

Think with Google

# Capture the comeback this holiday with Google

A guide for retailers and brands in 2021



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Every day, hundreds of millions of people turn to Google to find, discover, and shop for what they care about. Find out how to be there when they do.

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3

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Drive more sales by providing a seamless shopping experience wherever they prefer to shop — online or in-store.

4

## Be ready to drive sales during the holidays

Last year was online retail's biggest ever holiday season. Plan early for a digital-first shopping season this year, too.

The retail industry has seen a seismic shift in consumer shopping behavior over the past year, catapulting eCommerce as well as digital-first omnichannel retail experiences forward. It's no surprise that 2021 is poised to have the high retail spending, with Canada's overall retail will reaching CA\$645.71 billion (\$481.40 billion) this year.<sup>1</sup>

As we look ahead, we are on the brink of comebacks—in-person celebrations, in-store shopping and global economic recovery. This holiday season, consumers are embracing omnichannel shopping more than ever before. They want choice in what, how, and where to shop. A blended online and offline experience is key. Brands and retailers need to be ready to rise to the occasion.

In this guide, you'll learn how Google can help brands and retailers meet these changing demands and connect with consumers to drive more profitable growth this holiday season. We collected the most useful tools, product recommendations and consumer insights to help you achieve your business and marketing objectives.

This holiday season will again be unlike any other. Whether you're looking to optimize your existing marketing mix or game plan for the holiday season, this guide has you covered.

**Wherever the journey takes your customer, be ready to capture the comeback this holiday with Google.**



**Bill Ready**  
President,  
Commerce

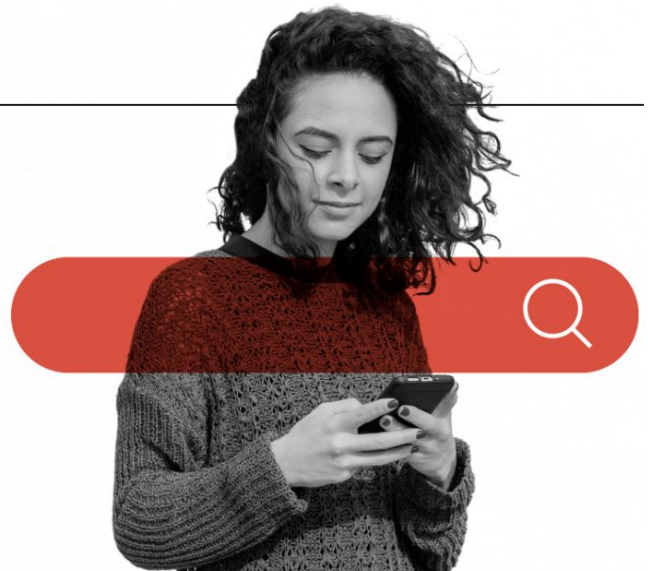


## Section 1

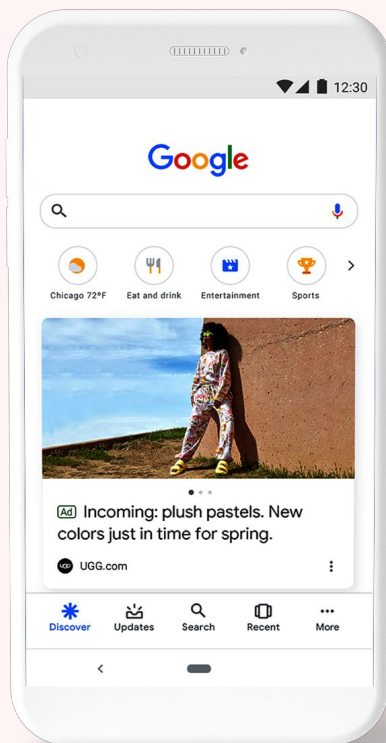
# Reach customers as they browse

## 1 Reach customers as they browse

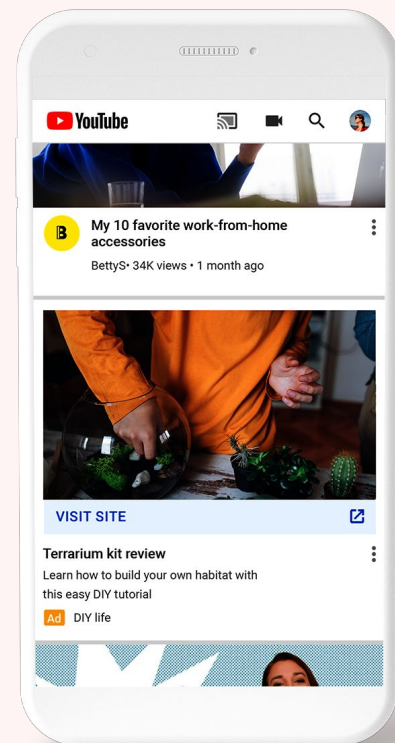
As customers browse  
they pick up brand and  
product information



whether it's scrolling through  
interesting topics on Discover...



...or watching product  
reviews on YouTube.



75% of Canadians surveyed said they  
have discovered new brands through  
online resources during COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

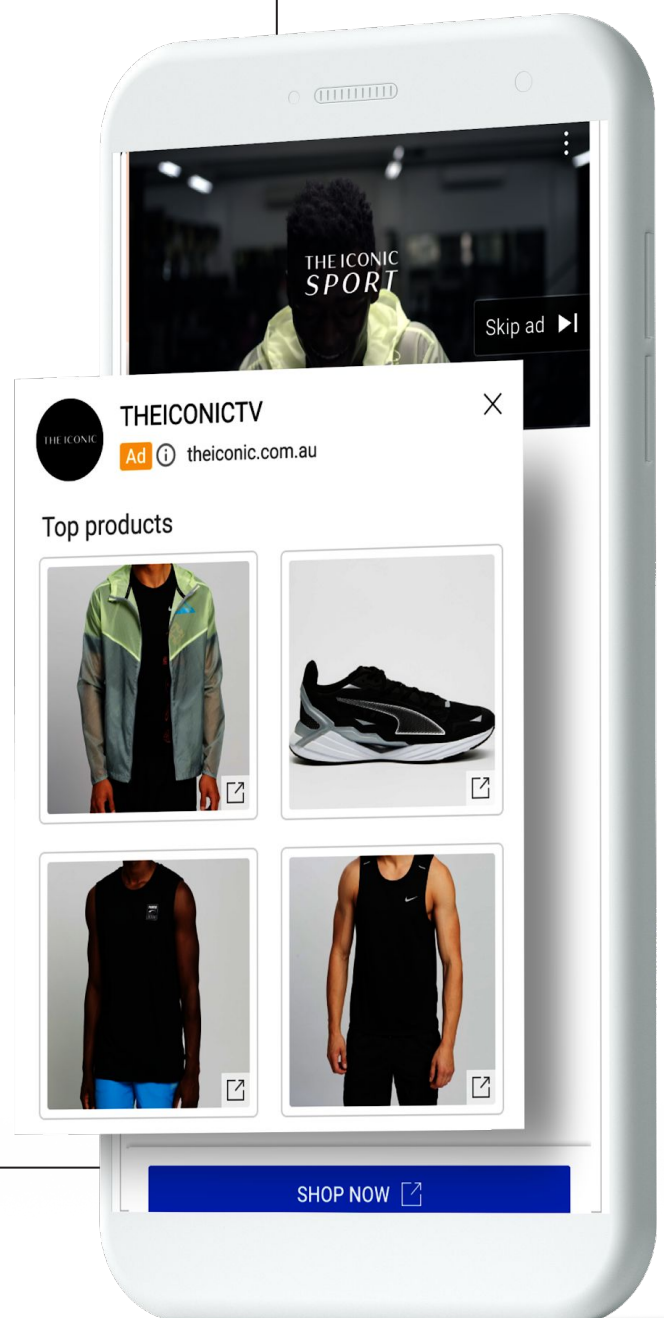


# Connect with potential customers and inspire action with video

YouTube has evolved from a singular entertainment destination to a place where people come to learn, stream, and inspire their next purchase. When watching videos, customers can shift from passive browsing to active shopping when they come across a product that interests them and motivates them to learn more.

YouTube is a great tool to **build awareness** and inspire people to **take the action** that matters to your business.

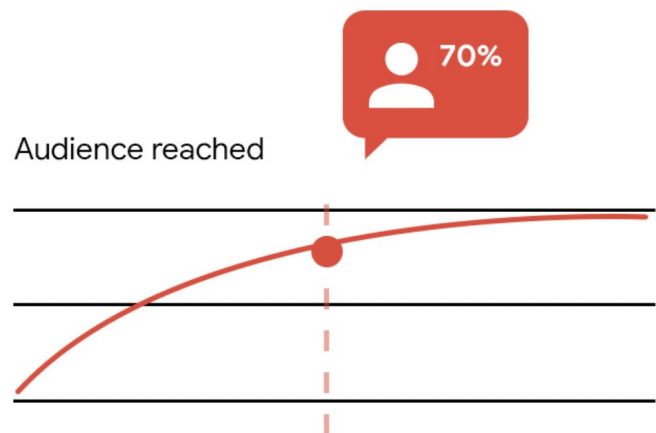
You can even transform your video ad into a digital storefront by complementing your **Video action campaigns** with a browseable product feed that encourages clicks and conversions.



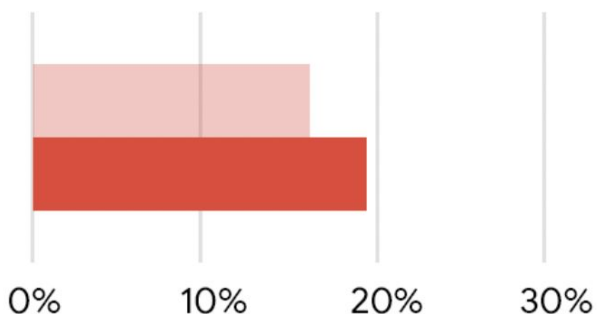
# Measure the right metrics and optimize for success

Google tools can help you determine the best YouTube strategy, measure the right goals, and uncover insights to continually optimize your campaigns.

Before you get started, [Reach Planner](#) can help you achieve your marketing objectives by showing you which audiences and video ads will be most effective for your business.



Overall brand ad recall lift



After launch, [Brand Lift](#) can show you how your campaign influenced people's feelings about your product with ad recall, brand awareness, and consideration metrics.

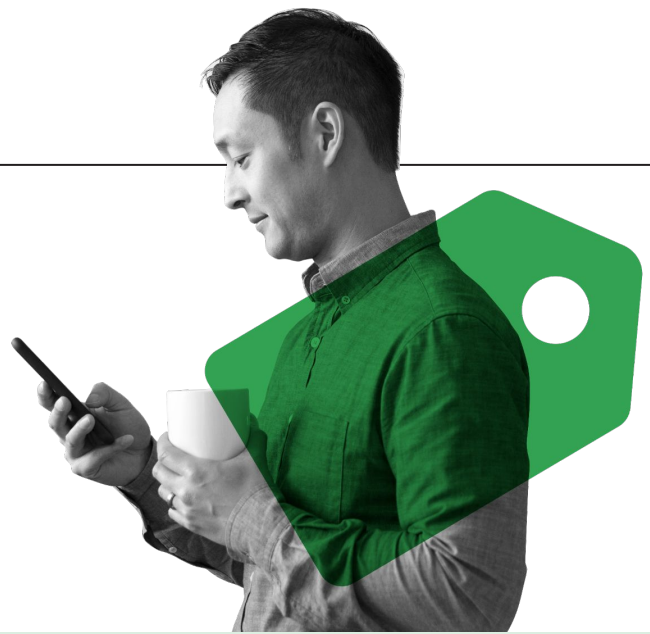


## Section 2

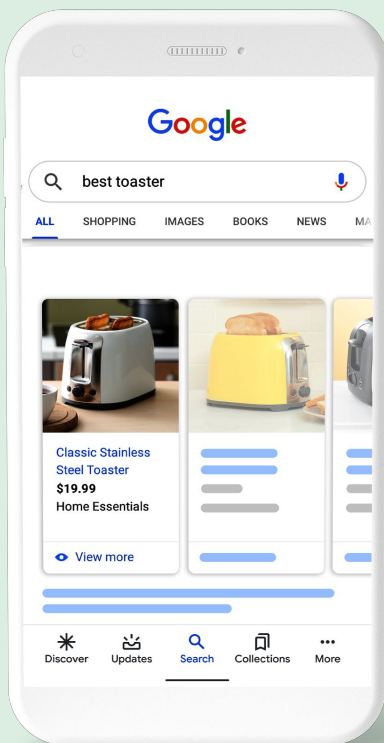
# Engage customers as they research



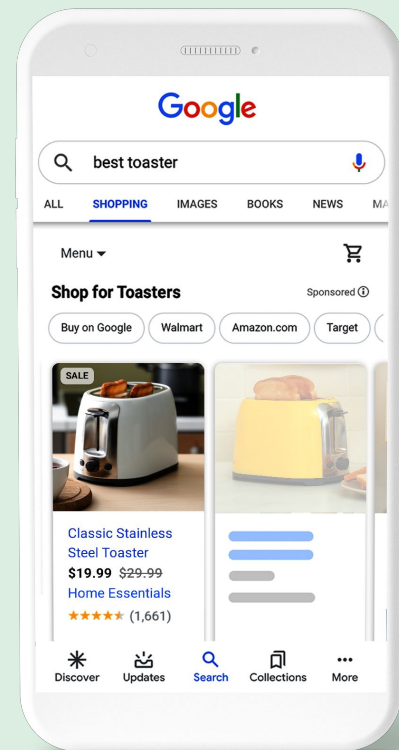
# Customers research products on Google before buying



Shoppers turn to Google to find out which product is best in its category...



...compare prices, look for sales, and check out the latest reviews.



Canadian shoppers searched online ahead of 91% of in-store purchases.<sup>3</sup>

# Be the answer when they search

Shoppers don't always have a specific product in mind when they search the category they're interested in.

**For example, mobile searches for “best affordable” have grown 60% globally year over year.<sup>4</sup>**

When that happens, [responsive search ads](#) can put your product in the spotlight with a flexible and personalized ad that's relevant to the shopper.



popular children's toys

popular children's toys **2020**

popular children's toys **near me**

popular children's toys **for girls**

popular children's toys **for boys**

popular children's toys **in the '80s**

popular children's toys **stores**

popular children's toys **shopping**



## Success story

Best Buy Canada used responsive search ads to reach potential customers during their key seasonal campaigns, more than **doubling clicks while improving return on advertising spend efficiency by 18%.**

# Drive demand with “window shoppers” on Google’s feeds

For example, 91% of Google feed users in the US say they took some kind of shopping or product-related action immediately after discovering new products, services, or brands on their feed.<sup>5</sup>

Engage these shoppers as they explore content on [Discover](#), watch videos on YouTube, or look for seasonal deals in Gmail.

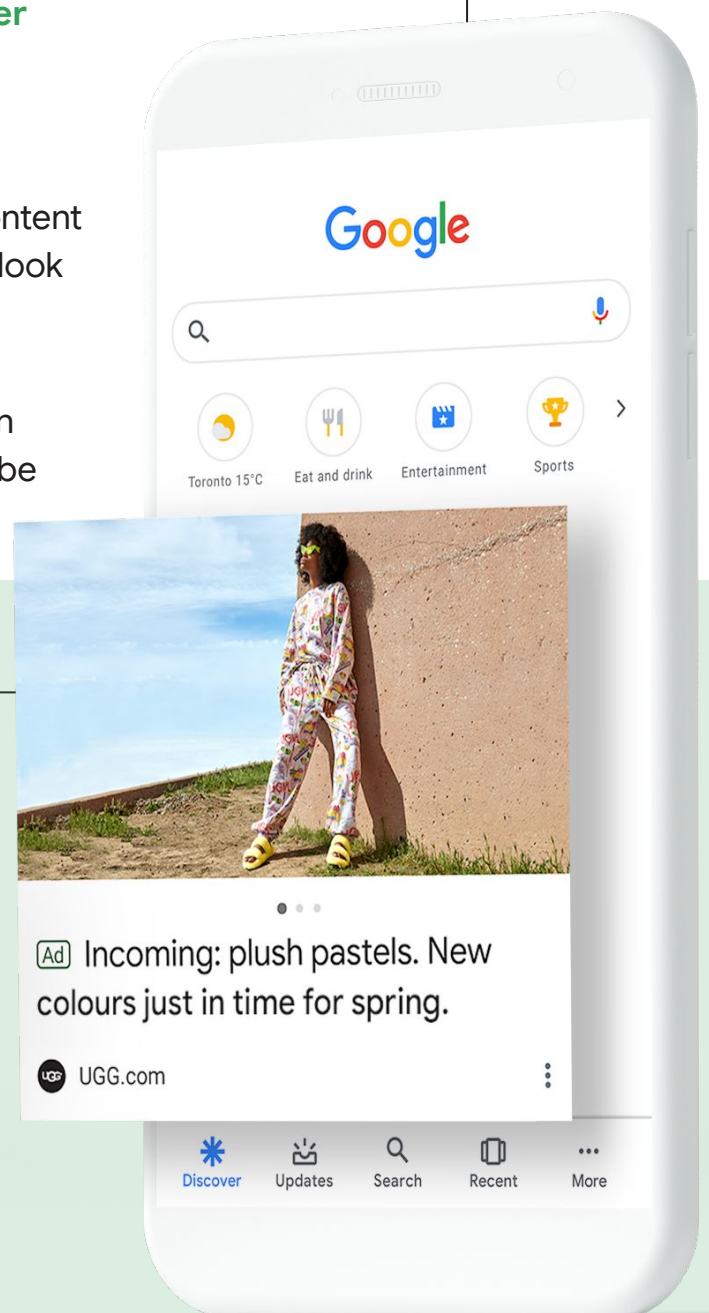
[Discovery ads](#) help you reach up to 3 billion people on feeds across Google and YouTube with a single campaign.



## Best practices

**Keep it simple:** Images without overlaid text drive 9% more click-throughs on average<sup>6</sup>

**Pair it with Search:** On average, Search advertisers who add Discovery ads see 12% more conversions<sup>7</sup>



# Find customers looking for products like yours

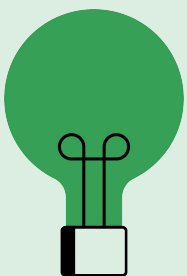
To reach new customers, choose the right [audience solution](#) for your ad campaigns.

To create awareness from potential new customers, use **Affinity audiences**. This helps you reach people based on their interests, passions, and habits.

To build consideration from people with demonstrated intent, use **In-market audiences**. This helps you show ads to people who have been searching for products and services like yours.



To drive action from existing and new customers, use a combination of **Customer Match** and **Similar audiences**. Customer match lets you upload your first-party data, like loyalty information, to engage with your existing customers across the web. Similar audiences then helps you find new customers with similar interests to people in these existing audience lists.



## Tip

Customer Match can help you cross-sell or reactivate existing customers with special offers and messaging. Learn more with our [best-practice guide](#).



## Section 3

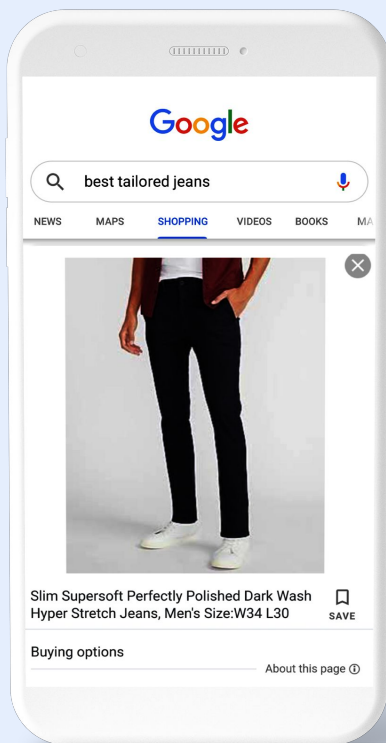
# Convert customers looking to purchase

### 3 Convert customers looking to purchase

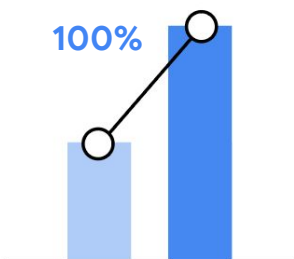
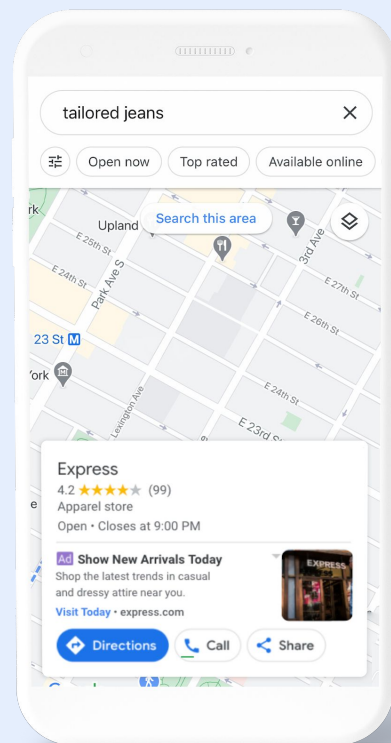
Customers expect to be able to shop wherever meets their needs



They want to be able to buy a product online as soon as they find it...



...or see if a local store has stock available for curbside pickup today.



In fact, searches for “available near me” have grown globally by over 100% in the last year.<sup>8</sup>



# Create a frictionless online shopping experience

Your website is your digital storefront, so it's important to deliver a fast, seamless, and personal experience to your customers. Every second counts — in fact, a **0.1 second decrease in page load time can boost your conversion rate by 8%.**<sup>9</sup>

Use [Grow My Store](#) for a quick and free evaluation of your entire retail site, including:

1

## Site benchmarking:

See how your site stacks up against retailers in your sector. For developer-friendly tips on boosting site speed, use [Test My Site](#).

2

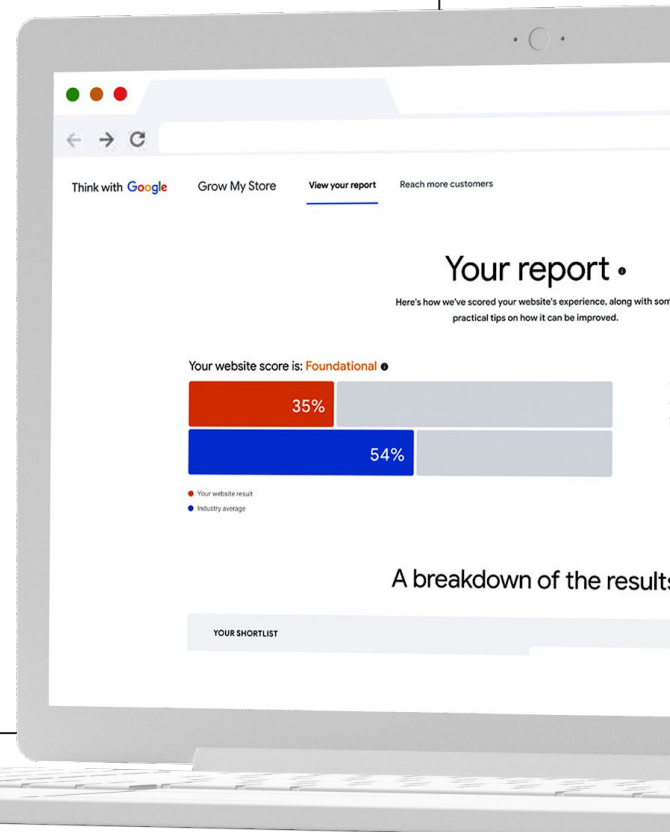
## Recommendations:

Learn how to upgrade your website experience to keep customers coming back

3

## Tailored insights:

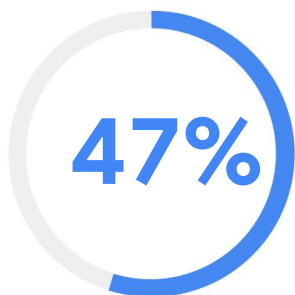
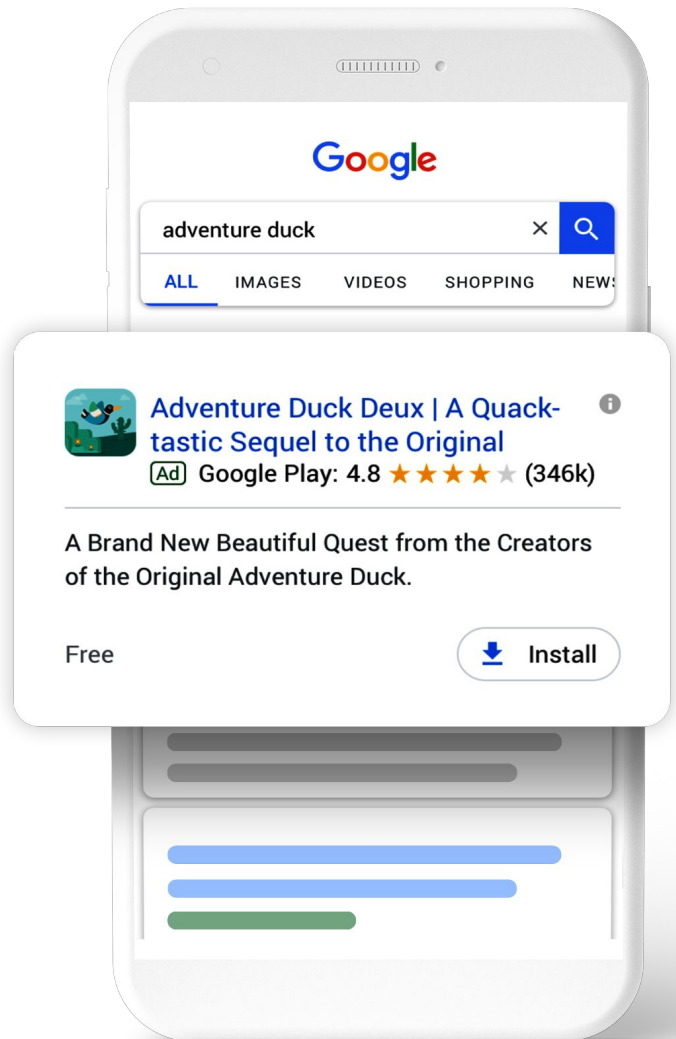
Access personalized market and consumer trends to reach new customers



## Engage mobile shoppers

Today, more people than ever are turning towards mobile to fulfill their needs. Reach these shoppers with [App Campaigns](#) and encourage them to make a mobile purchase, or take another action like installing your app.

To maximize sales, you can optimize your ads to drive [in-app value](#) and measure return on ad spend. If a customer already has your app, you can re-engage them and direct them to the right page through [deep-linking](#) your ads.



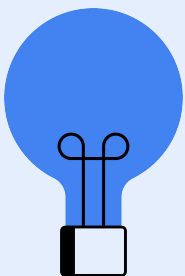
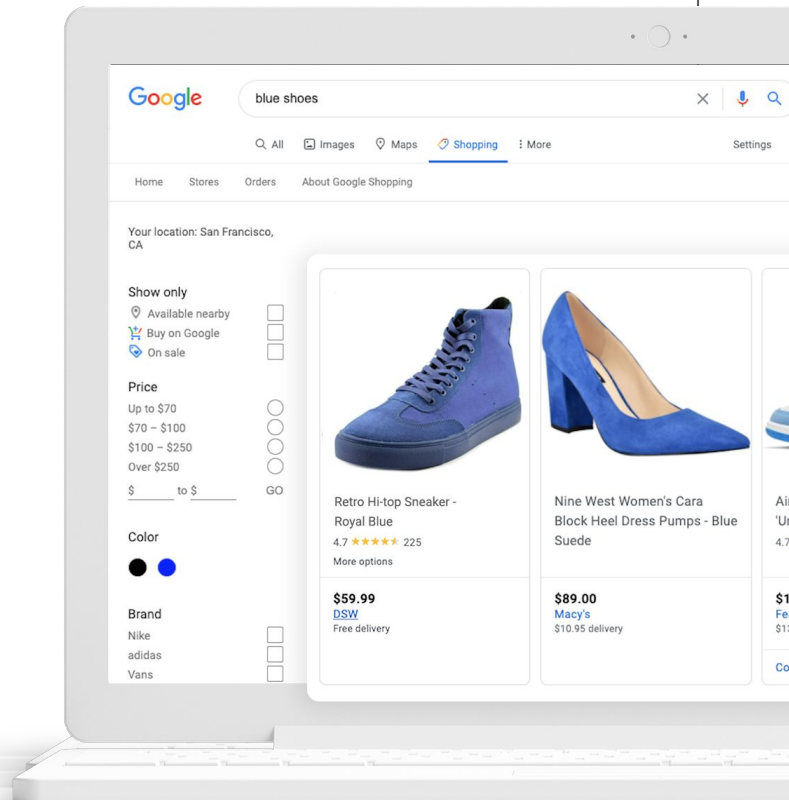
In fact, 47% of Canadian shoppers expect to be able to make a purchase on their smartphone from any brand or company with a site or app<sup>10</sup>

# Showcase your products for free on Google

Every day, hundreds of millions of people come to Google for their shopping needs, and now you can [list your products](#) in the Shopping tab on Search for free.

If you already use Google ads, these listings are a great way to boost your exposure for free. And if you're new to Google, syncing your product feed from sites like [Shopify](#) to Merchant Center will make it easier for your products to [appear in relevant search results](#).

You'll also be able to compare [performance reporting](#) across your ads and free listings in Merchant Center.



## Tip

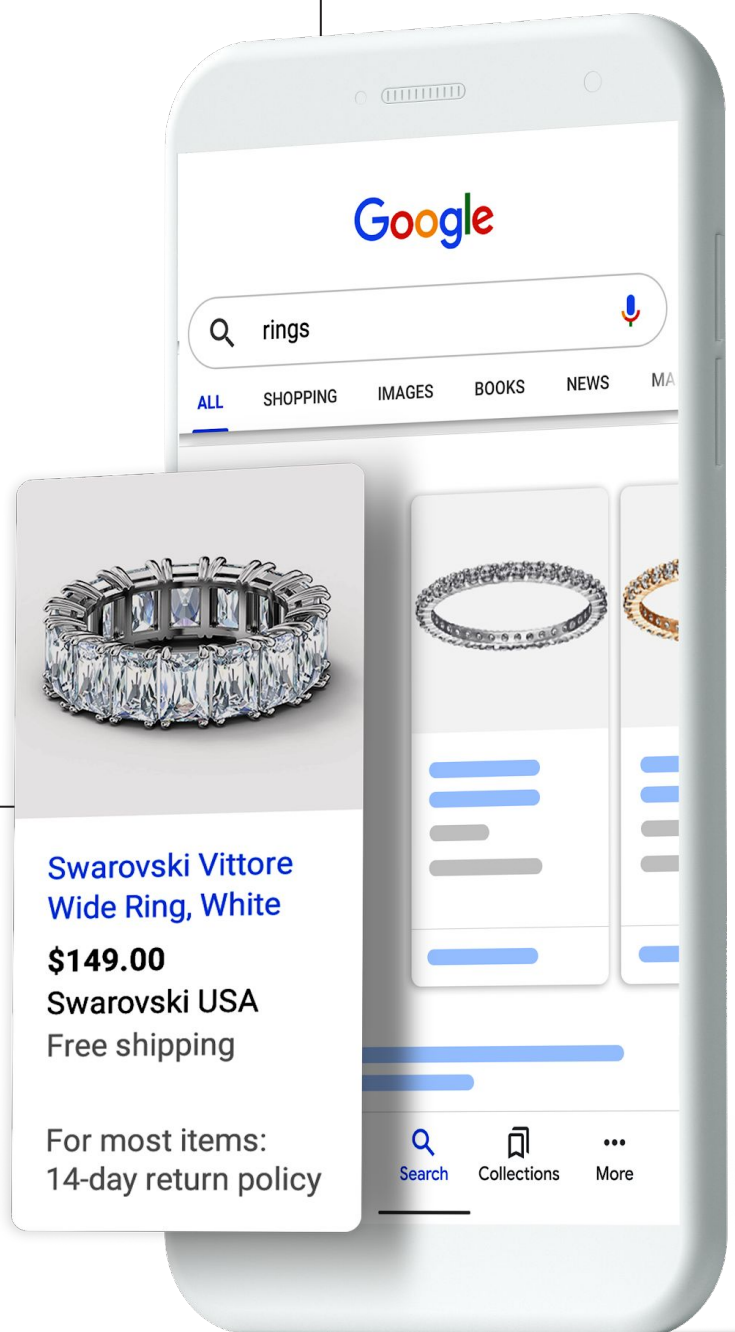
When uploading a product, make sure to include its **Global Trade Item Number (GTIN)**. This helps us make your ad or unpaid listing richer and easier for users to find.

# Reach new customers and deal-seekers across the web

People shop across multiple Google surfaces, like Search, YouTube, Gmail, and the Shopping tab. [Smart Shopping campaigns](#) provide access to all of this inventory through automated bidding and placements, enabling you to promote your products to the right customer at the right time.

Adding [promotions](#) to your free listings or ads in Merchant Center can also help boost click-through rates and increase conversions.

On average, **advertisers see more than a 30% increase in conversion value** when using Smart Shopping campaigns<sup>11</sup>

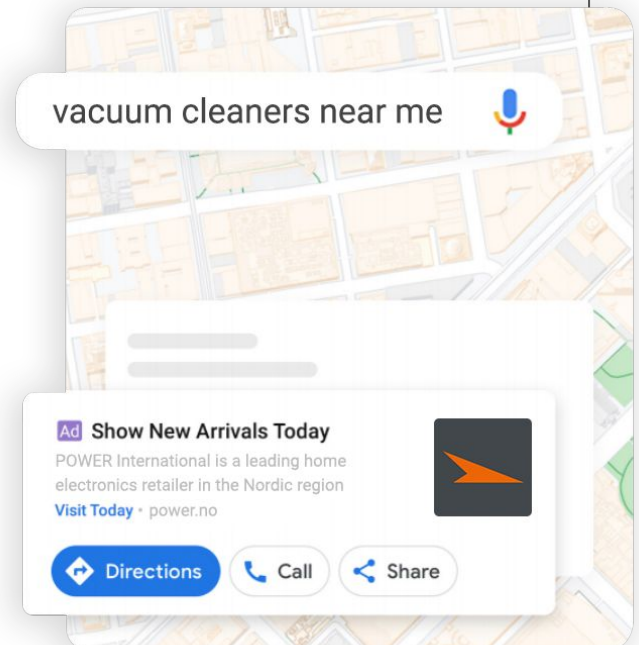


## Increase store visits by promoting in-store items

Shoppers often use Google to check product and business information online before going into the store, so it's important to keep your [Business profile](#) updated. Let customers know if you offer delivery, curbside pickup, or in-store shopping.

To showcase your in-store products to nearby shoppers on Google, you can use [Local inventory ads](#). You can also promote products available for in-store or curbside pickup.

[Local campaigns](#) are another way to bring people to your stores by promoting your locations to shoppers searching on Google Maps, Search, YouTube, and the Google Display Network. You can highlight special promotions and important business changes on a store-by-store basis.



### Success story

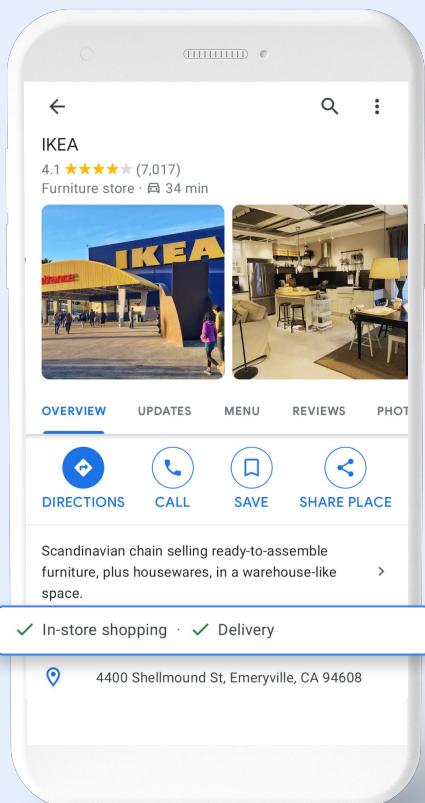
SAIL, a Quebec-based outdoor gear and apparel retailer used Local Campaigns to reach outdoor enthusiasts to communicate about store openings and product availability, **resulting in an 8% increase in store visits with a 12x return on advertising spend.**

# Increase store visits by showcasing in-store services

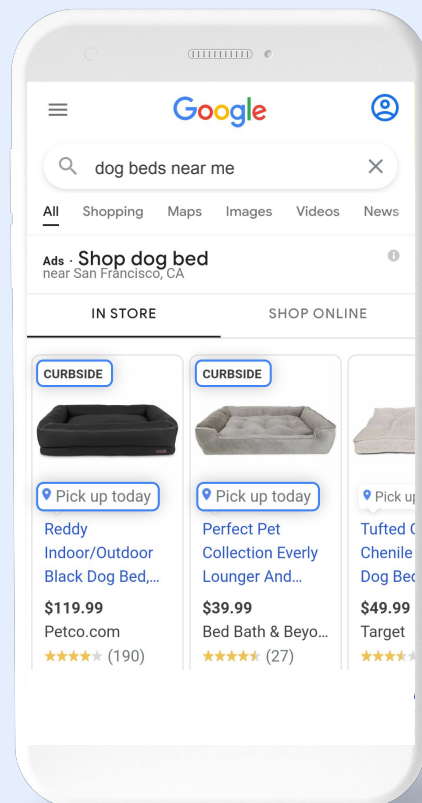
Shoppers often use Google to check product and business information online before going into the store, so it's important to keep your [Business profile](#) updated. Let customers know if you offer delivery, curbside pickup, or in-store shopping.

To showcase your in-store products to nearby shoppers on Google, you can use [Local inventory ads](#). You can promote products available for store [pickup today](#), pickup later or curbside pickup

## Business profile



## Local inventory ads

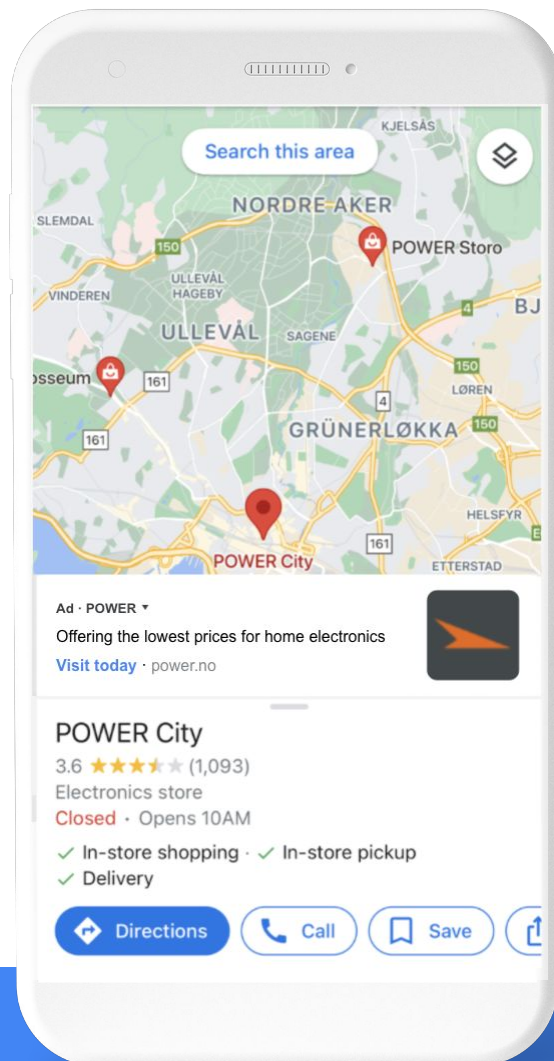




# Grow store traffic and promote in-store products

[Local campaigns](#) are another way to bring people to your stores by promoting your locations to shoppers searching on Google Maps, Search, YouTube, and the Google Display Network.

You can drive foot traffic for store reopenings, special in-store promotions, updated business hours and specific products that are available in nearby stores.



**POWER**

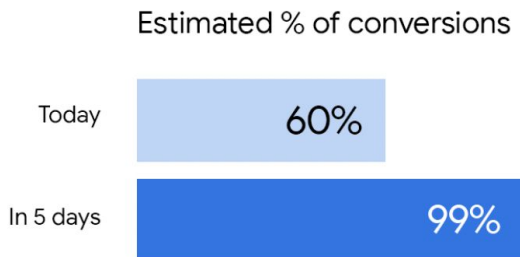
## Success story

POWER, an electronics retailer in the Nordics, increased store visits by 30% after adding products to their Local campaigns and showing customers the products available at stores near them.

# Optimize campaigns with insights and measure omnichannel performance

Set up your campaigns for success by uncovering the right insights and optimizing for the right marketing objective.

[Performance planner](#) can help you forecast your Search and Shopping campaigns to optimize for seasonal opportunities.



To get a better view of total revenue and return on ad spend, make sure you're measuring in-store sales by assigning a value to store visits in Google Ads. To maximize online sales and in-store visits from your digital ads, use [Smart bidding for store visits](#).



## Best-practice

Before you start, check the [best sellers report](#) for the most popular brands and products across Shopping ads. The [price competitiveness report](#) can also help you inform your pricing strategy by revealing the price point at which shoppers click on ads.



## Section 4

# Be ready to drive sales during the holidays

## Holiday highlights from 2020

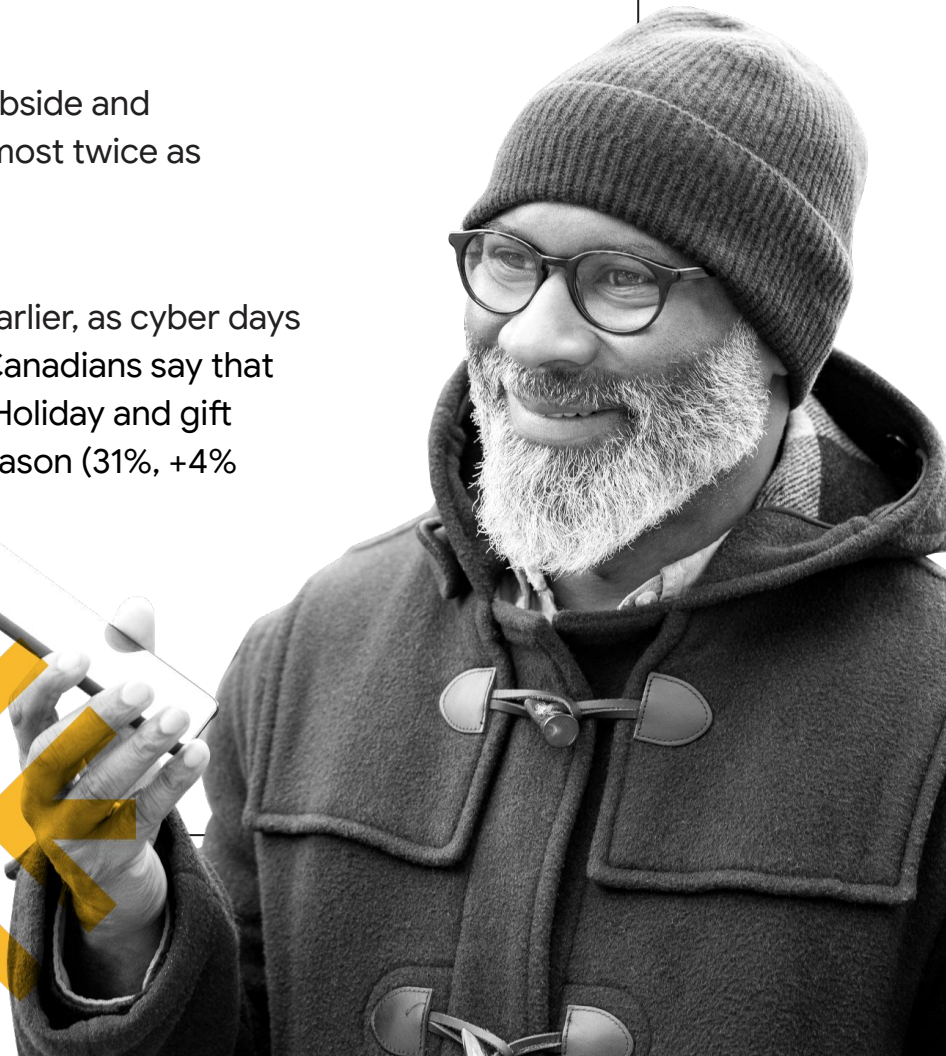
**Last year, retail had its biggest holiday season ever, with global digital sales growing by 50% to \$1.1 trillion.<sup>12</sup>**

Digital played a critical role in the shopping journey, even in stores, with more customers choosing to start their holiday shopping earlier in the season.

**1** 43% of Canadian holiday shoppers say they made more purchases online this holiday season than in previous years.<sup>13</sup>

**2** Globally, retailers offering curbside and other pickup options grew almost twice as fast as those that didn't<sup>14</sup>

**3** Holiday shopping was done earlier, as cyber days became cyber weeks. More Canadians say that they like to get most of their Holiday and gift shopping done early in the season (31%, +4% from 2019).<sup>15</sup>



## Start early

Holiday shoppers are starting their shopping earlier and becoming more price-conscious. As of mid August, nearly a quarter of Canadian shoppers have already started their 2021 holiday shopping <sup>16</sup> and **62% of Canadian shoppers will shop earlier to avoid an item being out of stock.**<sup>17</sup>

Set up for seasonal success by checking your channel measurement strategies, uploading your products and holiday deals sooner, and surfacing shipping and return offerings.



## How Google can help:

- As this holiday will be unique from years prior, ensure your holiday measurement strategy covers both [incrementality](#) and [attribution](#). These are key to definitively proving what your marketing dollars drove.
- Give shoppers a reason to buy from you now with [promotions](#) like 15% off across Search, Images and the Shopping tab for [Shopping ads](#) and [free product listings](#). Or for retailers with physical stores, highlight store-specific deals with [local promotions](#) and holiday store hours.
- Show your products can ship quickly with [free and fast shipping](#) annotations. [Account and item-level shipping setup](#) and [return and refund](#) annotations provide reassurance for products that don't quite fit the bill.



## Be visible

Window shopping has gone viral with search interest for “ideas” surging on both Google Search and Images<sup>18</sup>, as shoppers seek inspiration when they don’t have a specific product in mind. For retailers, visibility is crucial to capturing those shoppers.



Over 60% of YouTube viewers say they bought a brand as a result of seeing an ad on YouTube.<sup>19</sup>

Show up throughout the purchase journey with not only clear information about products, availability, and offers but also inspiration-based content to pique their interest while browsing.



### How Google can help:

- Promote your products to the right customers at the right time across Google surfaces, like Search, YouTube, Gmail and the Shopping tab. [Smart Shopping campaigns](#) provide access to this inventory through automated bidding and placements. The [new customer acquisition](#) goal helps you optimize for new customers in addition to online sales.
- Inspire and engage shoppers as they browse Google's personalized feeds on YouTube, Discover and Gmail with [Discovery Ads](#).
- Use the power of video to inspire your customers to take action with [Video action campaigns](#), and add a [browseable product feed](#) to show your best sellers directly alongside your video ad.



## Engage your fans

Give shoppers a reason to support and stay loyal to you. Increased search interest for terms such as ‘ethical online shopping’<sup>20</sup>, ‘support local businesses’<sup>21</sup>, and ‘Black owned ‘shops’<sup>22</sup> highlights just how important aligning purchase decisions with their values has become to consumers.

On top of that, providing a seamless shopping experience—across web and app—unlocks continued sales throughout the holidays. In fact, **30% of Canadian smartphone users are more likely to choose to purchase from one brand over another because it's easier/faster to make their purchase**<sup>23</sup>. Whatsmore, 47% of Canadian smartphone users expect to be able to make a purchase on their phone from any brand/company that has a website or app<sup>23</sup>.

Convert new users into loyal customers with an authentic stance on sustainability, local ties or key issues as well as a personalized, intuitive app experience.

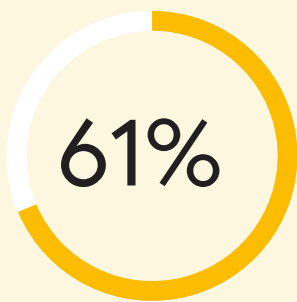
### How Google can help:

- Make your app more discoverable to over one billion users across Google's largest properties. Showcase what your app offers in richly formatted ads through [App campaigns](#)— including [feeds](#), which help consumers easily find what they're shopping for when they open your app.
- Create a frictionless experience for shoppers who already have your app by directing them to specific in-app pages with the [deep link validator](#) and [impact calculator](#).
- Display what makes your business unique with [business identity attributes](#) so shoppers can easily shop to support their values.



## Be flexible

Increased searches for ‘along my route’<sup>24</sup>, ‘in stock’<sup>25</sup>, and ‘curbside pickup’<sup>26</sup> tell us that convenience is reigns supreme for today's shoppers. This is particularly the case with last-minute shoppers, who rely on local and nearby stores.



of Canadian Holiday shoppers plan to confirm online that an item is in stock before going to buy it, as of August 2021.<sup>27</sup>

Offer visibility into your inventory digitally and a range of delivery and collection options to make the purchasing experience as convenient as possible.



### How Google can help:

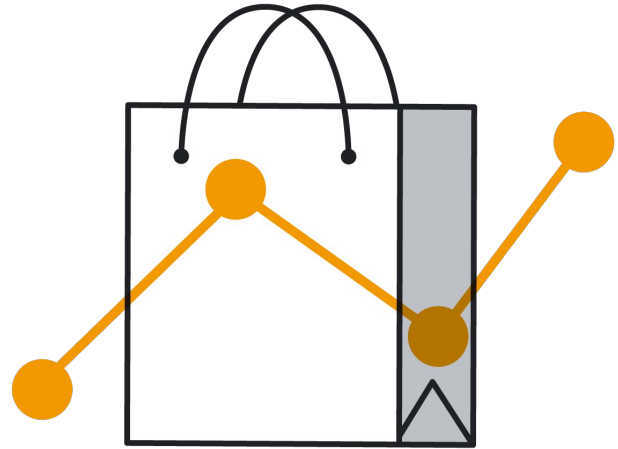
- Optimize for sales, whether they happen online or in your stores by including [store visits or store sales](#) in your Smart Bidding strategy.
- Showcase your in-store products to shoppers on Google Search with [Local inventory ads](#), and promote products available for in-store [pickup today](#), curbside pickup or at a later date via pickup later.
- Encourage visits to your stores by promoting your locations across Google Maps, Search, Display Network and YouTube with [Local campaigns](#). You can highlight special promotions, in-store products and business information on a store-by-store basis.

## Embrace change

Faced with new ways of working and living, shopper demands changed rapidly and will continue to evolve going into the holidays.

**15% of searches are new on Google everyday.**<sup>28</sup> Brands and retailers must be ready to adapt to anything to win.

Prepare for rapid, short-term shifts in demand with automated tools and insights, while adapting to longer-term changes in the consumer landscape by considering your overall digital strategy.



### How Google can help:

- Inventory and prices change quickly, especially during the holidays. [Automatic item updates](#) ensure you're showing the correct price in your Shopping ads and are not promoting out-of-stock items.
- Effectively plan your product assortment by knowing the most popular brands and products used in Shopping ads and free listings with the [best sellers report](#). It can help you decide which products and brands to stock and increase budget or bids for.
- Get Search trends related to your business in the Google Ads [Insights page](#), so you can see if you're keeping up with demand for trending products or services.

## Be ready for the holidays

1

### Start early

Have a robust channel measurement strategy, upload your holiday deal and surface shipping and return offerings sooner, as people begin their shopping earlier in the season to stock-up or avoid out-of-stocks.

2

### Be visible

Show up throughout the purchase journey with not only clear information about products, availability, and offers but also inspiration-based content to pique their interest while browsing.

3

### Engage your fans

Convert new users into loyal customers with an authentic stance on sustainability, local ties, or key issues and a personalized, intuitive app experience.

4

### Be flexible

Offer visibility into your inventory digitally and a range of delivery and collection options to make the purchasing experience as convenient as possible.

5

### Embrace change

Prepare for rapid, short-term shifts in demand with automated tools, while adapting to longer-term changes in the consumer landscape by considering your overall digital strategy.



Discover the four purchase behaviors our researchers believe will be with us for the long term in the [Shopping Shifts Guide](#).

To help you get the most out of Google Ads, check out the [Google Ads Growth Formula](#) for peak shopping season.

## Sources

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22. Google Data, Global English, Jan 26, 2021 – Mar 26, 2021 vs Jan 26, 2020 – Mar 26, 2020
23. Google commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, CA, n=840-online smartphone users 18+, May 28-31, 2020
24. Google commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, US n=506 Online consumers 18+ who will shop for the holiday season. June 17-20, 2021
25. Google Data, Global English, Jul 29, 2020 – Sep 26, 2020 vs Jul 29, 2019 – Sep 26, 2019
26. Google Data, Global English, Nov 3, 2020 – Jan 1, 2021 vs Nov 3, 2019 – Jan 1, 2020
27. Google commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, CA, ~n=535 online consumers 18+who will shop for the holiday season. Aug 12-15, 2021
28. Google Internal Data, July 2019