WeAdU · Field Guide

Google Ads Best Practices for **Multi-Brand** Resellers

2013 Edition

The year the paid model went global, enhanced campaigns merged every device, and Shopping campaigns gave resellers custom labels – what to have done with them.

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1. Enhanced campaigns: one campaign for every **device**

On February 6, 2013, Google announced enhanced campaigns, and on July 22, 2013 it began upgrading every remaining AdWords campaign automatically. Desktop, laptop and tablet traffic was grouped under one bid; mobile became a bid adjustment on the campaign or ad group, from −100% to +300%; location and time-of-day adjustments ran from −90% to +900%; sitelinks moved to ad-group level with their own reporting. For a reseller, the change halved the number of campaigns to maintain – the separate mobile copy of every brand campaign disappeared – and raised a new question: which brands actually sell on a phone?

- Keep the brand-by-brand structure and put the device question inside it: one mobile bid adjustment per brand campaign, set from that brand's mobile conversion rate, not one adjustment for the account.
- From March 12, 2013, Product Listing Ads were eligible on smartphones globally – but only from an enhanced campaign with a mobile bid adjustment. A brand with a mobile-hostile checkout deserved a low adjustment, not exclusion from the upgrade.
- Use location adjustments per brand where distribution agreements limited where a brand could be sold, rather than separate geographic campaigns.

2. The paid model goes global: eleven countries, one **deadline**

From February 13, 2013, Google Shopping results in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Japan, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Brazil, Australia, Switzerland and the Czech Republic began coming from Product Listing Ads, as they had in the US since October 2012. Merchants had until April 12, 2013 to launch Product Listing Ads and qualify for the promotional credit; on May 21, 2013 Google set June 11, 2013 as the date after

which free product listings would no longer appear on Google Shopping in those countries – inside the "end of the second quarter" window it had announced in November. The same post reported "over 1 billion products" promoted on Google Shopping, "largely driven by a 300% year-on-year growth in participating sellers".

- Treat each country as a separate account structure with the same brand logic: a brand's margin, permissions and competitors differ by country, and so should its budget.
- Launch before the April 12 credit deadline, with the whole catalogue promoted, then narrow the bids by brand afterwards; the credit rewarded breadth, the results rewarded discipline.
- Watch the 300% growth in sellers as a warning: the auction that felt cheap in 2012 was about to fill up (section 10).

3. Shopping campaigns arrive: product groups, custom labels, **priorities**

On October 22, 2013, Google introduced Shopping campaigns to a limited number of advertisers, with full global availability promised for early 2014. Product targets became product groups, subdivided by category, brand, product type, condition, item ID and five custom labels – "a new, structured way to tag your products in your data feed with attributes that matter to you", in Google's words, with "margin" as its own example. Three campaign priorities (low, medium, high) decided which campaign bid when the same product sat in several. Benchmark click-through rate and benchmark maximum cost-per-click columns showed how the account compared with other advertisers on the same products. For a reseller managing several brands, this was the structure the 2012 product targets had only approximated.

- Subdivide the first level of product groups by brand, and the second by the dimension that actually drives your bid – margin tier in a custom label, or product type – so every bid has a business reason.
- Reserve the priority settings for promotions: a high-priority campaign holding this month's promoted models across brands, with medium for the standing brand campaigns and low for a catch-all with the lowest bid – Google's own holiday guidance that October said to keep "only one All products target with the lowest bid".
- Write the custom labels into the feed now, even before the upgrade reached your account: the *adwords_labels* and *adwords_grouping* attributes would not carry over.
- Read the benchmark columns per brand: a brand where your maximum cost-per-click sat far below the benchmark was a brand where you were not really in the auction.

4. Identifier enforcement widens to nine more **markets**

In July and August 2013 Google announced that the unique product identifier rules already enforced in the United States – brand plus GTIN or MPN for most new products – would apply from September 16, 2013 to feeds targeting Australia, Brazil, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Spain, Italy, Japan and the Netherlands, and to accounts in France, Germany and the United Kingdom that had previously been exempt. "By November, all violating offers will be rejected and will not be served through Product Listing Ads." For a reseller, whose entire catalogue is other people's products, this was a data-quality deadline dressed as a policy notice.

- Audit identifiers brand by brand before September 16, starting with the brands that carry the most revenue; a supplier that cannot give you GTINs is a supplier whose products will vanish from Shopping in November.
- Keep one spelling per brand and one MPN format per supplier: Google matched identifiers to create one listing per product across sellers, and a mismatch left your offer outside the listing that shoppers saw.

5. Trademarks as keywords: one rule for the whole **world**

On March 22, 2013, Google announced that from April 23, 2013 it would stop restricting trademarks as keywords in the last eight regions where it still did – Australia, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, Macau, New Zealand, South Korea and Taiwan – so that the keyword policy became, in Google's words, "harmonized throughout the world". Ad text stayed as it was: Google "will continue to investigate trademark complaints concerning use of trademarks in ad text", with the reseller and informational-site exception first written for the US in 2009. A reseller expanding into Australia or Brazil could now bid on the brands it sold there, on the same terms as at home.

- Apply the same three-part discipline in every market: a landing page dedicated to the brand, prices and a way to buy on it, and the reseller relationship visible in the ad and on the page.
- Do not read "harmonized" as "unrestricted": a brand owner's complaint about ad text was still investigated everywhere, and the reseller who could show the relationship still won it.

6. Audiences reach Search: remarketing lists and dynamic **remarketing**

Two audience tools went from beta to everyone within two days. On June 24, 2013, dynamic remarketing launched for all advertisers with a Merchant Center account: display ads built from the product feed, showing shoppers the products they had viewed; Google's launch examples reported double the click-through rate and five times the conversion rate for one retailer. On June 25, 2013, remarketing lists for search ads reached all advertisers using enhanced campaigns. For a reseller, both tools work at the level of the store, not the brand – and that is their value.

- Dynamic remarketing runs off the same feed as your Product Listing Ads, so the brand values and custom labels you fixed for Shopping now decide which products chase a visitor around the web. Exclude from the feed's remarketing use any brand whose distribution agreement forbids off-site advertising.
- Apply remarketing lists across every brand's Search campaign, with a bid increase for past visitors and a larger one for past buyers; a visitor who came for one brand and searches for another is still your visitor.
- Build one list per brand only where the message differs – a cart abandoner for a brand with a manufacturer promotion, for instance – and keep the store-level lists as the default.

7. Ad Rank and trust signals: **extensions** start to count

On October 22, 2013, Google changed Ad Rank to include "the expected impact from your ad extensions and formats" alongside bid and Quality Score – "ad extensions and formats can now influence the position of your ad on the search results page." A month later, on November 25, 2013, Google Trusted Stores ratings began feeding the seller ratings shown on text ads and Product Listing Ads, with StellaService performance summaries in the US; the threshold in force was 30 reviews in the previous 12 months and at least 3.5 stars. Review extensions had entered beta on June 27, 2013. For a multi-brand reseller, every one of these signals belonged to the store and appeared on every brand's ads.

- Give every brand campaign the full set of extensions – sitelinks to the brand's categories, callouts on delivery and returns, seller ratings – because from October an ad without them ranked lower at the same bid.
- Keep the reviews flowing all year: with a 12-month window, the store's rating is only as good as its last four quarters.

- Use review extensions for a third-party quote about the store, not about a brand; the extension was one per account, and the store was what shoppers were choosing between.

8. Bidding automation begins: flexible strategies and Target **ROAS**

Flexible bid strategies arrived on May 20, 2013 – Target search page location, Maximize clicks, Target CPA and Enhanced CPC, shareable across campaigns – and Target ROAS followed on October 3, 2013. On October 1, 2013, Estimated Total Conversions began adding estimated cross-device conversions to reporting. All of this applied to Search; Shopping campaigns kept manual bids. For a reseller, the interesting strategy was Target ROAS, because a return target is a margin decision, and margin is a brand-level fact.

- One Target ROAS strategy per brand tier, never one for the account: brands with different margins need different returns to break even, and a shared target quietly subsidises the thin-margin brands with the thick-margin ones.
- Feed the strategies revenue, not conversions: a Target CPA treats a £30 accessory and a £900 appliance as the same event.
- Read cross-device estimates per brand before cutting mobile adjustments; a brand that "does not convert on mobile" often converts on desktop after a mobile search.

9. What was **new** in 2013 – and what each thing turned into

Nine dated changes from the year, in order, each with what it became:

- **March 12 – Product Listing Ads eligible on smartphones globally.** Mobile Shopping became the majority of Shopping clicks within a few years.
- **June 21 – DoubleClick Search inventory-aware campaigns** build text ads and keywords from the Merchant Center feed.
- **June 24–27 – dynamic remarketing for retailers, remarketing lists for search ads for all, review extensions beta.** The audience layer of every account since.
- **October 1 – Estimated Total Conversions.** The ancestor of today's cross-device and modelled conversions.
- **October 7 – local availability on Product Listing Ads, in pilot with US retailers.**
- **October 22 – Shopping campaigns, and Ad Rank with extensions.** The structure resellers still use; the ranking rule that made extensions mandatory in practice.
- **October 30 – holiday guidance: feeds up to four times a day, one "All products" target with the lowest bid.**
- **November 7 – Product Listing Ads in eight more countries.** Cross-border selling for resellers with EU-wide distribution rights.
- **November 25 – Trusted Stores ratings in AdWords ads.**

10. What the second paid holiday season **showed**

RKG's Digital Marketing Report for the fourth quarter of 2013, published on January 15, 2014, recorded paid search spend among its retail clients up 23% year on year, with Product Listing Ads reaching 42% of their non-brand clicks – and noted that Product Listing Ad costs per click had exceeded non-brand text ad costs per click for the first time. A study by Adchemy, reported in March 2014, looked at $6 million of holiday Product Listing Ads spend across 1.6 million SKUs: products with a single conversion in the quarter produced 21% of the revenue, and about 470,000 SKUs produced no conversion at all.

- The 2012 discount was over: from here on, a Product Listing Ad bid competed with text ads on equal terms, and had to be justified brand by brand on return, not on cheapness.
- Do not cut the long tail by conversion count alone. In a multi-brand catalogue, the products that convert once are often the models that brought a shopper who then bought something else; read the tail per brand before excluding it.
- Do exclude what cannot convert: products out of stock, products whose price is far above the benchmark, brands with no margin at the winning bid.

11. Europe: three offers, three **rejections**

Google submitted formal commitments to the European Commission on April 3, 2013, and the Commission market-tested them from April 25: Google would label and frame its own specialised results, including shopping, and show links to three rivals. On July 17, Commissioner Almunia said the proposals were "not enough to overcome our concerns"; a second offer followed in October and was rejected on December 20, 2013; a third was accepted in principle on February 5, 2014, then abandoned later that year. For a European reseller, the practical effect in 2013 was nil – Google Shopping had just gone paid.

- Nothing to change in the account in 2013. Watch the "rival links" idea: an auction for comparison-shopping services inside Google's results.

12. A five-minute **check**

CHECK	WHY IT MATTERS
Every brand campaign upgraded to enhanced campaigns with its own mobile bid adjustment	Product Listing Ads on smartphones required it from March 12
Product Listing Ads live in each new country before April 12; whole catalogue promoted	The credit deadline for the eleven countries switching on February 13
Custom labels written into the feed: margin tier, promotion, season	adwords_labels and adwords_grouping did not carry over to Shopping campaigns
Product groups subdivided by brand first, then by margin or product type	Every bid needs a business reason; brand is where the reasons differ
One high-priority promotion campaign; one catch-all at the lowest bid	Priorities decide which campaign bids when products overlap
Brand, GTIN and MPN complete for every market before September 16	Violating offers rejected from November
Remarketing lists applied to every brand's Search campaign; dynamic remarketing on the feed	Both tools work at store level, across brands
Full extensions on every brand campaign; seller ratings above 3.5 stars on 30 reviews in 12 months	Ad Rank counted extensions from October 22
Target ROAS per brand tier on Search, fed with revenue	A shared target subsidises thin margins with thick ones

About **WeAdU**

WeAdU is a Google Premier Partner and the current home of a Google Ads practice founded in 2002, focused on AI-boosted Google Ads for brand product resellers.

Across the client book: **$241M+** in sales generated, **$132M+** tracked in Google Ads, **$32M+** in ad spend managed and **5.3M+** conversions. **14 of 20** clients (**70%**) saw a higher ROAS, measured over 12 months.

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This edition is a retrospective written in September 2026, not a document from 2013: it describes Google AdWords, Product Listing Ads, Google Shopping and Merchant Center as they worked that year, checked against sources published at the time or reliable later accounts, listed below.

Sources & further reading

Google, Inside AdWords / Google Commerce blog: "Introducing enhanced campaigns" (February 6, 2013); enhanced campaigns upgraded sitelinks (February 27, 2013); "Reach smartphone users around the world with Product Listing Ads" (March 12, 2013); Google Shopping global transition update (February 21, 2013); "Connect, click and convert around the world" and "Shopping global" – June 11 completion, one billion products, 300% seller growth (May 21, 2013); "New flexible bid strategies available" (May 20, 2013); inventory-aware campaigns in DoubleClick Search (June 21, 2013); "Reconnect with site visitors using beautiful, customized dynamic ads" (June 24, 2013); "Bringing intent, context and audience together" – remarketing lists for search ads for all (June 25, 2013); review extensions beta (June 27, 2013); "Enhanced campaigns: what happens on July 22" (June 12, 2013) and "Stepping into the future together" (July 22, 2013); unique product identifier enforcement (July 16 and August 21, 2013); "Estimated total conversions" (October 1, 2013); new flexible bid strategy – Target ROAS (October 3, 2013); "Google Shopping goes local" (October 7, 2013); "Introducing Shopping campaigns" (October 22, 2013); "Improving Ad Rank" (October 22, 2013); holiday Product Listing Ads guidance (October 30, 2013); "Google Shopping now available in 8 new countries" (November 7, 2013); "Google Trusted Stores expands and integrates with AdWords" (November 25, 2013); "Shopping campaigns available globally" (February 18, 2014); Shopping campaigns upgrade tool (August 11, 2014) and "Are your Product Listing Ads ready for August 31st?" (August 21, 2014); US ad-text trademark policy update (May 14, 2009). Google Ads Help – Trademarks policy (adspolicy/answer/6118). Independent: Search Engine Land – enhanced campaigns (February 6, 2013), paid Shopping results in 11 new countries (February 2013), remarketing lists out of beta (June 25, 2013), Shopping campaigns launch (October 2013), Trusted Stores and StellaService ratings in AdWords (November 2013), Adchemy study on long-tail Product Listing Ads revenue (March 5, 2014), missing GTIN and limited performance (2019); The Next Web and CSC – worldwide trademark keyword policy (March 22, 2013); Search Engine Watch – Estimated Total Conversions (October 1, 2013); The Drum – dynamic remarketing (June 24, 2013); Clix Marketing – Shopping campaigns versus Product Listing Ads campaigns, first look (November 12, 2013); RKG Digital Marketing Report Q4 2013 (January 15, 2014); PPC Hero – Merchant Center disapprovals and GTINs (November 13, 2019); European Commission press release IP/13/371 (April 25, 2013); TechCrunch – second commitments offer (October 1, 2013); The Register – offer rejected (December 20, 2013); European Commission press release IP/14/116 (February 5, 2014). Policies and product names have changed since 2013; the 2026 edition describes the current rules.