



GOOGLE SHOPPING FEED OPTIMIZATIONS FOR RETAILERS

Rank Higher in Google Shopping with 10 Product Feed Optimizations

 cpcstrategy



SALSIFY

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Introduction

Trying to succeed in a competitive space like Google Shopping isn't easy, but sometimes, we make it more complicated than it has to be. Sometimes, you have to go back and perfect the basics before you can really excel.

To pull from a classic 80s movie, you can consider your feed optimizations the "wax on, wax off" part of training before you learn to crane kick.

Like the wax-on, wax-off technique, you might be less-than-thrilled about this part of selling products via the Shopping platform. After all, there are so many other levers to pull. (And some of them are a lot easier to manage.)

Unfortunately, you're not going to see the best return on Google Shopping if your feed isn't optimized. If quality content isn't getting surfaced on a search, your [customers may be less likely to buy from you](#).

We've partnered with the brains behind [Salsify](#), a product content management platform for brands and retailers, to nail down the feed optimizations that will take your Google Shopping game to the next level.



First Things First: Get Organized on Google Manufacturer Center



First Things First: Get Organized on Google Manufacturer Center

Nearly 3 billion Google searches are made every day, and Search is the primary way your consumers begin shopping.

If your product content can't be found on Google, not much else matters.

Your team needs to ensure that each of your product listings is detailed, accurate, compelling and easy for shoppers to find.

If you're a brand manufacturer, you should be on [Google Manufacturer Center](#). You can get started today by setting up your account at <http://manufacturers.google.com>. (If you aren't a manufacturer, you should be on the Merchant Center—and you can [get more information here](#).)

Manufacturer Center gives you the opportunity to supply structured product data directly to Google to improve your brand's discoverability. It also helps improve the relevance of your product listings across Google.com properties, including Google.com, Google Shopping, and Google Express.





We have three steps that will help you get started:

1 Get Control of Your Content

The product content you share with Google includes everything from photos and YouTube videos to size and weight, colors, and accurate text descriptions. You need to centralize the relevant information you have and adapt it to Google's specific content requirements.

2 Adopt a Process to Keep Your Content Updated

Your products are dynamic—you change packaging, descriptions, and pricing seasonally or for targeted merchandising promotions. The content you provide Google must reflect these frequent updates.

Adopt a flexible, cross-functional workflow that can help direct the flow of content through your organization, so those who need it when they need it, have high-quality, complete content.





3 Empower Your Team With Technology

With all of these moving pieces, it would be easy for the transfer and transformation of data to become a full-time process.

A product content management system like Salsify can act as a central source of information that organizes your content and streams it directly into Manufacturer Center.

Whatever system you use must simplify the process of managing and exchanging complete and accurate product content at scale and be accessible and easy to use by cross-departmental stakeholders.

The more detailed your product information is, the more likely that customers will see and then click on your products.

In fact, Salsify customer Speakman actually saw sales increase after updating content onto Manufacturer Center.

[\(Learn more here.\)](#)

Once you've set the stage to get up and running, it's time to make the feed optimizations you'll need to excel.



10 Key Product Feed Optimizations



10 Key Product Feed Optimizations

1 Optimize Your Product Titles for Search Intent

Only 15-20 characters show by default on Google Shopping titles, make sure all of the most important parts of your titles are on the left. **In fact, you can also impact your product rank by moving common search terms to the left.**





Here are some parts of a title that will impact your rank and visibility on the Google Shopping SERP:

Brand

Typically, the brand should be on the left. However, in some cases, the most commonly searched-for term will be something else like the product MPN or another attribute. Do your keyword research (see #2) to learn more.

Example

J.W. Hulme Leather Brief Bag

vs.

Leather Brief Bag by J.W. Hulme

Attributes

As we stated before, it's important to incorporate the most commonly searched terms into your title. Other attributes include color, size, or gender.

Example

J.W. Hulme Leather Brief Bag

vs.

J.W. Hulme Mens Brown Leather Brief Bag

MPN/Style Number

For some products, the MPN is key. (Think: sneakers.) In this case, incorporate the MPN or style number into the title.

Excessive Capitalization

You might find several words in your titles are in ALL CAPS. In order to improve readability—and to look less spammy—make sure you go through and remove unnecessary capitalization. One caveat: Make sure you don't turn MPNs into lower-case. They look much less professional and identifiable.

"If you have an MPN field or a UPC that's not correct, at some point, Google might just disapprove that product. And if you send the incorrect MPN, there's a potential you could get matched up incorrectly with other products on Google Shopping."



Jason Bell
Senior Account Analyst
CPC Strategy





HTML Issues

Characters such as ampersands (&) can get lost in translation and can result in unnecessary letters and characters in your titles. Carefully go through and remove these characters for cleaner titles.

Readability

Don't turn your titles into "keyword soup" for the sake of rank—it won't help you out in the sales department because it's not user friendly. Read through your titles and ensure they're easy to read and understand before you start bidding.





2 Implement Keyword Insertions

Keywords are super important for your product's ranking, and should be used in both your titles and your descriptions. Here are some of the first questions you should ask when looking for the best keyword opportunities.

Start by checking out what your products rank for in your Search campaigns.

In an ideal scenario, your Search campaigns rank for many of the same keywords as your Shopping campaigns. That way, you can take up as much space as possible on the SERP. In addition, this strengthens your brand awareness and credibility amongst consumers.

Then, run a Search Terms report in AdWords to find your top-performing queries.

Note: These are typically not the keywords you are bidding on (PPC). Instead, this report shows you metrics on the auctions you are winning based on what the user is actually typing into the search bar.





As you finalize your desired keywords for various products, ask yourself the following questions:

- ✓ Do PLAs show up for this keyword when running a manual search?
- ✓ Does at least one of your products show up when running this search?
- ✓ How much do your shopping campaigns currently spend on these keywords?
- ✓ Do your product titles or descriptions contain this keyword?



PROTIP: Be willing to update your title and description keywords as user behavior data evolves.



desktop organizer with drawers



All

Images

Maps

Shopping

More

Settings



3 Leverage Categorization

Google's [official product taxonomy](#) is a great place to start when looking for where your products fit.

It's called the Google Product Categories (GPC) and it's how Google recognizes most products. This is required, and you must choose a GPC that best matches your individual products.

The Product Types column is where you can get more granular and can incorporate your headlines and product categories from your website.

Here are some things to think about incorporating when categorizing your products (organize from broad to granular):

- ✓ Product types
- ✓ Sizes, MPNs, Part Numbers

Here's an example of a **GPC** vs. a **Product Type** column.

GPC

Home & Garden > Decor > Throw Pillows

Product Type

Baby Kids & Teens > Crayola Kids > Throw Pillows >
Crayola Crayon Bolster Pillow - Lemon Yellow





Although users don't typically use categories during their search, the product type section can help inform your campaign build-out. You can get extremely granular by building out product-level ad groups, and you can see Auction Insights at the product level.

However, if you do build out product-level groups, and you have thousands of products to manage individually, it could prove difficult.

[Learn more about the pros and cons of Product-Level Ad Groups on Google Shopping.](#)

"If you have thousands of products to manage, and you do decide to go this route, I recommend you pick 5 or 10 of your best sellers and focus on dominating search results for those specific products."



Jason Bell
Senior Account Analyst
CPC Strategy





4 Take Advantage of Merchant Promotions

[Merchant Promotions](#) can improve visibility, CTR, and conversion rates on Google Shopping. A study by Google showed that one brand was able to increase CTR by +7% and decrease CPC by 11% using these.

You should definitely make these a priority on holidays like Black Friday, Cyber Monday, or Memorial Day weekend.

Merchant promotions can be created within the Google Merchant Center. If your “Promotions” tab is unavailable, fill out the [Merchant Promotions Interest Form](#).

Here are our top 5 picks for Google Product Listing Ad Merchant Promotions:

- ✓ **Free Shipping**
- ✓ **Lowering the Free Shipping threshold**
- ✓ **Buy One, Get One or Buy One, Get One 50% Off**
- ✓ **Tiered percentage discounts** (Example: 5% Off Orders of \$50, 10% Off Orders of \$100 or more)
- ✓ **Brand specific rebates** (Example: One for each brand, sponsored by the manufacturer)

At CPC Strategy, we’ve seen the most success with tiered promotion and lowering the free shipping threshold. However, it’s important for all retailers to test for themselves and find out what works best for their audience.

Learn more about using
[Google Merchant Promotions](#)





5 Use Custom Labels to Manipulate Product Bids at Scale

Think about the data that would be useful for you to collect via Custom Labels in AdWords.

Product attributes work great to fill these labels up:

- ✓ Color
- ✓ Material
- ✓ Style
- ✓ Size

You may not want to manage your ads using these labels, but they will still give you the potential to run more detailed reports to inform your bidding strategies.

It can also help as you gauge what to promote during different seasons—you can see trends and more for specific products.

Learn more about using
[AdWords Custom Labels](#)



6 Validate your Detailed Product Descriptions

Google allows for a 10,000-character submission for a detailed product description.

This text is used to help surface your Google Shopping ads and shows up in detailed product cards in general searches when relevant, and play a critical role in helping the search engine determine your product's relevance to each shopper.

Like much of the product content that Google requests, there is a list of guidelines that you must follow in order to get your detailed product description approved. Make sure your copy is not only compelling and relevant to your target audience, but also meets the editorial requirements below.





Dorel Home Furnishings Madison Cupholder Futon, Black

from Sears

★★★★★ 1 product review

This chic black faux leather sofa will fit in with your finest decor without giving a hint of its dual purpose. Sitting up off the floor on spindle legs, this sofa gives the illusion of more space in your living room, great for small or big spaces. The black leather look is timeless, classic and durable—making this futon a great long-term investment in your home. Ideal for entertaining, day or night, this cupholder futon is roomy and comfortable. Fold down the middle cushion for parties, movie night or game night to reveal an armrest tray with two cupholders and room for snacks and remote controls. Keep guests happy through the night—fold out the futon to reveal a full-size sleeper with thick, comfortable cushions. Get more bang for your buck and make hosting simple and fun with this classy black Madison Cupholder Futon. [« less](#)

\$229.99
+\$23.25 tax and \$69.99 shipping

★★★★★ seller rating

[Shop](#)

\$393.62 [eBay - greatwaves16](#)
\$298.69 [eBay - sanhern](#)
[Sears](#) [Compare prices from 3 stores](#)

[Related items](#) [Reviews](#) [Save to Shortlist](#)



Best Practices

- ✓ Aim for 500 to 1,000 characters in length, despite the 10K limit.
- ✓ Include the most relevant attributes (size, intended age range, special features, technical specs, etc.)
- ✓ Include visual details (pattern, material, design) which can help Google return more accurate 500 to 1,000 characters search results for the shopper.
- ✓ Use correct punctuation and grammar throughout your description. Limit your use of special characters and exclamation points.

Things to Avoid

- ✓ Do not include links to your store or other websites.
- ✓ Do not include billing or payment, description is meant to relation to the product.
- ✓ Do not cross-sell other products, accessories, or similar items available or make comparisons to other products beyond the specific item you're selling.
- ✓ Avoid language that could be read as gimmicky repetition. Google screens for excessive, repetitive, or irrelevant keywords.



7 Use at Least Three Images for Each Product

Google requires a main image for every product and allows an additional 10 images. Here are some guidelines for uploading images:

- ✓ All your images should be the highest resolution available (at least 800 pixels in height and width and up to a 10MB file size).
- ✓ Each additional image should provide additional product information to the customer (it's use, relative size, target buyer).
- ✓ When it comes to clothing and accessories, shoppers are looking for product images from every angle.
- ✓ The main image of a product should include a clear view of the product on a white background.

Why does this matter? Salsify consumer research found that [70% of shoppers say they need to see at least 3 photos while shopping for a product](#).

8 Enact a Content Refresh Schedule

Your products are dynamic, and the content in your Google Shopping ads should reflect your newest merchandise, seasonal promotions, latest packaging, and relevant sales pricing.

Keeping pace with content refresh processes can involve multiple stakeholders, and it can feel like a full-time job to ensure content is up to date and fits Google's requirements. We recommend you establish guidelines for gathering updated content and updating your Google product feeds.





Here are some questions to ask when building this process:

- ✓ **Identify what drives content updates at your company.** Are they driven by the calendar, by specific events, or by sales goals that demand replacing stale content with fresh content?
- ✓ **Know who initiates a content refresh.** Make a plan for how updates are communicated throughout the company. What is a reasonable timeline to expect changes ready for your Google feeds.
- ✓ **Plan the elements you'll need to update.** Does a content refresh require new product imagery? New copy? Updated pricing?

One last thing—unless you use a fully automated product content management system, errors may get introduced when you update data.

Put an audit process in place so you can check your data before you send it and once it goes live to find gaps, inaccuracies, and opportunities. That way, you won't have any products get disqualified from Google Shopping due to poor data quality.



9 Make the Most of Mobile Opportunity

There is no question the growth in mobile is dramatically changing the way people shop. In fact, Salsify consumer research found that today, **77% of shoppers are using their mobile devices while in stores.**

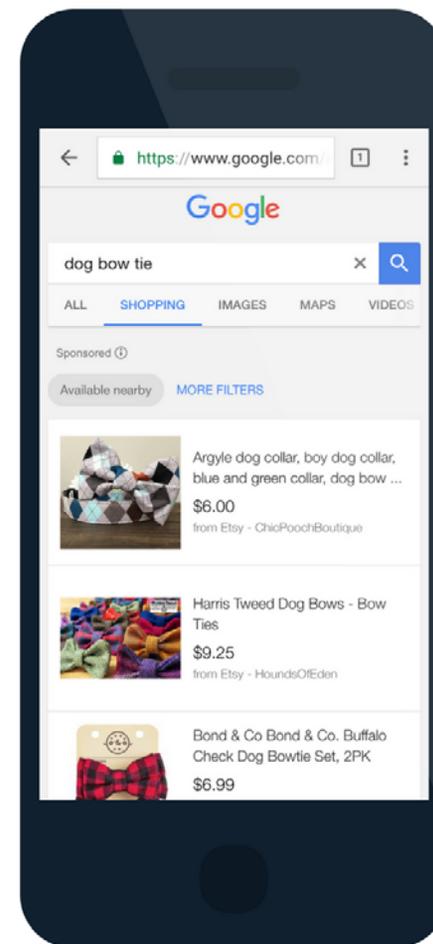
This shift provides a tremendous opportunity to provide more relevance to shoppers with targeted ads based on their location and the inventory you have locally available.

Use the Google Local Inventory Ads Feature to promote your local inventory, provide information about your business, stores, and products. After signing up for the program, you'll be asked to provide a local products feed and keep it up to date.

Display your local inventory and drive traffic to local stores. You can specify which ad format you want to use for eligible inventory in your Shopping campaign. Drive local-only mobile and web searches to your local store. Your generic shopping ads can continue to drive traffic to your website.

Use incremental feeds for quicker updates. Inventory price and quantity can change frequently and on a store-by-store basis. You can use incremental feeds to make quick updates to inventory data.

Track online conversions from your local inventory ads. It's important to measure online conversions to get the full picture of your ad's performance. You can monitor how local ads may be driving online sales as well as in store sales.



Learn more about using
[Google Local Inventory Ads](#)





10 Continuously Optimize Listings With Benchmark Data

Manufacturer Center provides back analytics on your ad performance as well as your content performance.

Looking both at the efficiency and cost effectiveness of your ads as well as the overall quality and impact of your content can help you optimize your listings.

Google is one of the first companies to provide this level of information on product content submissions.

There are more than 35 types of content issues—everything from grammar or spelling errors to duplicative listings to poor image quality—that can get flagged.

Here are three things to do right away with this provided data:

- 1 Revisit old listings to ensure content is complete.
- 2 Analyze which products are doing well and invest more in them (A+ content, videos, etc.)
- 3 Determine which products are performing poorly, and test new content.

Getting these insights directly from Google is a huge step forward and allows you to correct any specific problems for each product listing you share.





Another great way to avoid a loss of conversions? Monitor the following metrics:

- ✓ **Product Page Traffic:** How many people are visiting a product page driven by search results and advertising? Small changes can have huge impacts on how often your products are seen by a potential buyer.
- ✓ **Product Page Conversion:** How many people that visit a product page on a given site are adding the product to their cart and hitting the buy button? Pages with great product content perform better.
- ✓ **Active SKUs:** The more active SKUs you have, the higher the likelihood that your products are being found and your ad campaigns are running. How many SKUs are launched and sold on Google? How quickly are you able to add new items, refresh that content and keep the inventory data up-to-date?
- ✓ **Total Selling Days Per Product:** Every additional day that a product is in market can be a revenue driver for your business. How many days is each product available for purchase? No one is buying products that aren't available for sale and that revenue simply vanishes into thin air.

It's been said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure—and when it comes to Google Shopping, prevention is well worth the effort to keep sales rolling in.



Conclusion



Conclusion

These tips are just the beginning, because we all know feed optimization is ongoing. Getting your feed from 1-80% “optimized” can be accomplished with the tactics above.

However, getting from 80-100% is hard and requires incremental changes and tests as more data becomes available.



What Now?

Schedule Your Complimentary Retail Search Evaluation

CPC Strategy's Retail Search Evaluation is a complimentary 60-minute analysis and assessment of a retailer's existing Google Shopping campaign architecture, targeting settings, product feed, product pages, and profitability metrics.

[SCHEDULE MY EVALUATION](#)



We Turn Browsers Into Buyers



Learn how Salsify can help you get better product content, and ultimately increase sales, on Google Shopping.

[SEE HOW SALSIFY CAN HELP](#)