

6 steps to creating a better Performance Max campaign with Google

Article

As brands seek ways to stretch their marketing budgets, advertisers may lean on automation technology, like Google's Performance Max campaign tool, to help them create more cost-efficient campaigns.

With Performance Max, advertisers can optimize campaigns across all of Google's channels, including YouTube, Display, Search, Discover, Gmail, and Maps.

Here are some **best practices** on creating and measuring Performance Max campaigns and pro tips from Ginny Marvin, Google Ads' product liaison, plus a look at **what features are being rolled out now and in the near future**.

1. Pick conversion goals that matter to your business and set values for your conversions

Conversion goals make it easier to define and manage which conversion actions advertisers want to measure. And by assigning higher values to more important conversions, the campaign automatically prioritizes the type of conversions that are best for the business.

For example, if the goal is to acquire new customers, users can set up a new customer acquisition goal, which enables advertisers to bid higher for or only bid on new customers.

Pro tip: The best way to determine conversion value is to use Google's offline conversion imports, which will bring in transaction-specific values for your sales, said Marvin during the **Paid Search Association's annual conference**. But if that's not possible, there are also **ways to calculate the average value** of a specific stage in your conversion funnel.

2. Choose the right budget and bid strategy

Use existing campaigns as examples. Simulators can also be used to estimate performance based on target and budget.

Performance Max uses Smart Bidding to set bids in real time for every auction. Advertisers can set their bid strategy to drive conversions, return on ad spend (ROAS), or cost per action (CPA).

Coming soon: According to Google, budget pacing insights will help optimize campaign cost and performance and give advertisers an opportunity to change or redistribute their budgets to drive more conversions.

Pro tip: "You need to give this time to learn. So once you've assigned a value to your conversion action, we recommend that you wait for six weeks to watch and learn and gather data before making any bidding strategy changes," said Marvin.

3. Keep Final URL expansion on to drive more conversions

The Final URL expansion enables advertisers to match the clickthrough URL on an ad with the most relevant landing page based on the search query and intent. The feature can be turned off if advertisers only want to drive users to one landing page.

Coming soon: In the coming months, advertisers will be able to upload a feed of page URLs when using the Final URL expansion, according to Google. When the expansion is on, the list helps and informs Google's AI, but it isn't restricted to just those URLs. When it is off, however, the page feeds restrict matching to just the URLs provided.

4. Upload a variety of creative assets to your asset group

The more assets advertisers provide, the more ad formats the campaign can create and the more inventory ads can appear on. Google advises using high-quality images, a video that's at least 10 seconds long, and text assets that differ meaningfully from each other but make sense when combined together.

New feature: The video creation tool now appears right in the assets section of Performance Max. (Previously it was only available in the asset library.) It also provides users with templates to help advertisers create videos in different ratios or formats.

5. Add audience signals to indicate which audiences are more likely to convert

Performance Max users can add audience signals that guide the machine learning models on the ideal way to optimize a campaign. These audiences can be defined by interests, needs, behaviors, or goals.

Pro tip: Audience signals are more of a guide than a rule, said Marvin. "Audience signals are not used as hard targeting constraints," she said. "They are used to help guide and inform the system and speed up the learning."

6. Evaluate and optimize your performance

There are a few ways advertisers can evaluate and optimize campaigns.

Google recommends focusing on performance metrics that align with the bid strategy. Advertisers with a bid strategy meant to maximize conversions should be looking at metrics

like CPA, whereas advertisers with bid strategies meant to maximize conversion value should consider ROAS.

It's also wise to compare conversion performance before and after adding Performance Max to establish a baseline.

Asset reporting gives advertisers insights into which creative assets are performing well. It also shares which combination of assets have performed best, along with the ability to preview ads by channel.

New features: Account-level negative keywords provide advertisers with the ability to exclude traffic and queries that they don't want to reach.

Coming soon: Asset group reporting will give advertisers the ability to see conversions, conversion value, cost, and other metrics at an asset group level. In addition, campaign-level brand exclusions let advertisers control which brands a campaign will match to.