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# A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO GOOGLE SHOPPING CAMPAIGNS



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## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS A GOOGLE SHOPPING AD?

Shopping ads show users a photo of your product, a title, price, store name, and more. They appear across the Google Network (including GDN sites, SERPs and YouTube) and across all devices. Google ads are based on your brand's product feed and use Shopping Campaigns (AdWords) to promote both your on and offline inventory, boost traffic to your website or store, and aim to deliver better qualified leads and high intention traffic.

### WHAT IS A GOOGLE SHOPPING CAMPAIGN

Google's 'Shopping Campaigns' allow you to manage and optimise your Shopping ads in order to promote your products online. Offering a flexible way to organise your Google Merchant Center (GMC) inventory, Shopping Campaigns offer a relatively simple way to create customised campaigns.

By making all of your product data accessible from your AdWords account, Shopping Campaigns allow you to browse your product inventory, organise it and plan decisions about your ad strategy.

Shopping Campaigns employ product groups to select which products to bid on for your campaign. You can divide your stock in to customised groups (category, product type, brand, condition, item ID, etc.). The products which remain without subdivision will then remain in an 'Everything else' product group. You can then set bids per product group depending on your goals.

# CREATING YOUR DATA FEED

## WHAT IS A DATA FEED?

A data feed is a file which comprises of a list of your products, using groupings of accepted attributes which define each product in a unique way. While attributes such as the condition and availability attributes have standard value, others – such as ‘id’ or ‘title’ are unique user inputs. Describing your items using both required and suggested attributes will help consumers to easily search for and find your items. This feed is then uploaded to Google Merchant Center for use in Shopping Campaigns.

## WHAT IS GOOGLE MERCHANT CENTER?

A Google Tool, Merchant Center allows you to upload your brand’s products and data to make it available for Google Shopping and other services. In order to advertise specific products in SERPs (see right), you will need to: have a Merchant Center account, upload your product data, and create a Shopping campaign in [Google AdWords](#).

### Shop for shoes

Sponsored ⓘ



**Gucci, Platform sneakers -...**  
**£640.00**  
mytheresa.com...  
By Google



**ZARA Women Block Heel Shoes**  
**£19.99**  
zara.com  
By Google



**Valentino, Valentino...**  
**£650.00**  
mytheresa.com...  
By Google

## SIGN IN OR SIGN UP

To begin with, you’ll need to log-in or sign up to Google Merchant Center. The latter involves a few simple steps – including naming your store, agreeing to the T&Cs and verifying your site through either uploading an HTML file to your site, placing an HTML tag in your header, or via your Analytics or [Google Tag Manager](#) account.

We can leave Merchant Center there for the moment, because we won’t need it again until we upload our data feed.

About your business Terms & Conditions Website verification

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### Sign up for Google Merchant Center

Google Merchant Center is a platform where you can upload your store information and product data to show on Google.

You can use your product data to connect to your customers across the web. It's free to create an account and get started.

**About your business** Where is your business based?  
Select country ↕

What's the name of your store? ⓘ

What's your website? optional ⓘ  
Website URL

My site contains adult products as defined by [Google's policy](#)

**How to contact**

- Send me updates with tips and best practices
- Send opportunities to evaluate new features and participate in Google surveys  
Receive occasional surveys and evaluation opportunities to influence Merchant Center features. Your feedback helps us understand what works well and what features may need to be improved.

Add a different contact for customer service issues optional ⓘ

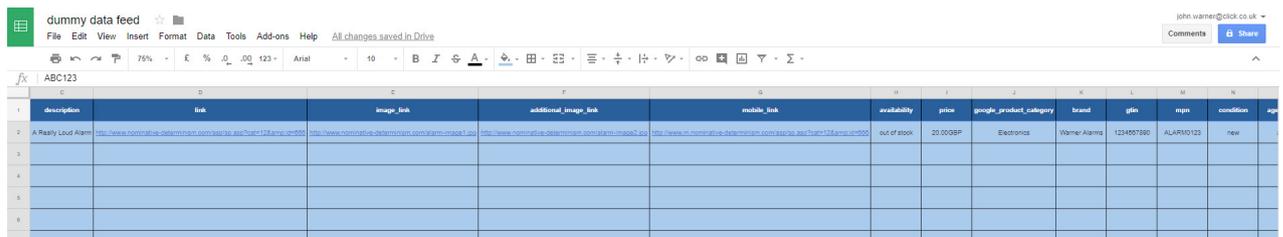
## CREATING A DATA FEED

While it's possible to create an XML feed, we're going to create a spreadsheet for ease (specifically Google Sheets – which I have literally done nothing but bang on about for weeks).

There are eight main types of data split into a fairly extensive variety of attributes. While not all of these are compulsory, we're only going to go through the basics here, so you can find a full list of the attributes [here](#).

## BASIC PRODUCT DATA

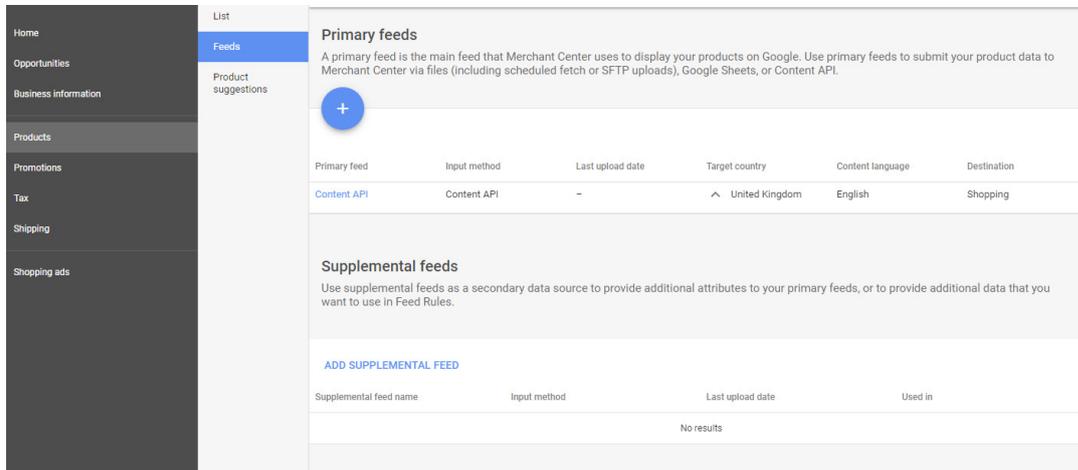
With these attributes in mind (and the other required attributes listed over at the Google Support site linked to above), you can now start to build out your data feed. The attribute names go in the column headers, with relevant data in the cells below. Any required fields not filled in will cause the associated product not to appear in Shopping Results.



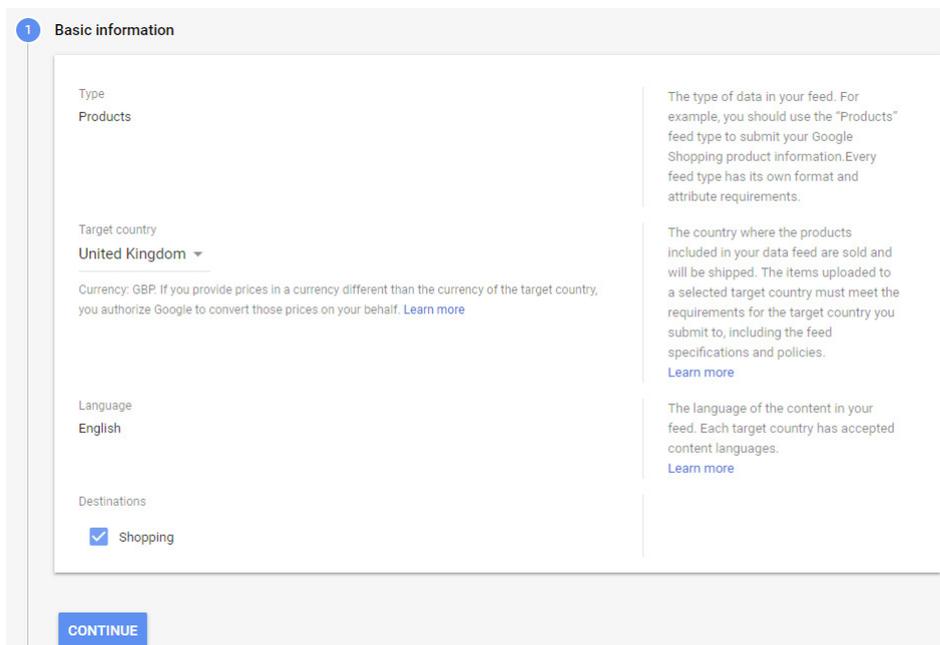
	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	description	link	image_link	additional_image_link	mobile_link	availability	price	google_product_category	brand	gfn	mpn	condition	age
2	A Really Loud Alarm	<a href="http://www.normality-electronics.com/gp/gp.asp?Item=112&amp;mpn=01500">http://www.normality-electronics.com/gp/gp.asp?Item=112&amp;mpn=01500</a>	<a href="http://www.normality-electronics.com/gp/image1.asp">http://www.normality-electronics.com/gp/image1.asp</a>	<a href="http://www.normality-electronics.com/gp/image2.asp">http://www.normality-electronics.com/gp/image2.asp</a>	<a href="http://www.normality-electronics.com/gp/gp.asp?Item=112&amp;mpn=01500">http://www.normality-electronics.com/gp/gp.asp?Item=112&amp;mpn=01500</a>	out of stock	20.00GBP	Electronics	Warner Alarms	1234567890	ALAR10123	new	
3													
4													
5													
6													

*Click to access dummy sheet*

Once the data feed spreadsheet is filled in, you can look to upload it to Merchant Center. First you'll need to return to GMC, select 'Products', then 'Feeds', then click the plus symbol to upload your data as a primary feed.



This will bring up a wizard – the first being 'Basic information' which asks you to select a 'type' for the feed, a target country and a target language, as well as offering a tick box to include the feed in 'Shopping'.



Step two is for the feed name and input method. Having completed the data feed setup in Google Sheets means you can select your sheet by highlighting the 'Google Sheets' option from the list.

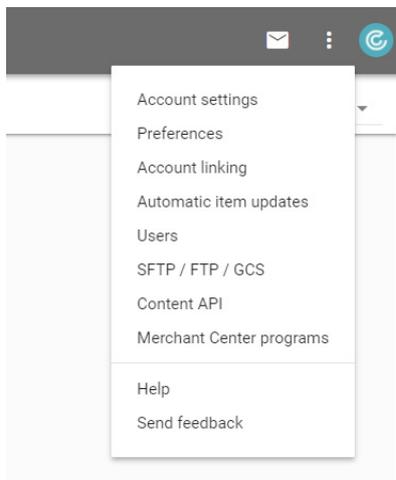
The screenshot shows a setup screen titled "2 Primary feed name and input method". It contains a text input field for "Primary feed name" and a section titled "Choose how to set up your feed and connect your data to Merchant Center." with four radio button options: "Google Sheets" (selected), "Scheduled fetch", "Upload", and "Content API". Each option has a brief description and a "Learn more" link. At the bottom are "CONTINUE" and "CANCEL" buttons.

The third and final step is to select an existing sheet and upload your feed.

The screenshot shows a setup screen titled "3 Setup". It contains a section titled "Register a Google spreadsheet." with two radio button options: "Generate a new Google spreadsheet from a template" (selected) and "Select an existing Google spreadsheet". There is also a collapsed section "Create an upload schedule (optional)". At the bottom are "CONTINUE" and "CANCEL" buttons.

In order to check your data, you can preview the list and their status by selecting 'List' from the 'Products' menu. Check carefully for errors.

## SETTING UP YOUR SHOPPING CAMPAIGN



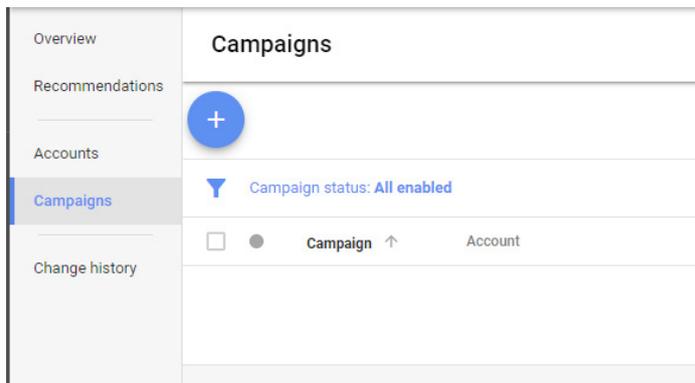
### Linking your accounts

The first step, between the previous blog on creating a data feed and this guide to setting up a shopping campaign, is to link your accounts. This is done in Google Merchant Center where, if you click on the top right hand menu (three dots), you can select 'Account linking'.

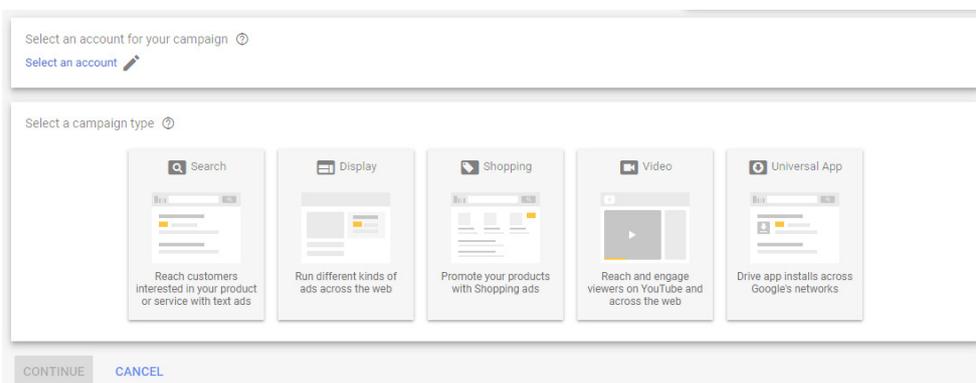
This will take you to the 'Account linking' page where you can select 'link account' and enter your AdWords customer ID. You can then select 'Send link request'.

### Creating your campaign

Once your accounts are linked, you'll need to begin a new campaign. You can do this in your AdWords account by selecting the 'Campaigns' option from the top menu, then again from the left side menu before adding your campaign with the blue plus button.



This will take you to a page from which you can select your campaign type (for the purposes of this, you'll obviously need to select 'Shopping').



You will then be able to select one of the four options that present themselves:

- **Sales** – the sales goal will steer your campaign choices in a manner designed to help you reach consumers at the point of purchase. This will allow you to:
  - Highlight your product/business
  - Increase your ROI through automated bidding
  - Boost sales through campaign optimisation, conversion tracking and audience lists.
- **Leads** – the leads goal will look to nudge you toward features and settings which may help to attract people to your business by:
  - Showing ads to people likely to be interested
  - Attracting consumers by promoting your brand with Showcase Shopping Ads
  - Bidding primarily for clicks to improve the number of leads
- **Website traffic** – this goal will encourage selection of settings/features which will help to increase traffic to your site:
  - Driving consumers to your store through Product Shopping Ads
  - Pushing click-throughs with ‘Maximise Clicks’ bidding.
  - Trying to reach as many potential consumers as possible while they browse and search.
- **No goal** – while you can select ‘Create your campaign without a goal’, it doesn’t remove your ability to add a goal later, essentially this option removes the guidance aspect of the above options.

Once you’ve selected your aim, you’ll be asked to select your GMC property and your target location.

Select a campaign type ⓘ

Search Display Shopping Video Universal App

Select the single goal that would make this campaign successful to you ⓘ

Sales

Leads

Website traffic

Get the right people to visit your website

The **website traffic** goal recommends settings and features to help you drive relevant customers to your website

- Drive new customers to your online store with Product Shopping ads
- Get as many clicks as possible within your budget with Maximise Clicks bidding
- Reach potential customers as they browse and research

Create your campaign without a goal ⓘ

Account

Select the Merchant Center account with products to advertise in this campaign ⓘ

Select account

Country of sale

Select the country where products are sold ⓘ

Select country

CONTINUE CANCEL

As the majority of Shopping Campaigns are to increase sales, we're going to proceed from here as though creating a 'Sales' targeted campaign (though much of the process remains the same).

Once you click continue, you will be presented with a number of options boxes; the first of which is 'Shopping campaign settings'.

Shopping campaign settings

Type: Shopping campaign Merchant: 102156875 Country of sale: United Kingdom

Campaign name Dummy Campaign

Inventory filter No filter: Advertise all products in the country of sale (recommended)

Local inventory ads Disabled

Campaign URL options No options set

## SHOPPING CAMPAIGN SETTINGS

These offer you the chance to assign a name and, if you need to, any inventory filters you want to add to the campaign, as well as adding custom URL parameters if there is a specific URL you want to send consumers through before they reach your landing page (if you are carrying out monitoring or tracking beyond that in AdWords and Analytics).

Bid settings

Bidding

Select your bid strategy ⓘ

Maximise clicks

Maximum CPC bid limit (optional) ⓘ

£

[Use a portfolio strategy](#)

With "Maximise clicks", AdWords automatically sets your bids to help get as many clicks as possible within your budget

A maximum CPC bid limit caps each cost per click bid. This could limit the clicks on your ad.

The strategy that you select here will be applied to this campaign only.

[Learn more](#)

## BID SETTINGS

Bid settings allows you to select a specific bidding strategy and, for some, a maximum cost per click (CPC):

- **Maximise clicks** - sets your bids automatically to earn as many clicks as possible for the total budget. You can set a maximum CPC with this option to limit the cost, but this can impact the number of clicks.
- **Target ROAS** – ROAS, or ‘return on advertising spend’ will set your bid to attempt to maximise conversions. You can set a percentage value for this, though the percentage is not a guarantee of success.
- **Manual CPC** – allows you set your own maximum CPC for your ads, removing the automated aspect.

The screenshot shows the 'Budget' section of a Google Ads campaign. It features a text input field with the placeholder 'Enter the average you want to spend each day' and a pound sign (£) to its left. Below the input field is a dropdown menu labeled 'Delivery method'. To the right of the input field is a help box with the text: 'For the month, you won't pay more than your daily budget times the average number of days in a month. Some days you might spend less than your daily budget, and on others you might spend up to twice as much. [Learn more](#)'.

## BUDGET

Budget is where you set the maximum spend for the day. While the spend may exceed or fail to meet this value on certain days, Google guarantees that your monthly spend will never exceed the daily spend on the account multiplied by the average number of days in the month.

You can choose either standard (evenly over time) or accelerated (as fast as possible) spend for whichever budget is selected by expanding the ‘Delivery method’ link.

The screenshot shows the 'Campaign priority' section of a Google Ads campaign. It features a heading 'Select a campaign priority' with a help icon. Below this are three radio button options: 'Low (default) – Recommended if you only have one Shopping campaign', 'Medium', and 'High'. To the right of the radio buttons is a help box with the text: 'When to use it: If you have multiple campaigns with one product, use campaign priority to decide which campaign's bid will be used. If campaigns have the same priority, the campaign with the higher bid will serve.'

## CAMPAIGN PRIORITY

This aids Google when it comes to deciding which bid to use if you have the same product in multiple campaigns. The campaign with the highest priority will decide the bid where applicable, otherwise it will default to the highest bid where all priorities are equal.

The screenshot shows the 'Targeting & Scheduling settings' interface. It is divided into three main sections: 'Networks', 'Devices', and 'Locations'.  
1. **Networks**: Includes a 'Search Network' section with a description: 'Ads can appear near Google Search results and other Google sites when people search for terms that are relevant to your keywords.' There is a checked checkbox for 'Include Google search partners'.  
2. **Devices**: A single line indicating 'Ads will show on all eligible devices by default'.  
3. **Locations**: A section titled 'Select locations to target' with three radio button options: 'All countries and territories', 'United Kingdom' (which is selected), and 'Enter another location'. Below these is a search input field with the placeholder 'Enter a location to target or exclude' and a link for 'Advanced search'.  
At the bottom, there are two buttons: 'SAVE AND CONTINUE' and 'CANCEL'.

## TARGETING & SCHEDULING SETTINGS

This section allows you to opt in to or out of the Search Network (appropriate Google partners), and to select a target location.

## AD GROUP CREATION

The following options screen gives you two types of shopping campaign to choose from:

- **Product Shopping** – which uses a single product from your feed to be promoted.
- **Showcase Shopping** – which allows you to select an array of products to better represent your brand as a whole.

The screenshot shows the 'Create an Ad Group' screen. At the top, it says 'Your ad group determines the type of ads you'll run and how you organise bidding on those ads. You can create more ad groups of both types later.'  
The main section is titled 'Ad group type' and 'Select ad group type'. It features two large cards:  
1. **Product Shopping**: A blue card with an image of a shoe and the text 'Promote individual products'.  
2. **Showcase Shopping**: A grey card with an image of multiple shoes and the text 'Promote a variety of products'. A green 'NEW FORMAT' badge is overlaid on the bottom right of this card.  
Below the cards is an input field for 'Ad group name'.  
At the bottom, there are two buttons: 'SAVE' and 'CANCEL'.

As a point of best practice, we tend to recommend the use of one product per ad group, allowing you greater overall control. In addition, we would recommend optimising your campaigns in a number of ways which we'll deal with in the next chapter.

## OPTIMISING YOUR CAMPAIGN

We've dealt with a few of these aspects throughout the last two sections, but there is never a time to be complacent about optimisation. Your business can grow substantially by using the right techniques, so there's no excuse for wasting the potential of your Shopping Campaign by doing half a job.

### GOOGLE'S ADVICE

Before we move in to a few areas of specific importance, the following are some of the key pieces of Google's advice for Shopping Campaign optimisation that are worth stating:

- **Use structured data markup** – by ensuring you use the right structured data markup, you can indicate to Google how your landing page elements match up with those in your product feed. This also allows you to enable automatic item updates and prevents your items being disapproved.
- **Triple check your landing page** – if the landing page is unavailable at the point of crawling, that item will be disapproved, if the landing page data doesn't match, it can be disapproved, if you've somehow blocked robots.txt, the item will be disapproved. It's vital you ensure that everything is in place and available and accurate for both Google's crawlers and your consumers.
- **Remove crawl rate limitations** – if, for any reason, you are limiting crawl rates on your site, remove the limits, if the Googlebot struggles to crawl the site, it can cause issues approving the feed.
- **Enable automatic item updates** – automatic item updates can prevent your items being disapproved if a change to your site slips through the net. It should never be used as your primary update method, however, as it will only update when Google crawls your site.
- **Ensure that your products IDs are accurate** – your product's unique identification numbers (especially GTINs) are important for ensuring your ads are served to the right audience. While incorrect IDs may not result in disapproval, Google will struggle to show the ads for the right searches.
- **Create your feed immediately after you update your database** – if you have changed any information, whether temporarily for a sale, or permanently, make sure your feed follows quickly:
  - Resubmit your feed after any site updates
  - If you update your site multiple times per day, submit your feed multiple times per day
- **Use the Content API for Shopping** – this allows you to provide updates for individual items as well as update data almost immediately (as soon as the product information changes in your own system).

## OPTIMISING YOUR FEED (FOUR KEY ATTRIBUTES)

### IMAGE ATTRIBUTE

This is the image that will appear in the ad and should exactly represent the description you give it and the terms you're targeting with the ad – from size, colour, material to brand, pattern etcetera. It needs to be high quality, and show the product off to the best of its ability.

### LINK ATTRIBUTE

This is vital insofar as it is not unknown for site structure to change from season to season, if you fail to ensure that your link attribute is kept up to date, you may find that you lose custom due to consumers finding either the wrong product, or worse no product at all when they click through.

### PRODUCT\_TYPE ATTRIBUTE

A key part of the description of your product within your feed, the product type is vital to ensuring your ads appear for the right key terms and should therefore be based on your primary keyword research. You will also need to match the categories against your descriptors. Think of it like a journey through your site: ***UmbrellaTerm > SubDivision > Category > SubCategory > Item.***

### TITLE AND DESCRIPTION ATTRIBUTES

This should accurately and concisely describe your item. This title will show up in the shopping results, so you want to ensure it works hard enough to attract the click, but is descriptive enough of the item on the landing page that it cannot be seen to have misled the consumer.

## OPTIMISING FROM ADWORDS

In addition to a well optimised feed, there are also methods to improve your Shopping Campaigns from within the AdWords platform.

### ALL PRODUCTS

The default setting for Shopping Campaigns is 'All products', this will use all products in your Google Merchant Center. This is a fine campaign to begin with, and standard best practice recommends that you retain a single 'All products' campaign – as there are likely items that will not fit in to the subsequent campaigns you will create that may otherwise be missed.

### PRODUCT GROUPS

In addition to an 'All products' campaign, you should be looking to create campaigns per category and one ad group per product. This can be done in AdWords by selecting one of the attributes that you have in your product feed to differentiate your stock.

### BID STRATEGY

This is a part of your optimisation that will take experimentation to perfect. However, there are a couple of best practices which can be followed initially while you experiment with the finer details:

- Your 'All products' bid should be set lower than product specific ad group bids to ensure that while no products will be missed, your less optimised ads will not supersede the product specific variation.
- To begin with, set your max CPC for product specific ad groups the same as those of existing ads in order to monitor their relative performance.

### MESSAGING

Messaging is another opportunity to make your ads stand out from the crowd. While they are not a prerequisite for running product specific ad groups, you can add a promotional message to product specific ad groups. You have 45 characters with which to make an impression using this message, so put your best foot forward – do you offer free delivery, is there 10% off, or are there other USPs you can brag about?

## TARGETING

While much of your targeting is done through your product feed (where you are essentially setting your keyword targets through various attributes), it is also possible to further refine your campaign targeting using negative keywords.

### NEGATIVE KEYWORDS

While it is possible to build a 'common sense' list of negative keywords at the inception of your campaign, and further refine the list through experience, what should be done is to continually add to this list by monitoring the keywords which have triggered your ads.

This is a continuous process and, if done regularly, can reduce spend, increase click-through and improve the efficiency and ROI of any Shopping Campaign.



## CONCLUSION

Google Shopping Ads and Campaigns should now be an absolutely integral part of any online retailer's growth and marketing strategy. Offering fantastic opportunities if done correctly, this service is growing and improving all the time – with far more options to improve targeting, organisation, creation and measurability now than during the period they were referred to as product listing ads (PLAs).

The importance of Shopping Campaigns is likely to grow as Google moves more and more in to the retail sector itself, so it's best to get learning and advertising now, to avoid a much steeper potential learning curve later on.

# GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

## ABOUT US

Located in North West England, Click Consult is a multi award-winning search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC), with over 70 professionals employed and with a portfolio of over 60 clients from across the UK, Europe, Americas and Australia.

Click was named Search Agency of the Year 2018, adding to its long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within both RAR's and Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Blog

Click Consult regularly posts actionable insights on its blog – dealing with all aspects of search marketing. From technical SEO to PPC, content marketing and Analytics advice, the Click Consult blog has something for everyone of any ability.

### eBooks

Click Consult produces in depth eBooks on all aspects of search marketing on a regular basis, dealing with the latest best practices, changes to standard practices, methods of improvement and more.

### Infographics

Sometimes what you need is a quick point of reference about complex subjects. Thanks to its team of highly talented designers, Click Consult is also able to distil its vast experience into easy to understand visual content.

Follow us on [Google+](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#), or to find out what Click Consult can do for you, call:

**0845 205 0292**

## OUR ACCREDITATIONS



## OUR AWARDS



## OUR TECHNOLOGIES

monitor **TRAX**® rank **TRAX**® feed **TRAX**® link **TRAX**® pro **TRAX**® page **TRAX**®