GOOGLE SHOPPING

BEST PRACTICES

ACHIEVE 1,000% ROAS OUT OF YOUR E-COMMERCE SITE

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WHY GOOGLE SHOPPING?

THE PLATFORM IS MORE THAN JUST A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR TODAY'S WEB-SAVVY SHOPPERS. IT'S A CERTIFIED RAINMAKER.

For consumers, Google Shopping is a convenient place to find products at the best prices. But for retailers, it is a fantastic tool for selling goods, building ad campaigns, and increasing online visibility.

Google Shopping has become such a popular marketing platform, its ads now produce more than 85% of retail paid search clicks and a return on ad spend (ROAS) of up to 1,000% or higher, reports Disruptive Advertising. To maximise such revenue potential, when launching ad campaigns on Google Shopping, sellers must think strategically.

The Google Shopping algorithm evaluates the products on your website, to determine whether your categories match the popular keywords that online buyers use. Follow the guidelines listed here to better understand this algorithm and more important, to optimise your website's product listings.

PRODUCT ID

This is the unique ID you use to identify a specific product in your store. When assigning a product ID, use either the SKU number or the ID number generated by your own store platform. Note that you can use the same product ID when listing your product in other languages, such as for targeting customers in a multilingual market.

PRODUCT TITLE

You can use up to 150 characters on your product title. However, the Google Shopping Portal displays only the first 75 to 100 characters and even less on the main listing page (only the first 35). Work within this limit to capture the buyer's attention, by front-loading your product title with your most important keywords.

WARNING: Avoid using clickbait text like "20% discount" or "limited time offer" in your titles. They take up precious space and do nothing for your SEO ranking.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

You can write a product description of up to 5,000 characters, but only the first 175 are displayed on the Google Shopping portal. So, choose your text wisely and put your main keywords up front.

Aim to attract both potential leads and search engines. But if you had to pick only one, always optimise for your target customers first.

Keep product descriptions precise: maximum information, minimal words.

PRODUCT CATEGORY

This attribute is optional, but Google will automatically assign a category to your product. Rather than leave it to Shopping, manually select one from the list of predefined values on the Google Product Taxonomy. Make your product category specific, to increase the visibility of individual products, as well as bundled products.

PRODUCT TYPE

While not required, the product type is extremely useful. Use it as a subcategory for organising your products in your campaigns. Moreover, Google Shopping allows you to type in your own product type, instead of having to select from a predefined list. Maximum flexibility.

When assigning a product type therefore, take advantage by using the entire string. This will come in handy later with separating or filtering out products, when you set up your campaigns.

LANDING PAGE

When a buyer clicks on your listing on the Google Shopping Portal, they are directed to the landing page - that is, the product page on your website. Keep your product prominent on this page, plus a carefully written description and list of features. Everything needs to be consistent, from the title and description to the price and image.

A bit of warning:
- Pop-ups. If you must have them, be sure they don't block the view or distract the customer from the goal: to buy your product.
- 404 errors. Page not found. Server not found. Zero conversions! Make sure your landing pages work 24/7.

More and more of today's shoppers are using their phones and gadgets to find and buy products online. Optimise your landing page for desktop display but also for viewing on mobile and other handheld devices.

PRODUCT IMAGE

When looking at an ad, the product image is the first thing that buyers see, and what they see will inevitably influence their decision to purchase. Google Shopping pulls product images directly from your own website; therefore, always use photos that are clear, crisp, and high-resolution. In fact, photo selection is so important that Google may refuse to run your campaign, if the quality of your images is habitually substandard.

What makes for a good photo?

The featured product must be prominent and take up between 75% and 90% of the entire image. It must catch attention and pop out from the background. Images that are blurred, pixelated, or watermarked are a no-no.

Steer away from stock imagery. Instead, hire a professional photographer or if you're keen, learn how to take photos yourself using a high-quality camera. If you can, try to feature regular people using your product and take as many photos as you need at multiple angles, until you capture that money shot. Practice makes perfect!

What about SEO?

Most important, prepare your image files not just for your own tracking purposes but also for SEO advantages. This starts with proper file naming.

Refrain from uploading images using the default DSC1234.jpg and the like. Take a few seconds to rename it using the keywords you want to rank for, which will then help web crawlers do what they need to do.

Furthermore, make sure to add a keyword-rich alt text (or alt tag) to every photo, to tell a customer - who came upon your listing all ready and willing to buy - what exactly is on the display.

IMAGE URL

This URL leads to the main product image on your website. Google uses it to display the image on the Shopping portal.

Keep your image URLs up-to-date and stable - that is, the link must stay constant, except if the file on the actual page is moved or replaced. Refrain from using URLs with a timestamp or other parts that can change each time you submit your product data.

CONDITION

When listing on Google Shopping, always be completely honest with the condition of the product, to prevent cognitive dissonance on the part of the buyer. Describe the item as new, refurbished, or used.

- New. The item is still in its original packaging and has never been opened, handled, or used.

- Refurbished. The product is not new, but it has been professionally restored to working order. It comes with a warranty, although it may not necessarily be in its original packaging.

- Used. The product has been used before, the original packaging has been opened, or the original packaging is missing.

AVAILABILITY

Product stockout is a major reason for shopping cart abandonment among Australians. How to avoid revenue loss? Correctly indicate on your landing page the state of product availability - select from in-stock, out of stock, or pre-order - and match it with the account shipping settings.

Offer the latest information regarding product availability, and make sure it gets updated automatically or manually after each purchase. Do not use the out-of-stock option for products that you're not selling anymore; instead, remove all discontinued products from your product data.

PRICE

Keep the price and currency on Google Shopping consistent with those on your original landing page. Do not include any shipping costs or import/export duties in your price; use a maximum of two digits after the decimal point (ex. $9.25); and make sure that the price will not change based on the user's location.

If your product needs to be transported to the end consumer, on your website, display both the shipping charges and the minimum shipping order size and show them separately. If you accept multiple currencies, you can display your own country's currency and simply enable conversion into other currencies, based on the latest exchange rates.

UNIQUE PRODUCT IDENTIFIERS

The UPI defines the product you're selling on the global marketplace and distinguishes it from similar items offered by other sellers. It also helps match your potential buyer's search queries with your offers. Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs), Manufacturer Part Numbers (MPNs), and brand names are common UPIs used today.

Not all products have unique identifiers. But if your item does have one, enter it on the Google Shopping Portal. Supplying a UPI will help make your campaigns richer and can reduce user effort to find your products. But if your product listing does not have a UPI, you can still list it explicitly in the product data.

Google Shopping can help any retailer increase website traffic and boost its revenues. When used properly, it is an effective platform that reduces the complicated online buying process down to a few clicks.

Ready to gain a bigger bang out of your online advertising buck? Digital Excellence has helped top companies like Google, MyTrendyPhone.com, and WallCann execute on their online marketing targets and maximise their ROAS.

Read our guide, Top 10 Google Shopping Mistakes and How to Avoid Them, and start getting the most out of your online campaigns today.

Let's have a chat about how we can help take your business to the next level. Call Peter Crone at 618 7200 4771 or email pc@digitalexcellence.global.