Google Ads

Think
Retail

Make every holiday connection count with **Google AI**

Handbook Contents

Think Retail 2024 | Digital Event
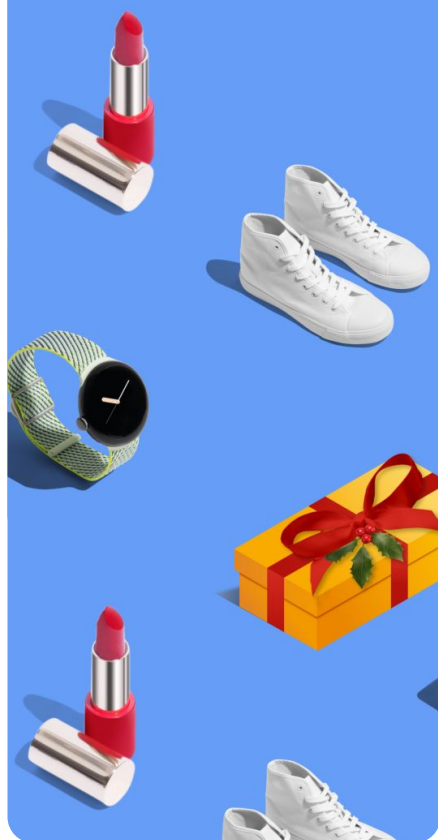
WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

Welcome Keynote

Make Every Holiday Connection Count

This holiday season, it's not only about hitting the bottom line, but it's about finding that perfect line – the one that connects you with your shoppers at every stage, from discovery to devotion. Learn how Google can help you capture the full opportunity and make every connection count.

State of Retail: What to Expect This Holiday Season

The 2024 holiday season is unlike any other. This session will kick off with insights from industry experts from BCG who will provide a macro view of the holiday landscape, including the economic factors influencing consumer behavior, and dive into actionable strategies to help your retail business adapt, plan with agility, and drive sales success.

Master the Mindsets Keynote & AI-powered Commerce Innovations

Master the Holiday Mindsets: Drive Relevance and Boost Confidence for Holiday Success

This presentation delves into the evolving landscape of holiday shopping, revealing the four distinct shopper mindsets that drive consumer behavior during the season. Discover how you can connect with each mindset and deliver relevant experiences, leading to confident purchase decisions and maximized holiday sales. Hear from best-in-class leading retail brands as they share their success stories.

The Shopper's Journey, Your Roadmap: Maximizing Every Moment with Google

Discover how to **connect with shoppers during and beyond peak shopping days**, using Google's AI-powered tools to create meaningful experiences and drive sales year-round.

Lightning Talks (Select into one session): Google Maps, Gen AI Creative, Retail Apps

Holiday Product Workshop

Best of Shopping Ad Strategies

Learn how to maximize your online shopping campaigns with a focus on budget optimization, prioritizing key products, utilizing Performance Max specifically for retail, building customer loyalty, and leveraging shopping apps.
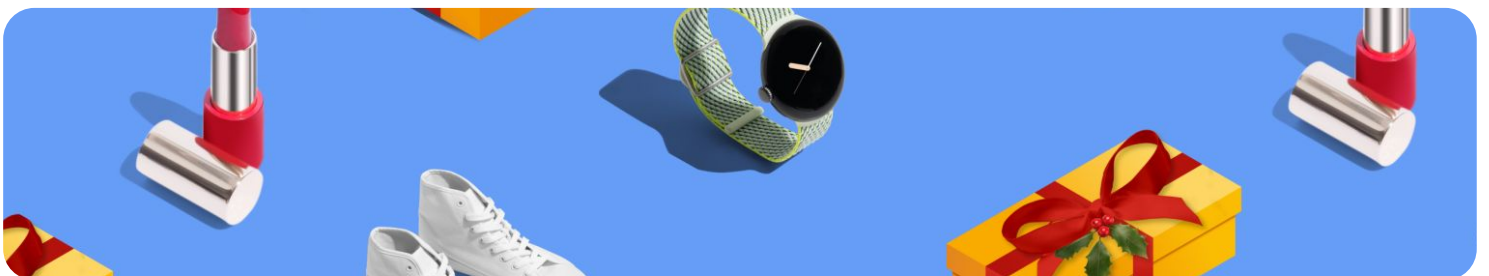
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2024 Holiday Macro Industry Insights

With a condensed shopping season and economic factors affecting consumer confidence,
making every holiday connection count will be especially critical this year.

STATE OF RETAIL: WHAT TO EXPECT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

BCG

Pockets of opportunity remain across when consumers will shop, where they will shop and what they will buy

- **When**: Compressed peak means wins are needed in all phases of holiday. Ensure you're focused not just on the peak days, but all the days in between.

- **Where**: Generational preferences hold during the holiday season. As you think about targeting, take into account the unique desires, expectations, and tactics relevant to each generation.

- **What**: Winning on pricing and promo is even more critical this year across categories. Use the increase in demand during seasonal sale moments to drive long-term engagement with your brand.

DRIVE RELEVANCE & BOOST CONFIDENCE FOR HOLIDAY SUCCESS

Holiday Shoppers Face an Overwhelming Number of Decisions

- 63% of US consumers agree that making the right purchase decisions requires more effort than it used to and 60% abandoned a purchase altogether because there were too many options and/or too much information.[1]

Boost Shopper Confidence with Relevant Information to Turn Interest Into Action

- The antidote to consumer uncertainty is confidence: Consumers who are highly confident at the point of purchase are 10x more likely to be very satisfied post-purchase and 6x more likely to say they would definitely buy again than those who have low confidence.[2]

- Relevance is key for driving confidence: Purchase confidence is highest when category knowledge is higher, information is relevant and shoppers have a relationship with the brand.[3]

Google is a Critical Resource for Holiday Shoppers

- Consumers whose journeys included Google as a touchpoint were 1.7X more likely to find "very relevant" information.[4]

- Google Properties are the #1 resource for holiday shopping - this includes Search, Maps, YouTube.[5]

- Users say Google is the #1 most trusted platform to deliver the right information at the right time.[6]

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Continue the conversation: Partner with your Google team to receive curated recommendations.

Practitioner Webinar: Google Ads Academy is back for Retail Practitioners on **September 10**!
Register here for a double click into tools and solutions to win holiday.

Master the Holiday Mindsets

To meet the moment and make the most of the season, understanding consumer behavior and mindset shifts will be critical

Deliberate
Oct-Nov

Discovery Starts Now

Holiday season purchases are defined by early-season researching behavior. **Don't wait to fuel the funnel:** earn shopper consideration and inspire those looking for the perfect gift.

34% of U.S. consumers said they had already started their holiday shopping in July 2024, **significantly higher** than July 2023 at 28%.[1]

Deal-seeking
Cyber

Balance Promo + Margin

Cyber 5, and the days surrounding it, deliver big-revenue days. Maximize your margins by aligning your promo strategy, and look for every way to **create value** in the eyes of your consumers.

The trend of product research-related searches (such as 'review' and 'comparison' etc.) **align with deal-related searches** (like 'deal' and 'offer' etc.), as their search volumes trend in tandem.[2]

Determined
Dec

Compressed Purchasing

December will be crucial. 2024 will bring **5 fewer days** after Cyber, and a November election that could delay purchases. Be prepared to offer a frictionless experience in stores and online.

In 2023, the average holiday shopper in the U.S. still had **over half of their shopping to complete** after Cyber Week.[3]

Devoted
Dec

Loyal Shoppers

This rapidly growing segment of the season is your **holiday halo effect.** Invest in retention strategies to bring back your loyalists, and protect your newly acquired shoppers from switching in 2025.

75% say they want brands to demonstrate they **understand my needs** and more than half (**61%**) want that to be **self-evident understanding** to come through in branded communications to them.[4]

THE SHOPPER'S JOURNEY, YOUR ROADMAP: MAXIMIZING EVERYDAY WITH GOOGLE AI

Feature		Mindset	External Links
Product Studio	✦ NEW	Deliberate	Help Center
YT Product Feeds on Demand Gen		Deliberate	Help Center
Merchant Center Next + Insights		Deal seeking	Blog
Profit Optimization Goals		—	Help Center
Automatic Product Sync for Local Inventory Ads	✦ NEW	Determined	Help Center
Offsite retail media in SA360	✦ NEW	Determined	Blog
Loyalty Promotions		Devoted	

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Best of Shopping Ad Strategies Workshop

Learn how to maximize your online shopping campaigns with a focus on budget optimization, prioritizing key products, utilizing Performance Max specifically for retail, building customer loyalty, and leveraging shopping apps.

KEY INSIGHTS

Set AI as foundation to capture consumer demand. Nearly 3 in 4 purchases are either made online or are influenced by online touch points[1]. As the shopper journey becomes more complex, tap into AI-powered ads to achieve scale and personalization.

Align budget to demand through the end of the year. Shoppers path to purchase is non-linear, with 40% of holiday shoppers "always on" to find the perfect gifts.[2] And the shopping season continues to expand, with over 80% of search demand from September through the end of the year outside of Cyber week.[3] Align budgets, targets and investment mix to capture these shoppers and deliver maximum value for the business.

Adapt to shopper mindsets to capture the bulk of demand. Omnichannel shopping is important throughout the season, but there is variance in what retailer competitive advantages stand out. Return policy picks up in October, promotions become critical during Cyber Week and on Christmas, while near me is critical on Black Friday and after shipping cutoff dates.

SOLUTIONS

☑ **Set AI foundation to cast a wide net**

- Maximize performance by using AI best practices, like a simplified account structure, conversion data signals, high quality image / text assets and complete SKU/keyword coverage.

- Understand and prove impact with a line-of-sight into media performance. This is achieved through measurement infrastructure and a rigorous test and learn program.

- Maximize scale and capture the most profitable traffic with flexible budgets and target-based management.

☑ **Align budgets with key periods to remain agile**

- Plan and set the right budgets by using Performance Planner to forecast optimal targets and budgets for your business outcomes during peak season.

- Optimize budgets before & during seasonal periods. Recommendations will help capture increase in interest with unconstrained budgets, while Campaigns Simulators will help identity conversion value and investment mix scenarios to deliver maximum returns.

- Efficiently manage budgets by implementing shared budgets and how budget is delivering on goals with insights and Performance Max insights.

☑ **Differentiate beyond promotions.**

- Better understand customer and competitive landscape with Merchant Center Insights.

- Deliver on last minute demand via upsell and cross-category purchases via omni strategy with Performance Max for Store Goals.

- Ensure creative coverage for each holiday mindset. This means 4+ unique image assets, 1+ RSA with good or excellent ad strength and business information.

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Shopping Feed Best Practices & Optimizations

MAINTAIN STRONG DATA QUALITY AND OPTIMIZE PRODUCT DATA TO MAXIMIZE PERFORMANCE

ACTION

Power quality shopping experiences by optimizing your Merchant Center product data

Ensure your product data is robust, reflective of your product catalogue, and formatted correctly into a feed to be sent directly to Merchant Center, per Google's formatting requirements.

Influence visibility and drive performance with optimized product titles

Create keyword rich, unique, and meaningful titles using information on the Brand + Gender + Product Type + Attributes (e.g., color, size), depending on what you'd like to achieve (e.g., customer acquisition, brand awareness).

Google is a critical resource for Holiday Shoppers

Provide high-quality images of your products with a solid white or transparent background, no watermarks, with minimal staging or use product studio to improve your existing images.

TIP We recommend images of at least 800 x 800 pixels (images can be up to 64 megapixels & 16MB file size)

Provide detailed product information to help categorize & understand your product

Provide detailed product identifiers such as gtin, sufficient descriptions, and product_type to help categorize and understand your products.

TIP Accurate gtins are essential for matching your products with user searches & maximizing visibility on Google

Leverage additional attributes to drive query relevance

Use additional feed attributes such as color, gender, material, length, width, etc. to provide additional product information and better surface your ads to the right queries.

TIP Additional attributes need to precisely match between the feed and landing page in order

STAND OUT AMONG COMPETITORS

Enable annotations help showcase valuable information and differentiate your products from others.

ACTION

Highlight savings & discounts using the Sale Price Annotation

Add sale_price & sale_price_effective_date attributes to schedule price change.
This will enable you to automatically switch to sale price when your sales period start!

Drive engagement & differentiate your offerings using shipping speeds

Activate the Fast & Free and / or Same Day Delivery annotation to highlight faster shipping speeds vs. competitors.

TIP To further help you stand out, Google Shopping also automatically surfaces free shipping / price drops

Establish trust with your customers & differentiate your products by adding your Return Policy

Implement Return Policy through the Shipping and Returns Tab.

TIP Update your Return Policy if you are offering holiday specific return policies such as extended return window

Showcase timely deals by leveraging Merchant Promotions

Utilize Merchant Promotions if you have coupon codes or special promos such as BOGO, free gifts, or % off discounts.

TIP Build out promotions three weeks out and submit early to ensure smooth promotional launches

Elevate your Loyalty Program to engage & retain high value members

Add your Loyalty Program details within Merchant Center to highlight key loyalty benefits such as rewards programs, member-only discounts, and free shipping

Shopping Feed Best Practices & Optimizations (cont'd)

POWER OMNICHANNEL EXPERIENCES AND DRIVE IN-STORE TRAFFIC

Take advantage of your local store presence.

ACTION

Ensure your store information & hours are up-to-date / accurate in Google My Business

Update your business information with relevant holiday hours to ensure the best experience for your customers.

Leverage Local Promotions to drive in-store traffic

Implement Local Promotions to drive users in-store and enhance your O2O experience.

TIP By activating Local Promotions you can elevate specific in-store promotions

Raise awareness of your differentiated Omni Channel offerings

Activate Pickup Today, Pickup Later, or Curbside Pickup to drive website visits and allow both online conversions and store visits.

TIP Enable relevant advanced LIA features to differentiate your offerings and provide variety to how users shop

Unable to build a Local Inventory Feed or enable Autofeeds? Leverage Pickup Later for PLA

Enable Pickup Later for PLA to promote an omnichannel fulfillment option without having to implement MHLSF.

TIP Enable Pickup Later for out of stock inventory, and inventory that can be made available for pickup (even if not carried in store)

STAY COMPLIANT WITH MERCHANT CENTER POLICY AND PREVENT DISRUPTION TO YOUR CAMPAIGNS

ACTION

Be notified when there is an issue in Merchant Center!

Ensure you added all the relevant contacts for feeds-related email notifications.

TIP You can now add more than 2 email contacts for Merchant Center notifications!

Regularly check that your account is not at risk of suspension

Regularly check the Products Tab **>** View Setup and Policy Issues tab in GMC Next to find existing account level issues.

TIP Pay special attention to preemptive item disapprovals, crawl issues – it could indicate a systemic issue

No account suspension? Fix high-impact item-level issues

Regularly check the Products Tab **>** Needs Attention to find all items that are warned for disapproved.

TIP Pay special attention to preemptive item disapprovals, crawl issues – it could indicate a systemic issue

Ensure your feed is accurate, up-to-date, & reflective of your website

Review how frequently you are sending your feed to GMC and ensure that the feed upload schedule aligns with how frequently your website is updated.

TIP Pay special attention to preemptive item disapprovals, crawl issues – it could indicate a systemic issue

Easily upload fixed product data

Take advantage of Supplemental Feeds & only update attributes that are incorrect!

TIP Supplemental Feeds need an id attribute column + at least one additional attribute column

Preventing / understanding item disapprovals due to image promotional overlay

Enable automatic image improvements so Google will try to automatically fix these images.

TIP Google will try to remove the promotional overlay from the disapproved items and show the outcome in the diagnostics tab so that you can get insights of what is a good quality image for Shopping