

7 WAYS TO ADAPT YOUR ONLINE ADVERTISING DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Digital transformation has long been a feature on the to-do lists of brands and retailers. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, digital transformation has accelerated like never before. All components of business as we know it have been disrupted. And there's never been more pressure to adapt to new consumer buying patterns.

During a crisis, it's difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel, however brands must think long-term in how they react, and take the opportunity to build their digital communities. Eventually there will be an end to the disruption and brands need to continue to invest in their digital marketing on channels like Google, Amazon, Facebook and Instagram. It's a great time to be experimental and play around with new post and ad formats.

#1

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

During these unprecedented times, marketers need to be able to respond to shifting customer demand with agility and focus. If you're looking for a place to start, think about whether you are on the offensive or the defensive when it comes to digital strategy — here's why it's crucial to consider:

IF YOU'RE PLAYING OFFENSE:

Increase Ad Spend

Analyse your current performance and be aggressive for the components that perform. Make sure to narrow the reporting window that you are looking at.

Exploit Gaps in the Competitive Landscape.

There has never been a better time to use tools like the Auction Insights. You might find that previously Amazon or eBay dominated Google search results on products you sell, and now they have disappeared. So there's an opportunity to pay less for clicks and even if you are paying a bit more you are not going up against all the competition that you used to. The landscape has changed.

Double-Down on Customer Acquisition

It is a good time to reach or gain new customers and double down on customer acquisition. You may be paying slightly more per acquisition but consider the long-term strategy.

IF YOU ARE PLAYING DEFENSE:

Segment Ad Spend Based on Product Category

This is the time to take a close look at your current structure and segment your ad spend based on products or product categories that work.

Refine Audience Segmentation and Retargeting

Refine your audiences based on important actions or non-actions that they take on your website and product pages. Consumers are spending longer on research. Just because a customer lands on the product page and spends a couple of minutes, it's not always a sign they are really interested, you may be investing in re-targeting hoping to persuade them to buy. Under normal circumstances, this strategy would be effective. But if you are looking to streamline budgets, this is the first place to create savings.

Focus your advertising efforts on products that will not run out of stock soon and have good margins.

#2

EVALUATE YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE

In an environment of crisis or uncertainty, your audience may have different responses towards advertising messages. Make sure your ads are fit for the current situation.

Maybe a group of people at the beach is not the best image to use, and in fact it could end up alienating customers who find the ad insensitive.

#3

PAUSE LOCATION EXTENSIONS

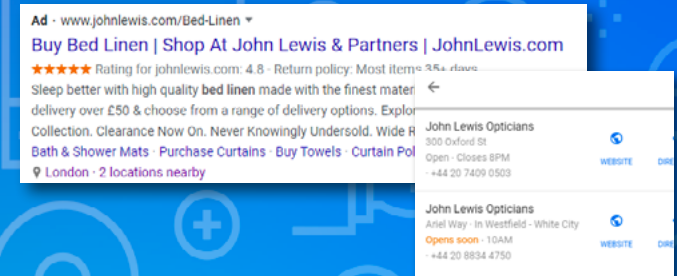
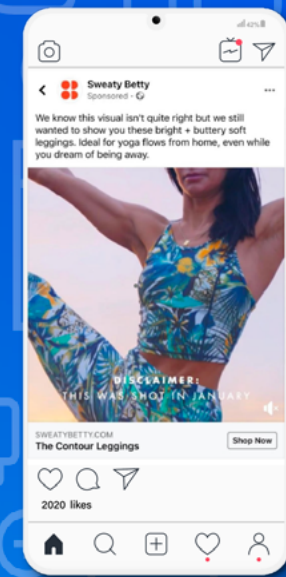
You can modify the ads according to your needs to let customers know if your business is open and if you offer useful services. You can also adjust the criteria of the campaigns to show the ads more or less frequently, according to where, how, and when users search.

Location extensions that usually led customers to the store that had products they were looking for, might lead them to locations that are not currently helpful.

#4

ENGAGE USERS THOUGH CONTENT

66 percent of social media consumers say they expect their consumption to increase during coronavirus confinement. This is the moment to invest in your content strategy, both organic and sponsored. Remember, it doesn't need to have Hollywood production value — consumers will respond to authentic, sensitive and thoughtful content.

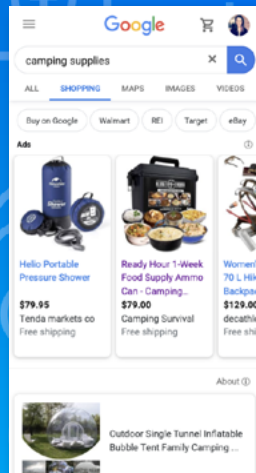
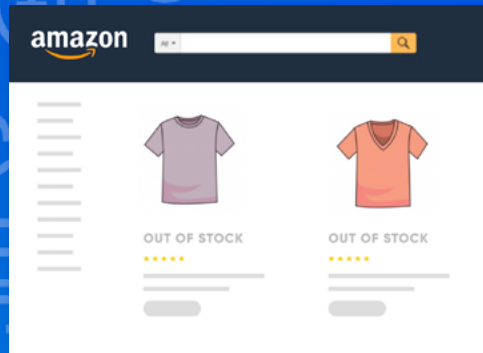


#5

KEEP YOUR FEEDS UP TO DATE

It's never been more important to ensure you aren't advertising products that are out of stock.

Make sure you increase your feed updates to avoid a poor customer experience. If you have no automation software for feed management, use feed rules in GMC and supplemental feeds to ensure the information is up to date. If products are selling fast, remove them from your feed when you are low in stock.



#6

GOOGLE OFFERS FREE SHOPPING LISTINGS

Google recently announced that it is going to offer free listings on its Shopping tab to help both sellers and consumers in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, where supply and demand challenges are affecting everyone. The changes are already in effect in the U.S., and the program will expand globally by the end of the year.

While this is certainly good news for many merchants struggling to reach new consumers, the overwhelming majority of consumer traffic is still driven by Google Search and Google Ads within the main search tab.

If you already use Google Merchant Centre and Shopping Ads in the US, you're already eligible for the free listings and don't have to take any additional action.

#7

LEARN FROM COUNTRIES OPENING UP BEFORE UK

Finally, keep a close eye on those countries coming out of lockdown. This is uncharted territory as we discover how consumer behaviour has changed.

What are the trends that they are seeing? Are there any challenges they are facing that could help you prepare for a similar situation? Look to European countries that have announced reopening such as: Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Spain and Italy for insights you can use for your own strategy.



Looking Ahead

The e-commerce landscape is evolving at such a rapid pace — advice and best practice is changing week to week. While we can't know for certain how a gradual reopening phase will affect purchasing behaviour, we do know that whatever plans and strategy you are devising, you need to be agile and able to change it at a moment's notice. It's no longer about Plan A and Plan B, you need to be prepared for Plan C, D and E!

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