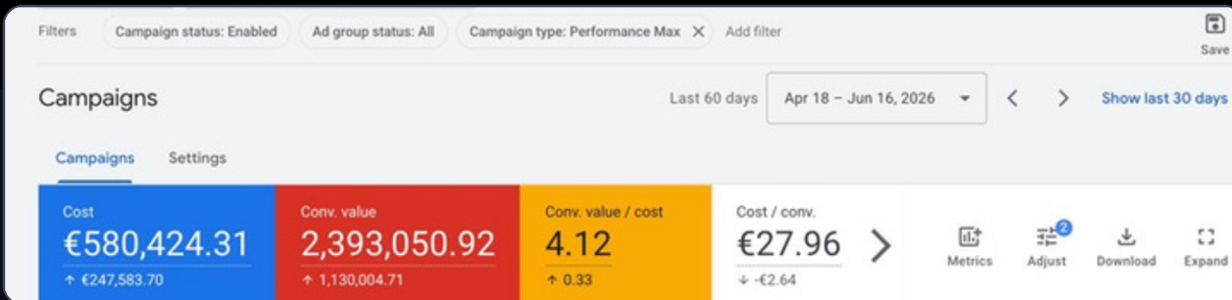


PMax is one of the top campaign types for getting new customers on Google right now.

For many of our clients it's the **#1 prospecting campaign in the account**, driving anywhere from \$500k to well over \$1m/month in revenue.



It's also the campaign type we see brands mess up more than anything else. Google made it easy to launch. That's exactly why the majority of brands run it the wrong way.

Where PMax runs

You give Google a budget, a feed, and a set of creative assets. It pushes ads across its entire network wherever it expects to generate a sale.

Shopping Search Maps YouTube Display Gmail Discover

The ideal traffic split

Rough averages, every account is different

~70%

Shopping
Often 80–90%

~20%

Search

~10%

Everything else

YouTube · Display · Gmail · Discover

The "everything else" bucket is mostly remarketing.

Don't expect PMax's display/YouTube to create demand at scale. That's what Demand Gen is for.

You can't directly control this split. Google decides where to put the money based on where it expects results. But you can nudge it toward shopping by using feed-only asset groups (covered in P4).

Keeping PMax Off Your Brand

This is the single most important thing in this whole playbook.

PMax optimises for the highest-converting traffic, which is almost always your branded terms. With no max CPC cap, it will happily pay **\$10–12 for a branded click you'd win for ~\$0.3–0.4** on a proper branded campaign.

How to exclude your brand from PMax

- 1 Create dedicated Search & Shopping campaigns targeting brand terms only
- 2 Build a branded negative keyword list: every variation, misspelling, abbreviation, etc.
- 3 PMax campaign → Additional Settings → Brand Exclusions → add all brand variations
- 4 Uncheck: *"Allow Shopping ads on searches that mention excluded brands"*
- 5 Monitor search term reports weekly. Add new brand negatives as you find them. **This never stops.**

Caveat: low-volume brands

If you're only getting a few hundred branded searches a month, skip building a dedicated branded shopping campaign. Let PMax capture those terms. Just make sure *"Allow Shopping ads on searches that mention excluded brands"* is enabled.

Product Feed

Since Shopping is the primary placement in PMax, your product feed is one of the most important levers in the account.

Start with titles

Pull search terms report (last 90 days). Find converting queries, add those exact phrases to your titles.

- Up to 150 characters, but only the first **25–35 show** on most placements, especially mobile
- Lead with the primary keyword and most important attributes
- Cover: product type · material or use case · color or size when buyers search by those attributes · brand when relevant

WEAK

"Workstation Chair Professional Edition V4"

STRONG

"Ergonomic Office Chair with Lumbar Support, Adjustable Armrests, Breathable Leather | BrandName"

Key attributes

- **Image:** Use high resolution, appropriate image size. Make the product the main focus. Test lifestyle images vs. plain white background images.
- **Price & sale price:** Google checks 3-month history. Permanent "sales" mean the green badge never shows.
- **GTIN:** barcode (UPC/EAN/ISBN). Wrong format = disapproved product. On Shopify: the "UPC" field.
- **Product type:** up to 5 levels, any structure. Always fill it. You can segment campaigns by it.
- **MPN:** paste your internal SKU. Helps attach reviews to the right listing.
- **identifier_exists:** set to "no" for handmade or custom products with no barcode.
- **item_group_id:** groups all variants of the same product together so reviews carry across every variant.
- **New AI attributes:** product_detail · product_highlight · question_and_answer. These improve how your product shows up in conversational and AI-powered searches.

Merchant Center

Merchant Center → Store Quality grades your store across four areas. What to do for each:

- **Shipping:** You want no mismatch between the actual value and what you tell Google. Faster shipping is also a huge component of CTR.
- **Returns:** Google wants a clear, easy-to-find policy that matches reality. Spell out how long, what condition, and who pays return shipping.
- **Browsing experience:** Use high-res images, at least 3 images per product, and improve site speed.
- **Purchase experience:** Turn on eWallets (PayPal, Apple Pay, Google Pay) and keep promo rejection rate low.

Three things to add

- **Product reviews:** star ratings show on listings, increase CTR, and carry across variants when item_group_id is set up
- **Seller ratings:** your overall store rating shows next to ads, signalling trust before they visit
- **Promotions:** Merchant Center → Promotions. All three improve CTR and listing rank
- **EU brands: use a third-party CSS** Google charges a margin on every click by default. A third-party CSS removes it, typically dropping CPCs by **15–20%**.

Asset Groups

A collection of creative assets: images, videos, headlines, descriptions, logos. Google mixes and matches them across placements. Think of it as PMax's version of an ad group.

Only split asset groups when the creative is genuinely different: a different product category or a seasonal theme.

The 5 parts of an asset group

Listing groups	Defines which products are included in this asset group. You can narrow by product type, brand, bestseller label, and more.
Final URL	All traffic from this group goes to one URL. If Final URL Expansion is on, Google can override this and send clicks to other pages it thinks are more relevant. Add URL exclusions to prevent waste. This is mainly for placements that aren't using the feed.
Headlines	Up to 15 headlines (30 chars each), 5 long headlines (90 chars), and 5 descriptions. The AI generator produces weak copy. Write your own.
Images	Up to 20 images. Google requires three shapes: landscape, square, and portrait.
Videos	Up to 5, minimum 10 seconds. If you don't add any, Google auto-generates one from your other assets. It's usually bad.

Asset Group Types

This is the single biggest way you influence where PMax spends.

FULL ASSET GROUP	FEED-ONLY
WHAT Listings + headlines, images, and videos	WHAT Listings only, no creative
USE FOR Your default. Google distributes across shopping, search, and other placements.	USE FOR Low-impulse products, or when you want to minimize spend across other placements like Gmail, Display, and YouTube or when they're eating too much of your budget. Google shows errors for missing creative. Ignore them and save. It still runs.

Signals

Signals are hints you give Google about who your ideal customers are. Google uses them as a starting point, then figures out the rest on its own. They are **not targeting**. Google doesn't have to follow them.

Layer 1 · Custom Segments

URLS YOUR CUSTOMERS VISIT

Competitor sites, category review sites, relevant publications. Tells Google where your buyers browse.

SEARCH TERMS THEY USE

Keyword-like inputs that guide which searches your ads appear for. Tells Google what your buyers search.

Layer 2 · In-Market

People already actively researching and comparing products in your category. For example:

Sports Nutrition

Activewear

Running & Jogging

Layer 3 · Affinity

These focus on users whose broader lifestyle aligns with your product. They're wider than in-market audiences, but useful when you want more reach without going too broad.

Layer 4 · Customer Match

You can upload your existing customer data: emails, phone numbers, addresses. The algorithm uses this to understand your customer profile and find similar buyers.

Bidding & Budgets

PMax only gives you automated bidding. Two options:

Maximize Conversions

A bidding strategy that gets you the most sales for your budget. You can optionally set a target CPA to control how much you pay per sale.

Maximize Conversion Value

A bidding strategy that gets you the most revenue from your budget. You can optionally set a target ROAS to control spend efficiency. **For ecom, running campaigns on target ROAS is usually the final goal for scaling**

How we approach it

Start on **Maximize Conversion Value with no target**. Let it gather data. Add a target ROAS once enough sales are coming through. With no max CPC cap in PMax, your ROAS target is the only lever for spend efficiency. That's also why brand exclusions (P2) matter so much.

Key Settings

Feed labels	Use for country only (US, AU, etc.). Do all sorting (brand vs non-brand, bestsellers) with custom labels instead. You can filter an asset group by multiple custom labels at once. Feed labels don't give you that flexibility.
Final URL expansion	The #1 reason PMax sends traffic to random pages. Turn it off for full control. If you leave it on, add URL exclusions: blogs, account pages, any page without a buy button.
Customer acquisition	Controls how Google prioritizes new vs existing customers in its bidding. Options: bid the same for everyone, bid more for new customers, or only target new customers. This often acts more as a signal to Google than a hard control, so it may not heavily shift actual acquisition. Be careful with the incremental value settings.
Video asset automation	Google can trim or reformat your videos. If you've uploaded polished edits, turn this off. It will chop the ending and break the cut.
Demographic & channel exclusions	PMax now supports limited channel exclusions (on Display and Search partners). Use the channel performance report to find placements spending without driving conversions, then exclude those. If you want to nudge spend away from other placements, you need to use a different asset group type (i.e. full asset vs feed-only).

Reports to run regularly

REPORT	WHAT IT SHOWS & WHY IT MATTERS	WHERE TO FIND IT
Channel Performance	Shows where PMax is spending across all placements. Use it to see which channels are driving results and which are wasting spend.	Campaigns → Insights and reports → Channel performance
Search Terms	Shows every search query that triggered your PMax ads. Use it to find new keyword angles and catch brand terms leaking through your exclusions.	Campaigns → Insights and reports → Search terms
Landing Page	Shows which pages are getting PMax clicks and how they perform (ROAS, CVR). Catches URL expansion waste and reveals pages converting quietly that you never set up.	Campaigns → Insights and reports → Report Editor → Landing Page
Products	Shows performance per product: clicks, sales, ROAS, and eligibility. Find disapproved products (they stop showing without notice), products with high clicks but zero sales (usually a bad image, wrong price, or poor landing page), and feed issues.	Campaigns → Products
Asset Performance	Shows which headlines, images, and videos are actually being served. If Google only shows 3 of your 15 headlines, those 3 are your strongest.	Campaigns → Assets → Assets
Demographics	Shows ROAS and conversion rate by age group and gender. Always check data before excluding any group. One account excluded 18-24s assuming they couldn't afford \$2,000 sofas. They converted at 27x ROAS.	Campaigns → Audience segments → Demographics