

Holiday Shopping Checklist

9 Tips for Your Search and Shopping Campaigns this Holiday Season

Preparing for the holidays can be hectic. You have a ton of emails to send and tasks to do but only a few weeks left before your vacation. Here's a nifty checklist to keep the coal out of the stockings for your Search and Shopping campaigns.



Search Campaign Tip



Shopping Campaign Tip

Today

Before jumping into Google AdWords or Merchant Center, let's talk about your plan.

Forecast your budget and set KPIs

Estimate your spend by pulling historical data for the holidays and layering on current year-on-year trends. Confirm that your CPA targets make sense with your conversion volume projections.

Set your promotional calendar

Determine what you want to promote and at what time with your merchandising team. Identify what historically drove the most profits or conversions and what'll be different this year, such as new products. Don't forget to ask about doorbuster deals, site-wide promotions and exclusive promo codes.

Establish a crisis-response plan

Be prepared in case trouble arises. Define what's considered a crisis, who needs to be involved to fix the problem, and what's the expected lead time. Loop in relevant team members, vendors and your Google account team.



Set up automated rules to monitor conversion rates alerting you of any potential landing page or website issues.




Determine who's on-point to troubleshoot item disapprovals, and split up the types of disapprovals amongst the team. Create an email alias so everyone stays in sync and add it as the primary technical contact in Merchant Center.


Early October

Now that you have a plan, start prepping your foundation.

Expand coverage of increased holiday queries


Check that you're advertising on all seasonally-relevant keywords and products.


 *Hunt for missing keywords by running a keyword report for the same time last year, filter for conversions > 0 and cross-reference against your current keyword list. Then broaden your match types. Capture all relevant queries by expanding high-performing exact match keywords into phrase and broad match types.*

 *Submit your entire inventory if you're not already doing so. Fix item-level disapprovals in the [Merchant Center Data quality tab](#). In AdWords, check that you have an "All Products" group and products aren't excluded or filtered out in your campaign settings.*

Promote your best-converting ads


Show the most compelling message at the right time.


 *Pause ad copy testing and pick winners. Set your ad rotation settings to optimize for clicks or conversions. Make sure to align ad copy with your promotional calendar, launching ads with the right offers and deadlines in a timely manner.*

 *Sway shoppers with the best-performing product titles, descriptions, and images. Highlight your promo codes and temporary discounts with [merchant promotions](#).*

Prioritize your holiday merchandise and top-performers

Identify what products will drive the most volume during peak holiday shopping days and make them easily accessible.

 *Focus on keywords that will drive the most volume. Manage their bids closely to get the most volume from your efficiency targets, and make sure they get enough budget. Create custom labels to quickly filter for these keywords.*


 *Create separate campaigns for your top performing products (e.g. low cost-per-acquisition products) and seasonal products so you can actively manage their bids and budgets and have simpler post-holiday reporting. Add the [sales_price](#) and [sale_price_effective_date](#) data feed attributes, and set the [campaign_priority](#) to medium and high respectively.*


Late October

After your ad staples are in-place, spend the rest of the month building on top of what you have.

Target on-the-go shoppers

Adjust your bids and ads to connect with mobile shoppers.


 Increase location bid adjustments for searches that occur close to a store location. Add all mobile-relevant extensions such as location, call, or app extensions to engage users on the go. And with mobile ads [potentially showing just one description line](#), prioritize the most important information in the first line.

 Add a mobile bid modifier and include your mobile landing page URLs in the [mobile_link](#) attribute in your data feed. If you're not sure what to set your mobile bid modifier, refer to your text ads mobile bid modifier. Also loosen time-of-day bid modifiers since consumers shop at all times of the day during the holidays.

Maximize the relevance of your ads

Attract as many qualified clicks as possible by differentiating your ads.

 Draw more attention to your ads with ad extensions such as sitelinks and [callout extensions](#).

 Highlight seasonal products and offers with [local inventory ads](#) or [product ratings](#). Get certified as a [Google Trusted Store](#) to attract customers unfamiliar with your brand.

November - December

Your campaign is locked-and-loaded, and holiday traffic has picked up. It's time to optimize defensively.

Check you're not going dark midday or mid-season

Actively measure your "burn rate" (dollars spent to date divided by the budget allocated to date) to see if you're outpacing budget. If budget is limited, view your campaign performance, prioritize your high performance campaigns and see what's spending the most.

Target easy-wins if you need more volume

If you're underpacing, bid more aggressively on keywords or products that drive the most profit but have low impression share. Also, reach more qualified shoppers with Search Partners for both Search and Shopping campaigns.

Last but not least, remember to take a breather during all the holiday hoopla. Have a candy cane, build a snowman, and be merry. Consider it a holiday gift to yourself.