



OPTIMIZING GOOGLE SHOPPING: QUALITY

Taking a closer look at optimizing Google Shopping
related to quality

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INTRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Part 1 of QuantAds' white paper series on Google Shopping Optimization, we looked at how to structure Shopping campaigns in relation to campaigns, adgroups and product groups in order to provide a more detailed picture and enable the marketer to make more informed decisions. In Part 2 we will look firstly at how you can identify product feed optimization opportunities using a data driven approach and secondly, how you can execute them to generate more online traffic to your Google Shopping campaigns.

QUALITY OPTIMIZATION

OF GOOGLE SHOPPING FEEDS

Shopping campaigns differ fundamentally from Keyword campaigns in that they do not give us the opportunity to simply add more keywords in order to gain extra traffic. Nor can we (directly) rewrite our ads to get a better CTR. Instead, increasing traffic volume to Google Shopping campaigns from a stable amount of products is done by qualitatively optimizing the product feed. In a product feed that could easily contain several thousand products, however, we need to focus our efforts on areas where we can make a significant difference. And locating these areas is a quantitative process.

DATA DRIVEN IDENTIFICATION OF FEED OPTIMIZATION OPPORTUNITIES

QuantAds uses a comparative analysis method that compares the search terms of the standard keyword campaigns and the search terms of the Shopping campaigns. This enables us to locate specific and actionable optimization opportunities. We do this by looking at search terms in the Shopping campaigns that perform relatively poorly (typically based on impressions) and comparing them to the same search terms in the Keyword campaigns. It is important to note the term 'relative' here, as you cannot always expect search terms to perform equally well – from an absolute point of view – across both campaign types.

Let's assume a scenario where the largest search term measured on impressions in the standard Keyword campaigns represents 2% of total impressions from keywords. However, the same search term only represents 0.5% of the impressions in the Shopping campaigns. The reasons for this can be many, but it is worth trying to identify them. Perhaps we are not bidding enough on the products that are triggered by this search term. Or perhaps the semantic nature of the search term means that Google shows it less often in Shopping results compared to text ads results. But it may also be due to the information that has been entered into the product feed.

ENRICHING THE PRODUCT FEED BY ADDING KEY SEARCH TERMS

To determine if anything can be optimized within the feed, the first thing to look for is whether or not the given search term is included in the product titles of the relevant products. This is the single most important product feed attribute when it comes to how Google matches search queries with Shopping ads. Therefore, this is where you should focus the majority of your efforts when working with feed optimization.

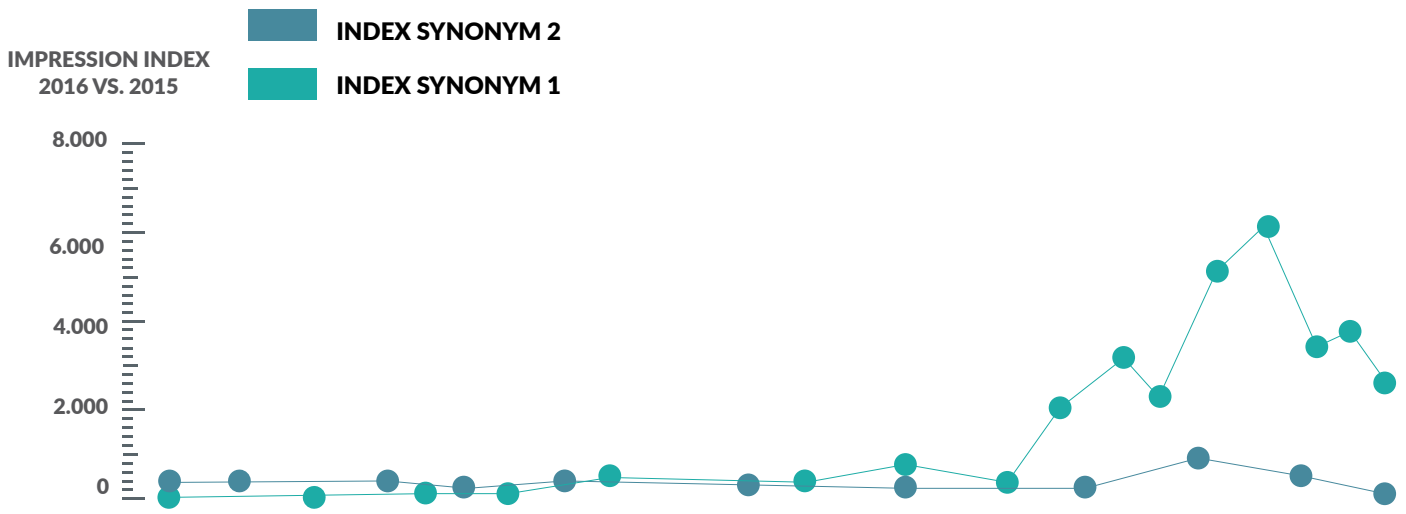
A good thing to keep in mind when you start working with feed optimization is synonyms. Typically, the title of a product will be generated based on what the manufacturer or retailer has chosen to name the product, but this might not be the only term people use to search for the product. This means that if the underperforming search term is a synonym for any of your products' names, the synonym can be added to the search term with, for example, a slash separating the two.

CASES OF PRODUCT FEED OPTIMIZATION

CASE 1: ADDING A GENERIC SYNONYM

By using the comparative analysis method described above on a client's AdWords account, QuantAds discovered that one of two large search term synonyms from the standard Keyword campaigns appeared significantly more than the other among the Shopping search terms. After reviewing the product titles of the relevant products, it was found that the missing synonym (hereafter referred to as 'Synonym 1') was not used at all in the product titles. The titles of these relevant products were thus changed so that they included both variations, as follows: "Synonym 1/Synonym 2". Changes like these are carried out via our feed management tool, as Google's own Merchant Center Rules do not currently support changes of this type.

Due to the product type, the search volume of the two particular synonyms was highly influenced by seasonality. Therefore, the effect of adding Synonym 1 to the titles was identified by comparing the amount of impressions both synonyms received YoY as an index over 34 weeks.



As the account was generally performing significantly better than the previous year, both synonyms had very high impression indexes throughout most of the period. But while Synonym 2 peaked at an index of 910, Synonym 1 had an index of +2,000 consistently during the last 9 weeks, peaking at index 6,045. The dramatic increase in Synonym 1's impression index shows the significant effect of optimizing the product's titles. Furthermore, the rather stable impression index of Synonym 2 shows that optimizing against a second synonym does not (negatively) impact the original synonym used in the product title.

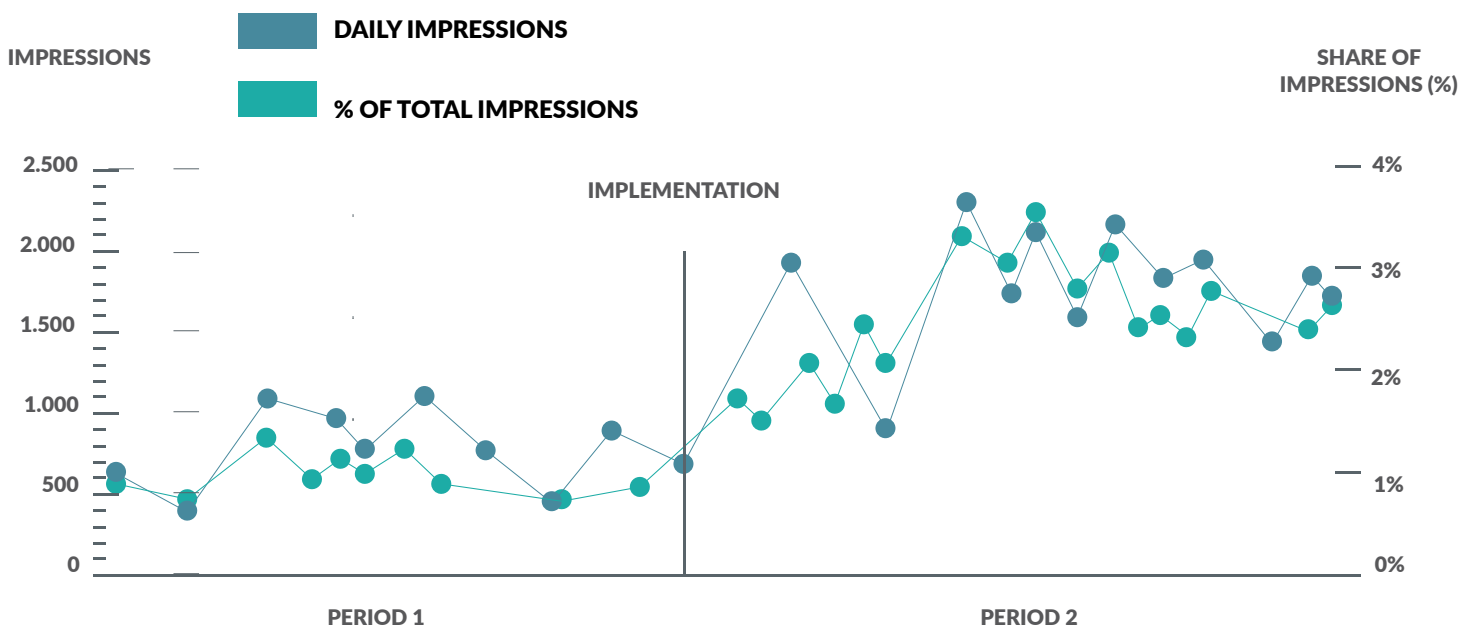
As will become evident from case 2, adding synonyms to the product's title (as opposed to the product's description or category) is essential if we are to reap the positive effects of Shopping ad impressions on a broader selection of relevant search terms. The product title field remains the single most important place in the feed to focus optimization efforts.

CASE 2: ADDING A SUB-BRAND

In a second analysis, the data-driven approach revealed that a specific sub-brand (sold by the retailer), which was one of the largest impression drivers in the search term report of the Search campaigns, was almost non-existent in the Shopping campaigns. Again, it was a matter of the brand not being present in the product titles. In this case, however, the brand was in fact placed in the feed attribute 'Manufacturer'. This indicates that this attribute field is not weighted heavily by Google when matching search terms with products. By adding the specific sub-brand to the product titles, impressions on search terms, including this one, increased 582% in the subsequent period as opposed to the previous one.

CASE 3: ADDING A RETAILER BRAND

In a third analysis, we identified that the parent brand of the retail client was almost non-existent in the Shopping campaign search terms. Search terms that included the brand represented just 0.97% on average of the Shopping campaign's total impressions. By adding the retailer's brand to the end of all product titles, impressions on search terms, including the brand, increased to a share of 2.51%. Although this remains a small share of the total impressions, it represents an increase of 158%.



Some will argue that this kind of optimization just simply results in a ‘cannabilization’ of the brand’s text ad results, thereby adding no real growth. You have to remember, however, that the brand of this retailer is also searched for in conjunction with generic terms, and even though your own brand might be in a much stronger competitive position than the other advertisers, brand-generic searches do also trigger competitors’ ads. Shopping results are extremely price sensitive, so a potential customer could end up seeing a competitor’s ad with the same product at a lower price and purchase it from them instead. This represents a strong argument for the implementation of any strategy that will reduce this risk.

From a rather simple feed optimization, the retailer from this case is now much more present on brand-generic searches as a result of having both text ad results and multiple Shopping ad results.

CONCLUSION

Google Shopping campaigns vary significantly from standard Keyword campaigns in several aspects, including how they are qualitatively optimized. Marketers therefore need to use a variety of optimization strategies tailored specifically to Shopping.

The second part of this three-part white paper series on Google Shopping optimization suggests the use of comparative analysis between search terms from the standard Keyword campaigns and search terms from the Shopping campaigns. This allows the marketer to identify specific and actionable optimization opportunities in terms of key terms that should be added to the product feed. We suggest that you do this by using a feed management tool, as the opportunities within Google’s Merchant Center are very limited.

A data-driven approach to feed optimization enables you to not only increase the amount of different relevant search terms to which your Shopping campaigns can serve ads, but also how many impressions your Shopping ads will receive. This adds value, not only by giving a stronger presence on relevant searches, but also by adding real growth in traffic from Google Shopping.

The next and final part of this white paper series will explain how we at QuantAds handle bid management within Shopping campaigns, with the goal of maximizing every single product’s performance within the given constraints, be it cost per transaction/acquisition, return on ad spend or even budget limitations.

ABOUT QUANTADS

Fast-growing, international digital marketing agency

We help e-commerce companies formulate and execute digital strategies across all major traffic channels (eg. Search, CRM, Social, Display). We specialize in delivering high-quality support and believe that a data-driven and documented approach leads to better decisions and outcome. Our digital specialists are supported by an in-house software team that provides tooling, technical help and web development when needed.

International e-commerce

We believe international execution is much more than language support, it is also providing local market knowledge and understanding how local customers research, decide and purchase online products and services. International online businesses often face fierce competition from local champions and winning that game requires a lot more than a translated website and properly spelled ad-texts.

Business oriented approach to digital marketing

The digital world develops so rapidly with new marketing platforms, targeting methods, and tracking technology that staying at the forefront requires a structured, fact-based approach. We have therefore built our team by attracting and developing people with a strong business mindset, who love data and analysis and thrive in creating simple solutions for complex problems.

QuantAds was founded in 2010 and currently has offices in both Amsterdam, Netherlands & Copenhagen, Denmark

45+ dedicated people who speak 12+ languages natively

#1 fastest growing agency in Denmark in 2015

Serve 50+ clients across all online industries – about half are international e-commerce companies

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