



Google Ads

Checklist for SaaS & Tech Companies



"Hello! I'm Nikita, Chief Technical Officer at Aimers. I would like to share a few thoughts with you on why conducting regular audits of your Google Ads account is not just important, but essential for a successful advertising strategy."

Google Ads is a powerful tool for promoting your business online. However, like any tool, it requires constant attention and careful tuning. Without regular audits, you risk missing valuable opportunities to improve the effectiveness of your campaigns and grow your business. We've seen how our clients have saved a lot of money by identifying and correcting errors before they led to serious budget losses.

That's why we've developed a checklist for auditing your Google Ads account. This checklist is based on our extensive experience in setting up advertising for SaaS & Tech businesses. We understand that every business is unique, and in the audit, we've tried to select the most commonly encountered items that have influenced our clients' results."

Nikita Yaroshenko
CTO

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Budget and Bidding

✓ Bid adjustments are done by segments (Geo/Devices/Age/Gender Income level/Audiences for observation)

If the business has accumulated demographic data, use it to reduce wasted spend on segments that don't convert. The approach depends on your bidding strategy:

- **Manual CPC / Max Clicks:** Apply negative bid adjustments for underperforming age, gender, or device segments. To eliminate a segment entirely, use exclusions.
- **Smart Bidding (Target CPA, Target ROAS, Maximize Conversions):** Demographic, geo, and audience adjustments are ignored by the algorithm. The only working lever is **device adjustment**, which modifies your effective CPA target rather than the bid itself. To cut out a non-converting segment – use **exclusions**, as they are respected by all strategies.

However, when working with Maximize Conversion Value and Target ROAS strategies, you can guide the algorithms using Value Rules, which can act as an alternative to Bid Adjustments. In other words, you can increase the actual conversion value from the most relevant users, thereby directing the algorithms to focus more on acquiring them.

Within Value Rules, you can set rules to increase or decrease the actual conversion value based on:
Audience, Location, Device.

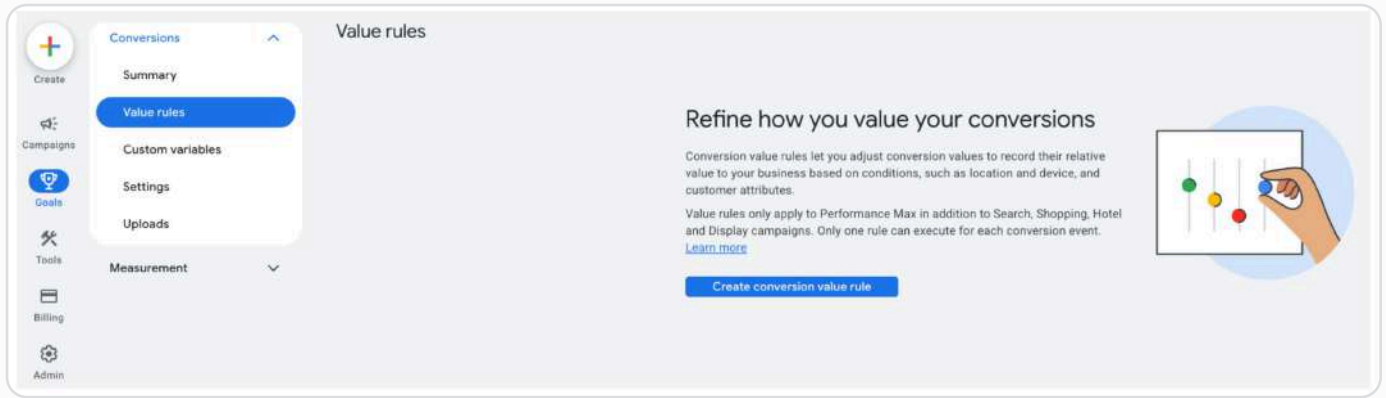
You can also use a combination of two criteria. For example:

Conversion value rule preview

If: Audience segment is New Visitors in the last 14 days

And: Device is desktop

Then: Multiply by 1.1



✓ You use automated bid strategies (Maximize conversions, Maximize conversion value, Target CPA), but your campaign generates fewer than 5 conversions per day

Automatic bidding strategies rely on sufficient conversion data to optimize bidding decisions effectively. With limited conversion data, campaigns may struggle to learn and adapt to maximize performance. It's essential to ensure that conversion tracking is properly set up, and that campaigns have adequate time to accumulate data before expecting significant performance improvements.

Here you can learn more about the “Maximize Conversions” strategy.

Based on our experience, we can say that currently automated bidding strategies produce better results in most cases, so check out this article to find the right option for you.

Ad Copy and Assets (formerly Extensions)

✓ All assets are added in Ads

Ad extensions are now called Assets in Google Ads. Ad assets play a crucial role in enhancing ad visibility and providing additional information to potential customers. By including assets such as sitelinks, callouts, and structured snippets, you can improve ad relevance and user experience, ultimately driving higher click-through rates.

Ad extensions (assets) play a crucial role in enhancing ad visibility and providing additional information to potential customers. By including extensions (assets) such as sitelinks, callouts, and structured snippets, you can improve ad relevance and user experience, ultimately driving higher click-through rates.

[Here](#) you can find all the information about each type of extension.

✓ Using A/B testing of Ad copies

We recommend having a minimum of 2 ad variations for A/B testing to optimize campaign performance. This allows for testing different elements such as headlines, descriptions, and calls-to-action. Utilizing A/B testing helps identify the most effective ad creatives to maximize click-through rates and conversions. You can check more insight about A/B testing/split testing [here](#).

With RSAs, traditional A/B testing requires the Ad Variations tool. Use it to test specific headline or description changes across ad groups or campaigns. Ensure sufficient impression volume (minimum 1,000 impressions per variant) before drawing conclusions. Also review the "Combinations" report inside each RSA to see which headline-description combinations Google is actually serving.

✓ Regularly checking ad copies performance

Ad copies typically vary in their performance, which requires close attention. It's important to regularly replace underperforming ad copies with higher-quality ones to stay competitive in the auction and maximize results. Consider launching Ad Variation Experiments or categorizing ads based on different themes to compare performance effectively. To ensure accurate results, set up even rotation during experiments to gather sufficient statistical data for each ad.

Adding labels can help you track ad performance; you can learn more about them [here](#). You can find out more about setting up ad variations [here](#).

✓ Ad copy meets ad policy requirements

Google's AI-powered ad policy enforcement has become more aggressive since 2024. Common violations: excessive capitalisation, repeated punctuation, claims about competitors, unverified superlatives ("best", "#1"), landing page mismatch. If ads are disapproved, use the Policy Manager to understand the specific violation before appealing.

Ensuring that ad copy complies with ad policy requirements is essential to maintain ad visibility and avoid potential penalties. You must adhere to guidelines regarding language, content, and formatting to ensure that ads are approved and displayed to the target audience effectively. Failure to meet ad policy requirements can result in ad disapproval or suspension, impacting campaign performance and ROI.

✓ AI-generated asset suggestions are reviewed before applying

Google now auto-suggests AI-generated headlines, descriptions, and image assets based on your landing page and campaign history. These appear as "Suggestions" in the Assets tab. Never apply AI-generated assets automatically -- review each for brand voice, accuracy, and landing page relevance before accepting.

✓ RSA (Responsive Search Ad) assets are fully optimised

RSAs are now the only text ad format. Optimisation requires:

- All 15 headline slots filled with distinct, non-redundant copy;
- All 4 description slots filled;
- Asset performance ratings reviewed -- replace "Low" rated assets with new variants;
- 1-2 headlines pinned to position 1 for brand/ICP message control.
Ad Strength of "Excellent" correlates with better auction eligibility.

[Check this article](#) if you think that your ads were rejected incorrectly, and you want to appeal to them.

Landing Pages & Conversion Tracking

✓ Conversions are being tracked

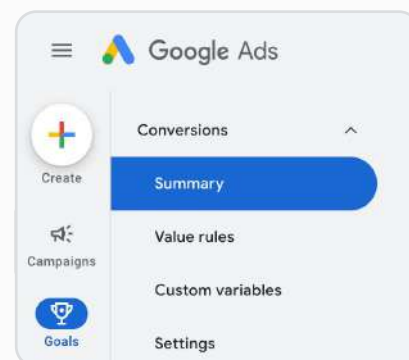
Failure to track conversions prevents you from accurately assessing the performance of advertising campaigns and making informed adjustments. Without conversion tracking, it becomes challenging to evaluate campaign effectiveness, optimize targeting strategies, and allocate budget efficiently.

✓ Conversions are divided into macro (primary) and micro (secondary)

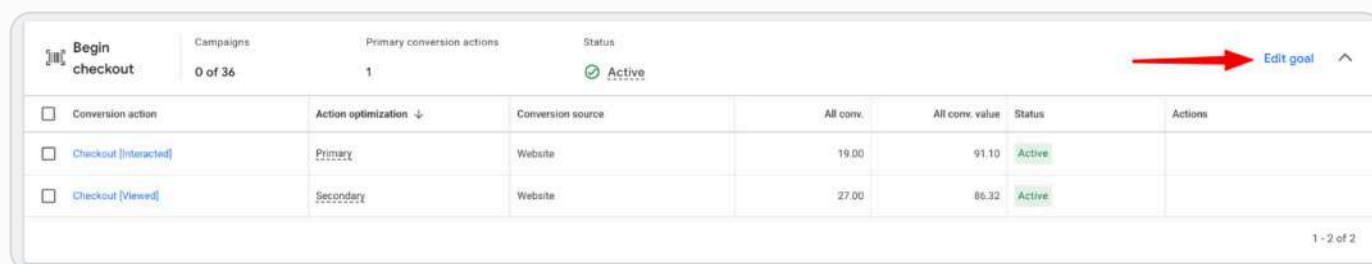
Segmenting conversions into macro and micro goals allows you to track various levels of user engagement and conversion actions. By defining primary and secondary conversion actions, you gain deeper insights into user behavior and campaign performance. Incorrect division of conversions can lead to misinterpretation of data and ineffective optimization strategies.

How to change the conversion priority:

1. Go to your Ad account, then to the “Goals” -> “Summary section”



2. Select the desired conversion and click “Edit goal”.



Begin checkout	Campaigns 0 of 36	Primary conversion actions 1	Status Active	Edit goal			
☐ Conversion action	Action optimization ↓	Conversion source	All conv.	All conv. value	Status	Actions	
☐ Checkout [Interacted]	Primary	Website	19.00	91.10	Active		
☐ Checkout [Viewed]	Secondary	Website	27.00	86.32	Active		

1 - 2 of 2

3. Change to the desired priority level.

× Edit settings for Begin checkout

Goal settings

Account default: Off

Campaign-specific optimization: 0 campaigns use Begin checkout as a campaign-specific goal

Conversion action optimization: 1 primary conversion action, 1 secondary conversion action

Select how conversion actions are used with Begin checkout. Primary actions are used for bid optimization and conversion reporting, while secondary actions are for observation only. [Learn more about primary and secondary conversion actions](#)

Conversion action	Action optimization	Source
Checkout [Interacted]	Primary	Website
Checkout [Viewed]	Secondary (observe only)	Website

Show rows: 5 1 - 2 of 2

✓ Landing page has a clear submit form

A clear and prominent submit form on the landing page is essential for facilitating user interaction and capturing lead information effectively. A poorly designed or unclear submit form can lead to user confusion and hinder conversion rates. Optimizing the submit form layout and placement enhances user experience and increases the likelihood of conversion.

✓ Enhanced Conversions are implemented, not relying on basic tag alone

Enhanced Conversions (EC) send hashed first-party data (email, phone, name) to Google at the point of conversion, allowing Google to match conversions even when cookies are blocked. In 2026, browser privacy restrictions and iOS updates mean standard Google Tags miss 20-40% of conversions. EC is now the baseline requirement for accurate measurement.

Where to find:

Google Ads -> Goals -> Conversions -> Diagnostics -> Enhanced Conversions.

Learn more about why it's important to pay attention to Conversion Rate Optimization of your website/landing page [in this article](#).

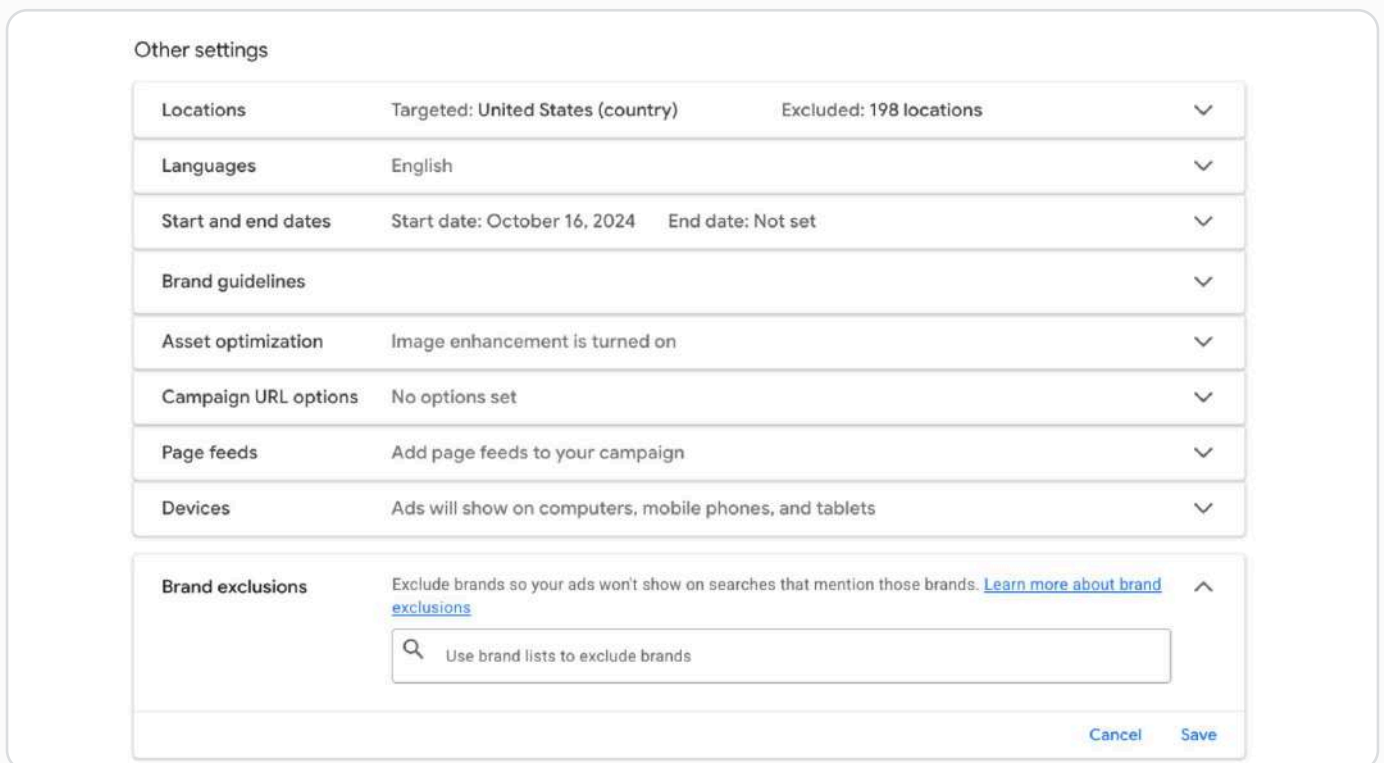
Performance Max

Performance Max is Google's primary campaign type. Accounts without a PMax audit frequently overpay on branded queries, run without audience signals, and lose conversion credit to brand cannibalism.

✓ **Brand terms are excluded from Performance Max campaigns**

PMax captures branded queries, inflating conversions with no incremental value. Exclude your brand name and key variants via Brand Exclusions in campaign settings – standard negative keyword lists do not apply here.

Where to find: Google Ads → PMax Campaign → Settings → Brand exclusions.



The screenshot shows the 'Other settings' section of a Google Ads campaign. It includes a table of settings with expandable rows. The 'Brand exclusions' section is expanded, showing a search bar and a 'Save' button.

Other settings		
Locations	Targeted: United States (country)	Excluded: 198 locations
Languages	English	
Start and end dates	Start date: October 16, 2024	End date: Not set
Brand guidelines		
Asset optimization	Image enhancement is turned on	
Campaign URL options	No options set	
Page feeds	Add page feeds to your campaign	
Devices	Ads will show on computers, mobile phones, and tablets	
Brand exclusions	Exclude brands so your ads won't show on searches that mention those brands. Learn more about brand exclusions 🔍 Use brand lists to exclude brands Cancel Save	

✓ **Asset Groups are structured by audience segment or product line**

Avoid one generic asset group serving all placements. Split by ICP segment, funnel stage, or product line. Each group needs: 15 headlines, 5 descriptions, 3+ images, 1 logo, 1 video.

Where to find: Google Ads → PMax Campaign → Asset groups.

✓ **Negative keywords are configured at campaign and account level**

Two layers to maintain:

- **Campaign-level negatives** – added directly to PMax, apply to Search and Shopping only;
- **Account-level negative lists** – apply automatically across all campaigns including PMax.

Neither layer suppresses ads on YouTube, Display, or Discover. Review monthly. Where to find: Google Ads → PMax Campaign → Keywords → Negative keywords / Tools → Shared Library → Negative keyword lists.

✓ **Audience signals are configured in each Asset Group**

Without signals, PMax takes longer to learn and delivers lower-quality traffic. Add: Customer Match lists, website remarketing audiences, and Custom Intent audiences from high-converting keywords. Signals are suggestions, not restrictions. Where to find: Google Ads → PMax Campaign → Asset group → Audience signals.

✓ **Search term visibility is reviewed via Insights and Search terms reports**

PMax offers limited query transparency. Check monthly: Insights tab → Search themes for targeting categories; Search terms report for actual queries. Where to find: Google Ads → PMax Campaign → Insights tab + Search terms report.

✓ **PMax and Search campaigns are audited for overlap**

Search campaigns take priority for exact keyword matches, but PMax can still capture broad/phrase traffic, causing double attribution. Audit overlap monthly via Auction Insights and Search Terms reports. Where to find: Google Ads → Campaign → Search terms → compare PMax vs Search traffic.

Find out more about PMax [here](#).

Keywords & Targeting

- ✓ At the geotargeting level in large countries (for example, the USA), the location is added not by the entire country, but separately by each state

We recommend dividing large countries, such as the USA, into individual states, cities, or regions; this allows optimizing advertising campaigns at the geolocation level, removing irrelevant ones, or making increasing/decreasing adjustments.

For example, we see that some states bring conversions much more expensively than others. Since the campaign uses an automatic strategy, and it is impossible to make decreasing adjustments, such states can be moved to a separate campaign and control CPA there or even can be removed from the campaign.

- ✓ At the campaign level, the location option is set to "Presence: People in or regularly in your targeted locations"

Inaccurate GEO settings at the campaign level, particularly when selected as "Presence or Interest," can lead to inefficient targeting and wastage of ad spend. Proper GEO targeting ensures that ads are displayed to the most relevant audience segments, maximizing campaign effectiveness and ROI.

How it should look: in the campaign settings, expand "Location options" in the Locations section and select the desired setting

Settings

Enter a location to target or exclude

Advanced search

For example, a country, city, region, or postal code

^ Location options

Target ?

☐ Presence or interest: People in, regularly in, or who've shown interest in your targeted locations (recommended)

☒ Presence: People in or regularly in your targeted locations

✓ **Negative keywords are added in Search campaigns**

Insufficient use of negative keywords in Search campaigns leads to irrelevant traffic and wastage of ad spend. By adding negative keywords at the group, campaign, and account levels, you can refine targeting and improve the quality of traffic, ultimately enhancing campaign performance and efficiency.

Read more about negative keywords and their match types [in this article](#).

✓ **Branded, competitor, and generic keywords are grouped separately**

We recommend separating search campaigns based on the following criteria:

- Search campaign for relevant keywords
- Search campaign for competitor brand queries
- Search campaign for company brand queries

This allows for convenient separate control of budgets, bids, adjustments to individual segments, as well as writing the most relevant ads for different categories of keywords.

✓ **Correct grouping of keywords is conducted in the campaign: for each category of keywords separate Ads are used**

Improper grouping of keywords within campaigns diminishes ad quality and relevancy, negatively impacting CTR and cost per click. Categorizing keywords and assigning separate ads to each category improves ad relevance and enhances Quality Score, which positively influences Ad Rank. By aligning ad messaging with specific keyword categories, you can optimize campaign performance.

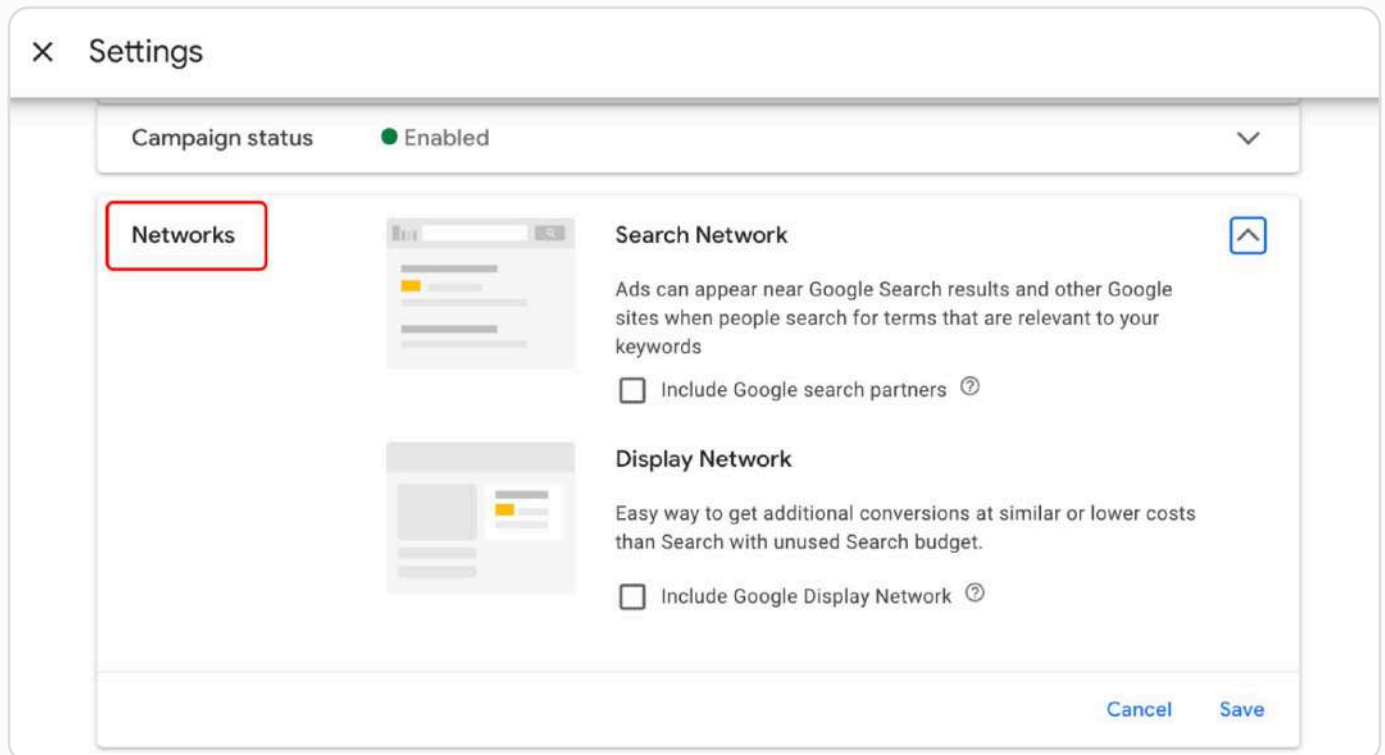
Find out the main nuances that affect [Ad Rank here](#).

Campaign Settings

✓ Search Partners generate a large volume of traffic within Search campaigns

Search Partners often contribute a substantial amount of traffic to Search campaigns, albeit of lower quality compared to primary search traffic sources. It's crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of Search Partners' traffic and adjust targeting strategies accordingly to maintain campaign performance and ROI.

You need to go to the campaign settings and select the “Network” section to disable impressions everywhere except Google search.



✓ Display Network is enabled within Search campaigns

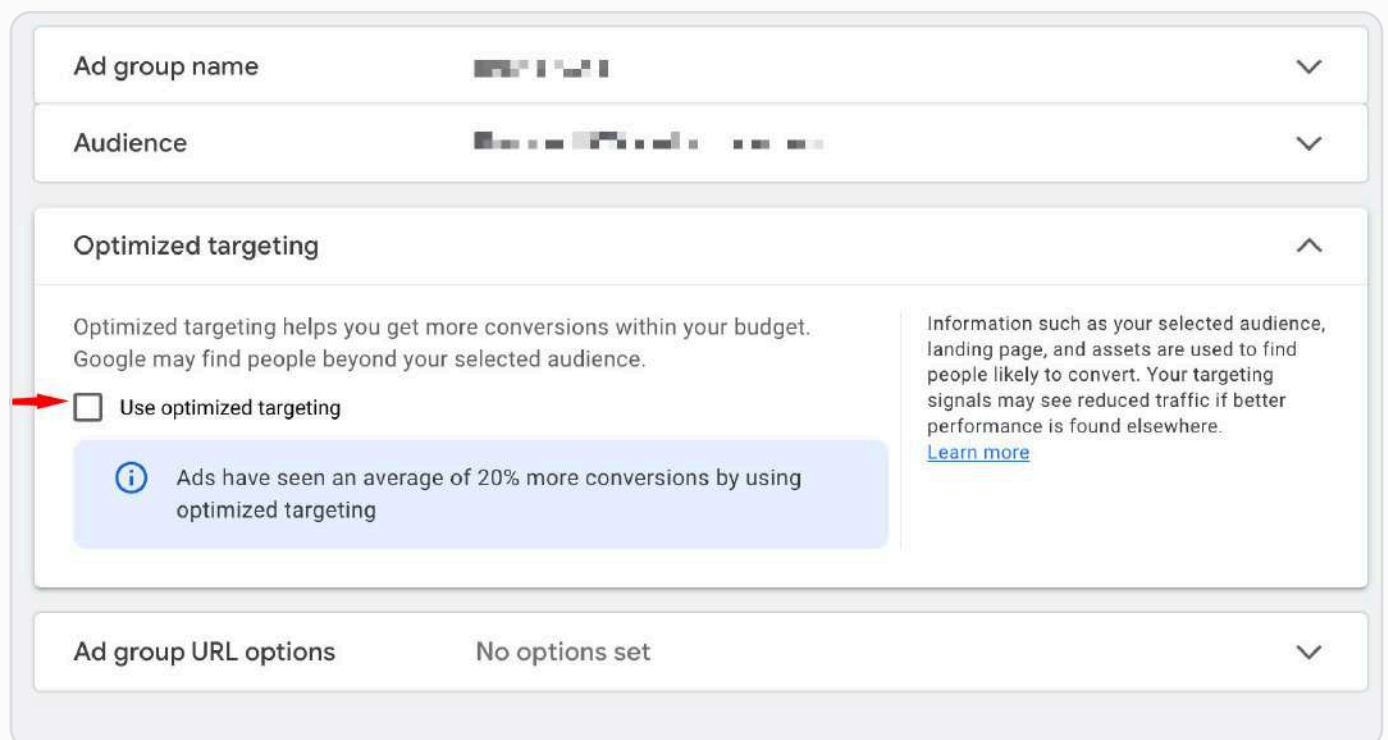
Based on our experience, the best option is to separate search and display into different campaigns to separately analyze statistics, make adjustments, and control the volume of search and display traffic if necessary. Typically, Display Network spent the majority of funds and bring more expensive conversions. Details about what a Display Network is you may find [here](#).

✓ Audience Expansions/Optimized targeting is enabled in Display/Demand Gen/YouTube

In our experience, enabling optimized targeting can lead to an increase in inappropriate budget spending and a decrease in conversion rate. Therefore, we recommend being careful with this setting and not use it in situations where you need special control over the audience for targeting and on projects with a limited budget.

Variant for “these types of campaigns are not set up”:

Consider running these types of campaigns if you want to reach a new audience across various channels, increasing brand visibility and engagement. Additionally, they provide valuable targeting options, including demographics, interests, and behaviors, ensuring that your ads are shown to the right audience at the right time. You can disable this setting at the ad group level:



Ad group name [REDACTED] ▼

Audience [REDACTED] ▼

Optimized targeting ^

Optimized targeting helps you get more conversions within your budget. Google may find people beyond your selected audience.

☐ Use optimized targeting

Information such as your selected audience, landing page, and assets are used to find people likely to convert. Your targeting signals may see reduced traffic if better performance is found elsewhere. [Learn more](#)

Ads have seen an average of 20% more conversions by using optimized targeting

Ad group URL options No options set ▼

✓ **Ad placements on irrelevant websites and devices (apps, TV placements, topics related to kids, gaming, etc.) are excluded**

Excluding irrelevant placements and topics in Display and YouTube campaigns helps ensure that ads appear in suitable contexts that match brand values and audience preferences.

Avoiding TV displays on YouTube minimizes ad spend wastage for users unable to interact effectively with ads. By excluding placements on kids' channels, gaming channels, mobile apps, and unrelated topics, you can enhance ad relevance and boost campaign performance.

All articles on how to exclude placements can be found [here](#).

✓ **Maintaining a high Optimization Score**

Maintaining a high optimization score is essential for effective campaign management and algorithm training. Adhering to recommended optimization practices and implementing relevant recommendations ensures that campaigns are optimized for maximum performance and efficiency.

Rejecting irrelevant recommendations while maintaining a 100% optimization score helps improve campaign effectiveness and achieve better results.

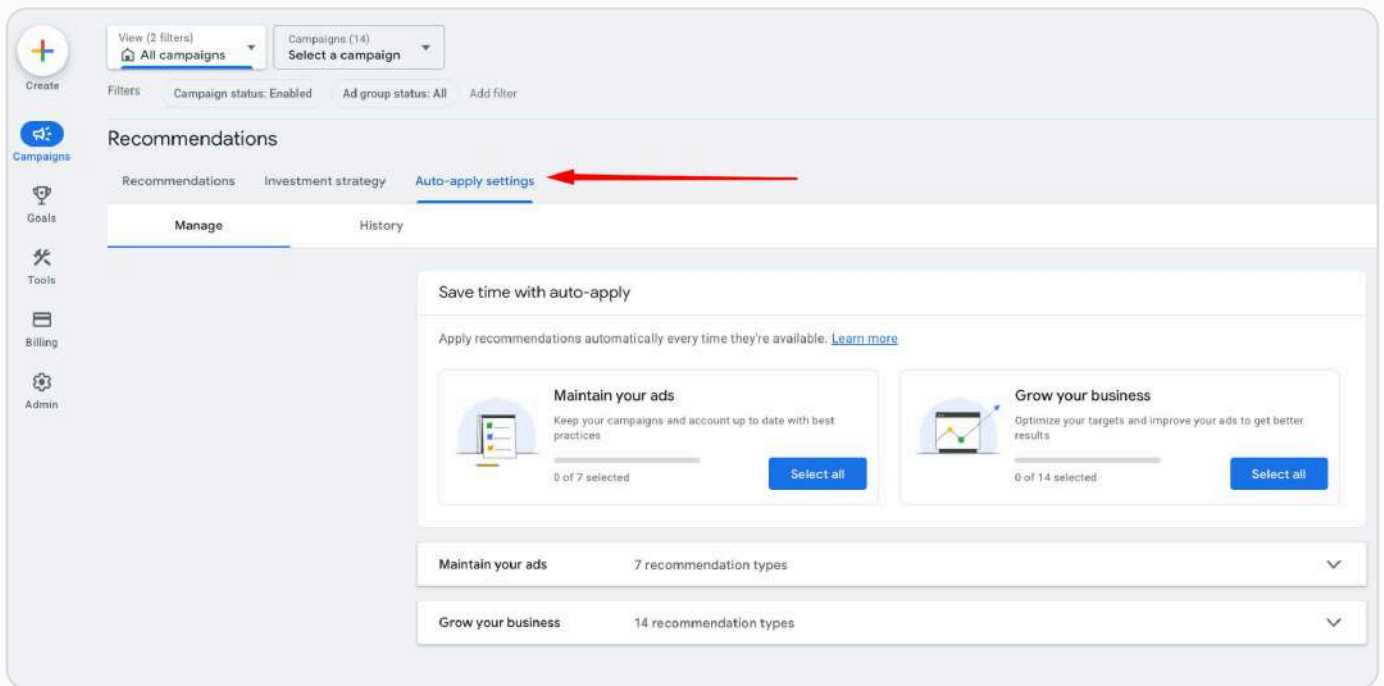
More details about the Optimization Score and how to calculate it can be found [here](#).

✓ **Auto-applied recommendations are enabled**

Enabling auto-applied recommendations streamlines campaign management processes but requires careful monitoring to ensure that applied recommendations align with campaign objectives and performance goals.

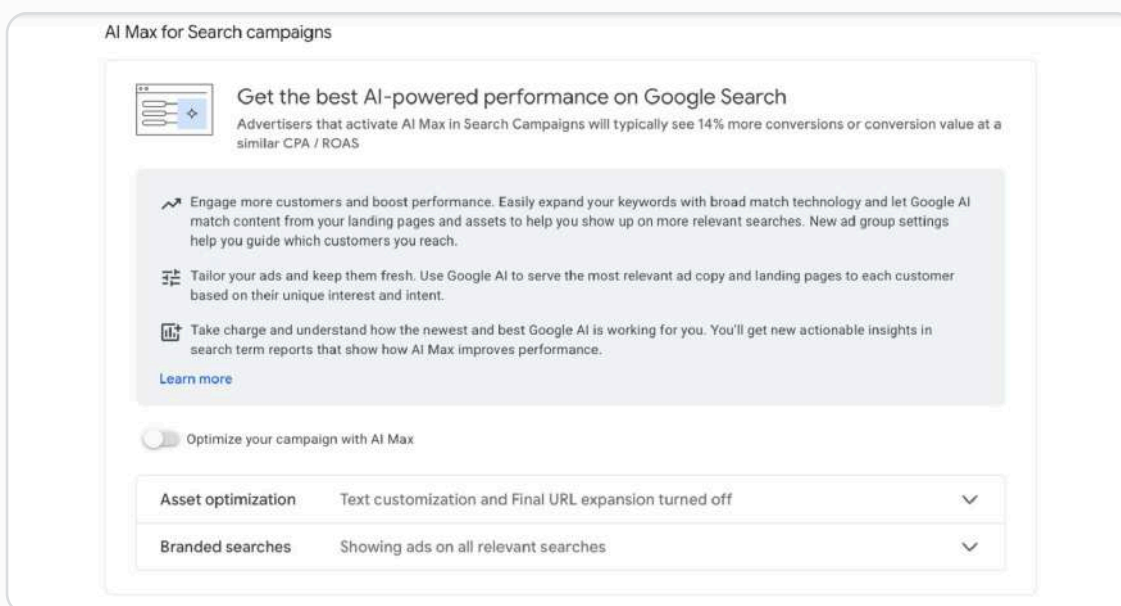
Regular review of auto-applied recommendations helps maintain campaign effectiveness and optimize ad spend allocation.

Auto-applied recommendations can be disabled here:



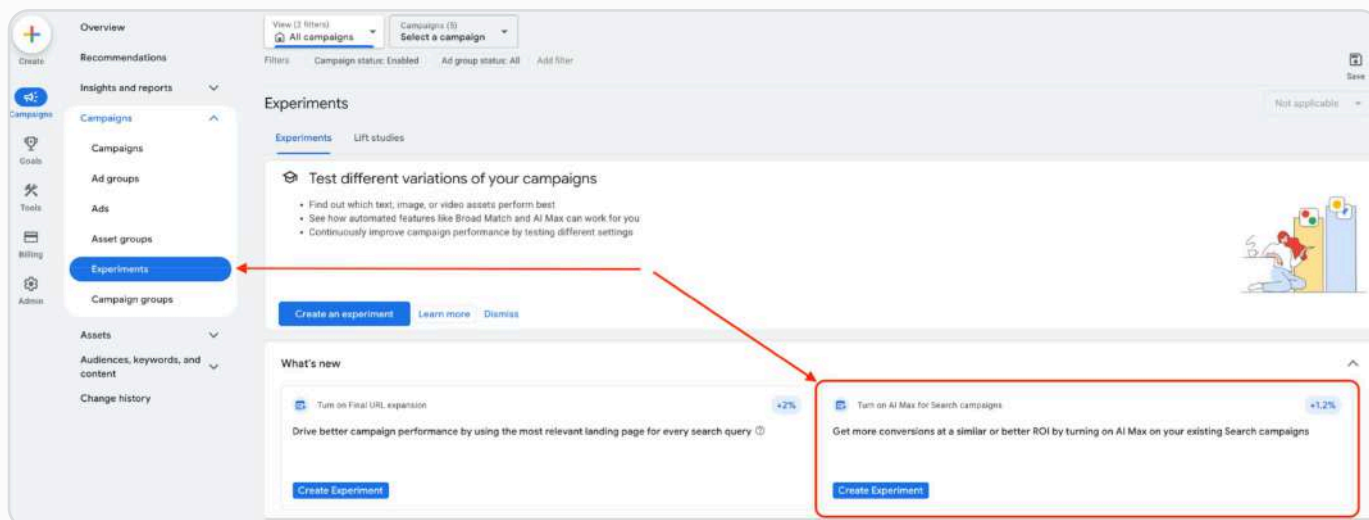
✓ AI Max is reviewed and disabled in Search campaigns if not intentionally tested

AI Max expands query matching beyond broad match, which can generate high volumes of irrelevant traffic. Disable it unless running a controlled test via the Experiments tab. Where to find: Google Ads → Search Campaign → Settings → Optimize your campaign with AI Max.



Add this sentence at the end of the check item:

If you want to evaluate AI Max, test it in an isolated campaign or via the Experiments tab , this ensures a clean performance comparison against your current active campaigns before rolling it out broadly.



Analytics & Reporting

✓ Data-driven attribution is selected

Choosing data-driven attribution is crucial for optimizing advertising performance and training algorithms effectively. By selecting data-driven attribution, you gain insights into the true impact of their marketing efforts across various touchpoints, leading to more accurate attribution modeling and better decision-making.

To select data-driven attribution, press on the conversion name:

Subscribe 0 of 61 campaigns		Edit goal				
☐	Conversion action	Action optimization ↓	Conversion source	All conv.	All conv. value	Status
☐	Subscribe to the newsletter	Secondary	Website	4.00	0.00	Active

1 - 1 of 1

Select the desired attribution in the drop-down window below:

Details

Settings

Webpages

Engaged-view conversion window

3 days

▼

View-through conversion window

1 day

▼

Attribution

The [attribution model](#) determines how much credit each ad interaction gets for your conversions.

Channels eligible to receive credit for a conversion. This is determined by the conversion source.

☒ **Google paid channels**
Only Google Ads paid channels are eligible to receive conversion credit.

Choose how to distribute credit to the channels selected above:

Bar chart icon

Data-driven

Recommended

▼

See example of conversion credit distribution using selected settings

▲

Cancel

Save

Done

✓ UTM tags are set up (checked at the account, campaign, ad levels)

The absence of UTM tags hinders accurate tracking and attribution of campaign performance across different levels, including the account, campaign, and ad levels. Implementing UTM tags lets you capture valuable data on campaign traffic sources, mediums, and campaigns, facilitating comprehensive performance analysis and optimization.

[Here](#) you can find a detailed guide about UTM tags.

✓ Google Analytics is linked to the account

Failure to link essential tools such as Google Analytics, Google Merchant Center, and Google Search Console to the account limits the depth of insights available for campaign optimization. Linking these platforms provides access to valuable data on website performance, product feeds, and search queries, enabling you to make informed decisions and maximize campaign effectiveness.

[Here](#) you can read about how to link Google Analytics with your Google Ads account.

✓ Auto-tagging is set to YES

Auto-tagging enables accurate tracking of campaign performance and attribution within Google Analytics. By enabling auto-tagging, Google Ads automatically appends unique parameters to destination URLs, allowing for comprehensive tracking of ad clicks and conversions.

This data is essential for evaluating campaign effectiveness, optimizing targeting strategies, and refining ad messaging to enhance overall performance and ROI.

Want to apply this setting? Find out how to set it up in 5 steps [here](#).

Insights from Aimers

Best practices for achieving success in Google Ads for SaaS and Technology businesses.

1. If you are just starting your journey in digital marketing, we recommend using a CRM system. Thanks to the integration of Google Ads with CRM, you can track actual sales and match them with specific advertising campaigns and keywords in your account. This allows you to measure the effectiveness of advertising and optimize your budget, allocating it to the most successful campaigns and keywords.

Here are the top 3 most popular CRM systems that our clients most often use:

- **Salesforce.** It is one of the leading CRM platforms globally, offering a wide range of features for sales, marketing, and customer service. It's known for its cloud-based solutions and extensive customization options.
- **Microsoft Dynamics 365:** Microsoft's CRM offering. Dynamics 365 is highly regarded for its integration with other Microsoft products like Office 365 and Outlook. It provides comprehensive tools for sales, marketing, and customer service.
- **HubSpot CRM.** HubSpot offers a user-friendly CRM platform that integrates with its suite of marketing, sales, and service tools. It's popular among small and medium-sized businesses for its ease of use and robust features.

2. Since the deal cycle can be long, be sure to use **remarketing campaigns** in your strategy. Try to find personalized offers for each category of users who contacted you or visited your website.

Information on how to create the necessary audience and what characteristics it must meet can be read [here](#).

3. Monitor **Auction Insight** reports regularly to help you stay on top of competitor activity, as this can have a big impact on your campaigns and lead to seemingly “inexplicable” CPA increases.

You can read about Auction Insight reports for each campaign type [here](#).

4. To avoid CPA increase and have an advantage over your competitors, monitor the quality of your ads and landing pages. Pay attention to the relevance of the ad to each keyword and pay attention to the **Quality Score** of each keyword, preferably a QS should be at least 6/10.

Read about 5 ways to use Quality Score to improve your performance [in this article](#).

5. You can peek at your competitors' ads using [the following website](#). Simply enter the URL address you are interested in and select the region where your ads will be displayed.

Ready to Turn Your Google Ads into a Pipeline Machine?

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