

# Google

## Shopping Campaigns

Best Practices & Feed Optimization Checklist

**GoDataFeed**

[www.godatafeed.com](http://www.godatafeed.com)

# Google Shopping Campaigns Best Practices

As we enter the holiday season once again, it's a great time to take a look at your Google Shopping Campaign product listings. To outperform your competition, you need to ensure your listings are optimized so potential buyers can easily find them.

Luckily, Google hasn't made huge changes like they did last year – the biggest one is the new “Buy” button, and that's something that is going to appear automatically (easy for you!). There are, however, still a number of smaller but still significant updates that you need to be aware of. Changes have been made to shopping feed specs and product taxonomy that can impact consumer searches.

In this guide, you'll find details about the updates to Google Shopping Campaigns since last year as well as best practices to keep your product feed ahead of the curve.



## Product Titles

Be as specific as possible. The more detail you provide, the more likely you are to attract shoppers who are actively looking to buy your products.

For example:

**Bad:** “Men's Shirt”

**Good:** “Men's black Nike t-shirt with swoosh logo and Just Do It – Medium”

When writing your titles, consider these tips:

- **Don't include items such as product IDs, SKU#, ISBN codes.** Not only will you pay more for adding in this unnecessary information, it can even hurt the searchability of your products.
- **Color matters.** Using “unique” color names, such as “sea foam” or “tangerine” can reduce impressions to your product. To maximize the number of hits you get, choose primary colors instead. For example, instead of tangerine, use orange.
- **Place important information early.** The most relevant information should appear in the first 25 characters. Color, brand, and type of product are examples of things that should always be near the beginning.
- **Don't leave any empty fields.** To the best of your ability, try to fill out every applicable product attribute field that Google includes.
- **Keep titles brief.** Google will issue a warning for titles with more than 70 characters. In most cases, only 70 or fewer characters will be displayed.

### IMPORTANT CHARACTER LIMITS

**ID:** 50 character limit

**Title:** 50-70 characters recommended (up to 150 characters allowed)

**Description:** 500 to 1,000 characters recommended (up to 5,000 characters allowed)

**General, Mobile or Image Links:** 2,000 (and be sure to include the http:// or https:// at the beginning of the link)



## Product Descriptions

Google allows up to 5,000 characters for Product Descriptions, but it's recommended to stay between 500 and 1,000.

- **Always include:** You can go above and beyond this information, but don't neglect it if it is applicable to your products.
  - Size
  - Shape
  - Pattern
  - Texture
  - Design
  - Material
  - Intended age range
  - Special features
  - Technical specs



### Beats by Dre Studio Over Ear Headphones

★★★★★ 11 product reviews

Beats by Dr. Dre · Over-ear · Studio · Headphones · Noise Canceling

Know that feeling you get when the beat drops? Multiply that by the good vibes generated by hearing the bass throb in your recycled-plastic headphones, add in a hefty comfort .

**\$299.95**

Free shipping. No tax

Shop

- **Do not include:** It is vital that you follow these editorial guidelines if you don't want Google to remove or suspend your ad. Your description should never have:
  - Promotional text like "Free shipping" or "On Sale Now"
  - BLOCK CAPITALS SUCH AS THESE
  - A description of your company or brand
  - Details or descriptions of other products or accessories
  - Comparison to other products that you are selling (e.g., twice as fast as X)
  - Links to your store (or other websites)
  - Information on billing, payment or sales
  - References to categorization systems that you use internally (e.g., Computers > Laptops > Touch Screens Laptops)
- **How information should be preferred:** When your product comes up in a search, only the very beginning of the description will be visible -generally speaking, the first line or so. That means, just like with the Product Title, the most important information should appear first. Things like:
  - Brand
  - Products type (e.g., sandal, computer, fish bowl)
  - Who it's for
  - And then whatever information seems most important for your product from the "always include" list above

It's okay to give your description some personality, but make sure you offer up the most important details first so people know if your product is what they're looking for.






## Revisit Product Categories





Since last year, certain categories have been changed, added, or eliminated altogether. In particular, you want to pay attention to the below categories.

### IMPORTANT CATEGORY CHANGES

#### Retooled Significantly

-  Arts & Entertainment
-  Apparel
-  Decor
-  Hardware
-  Sporting Goods
-  Motor Vehicle Parts & Accessories

#### New Subcategories Added

-  Food
-  Beverages
-  Tobacco
-  Mature Content



## Don't Overlook Negative Keywords

Negative keywords allow you to select words that do not apply to your business or product.

For example, let's say your business sells iPhones. There are probably a number of terms including "iPhone" that you might want to use as keywords, such as "iPhone reviews," "iPhone deals," and so on. One that you likely wouldn't want, however, is "iPhone repair." So in this case, if you select "repair" as a negative keyword and someone types in "iPhone repair," your listing won't appear for them.



## Keep it fresh

You not only need to send Google accurate data about your products, you need to send it frequently and consistently.

- **It prevents Google from disapproving your feeds.** If you don't meet Google's accuracy standards, they will remove your product until you have updated the information, causing you to lose out on sales opportunities.
- **It allows you to ensure pricing and inventory are correct.** Mistakes on information like this can lead to upset customers, unexpected expenses, and missed sales opportunities.
- **Google tends to preference and promote listing with fresh information.** Google likes it when businesses update their listings frequently and has been known to preference products and companies that "keep it fresh."



## Keep it real

Make sure your merchant promotion has real value. In other words, if you're going to offer some kind of sale, make sure it's a good one.

- **It matters to searchers.** Merchant promotions, such as sales, discounts, and extras, raise your click-through rate. For example, if you're offering 25% off on a particular lawn mower, you can add that as a promotion, and people will be able to see it immediately when it pops up on their search.
- **It matters to Google.** Not only is your sale potentially going to be compared to others for the same product, Google actually decides which promotions to display by comparing them to other ads around them. So if you're offering 5% off and a competitor is offering 15%, people are more likely to be shown your competitor's ad – your promotion is essentially wasted.

"A good, clear, professional image can sway people to click on your product."

## Use picture best practices

Many customers choose or discount your product based on the image alone. A good, clear, professional image can sway people to click on your product, while a sloppy or confusing one is likely to lose you sales.

- **Stand out.** Vary the camera angles so your products look different from those of your competitors.
- **Keep them clean.** Don't use images that have watermarks on them.
- **Focus your message.** Though it can be tempting to try to advertise for more than one product, don't include multiple products within the same image. This is more likely to confuse potential customers than anything else.
- **Leave some white space.** But not too much. It's recommended that the product take no less than 75% but no more than 90% of the entire image.

## Bidding Strategies: Use Feed Optimization to Guide Your Campaigns

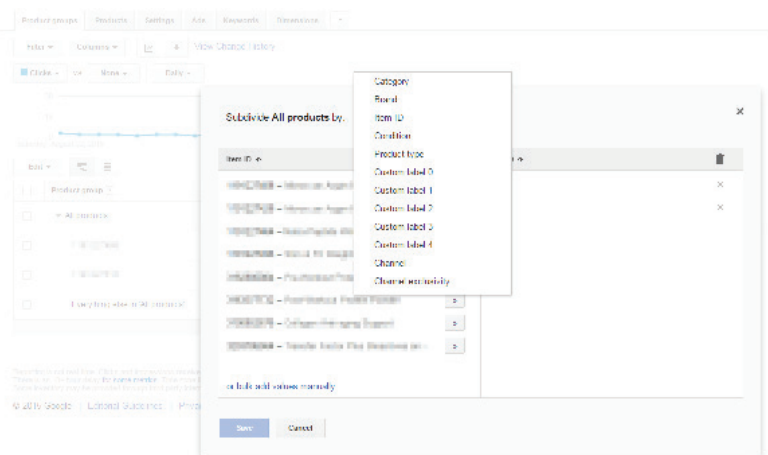
One of the best things that having an optimized feed can do for you is to serve as a guide and streamlining force when planning bidding strategies. This only works, though, if you strive to be as detailed in your product information as possible so you can benefit from the ability to segment different product types into like groups.

## Segment Product Groups by Category, Brand, etc.

Shopping Campaigns gives you the ability to create product groups. In fact, when you start a new campaign, this actually defaults to "All products." However, you don't have to keep this default. You can subdivide product groups by any number of the product attributes you entered for each item, such as:

- Category (Google specific category)
- Product type (Your store's category)
- Brand
- Condition
- Item ID
- Custom labels

Product groups can also be removed depending on your needs, and individual items can be removed from product groups. This is very important to know, because a product can only be in one "biddable product group" for each ad group.



"Be as specific as possible. The more detail you provide, the more likely you are to attract searchers who are truly looking for your products."



## Use Custom Labels

These allow you to categorize your products in any way you want and the information will only show up internally. Examples of common Custom Labels include Seasonal, Best Sellers, High ROI, and so on. You can use these specific values to monitor, report, and bid within your campaigns.

## Five Common Strategies Using Custom Labels

1

**Price Point.** Let's say you've got some products as low as \$10 and as high as \$10,000. In order to get the best ROI, your max CPC for the less expensive products should be significantly lower than the max CPC for higher priced items. Unfortunately, Google still doesn't allow you to segment your products by price, so you have to do this manually using Custom Labels.

The basic idea is that you group your products based on price and select a max CPC for each group. For example, a group that is \$30-\$99 might have a max CPC of \$1, while your highest-priced group - \$5,000 & Up - has a max CPC of \$10.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Ad group <span>↑</span>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Price point - \$5,000 +
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Price point - \$2,000 - \$4,999
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Price point - \$1,500 - \$1,999
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Price point - \$1,000 - 1,499
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Price point - \$999 & Under

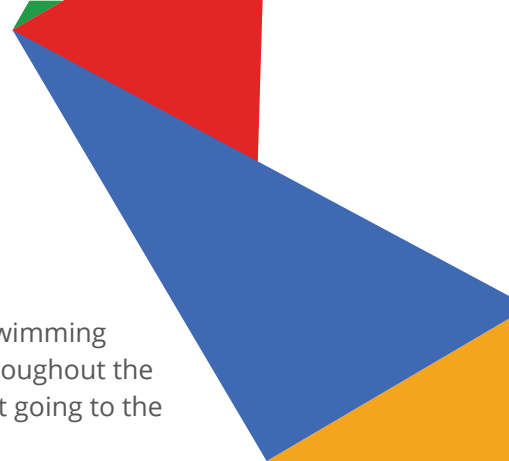
2

**High ROI.** Also known as bidding by margins, instead of grouping products by sales price, you segment them by the profit you make. It's different from price point bidding because two items that are selling for the same amount of money may have very different profit margins.

An example of this is a \$250 auto part that sells for \$500 vs. a \$400 lawnmower that sells for \$500. Yes, both sell for the same amount, but you are earning significantly more from the sale of the auto part.

To properly bid in this way, you need to know the profit margin on each of your products so you can segment them into groups labeled by those amounts and put more of your ad spend toward products netting you a better ROI.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Ad group <span>↑</span>	Status <span>?</span>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	\$101 - \$250	Eligible
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	\$20 & Under	Eligible
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	\$21 - \$50	Eligible
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	\$251 & Up	Eligible
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	\$51 - \$100	Eligible



### 3

**Seasonality.** Do you sell holiday items? Back to school gear? Swimming attire? Kites? Seasonality is a way to modify your bidding strategy throughout the year to reflect when season-specific items are actually selling without going to the trouble of adding and removing them.

By segmenting your products into season-specific groups, you can raise bids when items are in season and decrease them (often significantly) at those times when they are less likely to be selling. The benefits of doing this is that you can still get the odd off-season sale while keeping your ROI where you want it.

### 4

**Clearance Items.** There are two ways to go when labeling products with a "Clearance" tag. If your goal is to get rid of low-selling items as fast as possible so that you can make room for new merchandise, you can raise your max CPC to increase the chance of potential customers seeing them. Alternatively, since your profit margins on clearance items are bound to be lower than for other products, you could lower your bids to maintain a strong ROI.

### 5






**Best Sellers.** Generally speaking, it's a smart strategy for businesses to focus on promoting items that are selling well while decreasing their marketing budget for products that sit on shelves (real or otherwise) for longer.

Segment your products into groups based on how well they're selling and you can increase or decrease your bids accordingly to get the best possible return on investment.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Ad group
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Main
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Top Performers
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Poor Performers
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Category 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Category 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Category 3

Shop for beautyrest plush mattress on Google

Sponsored ⓘ

 Simmons Beautyrest Recharge \$779.99 Sleepy's ★★★★★ (25)	 Simmons Beautyrest Recharge \$549.00 DealBeds.com	 Queen Simmons Beautyrest Recharge Adda II Plush Mattress \$518.00 US-Mattress.com Free shipping, no tax	 Simmons Beautyrest Recharge \$599.00 DealBeds.com	 King Simmons Beautyrest Recharge \$671.00 US-Mattress.com Special offer
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# Google Shopping Feed Optimization Checklist

## Product Titles

- ✓ Be as detailed as possible.
- ✓ Don't include product IDs, SKU numbers, ISBN codes, and so on in titles.
- ✓ Use primary colors.
- ✓ Write the most important info first.
- ✓ Aim for 50-70 characters in length.

## Product Descriptions

- ✓ Always include important items like size, shape, design, material, and special features.
- ✓ Never include promotional text, links, or information about other products or billing.
- ✓ Write the most important info first.

## Revisit Product Categories

- ✓ Google has made changes this year. Make sure your categories reflect these updates.
  - \* Google discontinued all activewear categories in Apparel and combined similar product types into a more general rule; i.e. sweaters and polos are now combined in 'Apparel & Accessories > Clothing > Shirts & Tops'.
  - \* Another example of condensed categories are Media items, such as Software, Books, Music and Movies; they are no longer categorized by genre or format.
  - \* Categories are more granular now. Pay close attention to categories under Arts & Entertainment and Mature. New categories were also added more categories to the verticals "Food, Beverages & Tobacco" and "Mature".

## Negative Keywords

- ✓ Select words that do not apply to your products to prevent your items from showing up in irrelevant searches.

## Product Data

- ✓ Make sure it's accurate.
- ✓ Send it frequently.

## Promotion

- ✓ Make sure your promotion has real value.

## Product Images

- ✓ Vary camera angles.
- ✓ Don't use watermarks.
- ✓ Only one product per image.
- ✓ Use high-res images that fill an 800 x 800 pixel space at minimum.

## Product Data

- ✓ Segment items by Product Groups.
- ✓ Use Custom Labels to segment by price point, ROI, seasonality, clearance items, or best sellers.