Drive sales and reach more customers with Google
Although the holiday season will look a little different this year, it will continue to be a season of peak demand and a critical time to connect with shoppers.

In this guide, you’ll learn how Google Ads can help retailers and brands get discovered online, acquire new customers, and drive more sales. We’ve collected the most useful tools, product recommendations, consumer insights, and customer stories to help you achieve your business and marketing objectives. Whether you’re looking for insights on consumers’ shopping behaviors or you’re making a game plan for the holiday season, this guide has you covered.

As COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the way we live and connect with the world around us, consumers’ shopping behavior has shifted, too. Check out our supplemental guide with insights and best practices for handling the immediate impacts of COVID-19.

While we all figure out how to adapt to a dramatically different environment, drive sales and reach more customers with a little help from Google.
Be discoverable

Every day, hundreds of millions of people turn to Google to find, discover, and shop for what they care about.
The average online shopping journey has over 140 touchpoints that can influence what people buy and who they buy it from.¹

For marketers, the challenge is how to show up at all of these moments, while delivering the personalized, relevant experiences shoppers have come to expect.

That’s where Google can help. Every day, hundreds of millions of people turn to Google to find, discover, and shop for what they care about. And not just Google Search — people also look for inspiration when they’re browsing their Google news feeds, watching YouTube videos, or checking their Gmail.

In fact, U.S. shoppers say they go to Google first more often than any other source to discover or find a new brand.²

75% of global shoppers used a Google product (Search, Maps, YouTube) in the past week to help with shopping³

Even when they want to shop in-store, people research online before making a decision. This past holiday season, shoppers searched online before 89% of in-store purchases.⁴
In this guide you’ll learn how to **meet your customers every step of the way**, from the beginning of their journeys to driving discovery, influencing purchase decisions, and ultimately, increasing your overall sales.

Every one of these moments is a window into what your customers care about — which is why no one understands them better than Google.
1 Be discoverable
2 Build your brand
3 Acquire new customers
4 Increase sales
5 Marketing checklist

Build your brand

Ad creative is still the most important driver of campaign effectiveness.

WHY

Over 70% of viewers say YouTube makes them more aware of new brands.

HOW

Learn how to create effective videos with the ABCDs of Effective Creative
2  Build your brand

Tell your brand story

51% of U.S. shoppers research new brands before buying from them to make sure their products are relevant to their lifestyles. That’s why it’s important for brands to not only appear in those searches, but to create real value that is meaningful and distinct. Immersive creative on video and Search can help build awareness and differentiate your brand with shoppers across Google.

51% of surveyed global shoppers use Google to discover or find new brands.
Connect and inspire with video

In a world of limited attention spans, it’s important to create video ads that engage consumers. Over 70% of viewers say YouTube makes them more aware of new brands, whether it’s through how-to videos, unboxing videos, or influencer content. Excellent creative, combined with robust demographic and affinity targeting, can help you drive brand awareness with video.

SUCCESS STORY

Calvin Klein leveraged creators to spark a movement and drove brand awareness with 2.2M unique viewers.

SUCCESS STORY

REI uploads longer-form, made-for-YouTube content at least once a week, including an original series that has over 34 million views.
Be the answer when they search

Mobile searches containing “popular” and “brands” have grown by more than 80% in the past two years. Use responsive search ads to answer those searches with flexible and personalized ads.

SUCCESS STORY

Dell tested responsive search ads and drove 25% more clicks and conversions

Make more visible and useful ads:

Learn how to customize your search ads with extensions
2 Build your brand

Measure brand metrics

To raise awareness and visibility, create a Google Ads campaign using the brand awareness & reach goal.

Then measure success by monitoring the right metrics:

- **Impressions**
  How many customers actually saw your ad? You can prioritize impressions with a cost-per-thousand impressions campaign.

- **Reach and frequency**
  “Reach” is the number of visitors exposed to an ad in a display or video campaign. “Frequency” is the average number of times a visitor was exposed to an ad over a period of time.

- **Brand lift**
  Brand lift studies use surveys to measure a viewer’s reaction to the content, message, or product in your video ads.

If TV is a part of your strategy, you can extend your TV campaigns online with affinity targeting and connected TV. Reach Planner, which uses Nielsen TV data, can help you find and reach audiences while moving away from traditional TV.
Acquire new customers

Reach new potential customers who are in the market for products like yours.

**WHY**

47% of surveyed global shoppers say they use Google before buying something new.¹⁰

**HOW**

Turn inspiration into action with Google’s actionable brand formats: TrueView for action, Showcase Shopping ads, and Discovery ads.
3  Acquire new customers

Turn discovery into purchase intent

Engaging ad formats can help you reach the 47% of surveyed global shoppers who say they use Google before buying something new.1

Make your videos actionable for shoppers

TrueView for action drives leads and conversions by adding prominent calls-to-action, headline text overlays, and an end screen to your video ads. Add compelling product imagery to make your ads shoppable, and optimize for your goals with Smart Bidding.

SUCCESS STORY

As a relatively unknown brand, William Painter found it difficult to sell their sunglasses online because shoppers couldn’t try them on. To build their brand story and drive sales, they used TrueView for action — and within a day, they increased revenue 4x.
Engage new customers across feeds on Google

71% of people say they’re always on the lookout for new brands and products that make their lives easier, and increasingly, they’re looking while scrolling through their favorite personalized feeds. Discovery ads can help you drive action with up to 3 billion users monthly on YouTube, Discover, and Gmail.

SUCCESS STORY

During its first six months using Discovery ads, Nectar by Resident saw an overall **8% sales increase** at the same CPA compared to its Google Search campaigns, and a **70% lower CPA** compared to its paid social campaigns.

Learn more about optimizing Discovery campaigns
Help people discover and explore your brand and products

Showcase Shopping ads let you group a selection of related products and present them to introduce your brand or business. 85% of traffic from Showcase Shopping ads to retailers’ sites is new visitors, many of whom are deciding where to buy when they search for general terms like “backpacks” or “furniture.”

SUCCESS STORY

Urban Outfitters expanded Showcase Shopping ads to 50 key categories in Apparel, Home decor, and Beauty. 52% of purchasers were new and drove a 186% increase in sales (compared to returning customers).
3 Acquire new customers

Here are some of the places your Shopping ads will appear to shoppers across Google:
3 Acquire new customers

Remarketing across all of Google

Now that potential customers are connecting with your brand campaigns, it’s time to build customer remarketing lists to re-engage shoppers and convert that brand discovery into purchase intent. Get started by tagging your site for remarketing.

You can also upload your first-party data to connect with these shoppers across Google:

- **Standard remarketing**
  Show ads to your past visitors as they browse sites and apps on the Display Network. Learn more

- **Dynamic remarketing**
  Show ads that include products or services that people viewed on your website or app. Learn more

- **Remarketing lists for search ads**
  Show ads to your past visitors as they do follow-up searches for what they need on Google. Learn more

- **Video remarketing**
  Show ads to people who have interacted with your videos or YouTube channel. Learn more

- **Customer Match**
  Show ads to your customers across Google, using information that your customers have shared with you. Learn more
Reach new, in-market shoppers

To reach new shoppers with purchase intent, you can select audiences who are in the market for products like yours across your Display, Search, and Video campaigns:

- Use **in-market audiences** to show ads to people who have been searching for products and services like yours but have not interacted with your business.
- Use **similar audiences** to reach new customers with interests related to the users in your audience lists.

Use our insights tools to find new opportunities to reach potential customers:

- **Discover rising product trends** to see what’s gaining momentum this season.
- **Audience Insights** can help you find new customers by revealing valuable insights about the people in your remarketing lists.
- **Find my audience** helps you understand who your most valuable customers are on YouTube so you can reach similar audiences with relevant messages.
- **Audience reports** in Google Analytics can give you a deep-dive into who has visited your website, including their interests and behaviors.
- **Market Finder** helps you take your business to new markets and start selling around the world.
Launch a new product

New products build your brand and can be a way to find new customers. To successfully launch a new product, you need to start by building consumer interest, then drive continued sales post-launch.

Product launch guide

Build pre-launch interest
Leverage immersive storytelling with video to build excitement and drive new leads. Start building remarketing lists to drive sales post-launch.

Advertise your launch moment
Focus on driving action with video, text ads, and formats that showcase your products.

Drive continued sales
Continue to share your message and turn intent into action.

SUCCESS STORY

To launch their Nemeziz soccer shoe, Adidas created multiple sequential video paths for viewers who watched or skipped their product-focused ad. Viewers who engaged with their message were served an ad that took a deeper look at the product, leading to a 33% lift in brand awareness and a 317% lift in product interest.

Born to Create: Hakan Çalhanoğlu, Kasper Dolberg, Jack Harrison

13M views
3 Acquire new customers

Shopper and product insights

Use our product insights to help with your new product strategy.

Add popular products to your feed
Use the best sellers report to see the most popular brands and products across Shopping ads and find out if they’re in your feed and in stock.

Push popular products when you’re price-competitive
The price competitiveness report shows you the price point at which shoppers are clicking on ads to inform your pricing and assortment strategy.

Learn what shoppers want
Use our Shopping Insights tool to create a personalized weekly email about the product and category trends that matter to you.
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.

1. Be discoverable
2. Build your brand
3. Acquire new customers
4. Increase sales
5. Marketing checklist

Increase sales

Use your product feed to help shoppers discover your products, both online and offline.

WHY

78% of shoppers used more than three channels to shop within a two-day period*.

HOW

Upload your online and in-store products to Merchant Center and activate Smart Shopping campaigns*.

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4 Increase sales

Drive omnichannel sales

Today’s consumers are living — and shopping — in a channel-less world, making an omnichannel strategy more important than ever. In fact, people who shop across five or more channels reported spending almost 2x more than people who shop across only one or two channels.16

90%

of surveyed global shoppers who visited a store in the last week said they searched online first17
4 Increase sales

Create a frictionless shopping experience online

A frictionless shopping experience for omnichannel shoppers maximizes sales. Your website or app is your digital storefront, so put your best foot forward online with a quick and easy evaluation on Grow My Store.

76% of smartphone users are more likely to purchase from companies whose mobile sites or apps allow them to make purchases quickly.

Use the Test My Site tool to test your mobile website speed

Connect with shoppers across Google

Get your products in front of the hundreds of millions of people who come to Google every day for their shopping needs. In the U.S., it’s now free to list your products on Google. Merchants running free listings and ads together see an average of over 50% increase in clicks and over 100% increase in impressions on both free listings and ads on the Shopping tab.

You can also sell your products directly on Google, with zero Google commission fees, which lets your customers purchase through our online checkout experience.
4  Increase sales

Upload your products to Merchant Center to get started

Use Smart Shopping campaigns* for automated bidding and ad placement to promote your products. Advertisers see more than a 30% increase in conversion value on average when using Smart Shopping campaigns.20 Shopping ads use product data, not keywords. They promote your online inventory, boost traffic to your website, and can help you find better-qualified leads.

Promote your in-store items with Local inventory ads

Local inventory ads highlight your products and store information to nearby shoppers searching with Google. Make sure to link your Google My Business account with your Merchant Center account to display your store information across Google services.

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4  Increase sales

Drive more shoppers to your stores with Local campaigns

They use best-in-class machine learning and local formats to drive shoppers to all of your store locations. They can also be used to support specific stores and events.

SUCCESS STORY

Sephora invests in digital shopping assistants that combine the best of offline and online. Their mobile app allows shoppers to scan barcodes for product reviews and look up their order histories, while the Sephora Virtual Artist feature allows shoppers to virtually try on thousands of makeup shades.
4  Increase sales

Measure omnichannel performance

As part of your measurement strategy, remember to account for the conversions that happen both online and offline. Use conversion cart reporting to measure online transactions, revenue, and profit, and include store visits and store sales to identify the campaigns, keywords, and devices that drive the most offline value for your business. To maximize total omnichannel value, add store visits or store sales into your Smart Bidding campaigns for Search, and include them in Target ROAS bidding for Shopping and Smart Shopping campaigns.*

SUCCESS STORY

Saks Fifth Avenue

Saks Fifth Avenue used Local campaigns to drive value from their stores during the holiday season. They saw $460K in incremental in-store sales compared to control markets where Local campaigns weren’t running.

Increase customer lifetime value

Use the Lifetime Value report to understand how valuable different customers are to your business. You can also compare the lifetime value (LTV) of the customers you’ve acquired through different channels. For example, you can compare customers acquired through organic search to those from social to see which method brings the higher-value users. This can help inform your channel strategy and achieve the right marketing mix to maximize your overall customer LTV.

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Maximize promotional periods

Plan your marketing strategy for before, during, and after your promotion or holiday to drive as many sales as possible.

**WHY**

Holiday shoppers make the most purchases and store visits during Cyber Week, right before Christmas, and after the holidays.\(^2\)

**HOW**

Follow these best practices to set up your campaigns for holiday success.
Holiday highlights from 2019

Last year, retail had its largest holiday season ever with global digital revenue reaching $723B at 8% growth. Even in stores, digital played a critical role.

- **58%** of holiday purchases happened online, compared to **42%** in-store
- Holiday shoppers searched online before making **88%** of in-store purchases
- **44%** of holiday shoppers used their smartphones to shop or research while in stores

When consumers were looking online for help with their holiday shopping, they often turned to Google. Over the 2019 Black Friday and Cyber Monday holiday weekend, Google saw its largest number of daily shoppers in history. And 77% of holiday shoppers said that Google (Search, YouTube, or Maps) continued to be their most used shopping resource throughout the holidays, especially during the post-holiday period.

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**4 Increase sales**

**Drive sales during the holidays**

When consumers were looking online for help with their holiday shopping, they often turned to Google.
4 Increase sales

Shoppers want to discover new items, find what they need, and purchase products with the least amount of friction. Consider these five shopping trends to lay the digital groundwork for a successful holiday season.

Holiday shoppers are open to buying from new retailers

**INSIGHTS**

70% of shoppers said they were open to buying from new retailers[^28]

50% of shoppers purchased from new retailers last year[^29]

**GET STARTED**

Connect with new customers through engaging [video content](#), like store tours, product reviews, and seasonal gift recommendations

Find new audience segments and re-engage them during the peak holiday season by creating [audience lists](#)

Holiday shoppers are starting earlier and ending later

**INSIGHTS**

23% of shoppers start looking for gift ideas three to six months prior to the holidays[^30]

54% of holiday shopping remains to be completed after Black Friday/Cyber Monday week[^31]

21% of holiday shopping is completed during the week of Christmas and the week after Christmas[^32]

**GET STARTED**

Offer compelling gift guides in visual formats, like [TrueView for action](#), [Showcase Shopping ads](#), and [Discovery ads](#)

Forecast and allocate enough budget for the entire season using [Performance Planner](#)

Capture early and late holiday traffic by setting adequate budgets and competitive targets for [Smart Shopping campaigns](#) or [Smart Bidding](#)

Improve your [optimization score](#) by regularly checking your account recommendations throughout the holidays

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[^28]: 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.

[^29]: Holiday shoppers are open to buying from new retailers

[^30]: Holiday shoppers are starting earlier and ending later

[^31]: Holiday shoppers are starting earlier and ending later

[^32]: Holiday shoppers are starting earlier and ending later

Drive sales and reach more customers with Google
4 Increase sales

Holiday shoppers value price, convenience, and availability

Insights

Top factors for purchasing from a retailer: 33%
- Price/promotion
- Convenience
- Product availability

Holiday shoppers shop across multiple channels

Insights

78% of shoppers used more than three channels to shop within a two-day period

88% of in-store purchases were preceded by an online search

Get Started

Highlight holiday offers with Merchant Promotions or sale price annotations

Feature convenient delivery options, like fast and free shipping or store pickup

Make your products discoverable across Google by uploading and optimizing your online and in-store inventory in Merchant Center

Promote seasonal events or special services like gift wrapping by creating a Google My Business post

Drive more store visits by using Smart Shopping campaigns* and Local campaigns

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4 Increase sales

Holiday shoppers turn to mobile

INSIGHTS

Shoppers reported making 51% of their online holiday purchases on mobile.

60% of holiday shoppers used shopping apps.

GET STARTED

Create a seamless holiday shopping experience on your website by testing your mobile speed.

Promote your app across Google with App campaigns.

Maximize promotional periods

Create awareness

Build momentum around your promotions and capture shoppers’ initial interest so you can alert them on the day of your actual sale.

Capture demand

To maximize performance when your promotion arrives:

- Put your promotional products into their own campaign
- Set adequate budgets to capture increased traffic
- Use Smart Shopping campaigns* or Smart Bidding with lower targets to set more competitive bids based on real-time signals

Follow these best practices to set up your campaigns for holiday success

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4 Increase sales

Think beyond the holiday season

Year-round consumer shopping

Today’s retail landscape is filled with events of all kinds, from public holidays to sales and promotions. Be sure to include all of these consumer moments in your marketing strategy, to maximize your sales.

Independence Day
$6.8B total spend, $73 average per person. Searches for gifts rise at the end of June and peak in the first week of July.\(^{38}\)

Back to School
$27.8B total spend, $519 average per child. 56% of budget is spent in-store, 29% online, and 15% undecided.\(^{39}\)

Halloween
$8.8B total spend, $86 average per person. Online search is the top source of Halloween inspiration.\(^{40}\)

Drive sales through non-holiday promotions

Sales give customers the urgency and desire to purchase. Outside of the holidays, you can create promotions to increase how often people shop with your brand.

Make your non-holiday promotions stand out

Customize your ads with sales countdowns. You can display dynamic ad copy, such as an hourly countdown, for a sale you’d like to promote.

77% of surveyed global shoppers say getting a special promotion is important to them when deciding which brand or retailer to buy from\(^{41}\)
4 Increase sales

2020 Global holiday calendar

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<th>JANUARY</th>
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<td>White Day (JP, TW, VN, KO)</td>
<td>Passover (Global)</td>
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<td>Ramadan cont. (Global)</td>
<td>Father’s Day (US)</td>
<td>Canada Day (CA)</td>
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<td>May Day (Global)</td>
<td>Independence Day (US)</td>
<td>Bastille Day (FR)</td>
<td>Back to School (US)</td>
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<td>Golden Week (JP)</td>
<td>Cinco de Mayo (US, MX)</td>
<td>Sea Day (JP)</td>
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<td>Victoria Day (CA)</td>
<td>Back to School (CO, MX)</td>
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<td>Hot Sale (AR, MX), Cyber Day (AR, MX)</td>
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<td>Back to School (UK)</td>
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<td>El Buen Fin (MX)</td>
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<td>Small Business Saturday (US)</td>
<td>Cyber Monday (Global)</td>
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Your marketing checklist

Here are our recommendations to help you build a successful strategy with Google Ads.

1. Be discoverable
2. Build your brand
3. Acquire new customers
4. Increase sales
5. Marketing checklist
5  Marketing checklist

Find the right customers

- Find new customers with **in-market and similar audiences**
  
- Discover new opportunities with our insights tools
  - **Audience insights** help you find potential customers based on information about the people in your remarketing lists
  - **Find my audience** reveals your most valuable customers on YouTube to help you discover new audiences and learn how to reach them with relevant messages
  - **Audience reports** in Google Analytics can tell you more about who has visited your website, allowing you to dig into details such as interests and behaviors

- Set up **remarketing lists** to turn brand discovery into purchase intent

Choose the right message

- Tell your brand story with **compelling assets** across all types of ads

- Drive leads and conversions with **TrueView for action**

- Help people explore your products with **Showcase Shopping ads**
Drive omnichannel sales

- Create a frictionless shopping experience by making your website or app your digital storefront pg. 21
- Drive product sales online and offline with Smart Shopping Campaigns* pg. 22
- Increase foot traffic to your store with Local campaigns pg. 23
- Set up your Search and Shopping campaigns for holiday success pg. 29

Optimize and measure for success

- Measure and optimize for the right metrics for your campaigns pg. 24
- Use both online and offline data for bidding and reporting to see the full value of your campaigns pg. 24
- Use product insights to understand demand and pricing for your products pg. 18
  - Add popular products to your feed with the best sellers report
  - Push popular products when you’re price-competitive with the price competitiveness report
  - Learn what shoppers want with our Shopping Insights tool

*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.
Sources

   Countries included: AR, AU, BR, CA, CZ, FR, DE, IN, ID, IT, JP, KR, MX, NL, PL, PT, RU, SA, ZA, ES, SE, TR, UA, UK, US, AE, VN.
4. Google/Ipsos, U.S., Omnichannel Holiday Study, online survey, n=6,122, online Americans 18+ who shopped for the holidays in
   Countries included: AR, AU, BR, CA, CZ, FR, DE, IN, ID, IT, JP, KR, MX, NL, PL, PT, RU, SA, ZA, ES, SE, TR, UA, GB, US, AE, VN.
   Countries included: AR, AU, BR, CA, CZ, FR, DE, IN, ID, IT, JP, KR, MX, NL, PL, PT, RU, SA, ZA, ES, SE, TR, UA, UK, US, AE, VN.
11. Ibid.
12. Google/Ipsos Connect, U.S., Consumer Discovery Study, n=2,001, consumers A18–54 who go online at least once a month,
14. Google Data, Global, analysis across 25 advertisers that had >100 clicks on each format in a given time period, new visitor
    defined as user not on “Site visitors” list, March 2019.
15. Google/Ipsos, U.S., Omnichannel Holiday Study, online survey, n=6,122, online Americans 18+ who shopped for the holidays in
16. Google/Ipsos, U.S., Omnichannel Holiday Study, online survey, n=6,122, online Americans 18+ who shopped for the holidays in
17. Google/Ipsos, Global (excl. China), Global Retail Study, n=8,430, past week in-store shoppers, online 18+ who searched
    before visiting a store in the last week, Feb. 2019. Countries included: AR, AU, BR, CA, CZ, FR, DE, IN, ID, IT, JP, KR, MX, NL, PL,
    PT, RU, SA, ZA, ES, SE, TR, UA, UK, US, AE, VN.
19. Google Internal Data, July 2020, based on an A/B test comparing performance for users seeing the updated layout on the
    Shopping property vs. a control group not seeing the new experience.
20. Google Data, based on aggregated results of A/B traffic split for 690 advertisers using Smart Shopping Campaigns and 142
    campaigns using Target ROAS Smart Bidding for Shopping campaigns; seasonal event conversion value increase is based on
21. Google/Ipsos, U.S., Omnichannel Holiday Study, online survey, base: holiday shoppers - varies by week (n=526–1,284), base:
    holiday shoppers - made purchase(s) - varies by week (n=216–721), online Americans 18+ who shopped for the holidays in the
Sources, cont’d


28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.


