for Business

SHOPPING ADS BEST PRACTICES

2026

Your guide to shoppability on YouTube

Demand Gen for Retail

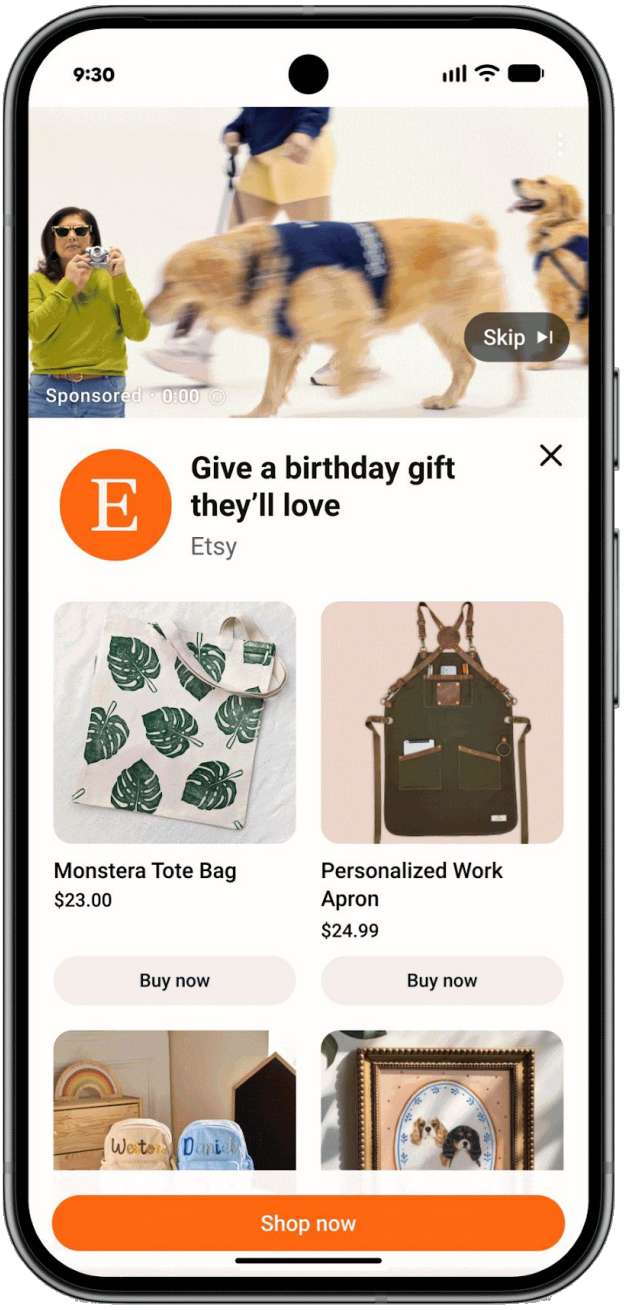
Maximize shoppability and drive sales on YouTube

Demand Gen:
Unlock high-value audiences and shorten their path to purchase

Product Feeds:
Turn your product catalog into a virtual storefront

Checkout:
Enable a seamless checkout experience

Affiliate Partnerships Boost:
Boost organic YouTube affiliate videos at scale



Demand Gen

Ensure the right foundations are in place to unlock maximum performance.

Advertisers that adopted at least 3 out of 4 of the Demand Gen Best Practices saw on average over

Based on an internal analysis

40% more conversions.

Prioritize Data Strength

Capture high-quality signals to future-proof results.

Maximize signal accuracy by implementing Google Tag Gateway with PII or using offline data imports.

- **Enhanced Conversions**
  Activate GTG with PII for accuracy.
- **Multi-Identifier Signals**
  Pass: gCLID/dCLID, Hashed PII, Braid, IP, Session, Trans ID.
- **DDA Enabled**
  Configure for click-through conversion, view-through conversion, & engaged-view conversion.

Fuel with Conversion Volume

Move beyond the learning phase dynamically.

Ensure sufficient volume by setting daily budgets at least 10x tCPA or Min $100/day.

Bidding Thresholds:

- Daily budget for Target* campaigns are >=10x CPA
- Daily budget for Max* campaigns are >=$100
- **Full Funnel Tracking**
  Track all actions (shallow + deep); optimize for Deep.

Scale with AI Targeting

Find your next high-value users dynamically.

Drive efficient scale by leveraging AI-based Targeting with first-party data seedlists.

- **Optimized Targeting**
  Enable OT with 1PD seedlist.
- **Target 1PD**
  Target high-value segments directly.
- **Growth Strategy**
  Use new customer acquisition (NCA) goals

Maximize Creative Variety

Tell your story across every asset and surface.

Achieve full coverage by maintaining variety across vertical, square, and horizontal aspect ratios.

- **Creative Variety**
  Meet all 3 aspect ratio requirements
- **Automation**
  Link Product Feed & use AI enhancements for creatives
- **Specialized Ads**
  Use creator partnerships boost or Shorts.

Demand Gen
Tips for Retail

Data Strength

Enable seamless app shopping. Use **Web to App Connect** to unlock higher ROI by connecting Demand Gen campaigns to your app experience.

Advertisers using Web to App Connect see significantly higher conversion rates – on average **2x higher for conversion rates** on YouTube.

Conversion Volume

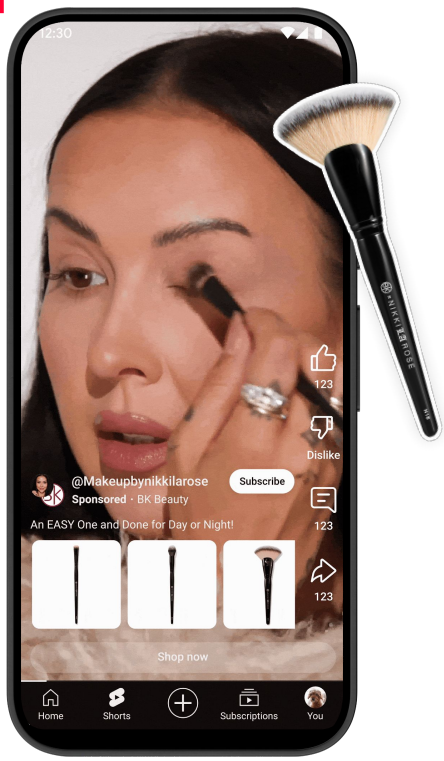
Plan for shopping peaks. Use **Performance Planner** to land on the right bid and budget settings to capture increased holiday demand.

Adjust your budget. Before scaling, use the campaign **Bid Simulator** in the UI to forecast traffic impact from bid increases. Continuously monitor and adjust your budget according to results and goals for a competitive advantage.

Optimize campaign performance. Use **campaign total budgets** if your campaign is flighted with a fixed budget for a sale, discount, or promotion. If your main goal is budget utilization over performance, use the Max Conversions or Max Conversion Value bidding strategy, depending on your specific goals.

Demand Gen

Tips for Retail



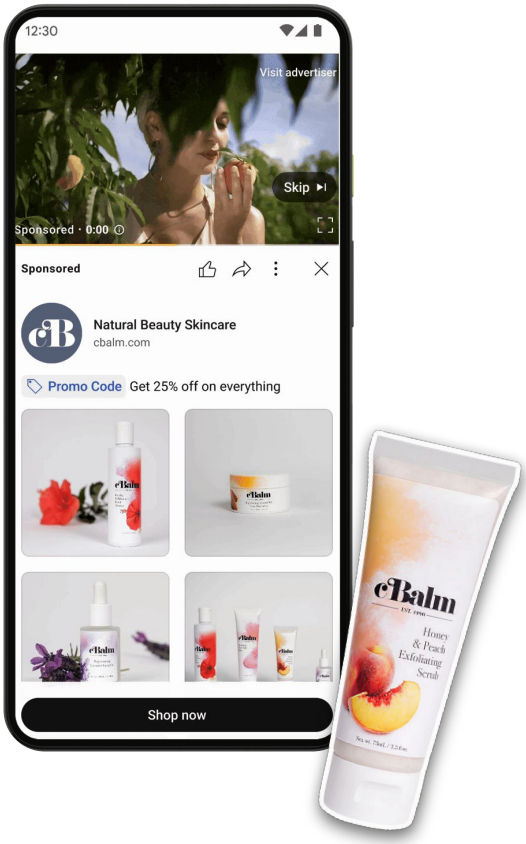
AI Targeting

Find more high value customers. Reach new users that are similar to your existing high value customers (e.g. recent purchasers) by leveraging **lookalike segments**. Add users who've engaged with your brand on external media channels and YouTube creator data segments to your seed list to maximize your reach.

Creative Variety

Boost GMV driving creator content. Merchants onboarded to the **YouTube Shopping Affiliate Program** can use Demand Gen with Affiliate Partnerships Boost to scale authentic, creator content through a commission-based model.

Communicate promotions. Boost engagement by adding dollar or percent-off discounts via **Promotion Assets**. These appear as bold, clickable tags and can be applied directly to existing campaigns—no need to build from scratch.



Product Feeds

Product feeds allow you to turn your product catalog into a virtual storefront directly on YouTube

Keep Product Data Accurate & Up-to-Date

Verify titles, descriptions, utilize [short_title] (<65 chars), check image links are live, landing page URLs are correct, and [price] / [sale_price] attributes are accurate.

Use the highest quality images, to ensure best performance

Submit the largest, highest resolution, full-size image you have for the product, up to 64 megapixels. We recommend images of at least 300 x 300 pixels.

Sync Feed Availability with Stock Levels

Regularly synchronize feed inventory with actual stock levels using the [availability] attribute. Ensure products are set as available only in regions where you can fulfill orders.

Ensure Sufficient Product Variety

If using manual product filters in the campaign, make sure at least 50 approved and relevant products are selected. For marketing creatives promoting specific products, categories, or brands, use filters to narrow the product feed to match.

Optimize titles with [short_title]

Review and edit the [short_title] attribute for key products to be concise (<65 characters), clear, and highlight compelling features or benefits visible in Demand Gen placements.

Align Campaign Location Targeting with Feed

Go to Google Ads campaign settings, navigate to 'Locations', and ensure your location targeting precisely matches the regions where the products in your feed are intended to be sold and shipped.

By focusing on these checklist items, you can proactively optimize your Demand Gen campaigns and product feeds for better performance, especially around promotional events.

Product Feeds

Product feeds allow you to turn your product catalog into a virtual storefront directly on YouTube

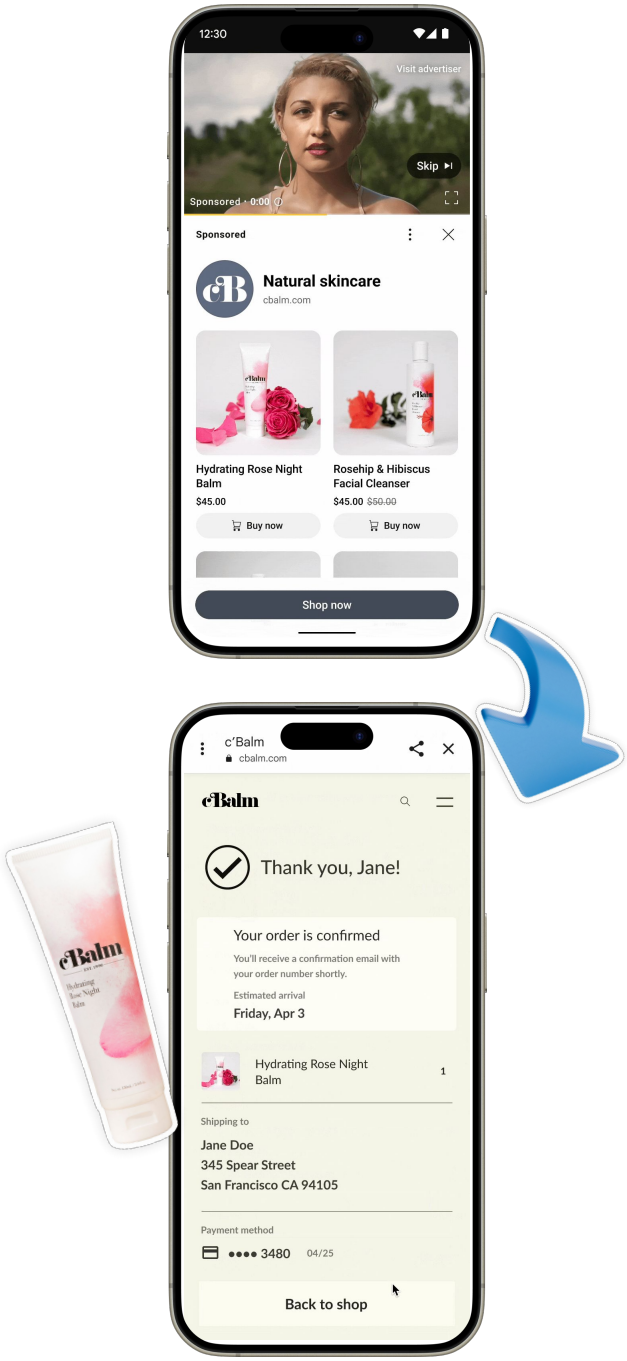
Instructions on adding product feeds to your Demand Gen campaigns can be found here.

Demand Gen campaigns with large product selections typically see a 33% increase in conversions when adopting product feeds.

Source: Google data, Global, May to June 2025, based on performance data for campaigns active since Q1 2024 with over 50 products in merchant feed

Checkout

YouTube offers two distinct checkout journeys to help advertisers reduce friction and drive conversions based on their technical needs.



Checkout links

- **Streamline Checkout Process:** Enabling checkout links on YouTube, allows viewers a more streamlined purchase experience and improve conversions.
- **Optimize Feed Data:** Ensure that all product information—including price, product titles, images—is accurate and up to date, as discrepancies can cause issues.
- **Optimize for All Video Formats:** Ensure that your checkout-enabled ads are optimized for both horizontal and vertical video formats. This allows you to reach customers on all parts of the YouTube platform, including Shorts.

Instructions on adding checkout links to your products can be found here.

On average, advertisers who provide Checkout URLs achieve an 11% increase in Conversion Value* at similar CPA/ROAS in their Demand Gen campaigns.

*Conversion value defined as a minimum of $250 or advertiser chosen value (US, Feb 2025)

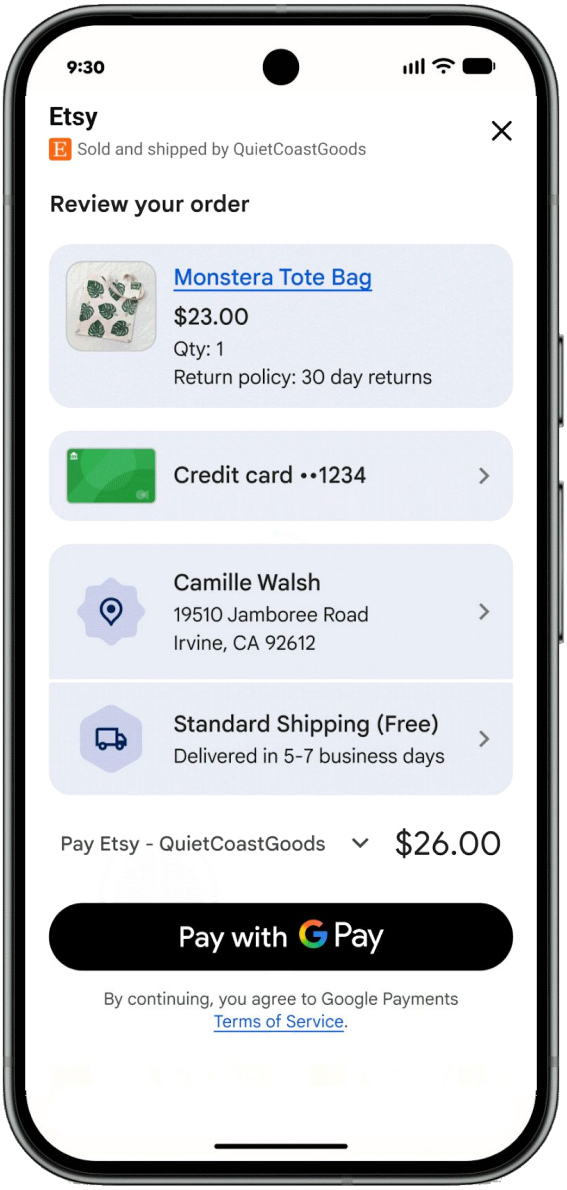
Checkout

YouTube offers two distinct checkout journeys to help advertisers reduce friction and drive conversions based on their technical needs.

UCP-enabled checkout

- **Ensure Real-Time Inventory Syncing:** To prevent out of stock issues and customer frustration, maintain a real-time or near-real-time synchronization between your feed's inventory data and your actual stock levels. Use the [availability] attribute in your product feed to reflect accurate stock status.
- **Clear and Strong Call-to-Action:** Use a clear and direct call-to-action (CTA) in your ad, such as "Shop Now" or "Buy Now," to prompt users to enter the checkout flow.
- **Utilize AI:** Leverage AI-based targeting with your first-party data to reach high-value customers who are most likely to convert through a quick-buy experience. This will help you maximize your return on ad spend.

Learn more on how to integrate the checkout feature powered by Universal Commerce Protocol here.



Native quick buy flow

Affiliate Partnerships Boost

Introducing an expansion to creator partnerships boost that allows you to **leverage organic YouTube affiliate videos** at scale. Creators enrolled in the YouTube Shopping affiliate program already earn commissions on sales generated from tagged products in their videos. **Affiliate creators can now expand this monetization model to ads traffic by providing licensing rights** to advertisers in exchange for commissions. This means as the advertiser, you will now have access to a library of pre-consented creator content, allowing you to boost content at scale with just a few steps.

Initiate eligibility requirements

Share signatory info with your Google rep, so they can share the click-to-sign terms with you. Ensure that your Google Ads account is linked to an affiliate Google Merchant Center account.

Discover and select creator content

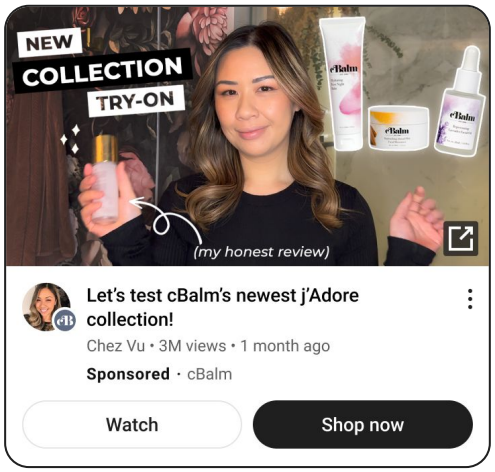
Your Google Rep will send you affiliate creator content recommendations. Browse through and find videos that you want to boost, making sure they are marked as consented.

Setup DG campaign and submit for allowlisting

Add the consented video to a **paused** Demand Gen campaign, following best practices and attaching an affiliate GMC feed. Submit the campaign ID to your Google rep for allowlisting review.

Go live! Review performance.

Once approved, your Google rep will inform you, and you can **unpause your campaign to go live**. Campaign performance reporting will be shared, and we welcome your product feedback.



No creator negotiations necessary.

Only pay commissions on generated sales.

MORE CONVERSIONS:

Ads from boosted videos that live on the creator's channel drove up to 20% higher conversions on the Shorts feed.

UNPARALLELED VIEWER TRUST:

Online users are **98**% more likely to trust the recommendations of creators on YouTube vs. those on other social sites/apps (on average).

This is a limited Beta and only available for advertisers who are part of the YouTube Shopping affiliate program.
Contact your Google Rep to express interest. Participation is not guaranteed.