How do we ramp up over the weekend leading to Holiday?

SOLUTION

To ramp up over the weekend leading into peak holiday season and generate momentum for peak holiday season:

- Change targets to allow for more aggressive bids based on profitable considerations, where possible. Talk to your Google team about how to make the most of our ROAS-based solutions to achieve the highest volume at optimal return at every stage.

- Raise budgets on campaigns that are limited by budget to capture untapped demand.

- Increase coverage across search by adding more relevant keywords, switching existing keywords to broad match, and applying Dynamic Search Ads to campaigns.

- Launch YouTube and Discovery campaigns focused on driving awareness for your priority categories to reach more qualified shoppers.

If you don't reach your Cyber period targets, don't worry! You'll still have a chance to capture valuable revenue as shoppers shift into crunch time (the Devoted mindset).

Sources: 3. Google/Ipsos, Holiday Shopping Study, AR, AU, BE, BR, CA, CL, CO, DK, FI, FR, DE, IT, MX, NL, NO, PE, ES, KR, SE, U.K., U.S., n=84,075 online consumers 18+ who shopped for the holidays in the past two days, Oct. 2022–Jan. 2023; **16.** Google/Ipsos, Holiday Shopping Study, Online survey, US, n=1,084, Americans 18-26 (Gen Z) who conducted holiday shopping activities in past two days. Oct 13 2022 – Jan 4 2023.

CHALLENGE

How do we assess incremental opportunity across campaigns during peak seasonality?

SOLUTION

Evaluate incremental opportunities across campaigns using Performance Planner and Reach Planner to grow sales this holiday season.

Performance Planner lets you create plans for your advertising spend, and see how changes to campaigns might affect key metrics and overall performance. Reach Planner is designed to accurately plan for reach-based video campaigns across YouTube and video partners sites and apps.

If you expect a major surge in conversion rates in a short period of time (1-7 days), consider using seasonality adjustments to inform your Smart Bidding.

CHALLENGE

In the run up to peak holiday season, how do we drive extra visibility for products where we are priced competitively?

SOLUTION

To drive extra visibility for products where you are priced competitively:

- Use performance reporting in Merchant Center to get actionable insights on how to improve your campaign performance, including top-selling products on Google, pricing benchmarks, and competitive insights.

- Leverage the price competitiveness report within Merchant Center to identify and differentially target your price competitive products.

- For product-focused creative, like images and videos, swap out previous product images for your most price competitive offerings to help drive incremental awareness for the products and drive sales.

CHALLENGE

For one of our campaigns, only 1-2 products are driving all the traffic. What about the other ones?

SOLUTION

Create a separate campaign for the under-performing products. This will ensure that you are driving demand for all products, not just your most popular ones.

Work with your Google team to decide which products to divide into separate campaigns, and what bid strategy to use.

4

EVALUATE AND EXPAND

Unlock customer insights to help improve performance, identify new opportunities, and enable maximum growth.

CHALLENGE

How do we monitor how popular our products are, relative to other products in the category?

SOLUTION

Leverage the best sellers report in Google Merchant Center to rank popular products, whether or not they are in your inventory. If you're using promotions for certain products, use the Performance tab in Merchant Center to see how your deals are performing.

Bonus points: set up an export to BigQuery to build a custom dashboard on top of this data giving your team a granular, self-serve view into the data.

For manufacturers, leverage Manufacturer Center insights and analytics for better and more accurate information about your products to improve shoppers' experience on Google properties.

CHALLENGE

We're not on track to hit our goals, how can Google help?

SOLUTION

Reassess your performance indicators like budget management, coverage, audience strategy, creative excellence and performance plans to ensure best practices are followed and identify any gaps.

Check the optimization score in your Google Ads account to see how well your ads are set to perform. You'll get recommendations on how to optimize your ad performance, and what impact these recommendations will make if you apply them.

CHALLENGE

How do we drive traffic to our store locations during the most important season of the year?

SOLUTION

Use Performance Max for store goals to drive traffic to your most important stores.

Using local inventory ads, you can also promote in-stock products nearby or same-day pickup (including a curbside pickup option) to create a seamless experience for shoppers.

Leverage the Business Profile API to extract and analyze real-time customer reviews by location and capture interest from new customers by demonstrating the value of your business.

Learn from Google product experts how to **forecast budgets** for the holiday season and beyond

CHALLENGE

How do we pace our performance budgets and ensure we keep up with increasing holiday demand?

SOLUTION

Use Performance Planner to help you get the most out of your holiday advertising budget quickly and easily. It uses query-level seasonal data, combined with your recent historical performance, to forecast and plan optimal target bids and budgets to capture incremental conversions during seasonal periods. Here are the ways Performance Planner can help you reach seasonal demand:

- Plan ahead to ensure your investment is sufficient for reaching your seasonal business objectives.

- Plan optimal budget and bid settings regularly throughout peak season.

- Adjust forecasts to account for expected future performance changes.

CHALLENGE

How can we use our learnings from holiday and carry them into our 2024 strategy?

SOLUTION

Congratulations on making it through the holiday season! Now is the time to reach **Devoted** shoppers who continue to spend after December 25th and into the new year.

According to a Mastercard credit card analysis conducted by Boston Consulting Group, US consumers spent **over $47 billion dollars** in retail (excluding Auto, Grocery, and Restaurant) in the two weeks post-December 25th.[10]

These post-holiday shoppers are buying for themselves: Between December 26th and January 4th, **57% of holiday shopping occasions were self-gifting,** which is significantly higher than the year before.[11]

Here's what you can do to **connect with self-gifters** and **clear the holiday shelves**:

- Re-engage shoppers from earlier in the season using Customer Match.

- Revamp your creatives and promotions to focus on self-gifting and loyalty.

- Make sure your Shopping annotations are up-to-date, including sale prices and local promotions, to help you clear your post-holiday shelves.

- Use Performance Planner and the Insights page in Google Analytics 4 to help you plan your 2024 campaigns and uncover new opportunities.

Sources: 10. Google/BCG. Holiday Spending Analysis. Analysis of US Mastercard Credit Card Data December 26-January 8, 2022. Retail Categories included were: Apparel, Department Store, Electronics, Home Furniture & Furnishings, Home Improvement, Jewelry; **11.** Google/Ipsos, Holiday Shopping Study, online survey, Americans 18+ who conducted holiday shopping activities in past two days, n=1,823 holiday shopping occasions. Dec. 26, 2022 - Jan 4 2023.

🎁

BUILD YOUR HOLIDAY BLUEPRINT

Begin preparing for your best holiday season yet. Use this sequential list to guide how you plan, activate, and optimize your holiday strategy throughout the upcoming peak.

📋 **PREPARE**

AUG-SEP

- **Check feed health.** Address any feed disapprovals and add products that aren't currently in Google Merchant Center.

- **Test automated strategies.** Recommended: Performance Max for online sales, value-based bidding, and broad match keywords on Search.

- **Review holiday budgets** from last year and scope investments for this season.

- **Evaluate your site's customer experience** and make necessary changes.

- **Verify conversion value tracking** is set up correctly.

- **Prepare high-quality creative** for your Discovery, YouTube, and Performance Max for store goals.

⚡ **ACTIVATE**

SEP-NOV

- **Revisit automated bidding strategies.** Gradually adjust budgets and ROAS targets in the month leading up to peak periods in order to capture additional opportunities while maintaining efficiency goals.

- **Improve customer loyalty** by checking that your remarketing tag is functioning correctly and add customer match lists to your account. Adjust creatives across platforms to give returning customers a customized experience.

- **Reach new customers across platforms** by planning and launching Discovery, YouTube, and Performance Max for store goals.

- **Apply learnings** from early seasonal peaks for Q4. Use the best seller report, Shopping insights, and Rising retail categories to inform your strategy (i.e., seeing what product-related categories are trending, which products are selling well to invest more on).

📋 **ACCELERATE**

NOV-DEC

- **Check your performance regularly** to ensure your goals are being met and adjust bidding targets and budgets if needed.

- **Continue to allocate budgets** across platforms based on business goals.

- **Swap out your creative** for holiday themed images and videos.

- **Add your sales and promotions** to your ads and feed.