Think with Google

Be there for your customers with Google

A guide for retailers and brands in 2021

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In 2020, disruptions to the retail industry caused a seismic shift in consumer shopping behavior, which we predict will continue this year. **In Q4, retail searches grew at a rate over 3X higher than the same time last year**, signifying a major shift to digital. Rapidly changing societal norms are also making the path to purchase increasingly complex, as customers combine online and in-store shopping experiences in new ways.

In this guide, you'll learn how Google can help retailers and brands connect with customers throughout these new journeys to drive more sales. We've collected the most useful tools, product recommendations, and consumer insights to help you achieve your business and marketing objectives. Whether you're looking to optimize your existing marketing mix or making a game plan for the holiday season, this guide has you covered.

Wherever the journey takes your customer, meet them there with Google.

**Bill Ready
President,
Commerce**

Reach customers as they browse

As customers browse they pick up brand and product information
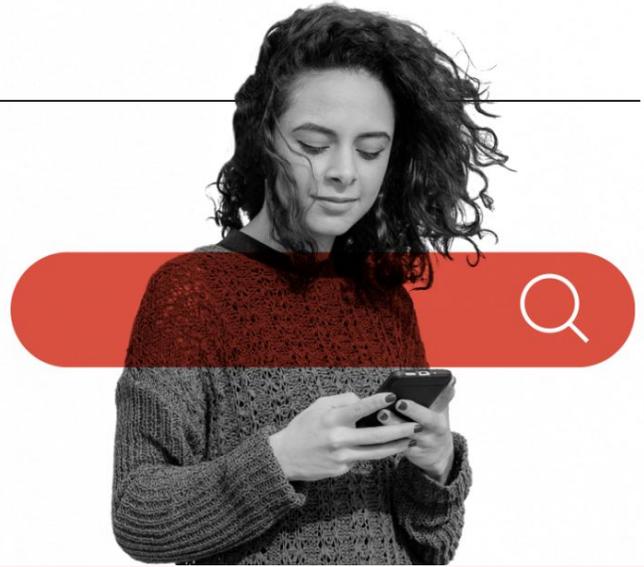
whether it's scrolling through interesting topics on Discover...
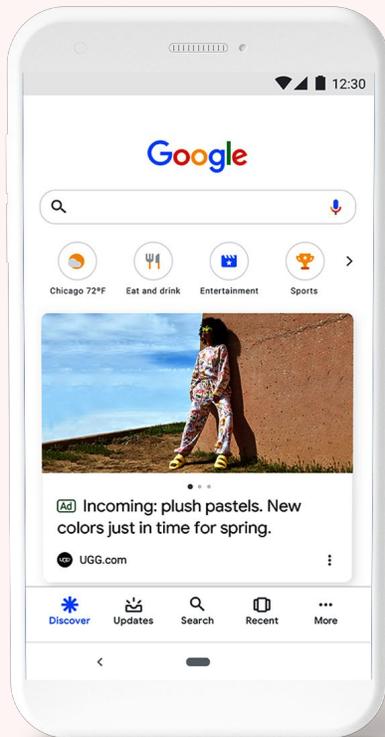
...or watching product reviews on YouTube.

81%
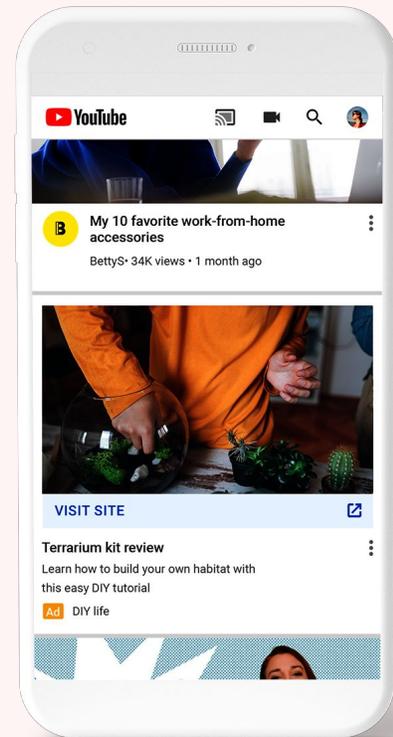
81% of consumers in surveyed countries across the globe say they've discovered new brands online during COVID-19.[1]

Connect with potential customers and inspire action with video

YouTube has evolved from a singular entertainment destination to a place where people come to learn, stream, and inspire their next purchase. When watching videos, customers can shift from passive browsing to active shopping when they come across a product that interests them and motivates them to learn more.

**YouTube is a great tool to build awareness and inspire people to take the action that matters to your business.**

You can even transform your video ad into a digital storefront by complementing your Video action campaigns with a browseable product feed that encourages clicks and conversions.
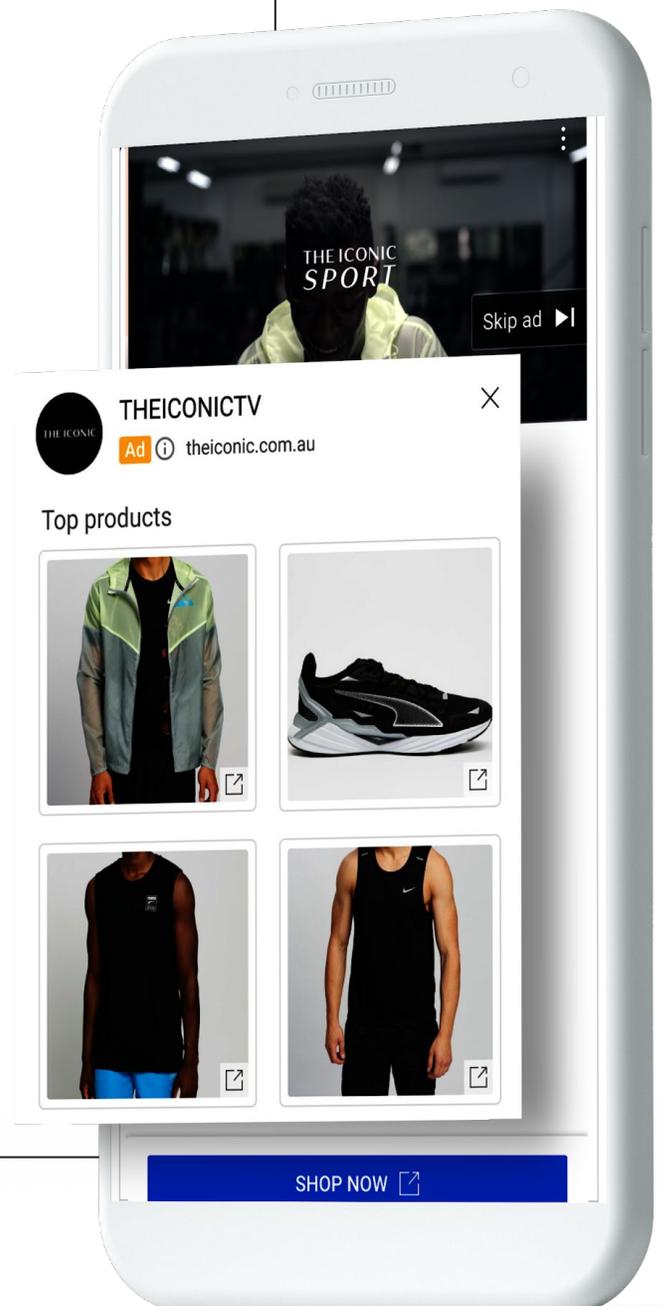
Measure the right metrics and optimize for success

Google tools can help you determine the best YouTube strategy, measure the right goals, and uncover insights to continually optimize your campaigns.

Before you get started, Reach Planner can help you achieve your marketing objectives by showing you which audiences and video ads will be most effective for your business.

Audience reached

70%

Overall brand ad recall lift

0%   10%   20%   30%
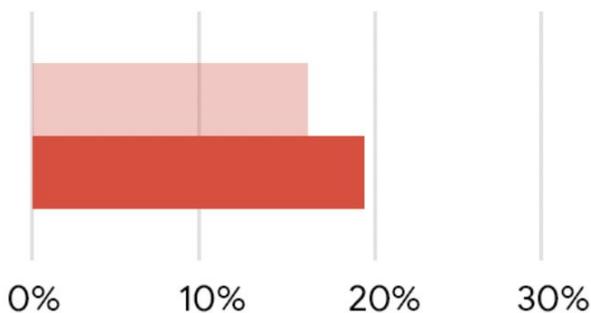
After launch, Brand Lift can show you how your campaign influenced people's feelings about your product with ad recall, brand awareness, and consideration metrics.

Engage customers as they research

Customers research products on Google before buying
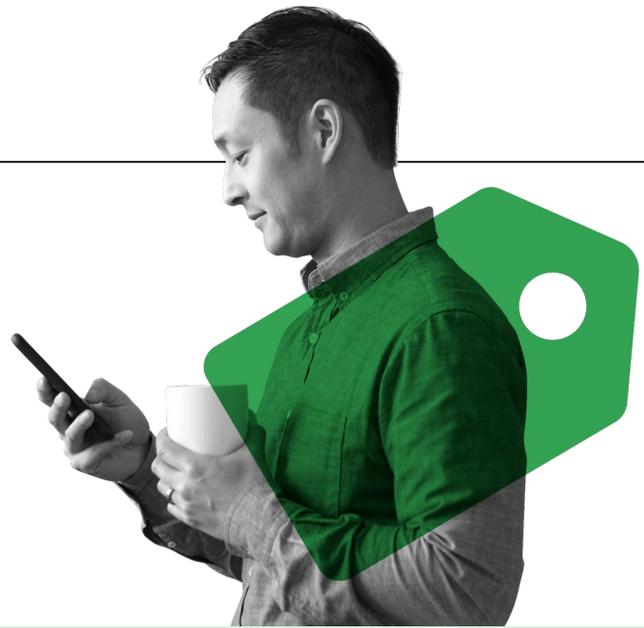
Shoppers turn to Google to find out which product is best in its category...

...compare prices, look for sales, and check out the latest reviews.
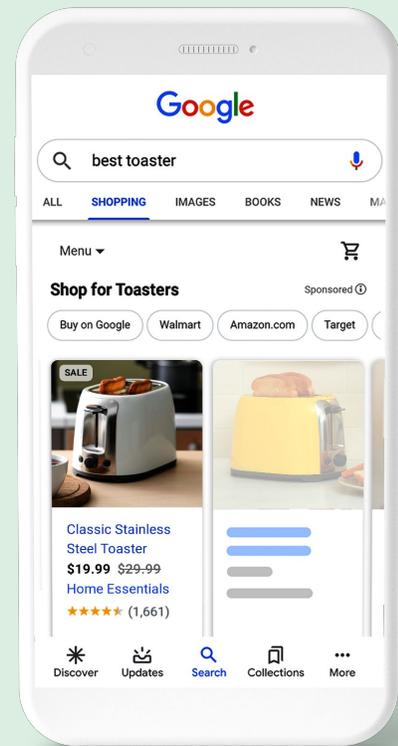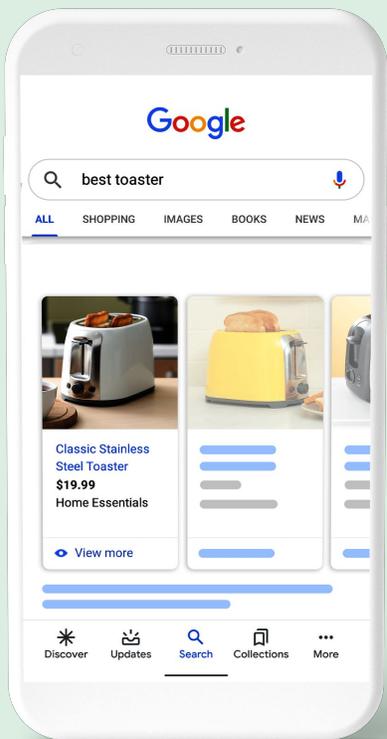
More than half of consumers in surveyed countries say they use Search to research their in-store purchases.[2]

Be the answer when they search

Shoppers don't always have a specific product in mind when they search the category they're interested in.

For example, mobile searches for "best affordable" have grown 60% globally year over year.[3]

When that happens, responsive search ads can put your product in the spotlight with a flexible and personalized ad that's relevant to the shopper.

G   popular children's toys

popular children's toys **2020**
popular children's toys **near me**
popular children's toys **for girls**
popular children's toys **for boys**
popular children's toys **in the '80s**
popular children's toys **stores**
popular children's toys **shopping**

Success story

To expand its footprint in the gaming market, Dell tested responsive search ads for its brand Alienware. Dell was able to reach new shoppers as they researched across Google, **driving 25% more clicks and conversions**.

Drive demand with "window shoppers" on Google's feeds

91% of Google feed users say they took some kind of shopping or product-related action immediately after discovering new products, services, or brands on their feed.[4]

Engage these shoppers as they explore content on Discover, watch videos on YouTube, or look for seasonal deals in Gmail.

Discovery ads help you reach up to 3 billion people on feeds across Google and YouTube with a single campaign*.

Best practices

Keep it simple: Images without overlaid text drive 9% more click-throughs on average[5]

Pair it with Search: On average, Search advertisers who add Discovery ads see 12% more conversions[6]

*Google Internal Data, July 2020
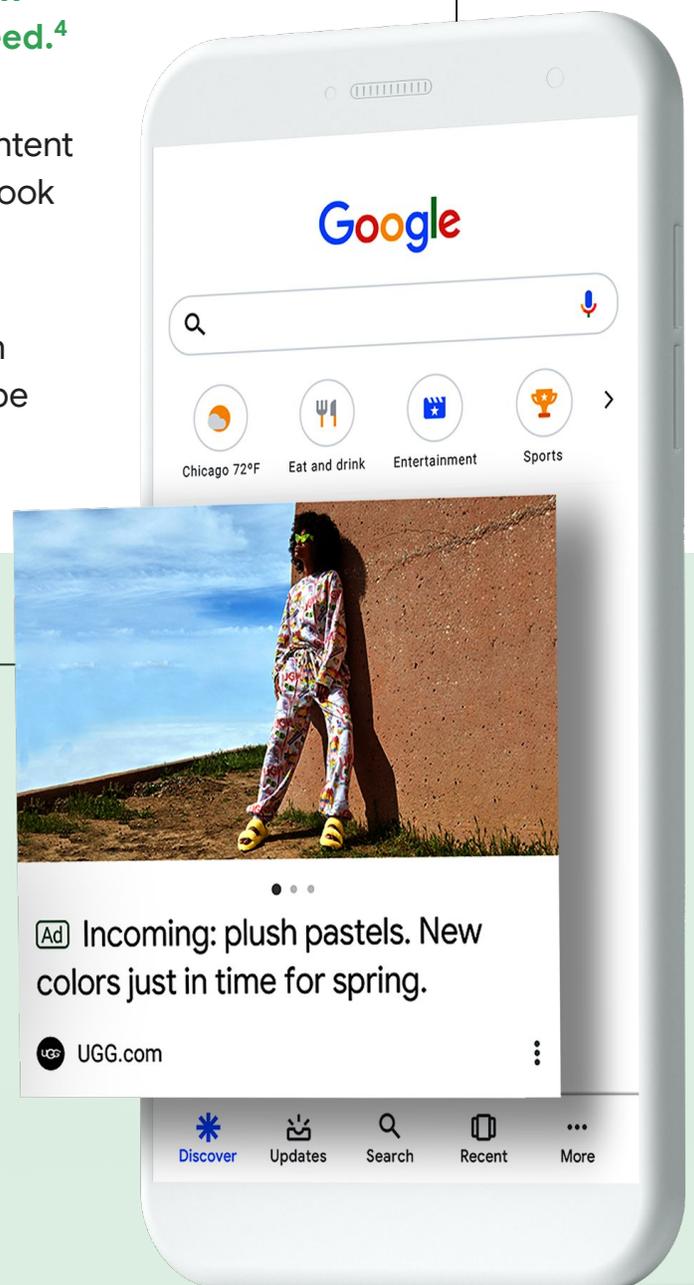
Find customers looking for products like yours

To reach new customers, choose the right audience solution for your ad campaigns.

To create awareness from potential new customers, use **Affinity audiences**. This helps you reach people based on their interests, passions, and habits.

To build consideration from people with demonstrated intent, use **In-market audiences**. This helps you show ads to people who have been searching for products and services like yours.

To drive action from existing and new customers, use a combination of **Customer Match** and **Similar audiences**. Customer match lets you upload your first-party data, like loyalty information, to engage with your existing customers across the web. Similar audiences then helps you find new customers with similar interests to people in these existing audience lists.
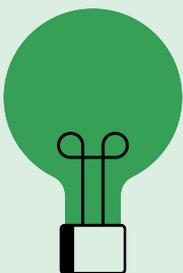
Tip

Customer Match can help you cross-sell or reactivate existing customers with special offers and messaging. Learn more with our best-practice guide.

# Convert customers looking to purchase

Customers expect to be able to shop wherever meets their needs
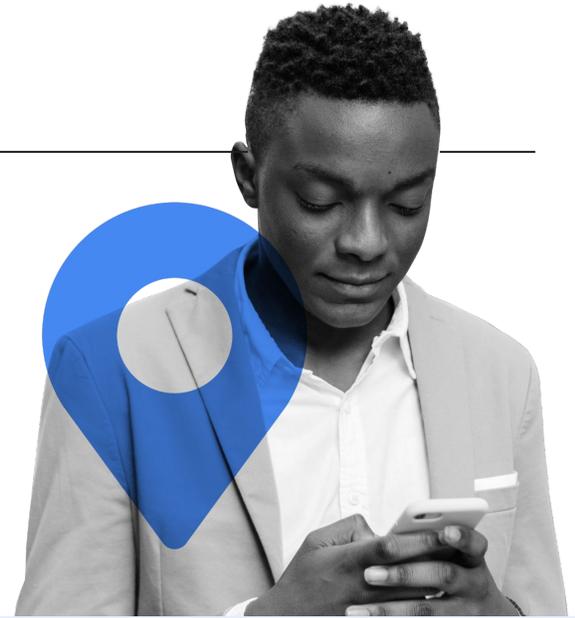
They want to be able to buy a product online as soon as they find it...
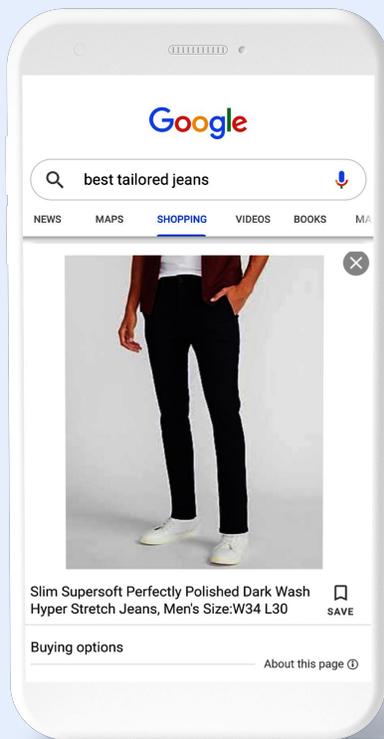
...or see if a local store has stock available for curbside pickup today.

100%
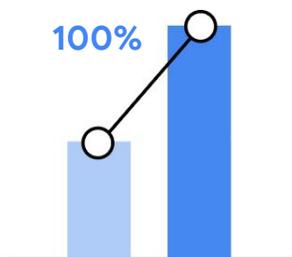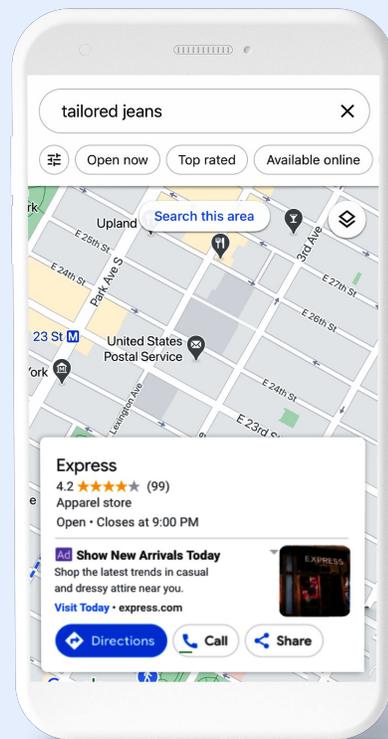
In fact, searches for "available near me" have grown globally by over 100% in the last year.[7]

Create a frictionless online shopping experience

Your website is your digital storefront, so it's important to deliver a fast, seamless, and personal experience to your customers. Every second counts — in fact, **a 0.1 second decrease in page load time can boost your conversion rate by 8%.**[8]

Use Grow My Store for a quick and no-cost evaluation of your entire retail site, including:

1   **Site benchmarking:**
See how your site stacks up against retailers in your sector. For developer-friendly tips on boosting site speed, use Test My Site.

2   **Recommendations:**
Learn how to upgrade your website experience to keep customers coming back

3   **Tailored insights:**
Access personalized market and consumer trends to reach new customers

Think with Google   Grow My Store   View your report   Reach more customers

Your report •

Here's how we've scored your website's experience, along with som practical tips on how it can be improved.

Your website score is: Foundational •

35%

54%

● Your website result
● Industry average

A breakdown of the results

YOUR SHORTLIST
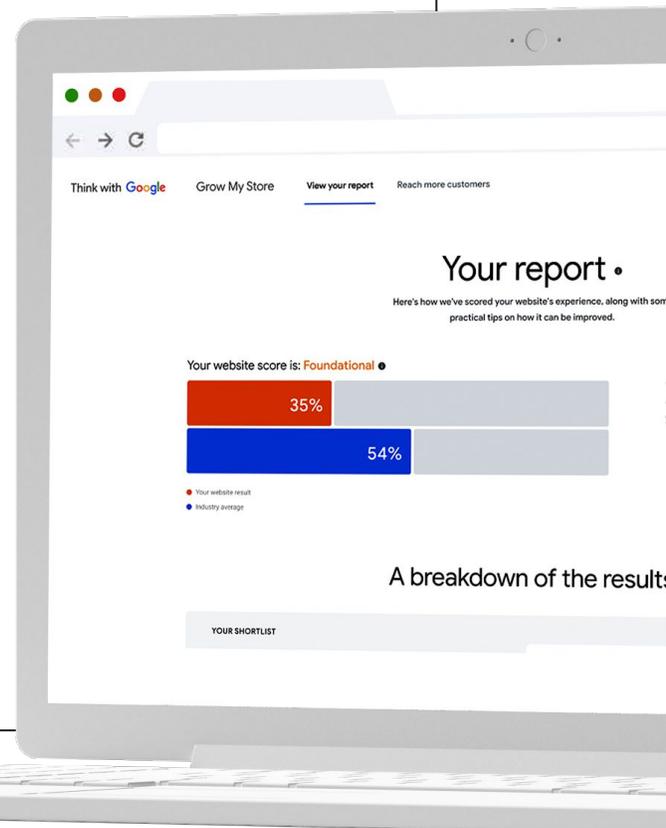
Engage mobile shoppers

Today, more people than ever are turning towards mobile to fulfill their needs. Reach these shoppers with App Campaigns and encourage them to make a mobile purchase, or take another action like installing your app.

To maximize sales, you can optimize your ads to drive in-app value and measure return on ad spend. If a customer already has your app, you can re-engage them and direct them to the right page through deep-linking your ads.

53%
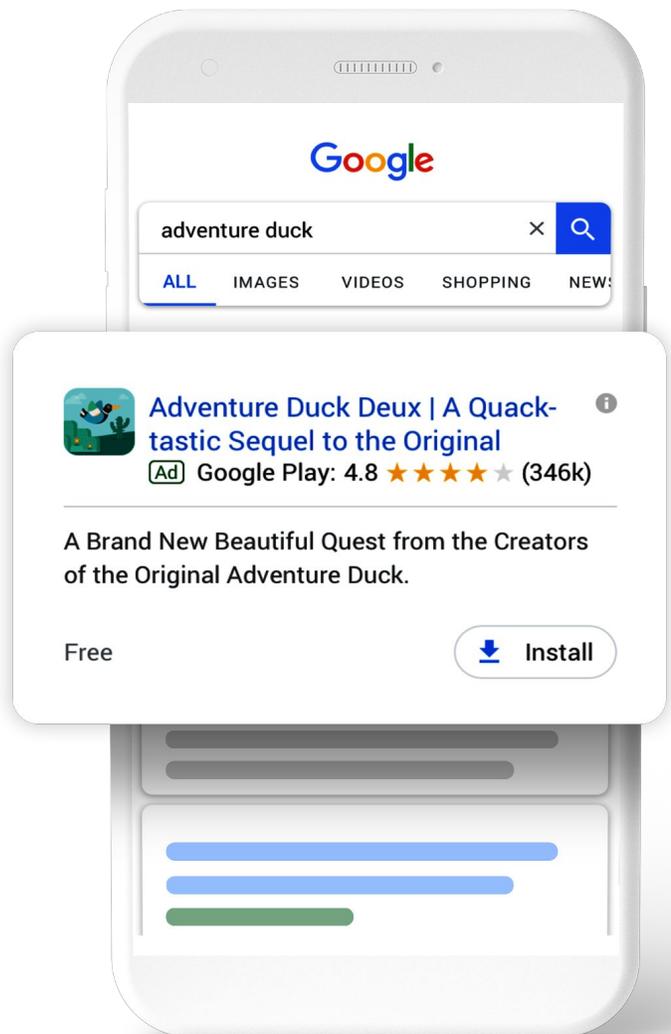
In fact, 53% of shoppers expect to be able to make a purchase on their smartphone from any brand or company with a site or app[9]

Showcase your products for free on Google

Every day, hundreds of millions of people come to Google for their shopping needs, and now you can list your products in the Shopping tab on Search for free.

If you already use Google ads, these listings are a great way to boost your exposure for free. And if you're new to Google, syncing your product feed from sites like Shopify to Merchant Center will make it easier for your products to appear in relevant search results.

You'll also be able to compare performance reporting across your ads and free listings in Merchant Center.
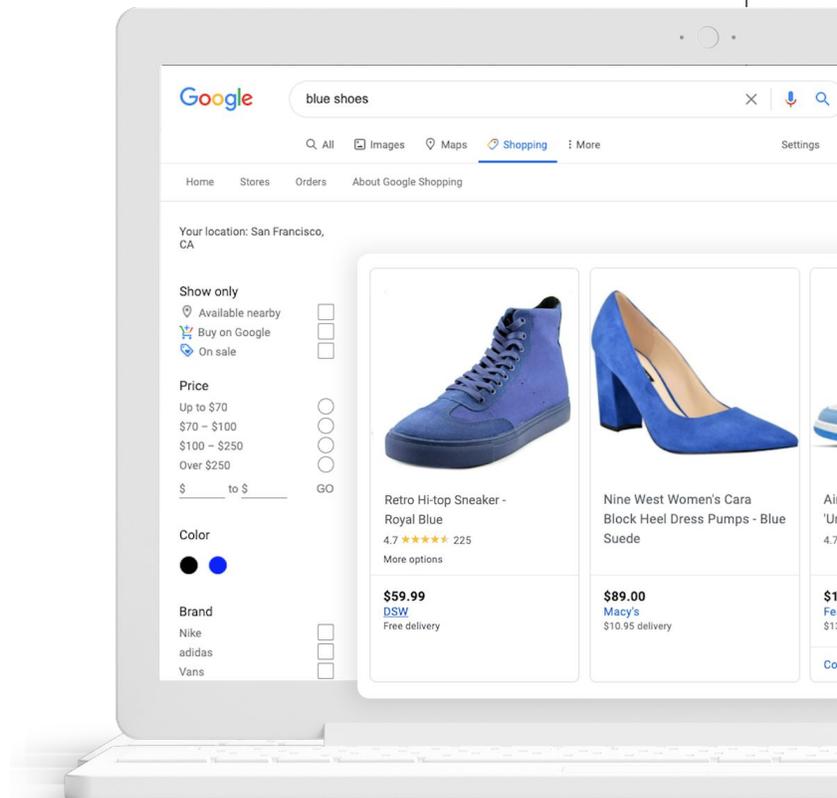
Tip

When uploading a product, make sure to include its **Global Trade Item Number (GTIN).** This helps us make your ad or unpaid listing richer and easier for users to find.

Reach new customers and deal-seekers across the web

People shop across multiple Google surfaces, like Search, YouTube, Gmail, and the Shopping tab. Smart Shopping campaigns provide access to all of this inventory through automated bidding and placements, enabling you to promote your products to the right customer at the right time.

Adding promotions to your free listings or ads in Merchant Center can also help boost click-through rates and increase conversions.

On average, **advertisers see more than a 30% increase in conversion value** when using Smart Shopping campaigns[10]

Google

rings

ALL   SHOPPING   IMAGES   BOOKS   NEWS   MA

Swarovski Vittore Wide Ring, White
$149.00
Swarovski USA
Free shipping

For most items:
14-day return policy

Search   Collections   More
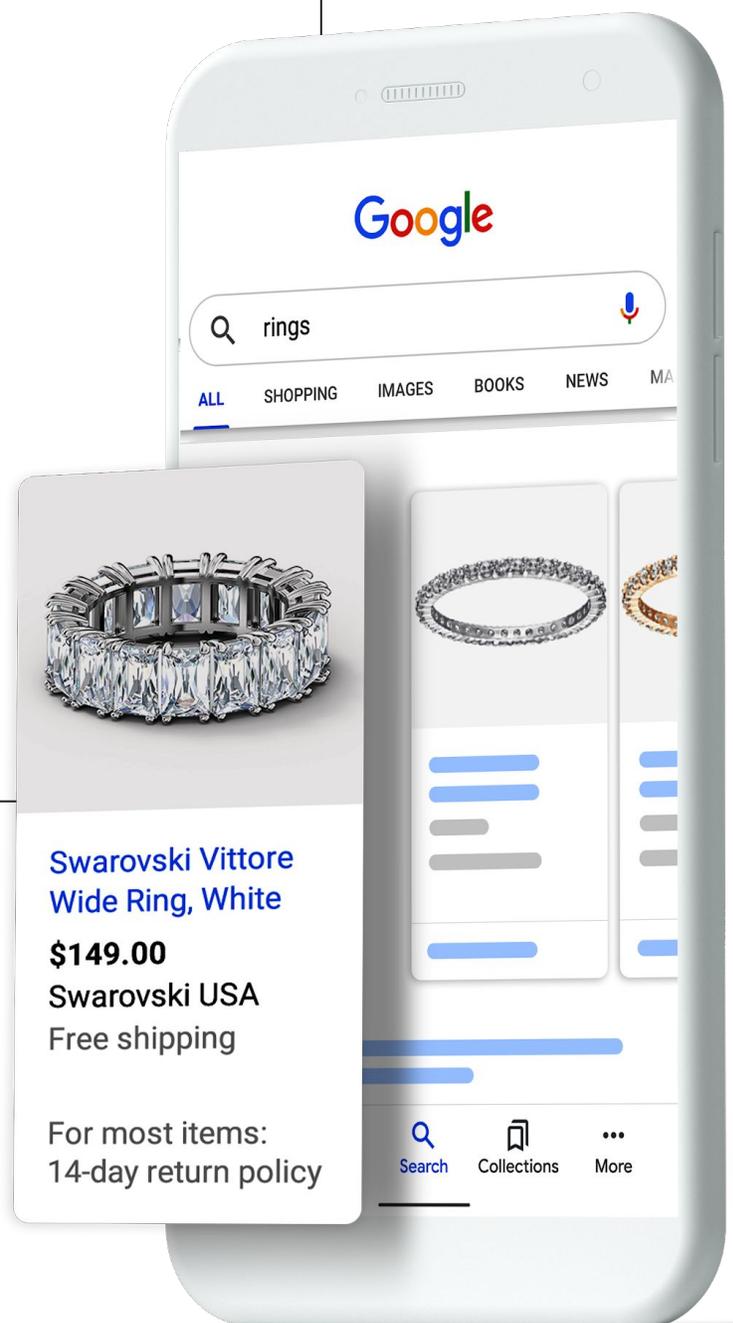
Increase store visits by promoting in-store items

Shoppers often use Google to check product and business information online before going into the store, so it's important to keep your Business profile updated. Let customers know if you offer delivery, curbside pickup, or in-store shopping.

To showcase your in-store products to nearby shoppers on Google, you can use Local inventory ads. You can also promote products available for in-store or curbside pickup.

Local campaigns are another way to bring people to your stores by promoting your locations to shoppers searching on Google Maps, Search, YouTube, and the Google Display Network. You can highlight special promotions and important business changes on a store-by-store basis.

vacuum cleaners near me

Ad **Show New Arrivals Today**
POWER International is a leading home electronics retailer in the Nordic region
Visit Today · power.no

Directions   Call   Share
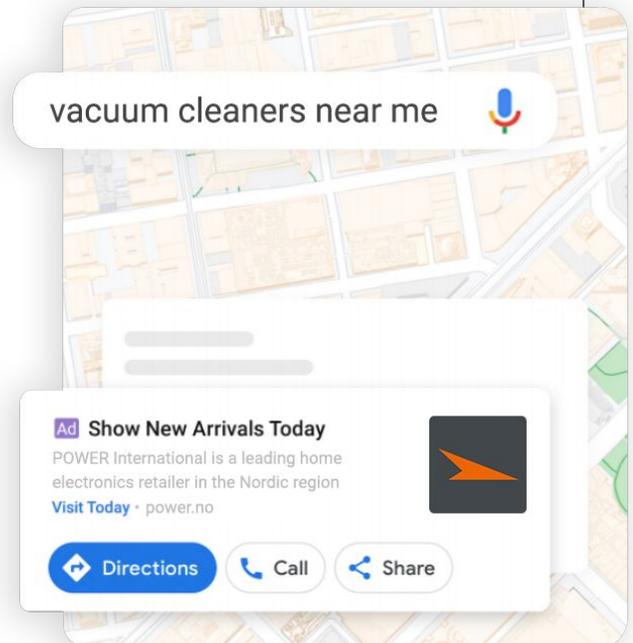
POWER

Success story

POWER, an electronics retailer in the Nordics, increased store visits by 30% after adding products to their Local campaigns and showing customers the products available at stores near them.

Optimize campaigns with insights and measure omnichannel performance

Set up your campaigns for success by uncovering the right insights and optimizing for the right marketing objective.

[Performance planner](#) can help you forecast your Search and Shopping campaigns to optimize for seasonal opportunities.
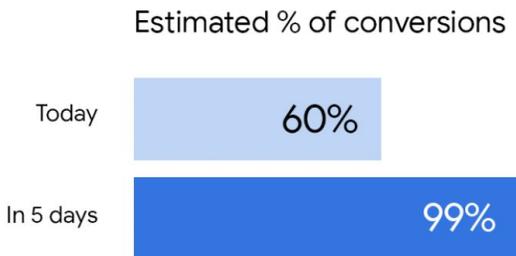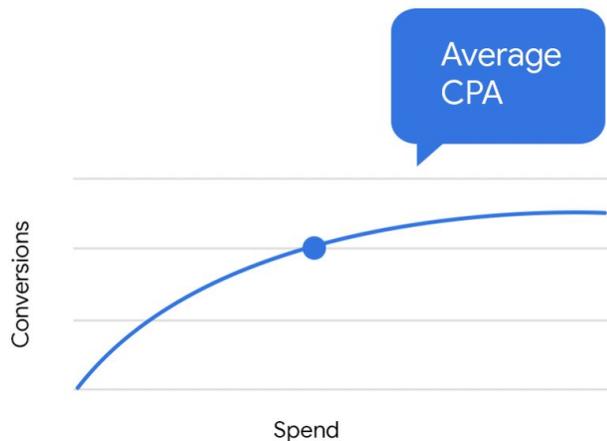
To get a better view of total revenue and return on ad spend, make sure you're measuring in-store sales by assigning a value to store visits in Google Ads. To maximize online sales and in-store visits from your digital ads, use [Smart bidding for store visits](#).

Best-practice

Before you start, check the [best sellers report](#) for the most popular brands and products across Shopping ads. The [price competitiveness report](#) can also help you inform your pricing strategy by revealing the price point at which shoppers click on ads.
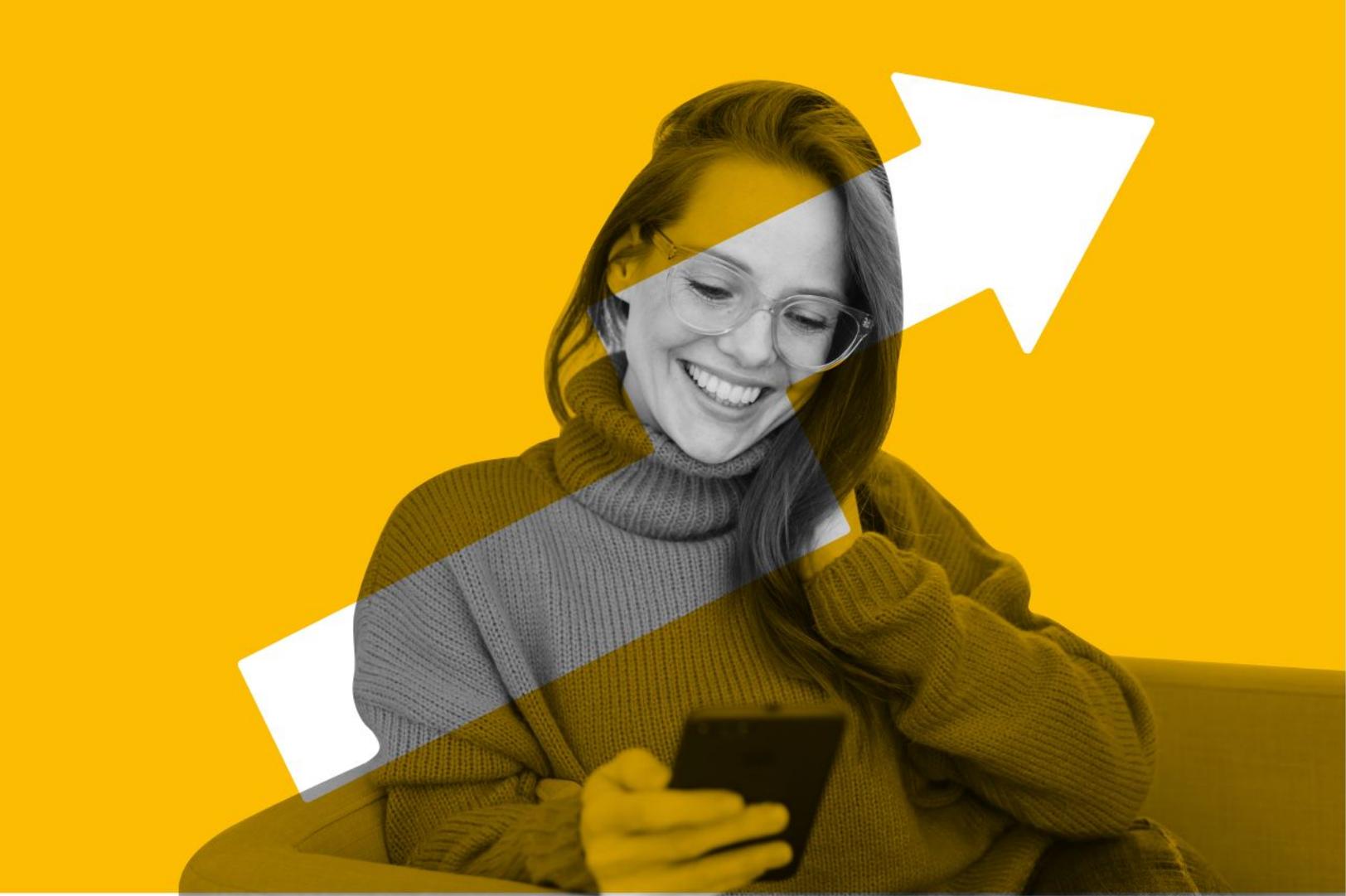
Be ready to drive sales during the holidays

Holiday highlights from 2020

Last year, retail had its biggest holiday season ever, with global digital sales growing by 50% to $1.1 trillion.[11] Digital played a critical role in the shopping journey, even in stores, with more customers choosing to start their holiday shopping earlier in the season.

**1** 43% of US holiday shoppers say they made more purchases online this holiday season than in previous years.[12]

2 Retailers offering curbside and other pickup options grew almost twice as fast as those that didn't[13]

3 Holiday shopping was done earlier, as cyber days became cyber weeks. More Americans said that they like to get most of their holiday and gift shopping done early in the season.[14]
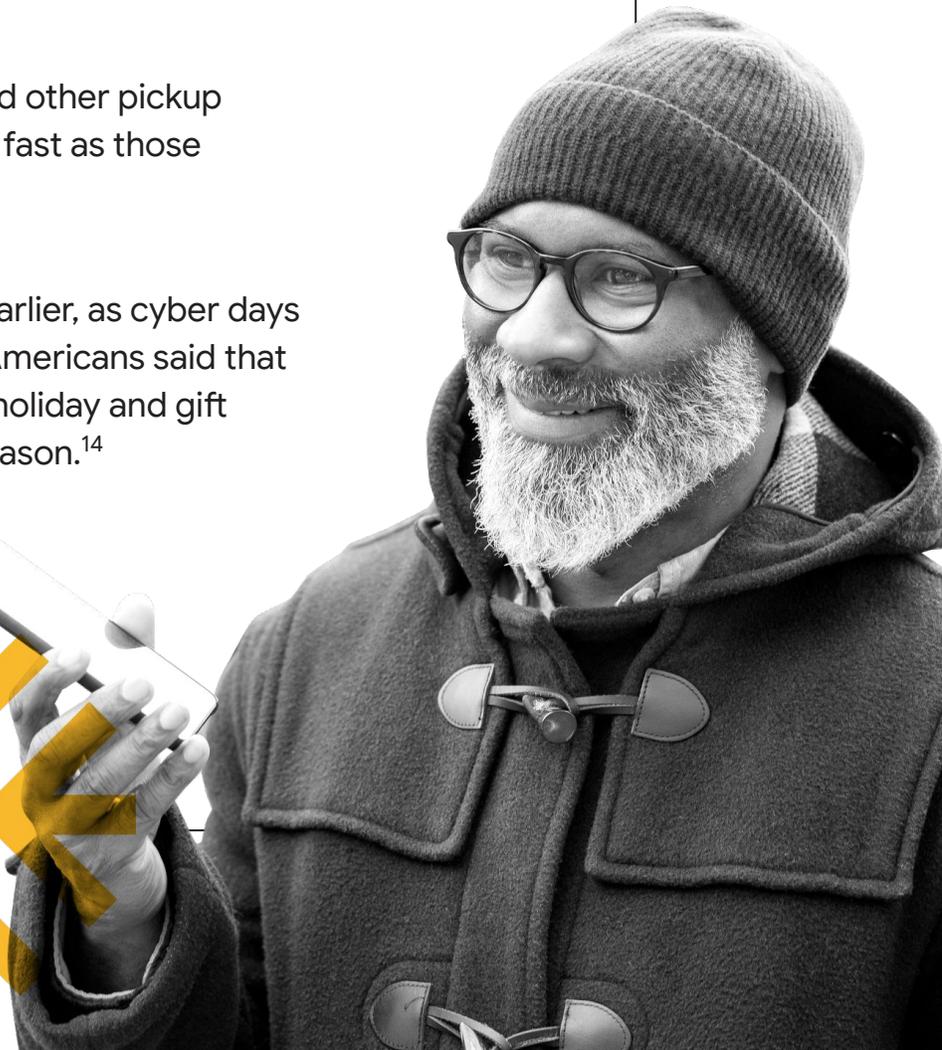
Be ready for the holidays

1

Be visible

Show up throughout the purchase journey with clear information about products, availability, and offers.

2

Take a stand

Give shoppers a reason to support you by making your stance on sustainability, local ties, or key issues clear — and find authentic ways to follow through.

3

Start early

Upload your products and holiday deals sooner, as people begin their shopping earlier in the season to stock-up or avoid out-of-stocks.

4

Be flexible

Offer a range of delivery or collection options to make the purchasing experience as convenient as possible.

5

Embrace change

Prepare for rapid, short-term shifts in demand with automated tools, while adapting to longer-term changes in the consumer landscape by considering your overall digital strategy.

Sources

1. Google-commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, US, CA, UK, FR, DE, IT, AU, JP, RU, IN, CN, BR, MX, ES, ZA, KR n=1000 online consumers 18+ per market. May 7-10.

2. Google/Ipsos, "Holiday Shopping Study", November 2019 – January 2020, Online survey, United States, n=2540 Holiday in-store purchase occasions (Online Americans 18+ who shopped for the Holidays in the past two days).

3. Google Data, Global English, Mar 25, 2020 - May 23, 2020 vs Mar 25, 2019 - May 23, 2019.

4. Google/Ipsos, Google Feed Consumer Insights, June 2020, Online survey. Americans 18+ who made a discovery on at least one Google feed (feeds defined as Google app, Chrome app, YouTube, Gmail) on a mobile device. Base: Feed users n=1,053

5. Google Internal Data: An Unskippable Labs analysis of 27K images, 22K headlines and 27K descriptions used by Auto, CPG and Retail advertisers from January 2019 - September 2020)

6. Google Internal Data, Global, March 2021. Based on an updated approach and analysis of campaign performance over 3-7 weeks from Jan 2019 to Feb 2021

7. Google Data, Global English, Feb 26 - Apr 25, 2020 vs Feb 25 - Apr 25, 2019

8. Google/55/Deloitte, EMEA and U.S., Speed Impact study, Oct. 2019–Nov. 2019

9. Google commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, US, CA, UK, FR, DE, IT, AU, JP, RU, IN, CN, BR, MX, ES, ZA, KR Online 18+ smartphone users varying by market ~n=840-1000 online consumers 18+ per market May 28-31

10. Google Data, Jan 2018 - May 2019. 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 Black Friday weekend in 2018

11. https://www.salesforce.com/news/press-releases/2021/01/12/all-wrapped-up/

12. Source 12: Google/Ipsos, "Holiday Shopping Study", November 2020 – January 2021, Online survey, UNITED STATES, n=7350 online Americans 18+ who shopped for the Holidays in the past two days.

13. https://www.salesforce.com/news/press-releases/2021/01/12/all-wrapped-up/

14. Google/Ipsos, "Holiday Shopping Study", November 2020 – January 2021, Online survey, UNITED STATES, n=7350 online Americans 18+ who shopped for the Holidays in the past two days.