



*The*  
**PRODUCT LISTING ADS GUIDE  
SECOND EDITION**



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To our readers,

At CPC Strategy our goal is to create resources, webinars, tutorials and guides that help make the retail search world easy to navigate, a map of the ecommerce world if you will. If at any time you have questions, suggestions or simply just unclear, reach out to [contact@cpcstrategy.com](mailto:contact@cpcstrategy.com). Happy learning!

Sincerely,



**Rick Backus** | Co-Founder, CEO





# HOW TO READ THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed as a resource for retail merchants on all knowledge levels- from those who know nothing about Google Shopping Product Listing Ads (PLAs) to those with a detailed campaign. Follow the key below to determine which sections of the guide are more suited to your needs.

- ■ ■ **Introductory Google Shopping Strategy**
- ■ ■ **Intermediate Google Shopping Strategy**
- ■ ■ **Advanced Google Shopping Strategy**

In this guide we'll go into depth on what PLAs are, why they are a great investment for retailers, and how to go about creating them. If you already have a PLA campaign running feel free to skip the section which outlines how to create PLAs. Similarly if you're already on the PLA boat, you may want to skip the section which outlines why PLAs are a good investment.

Throughout the guide we'll use some Google terms which you may or may not be familiar with. Below are some of those major terms and what they mean in plain English.





# GLOSSARY

**PLA:** Product Listing Ads are paid display ads within Google search.

**Google Shopping:** Google Shopping is a comparison shopping site within the Google network. PLAs are the display ads on Google Shopping, but can also be referred to as Google Shopping ads or simply Google Shopping.

*\*Google Shopping, PLA, and Product Listing Ads will be referred to throughout interchangeably.*

**Paid Ads:** Ads which merchants pay a cost per click (CPC) for each time they are click on in search.

**Display Ads:** Product ads which feature a product image.

**Ad group:** One or more products that you have segmented into an ad through AdWords. You can have an ad group with one SKU, or an ad group which contains all of your products.

**Product group:** A product group is just another way to say ad group, and is a term associated with the new PLA campaign structure.

**AdWords Ads:** Product Listing Ads are managed within the AdWords login, but there is a different type of Google ad which you also manage there, and appears on Google search. AdWords ads are text ads which are CPC, use the Google data feed and managed through AdWords, but do not feature images or appear in Google Shopping page major results.

**Paid Ad:** Ads which merchants are charged for.



**Google Shopping Campaigns/ new PLAs:** This is the new PLA campaign structure that is based on segmenting sections of the data feed for product groups that are subsets of the data feed. Google Shopping Campaigns is the official title for the new PLA structure, but we will refer to this as new PLAs or the new PLA structure throughout to avoid confusion.

**Traditional/Old PLAs:** PLAs as they are now work now allow merchants to create product groups based on labels in the data feed. In order to clearly establish which PLA structure we're talking about the term traditional or old will be used with PLAs to indicate that this is the current campaign structure, not the latest update.



## ▶ CHAPTER 2

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# GOOGLE IN SEARCH





# GOOGLE IN SEARCH

## Comparison Shopping Engines .||

If you are looking to advertise online, there are a number of places for retailers including marketplaces, social media, and video.

One area where merchants list product ads is on comparison shopping sites. These are sites which show similar products from different merchants so shoppers can choose what to purchase based on price, consumer reviews and shipping rates. For merchants, this is a place where they can advertise outside of their website and appeal to a larger audience.

## Google Shopping Overview

Google is a search engine, it's designed to curate results based on what people are searching for. Google Shopping is Google's product search engine, but it is also the largest comparison shopping engine for products online. Google product ad results appear both Google Shopping (Google comparison shopping engine), Google search, and on individual comparison pages.

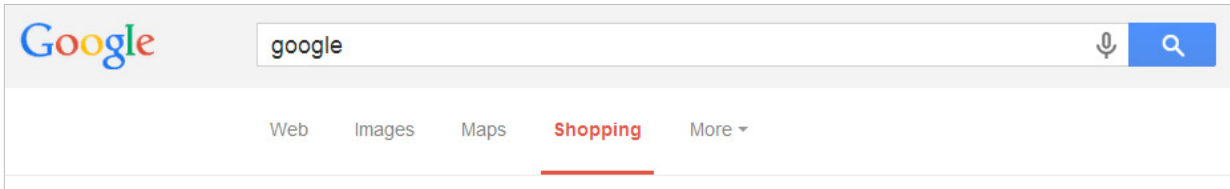
Currently Google Shopping is paid comparison shopping engine, meaning merchants pay to list products on Google. This has not always been the case, **as Google Product Search was a free program** for online retailers prior to July 2012.



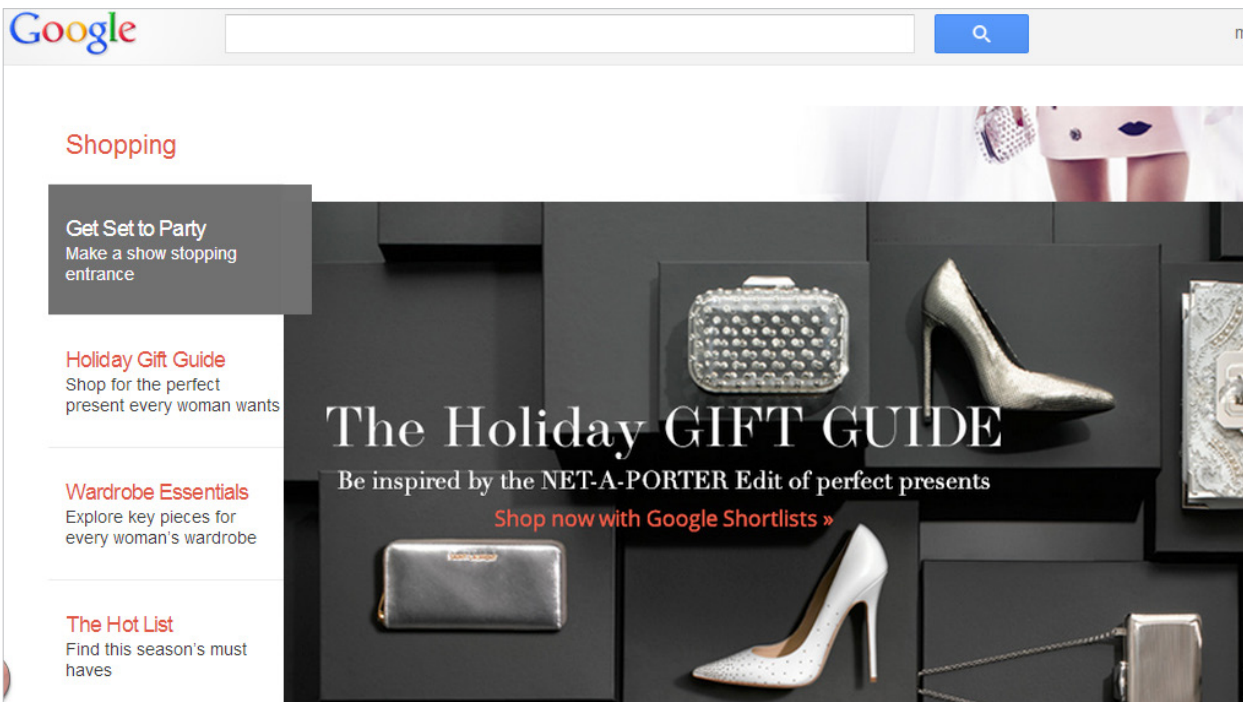




Google Shopping is a comparison site that show products from different retailers so shoppers can purchase items for the lowest price. Google Shopping is its own comparison shopping engine, but it is a part of Google which is a search engine. When searching for a product on Google, you'll notice that Google Shopping has its own tab:

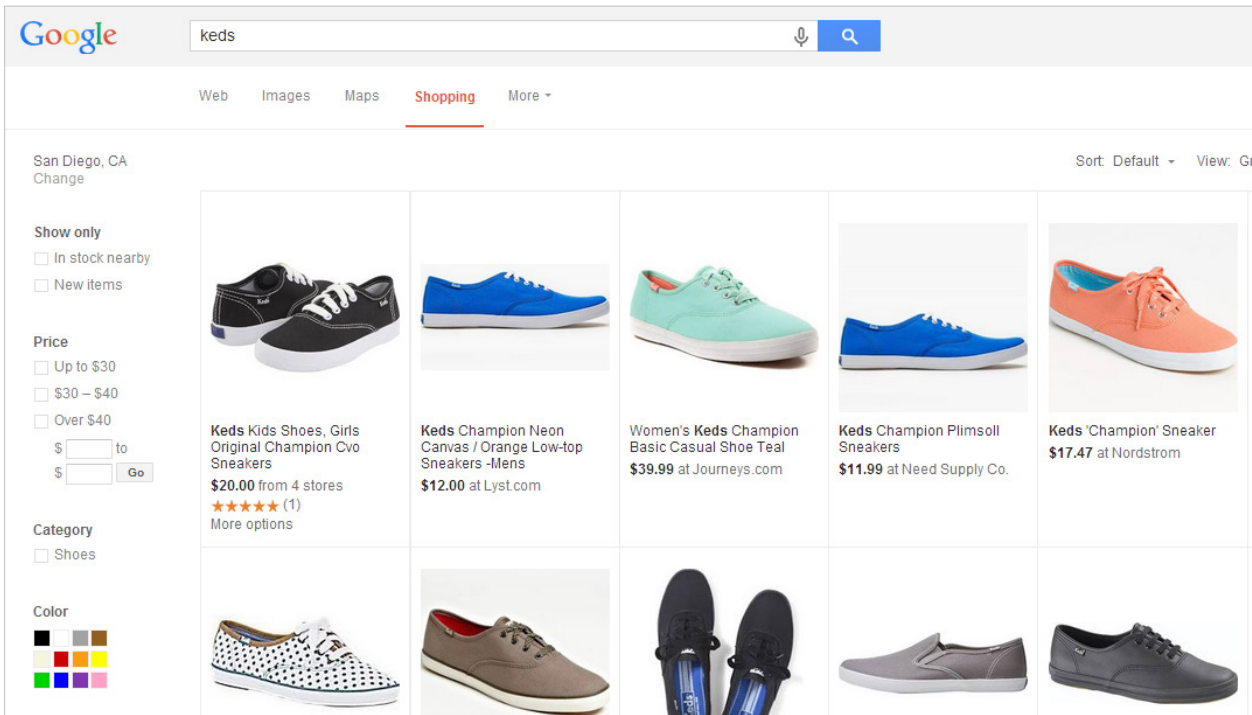


Just like other popular comparison shopping engines, Google Shopping also has its own homepage:





Rather than going to Nordstrom.com and Journeys.com online shoppers can search on Google Shopping to see similar products from both sellers:

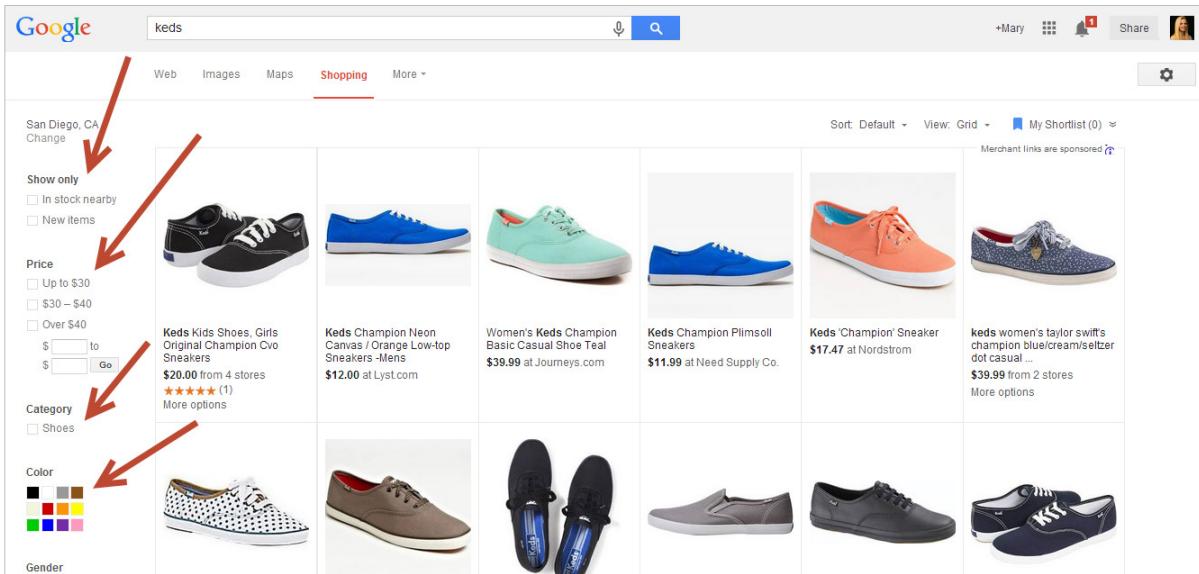


## GET MORE ON GOOGLE, AMAZON, ADWORDS, & RETAIL SEARCH



**Dominate Retail Search**

Like other comparison shopping engines, Google Shopping is designed to help online shoppers to search for items from different merchants based on product attributes such as quantity, price, and color:

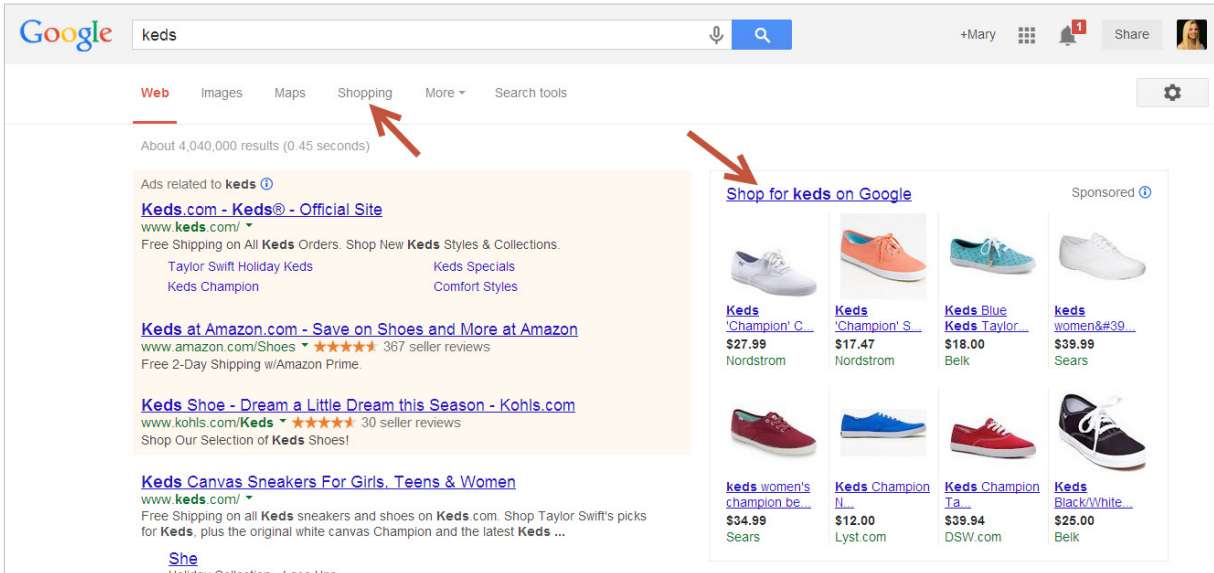


Since Google Shopping is a part of Google, Google Shopping ads are incorporated into Google as a whole, in addition to the Google Shopping site.

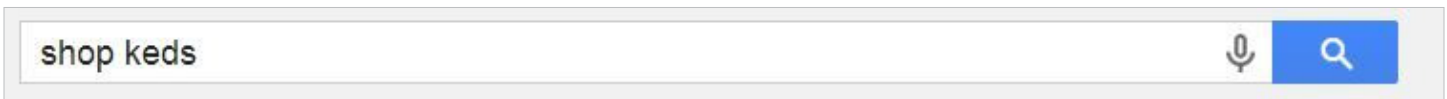
You can see this within a Google search page if you are searching for a product. In this case the Google search page identifies you are looking to shop, or purchase something, and so it provides Google Shopping results, or paid Google product ads, in addition to the information which would also appear on that search page.



In this case, Google is showing Google Product ads on a search page in addition to unpaid search results and text ads.



Shoppers can look at paid product information by selecting the shopping tab or clicking “shop for Keds on Google”, both of which lead to Google Shopping:





## Google Shopping PLAs on Google search and on Google Shopping lead to individual merchants' websites.

Google search results for "keds". The search bar shows "keds" and the search button. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "Web", "Images", "Maps", "Shopping", and "More". The results show "About 4,040,000 results (0.45 seconds)".

On the left, there are "Ads related to keds" with links to "Keds.com - Keds® - Official Site", "Keds at Amazon.com - Save on Shoes and More at Amazon", "Keds Shoe - Dream a Little Dream this Season - Kohls.com", "Keds Canvas Sneakers For Girls, Teens & Women", and "Keds Shoes, Sneakers, Socks - Zappos.com".

On the right, there is a "Shop for keds on Google" section with a grid of product listings. A red arrow points to the "Keds Champion C" listing. The grid includes:

- Keds Champion C: \$27.99, Nordstrom
- Keds Champion S: \$17.47, Nordstrom
- Keds Blue Keds Taylor: \$18.00, Belk
- keds women's #39: \$39.99, Sears
- keds women's Champion Be...: \$34.99, Sears
- Keds Champion N...: \$12.00, Lyst.com
- Keds Champion T...: \$39.94, DSW.com
- Keds Black/White...: \$25.00, Belk

Below the grid is a "Keds" brand overview section with a "Keds" logo and a brief description: "Keds is an American brand of plimsoll-style canvas shoe with rubber soles. Keds were introduced in 1916 by U.S. Rubber. The shoe brand was later acquired by Stride Rite".

Google Shopping product page for "Keds Kids Shoes, Girls Original Champion Cvo Sneakers". The search bar shows "keds".

The product image shows a pair of black canvas sneakers with white laces and soles. The price is "\$20 online". There is a "Write a review" button and a "Save to Shortlist" button. A red arrow points to the "Shop" button in the "My Shortlist (0)" section.

The product description says: "An all-time favorite. These simply stylish Keds Original Champion sneakers go with anything, anytime, anywhere".

Available in: Size selection from 1 to 13.5. Color selection includes black, white, blue, yellow, and red.

On the right, there are three "Shop" buttons for different prices:

- \$20.00 + \$11.55 tax & shipping, Macy's (44)
- \$25.00 + \$4.99 shipping, Stride Rite
- \$25.95, Shoebuy.com (7,026)

Below the product page is a "Visually Similar Items" section showing other shoe models.



## OVERVIEW OF GOOGLE SHOPPING SEARCH PAGE

You may have noticed there are a couple of other elements to a Google search page. Google search defaults to the web tab:

Google keds

Web Images Maps Shopping More Search tools

About 4,050,000 results (0.59 seconds)

Ads related to keds

**Keds.com - Keds® - Official Site - Free Shipping on Any Keds Order**  
[www.keds.com/](http://www.keds.com/) -  
 Shop All the New Styles and Colors.  
 Taylor Swift Holiday Keds Comfort Styles  
 Keds Champion Gift Cards  
 Keds Specials Keds Apparel

**Keds at Amazon.com - Buy Shoes & Much More at Amazon**  
[www.amazon.com/Shoes](http://www.amazon.com/Shoes) -  
 ★★★★★ 367 reviews for amazon.com  
 Free 2-Day Shipping w/Amazon Prime.

**Keds Shoe - Dream a Little Dream this Season - Kohls.com**  
[www.kohls.com/Keds](http://www.kohls.com/Keds) - ★★★★★ 30 seller reviews  
 Shop Our Selection of Keds Shoes!  
 3450 College Ave, San Diego, CA - (619) 265-8566

**Keds Canvas Sneakers For Girls, Teens & Women**  
[www.keds.com/](http://www.keds.com/) -  
 Free Shipping on all Keds sneakers and shoes on Keds.com. Shop Taylor Swift's picks for Keds, plus the original white canvas Champion and the latest Keds ...

**She**  
 Holiday Collection - Lace Ups -  
 Champion Collection - Slip Ons  
 More results from keds.com »

**Keds Shoes, Sneakers, Socks - Zappos.com**

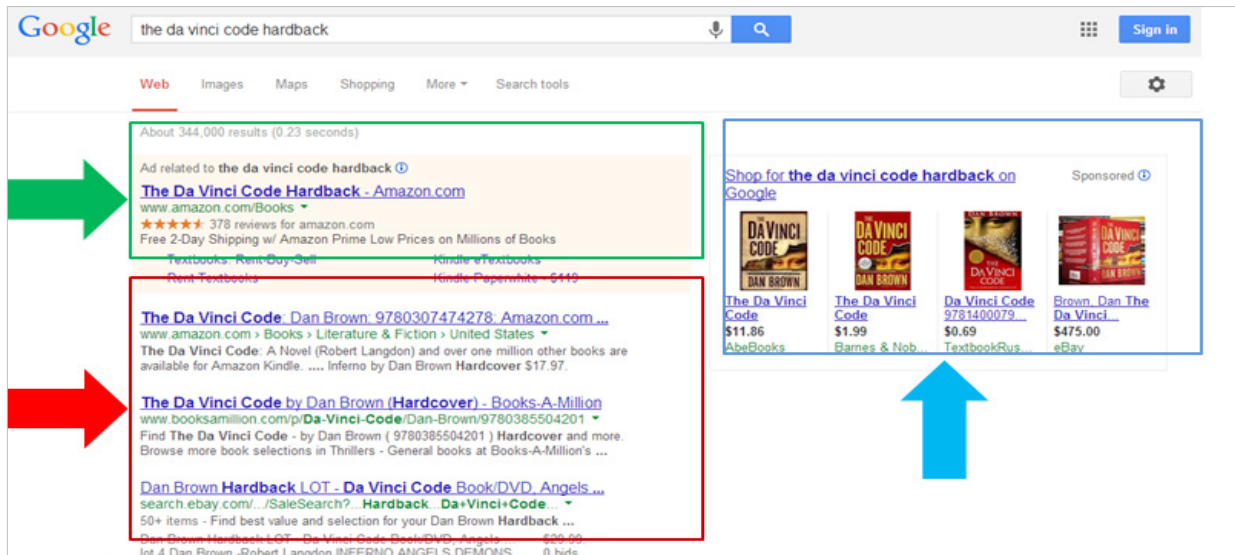
Shop for keds on Google Sponsored

 <b>Keds 'Champion' C...</b> \$27.99 Nordstrom	 <b>Keds 'Champion' S...</b> \$17.47 Nordstrom	 <b>Keds Blue Keds Taylor...</b> \$18.00 Belk	 <b>keds women&amp;#39;</b> \$39.99 Sears
 <b>keds women's champion be...</b> \$34.99 Sears	 <b>Keds Champion N...</b> \$12.00 Lyst.com	 <b>Keds Champion Ta...</b> \$39.94 DSW.com	 <b>Keds Black/White...</b> \$25.00 Belk

**Keds**  
Shoes

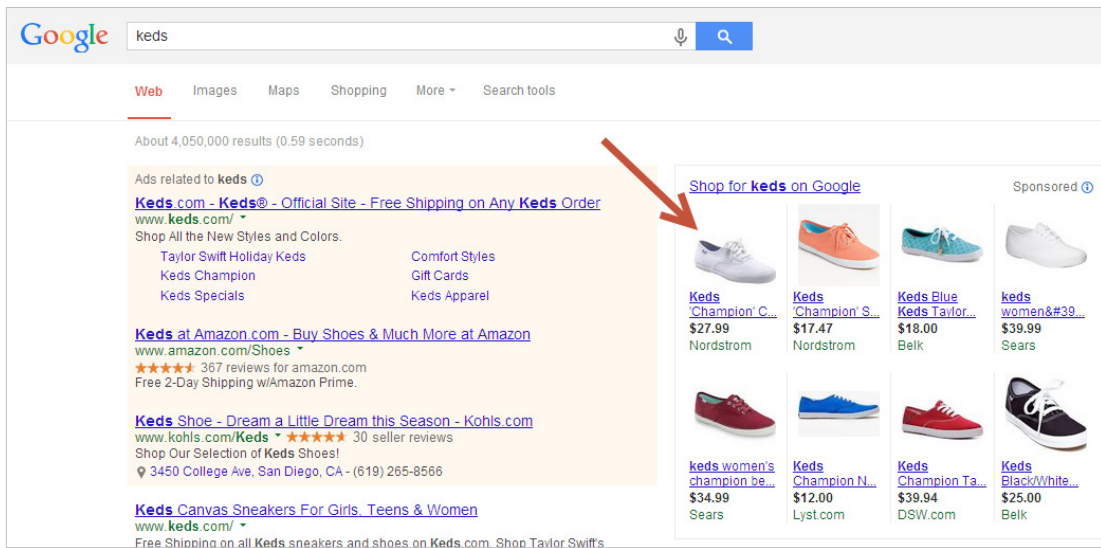
Keds is an American brand of plimsoll-style canvas shoe with rubber soles. Keds were introduced in 1916 by U.S. Rubber. The shoe brand was later acquired by Stride Rite

A Google search page is composed of Product Listings Ads, AdWords ads or text ads, and organic search results. All of which appear based on what the searcher types into the search box. Here is a holistic look at how search results appear on a Google search:

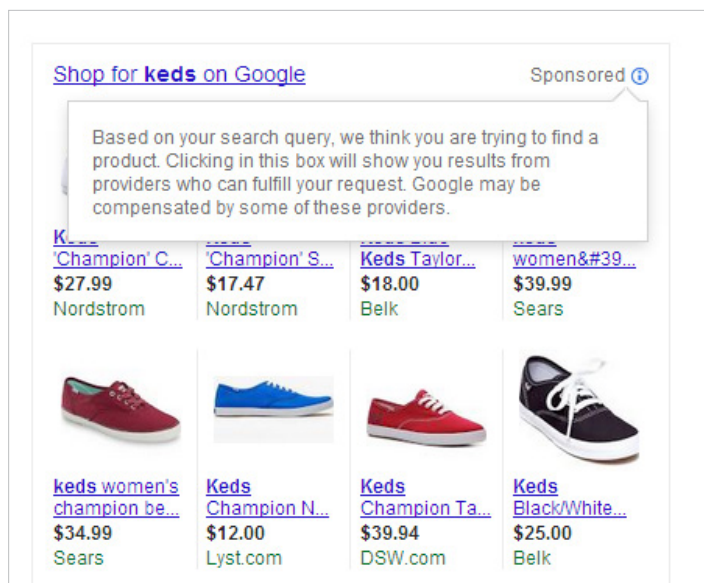


- Pay Per Click (PPC) Text Ads
- Standard Organic Search Results
- PLAs/Google Shopping Results

We went over Product Listing Ads briefly above, but to recap Product Listing Ads are display ads (they have images) which appear on Google search, Google Shopping and on Google comparison pages. Within Google search, Product Listing Ads typically appear on the right of the page:

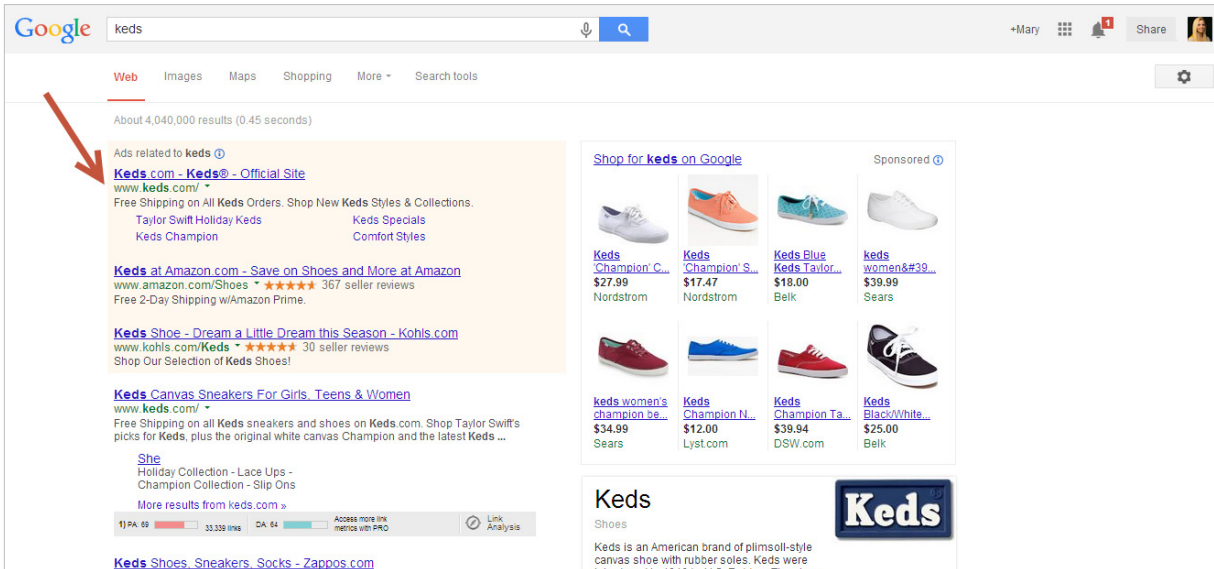


Google also notes that these are paid ads:

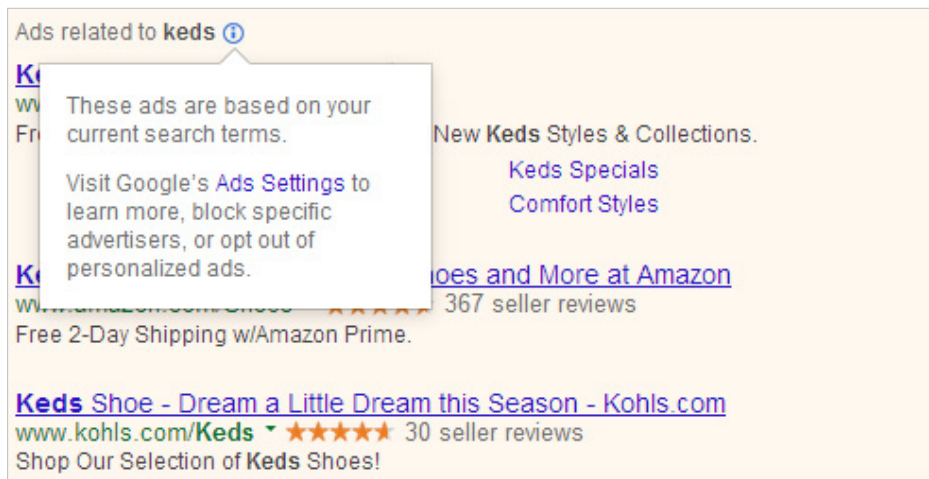




To the left of PLAs, you'll notice some more ads which are outlined with a pink background:



Similar to PLAs, these are paid pay per click (PPC) ads which lead to a merchant's site. Unlike PLAs, these ads don't have images and use different merchant information. Similarly, Google provides an explanation of how and why these ads appear in search:



Text ads can sometimes also appear to the bottom, top or farther down to the left of a page:

[Keds® Shoes & Sneakers | Nordstrom](#)  
shop.nordstrom.com › Brands ▾  
Free shipping and returns on **Keds®** shoes at Nordstrom.com. Shop for white **Keds®**, red **Keds®**, black **Keds®**, **Keds®** sneakers, **Keds®** slip-ons and more.

[Keds \(Keds\) on Twitter](#)  
https://twitter.com/Keds ▾  
The latest from **Keds** (@Keds). The iconic America sneaker brand established in 1916.

Searches related to **keds**

[keds shoes outlet](#)   [keds sale](#)  
[keds coupons](#)   [keds store locator](#)  
[pro keds](#)   [taylor swift keds](#)  
[keds kate spade](#)   [keds coupon codes 2012](#)

>  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10   [Next](#)

Ads ⓘ

[Keds at JCPenney®](#)  
www.jcpenney.com/**Keds** ▾  
1 (877) 431 8299  
Shop For Stylish **Keds** Today at JCP.  
Free Shipping on Orders Over \$49.  
📍 6987 Friars Rd, Fashion Valley Mall

[Free Shipping on Keds](#)  
www.zappos.com/ ▾  
★★★★★ 26,149 seller reviews  
Free Shipping both ways on **Keds** Shoes. 365 Day Return Policy.

[20% Off Keds](#)  
www.famousfootwear.com/Sale ▾  
Use Promo Code SNOW20 & Get 20% Off Your Order. Shop Now!  
📍 SAN Ysidro, CA  
(619) 662-2485

[See your ad here »](#)

Similarly, PLAs can sometimes be at the top of search, or in a different location:

Web   Images   Maps   Shopping   News   More ▾   Search tools

---

About 37,400,000 results (0.84 seconds)

[Shop for tent on Google](#)

<a href="#">MSR Backcountry...</a>	<a href="#">Ozark Trail 10-Person 3...</a>	<a href="#">Slumberjack Grand Lodge...</a>	<a href="#">Eureka! Timberline 4...</a>	<a href="#">Eagle's Camp Family Voyag...</a>
<b>\$679.99</b>	<b>\$139.00</b>	<b>\$399.99</b>	<b>\$199.99</b>	<b>\$169.99</b>
AfterSchool.c...	Walmart	AfterSchool.c...	Cabela's	Cabela's
👉 Special offer		👉 Special offer	👉 Special offer	👉 Special offer

[Amazon.com: Tents - Camping & Hiking: Family Camping Tents ...](#)  
www.amazon.com/Tents-Accessories-Camping-Hiking/b?ie=UTF8... ▾  
Results 1 - 24 of 3290 - Online shopping for **Tents** Camping & Hiking from a great selection of Sports & Outdoors; Outdoor Gear, Family Camping **Tents**, ...

Ads ⓘ

[Frame Tent & Pop Up Tent](#)  
www.promotionaldesigngroup.com/ ▾  
1 (855) 378 5268  
Manufacturer. 6 Year Frame Warranty  
#1 U.S In Digitally Printed **Tents**

[Camping & Hiking Tents](#)  
www.kohls.com/ ▾  
★★★★★ 30 reviews for kohls.com  
Get Great Savings That Make You Go Kohl's. \$50 Orders Ship Free!  
📍 3450 College Ave, San Diego, CA  
(619) 265-8566

[Party Tent SuperSale \\$199](#)  
www.saferwholesale.com/ ▾  
1 (800) 200-2004



Below Google's text ads and PLAs, you'll see organic Google search results, which are unpaid results Google aggregates based on your search:









Web Images Maps Shopping More Search tools

About 4,040,000 results (0.45 seconds)


Ads related to **keds**

- [Keds.com - Keds® - Official Site](#)  
www.keds.com/ - Free Shipping on All Keds Orders. Shop New Keds Styles & Collections.  
Taylor Swift Holiday Keds Keds Champion Keds Specials Comfort Styles
- [Keds at Amazon.com - Save on Shoes and More at Amazon](#)  
www.amazon.com/Shoes - ★★★★★ 367 seller reviews  
Free 2-Day Shipping w/Amazon Prime.
- [Keds Shoe - Dream a Little Dream this Season - Kohls.com](#)  
www.kohls.com/Keds - ★★★★★ 30 seller reviews  
Shop Our Selection of Keds Shoes!
- [Keds Canvas Sneakers For Girls, Teens & Women](#)  
www.keds.com/ - Free Shipping on all Keds sneakers and shoes on Keds.com. Shop Taylor Swift's picks for Keds, plus the original white canvas Champion and the latest Keds ...  
She  
Holiday Collection - Lace Ups - Champion Collection - Slip Ons  
More results from keds.com >
- [Keds Shoes, Sneakers, Socks - Zappos.com](#)  
www.zappos.com/keds - Keds at Zappos.com. Free shipping BOTH ways, 365-day return policy, 24/7 customer service. Call (800) 927-7671.
- [Keds at Amazon.com](#)

Shop for **keds** on Google Sponsored

 <a href="#">Keds Champion C.</a> \$27.99 Nordstrom	 <a href="#">Keds Champion S.</a> \$17.47 Nordstrom	 <a href="#">Keds Blue Keds Taylor.</a> \$18.00 Belk	 <a href="#">Keds women's #39.</a> \$39.99 Sears
 <a href="#">Keds women's champion ba.</a> \$34.99 Sears	 <a href="#">Keds Champion N.</a> \$12.00 Lyst.com	 <a href="#">Keds Champion Ta.</a> \$39.94 DSW.com	 <a href="#">Keds Black/White.</a> \$25.00 Belk

**Keds**  
Shoes  
Keds is an American brand of plimsoll-style canvas shoe with rubber soles. Keds were introduced in 1916 by U.S. Rubber. The shoe brand was later acquired by Stride Rite Corporation and is currently owned by Wolverine World Wide. [Wikipedia](#)











More recently Google has made some updates where search information for brands or different queries appears on the right for some search pages:

About 4,040,000 results (0.45 seconds)

Ads related to **keds**


- [Keds.com - Keds® - Official Site](#)  
www.keds.com/ - Free Shipping on All Keds Orders. Shop New Keds Styles & Collections.  
Taylor Swift Holiday Keds Keds Champion Keds Specials Comfort Styles
- [Keds at Amazon.com - Save on Shoes and More at Amazon](#)  
www.amazon.com/Shoes - ★★★★★ 367 seller reviews  
Free 2-Day Shipping w/Amazon Prime.
- [Keds Shoe - Dream a Little Dream this Season - Kohls.com](#)  
www.kohls.com/Keds - ★★★★★ 30 seller reviews  
Shop Our Selection of Keds Shoes!
- [Keds Canvas Sneakers For Girls, Teens & Women](#)  
www.keds.com/ - Free Shipping on all Keds sneakers and shoes on Keds.com. Shop Taylor Swift's picks for Keds, plus the original white canvas Champion and the latest Keds ...  
She  
Holiday Collection - Lace Ups - Champion Collection - Slip Ons  
More results from keds.com >
- [Keds Shoes, Sneakers, Socks - Zappos.com](#)  
www.zappos.com/keds - Keds at Zappos.com. Free shipping BOTH ways, 365-day return policy, 24/7 customer service. Call (800) 927-7671.
- [Keds at Amazon.com](#)  
www.amazon.com/Keds/e/2416464011 - Worn by brave girls around the world—including Taylor Swift—Keds® has been an iconic style staple since 1916, lending lending sunny colors, charming prints, ...

Shop for **keds** on Google Sponsored

 <a href="#">Keds Champion C.</a> \$27.99 Nordstrom	 <a href="#">Keds Champion S.</a> \$17.47 Nordstrom	 <a href="#">Keds Blue Keds Taylor.</a> \$18.00 Belk	 <a href="#">Keds women's #39.</a> \$39.99 Sears
 <a href="#">Keds women's champion ba.</a> \$34.99 Sears	 <a href="#">Keds Champion N.</a> \$12.00 Lyst.com	 <a href="#">Keds Champion Ta.</a> \$39.94 DSW.com	 <a href="#">Keds Black/White.</a> \$25.00 Belk

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Shoes  
Keds is an American brand of plimsoll-style canvas shoe with rubber soles. Keds were introduced in 1916 by U.S. Rubber. The shoe brand was later acquired by Stride Rite Corporation and is currently owned by Wolverine World Wide. [Wikipedia](#)

Founded: 1916





The screenshot shows a Google search for "southwest". The search bar is at the top with the Google logo. Below the search bar are navigation tabs for "Web", "Images", "Maps", "Shopping", "News", "More", and "Search tools". The search results show "About 56,200,000 results (0.32 seconds)".

On the left, there are "Ads related to southwest" with several links:
 

- [southwest.com - Southwest Official Site](#) (www.southwest.com/)
- [South West Cheap Flights - Tour American Southwest and Save](#) (www.cheapair.com/South-West-Flights)
- [Southwest Airlines | Book Flights, Airline Tickets, Airfare](#) (www.southwest.com/)

On the right, there is a "Southwest Airlines" knowledge panel. It includes the Southwest Airlines logo, the text "Airline company", a brief description of the airline, stock price information (LUV NYSE \$18.72 +0.09 (+0.46%)), headquarters (Dallas, TX), CEO (Gary C. Kelly), founded date (March 16, 1967), and founders (Rollin King, Herb Kelleher). Below this is a "Track flight status" section with an input field for "Enter flight number" and a "Track flight" button. At the bottom, there is a "People also search for" section with logos for JetBlue, Delta Air Lines, American Airlines, Frontier Airlines, and Spirit Airlines.

A red arrow points from the "Ads related to southwest" section towards the "Southwest Airlines" knowledge panel.

There are a lot of things on a Google search page. In fact, **41% of users searching on Google don't even know the paid ads aren't organic results.** On top of that, last year product results appeared for free in organic search without images. The face of Google search has changed significantly in a year, and continues to change.



## IS GOOGLE SHOPPING RIGHT FOR YOUR STORE?

**Google** Search is the largest search engine, and PLAs are the highest converting ad. Here are some pretty significant Google numbers which support PLAs:

- ✓ **There are over 1 billion products on Google Shopping**
- ✓ **Google PLA clicks increased 200% YOY since Sept (2012)**
- ✓ **PLAs are available in 23 countries globally**
- ✓ **Display ads have a 22% higher click-through rate than traditional text advertisements**

In addition to conversion rates and visibility, Product Listing Ads are designed to be more manageable for merchants including:

- ✓ **PLAs allow you to make ad group and bid changes**
- ✓ **PLAs work with Google Analytics**
- ✓ **Shopping campaigns let you make changes in AdWords**

Remember PLAs may or may not be a good fit for your online store. Consider the questions below before creating a Google Shopping campaign.



## Should You List on Google Shopping?

There are over one billion products on Google Shopping, but should your products be on Google Shopping?

**Here are some questions to consider** your store's fit with Google Shopping PLAs:

**How many products are on your site?**

If you sell less than 500 products Google Shopping may give your products less visibility than you might want. And it could be difficult for you to break out product groups effectively depending on your site and product category.

**What category are most of your products in?**

Not all product categories are created equal. Like all of ecommerce, some categories are more competitive on Google and others just don't get a lot of customer traffic. Categories like automotive, baby supplies, tools, or furniture can get low traffic volume, while categories like Apparel can get a lot of clicks, but have more merchant competition. If you sell novelty items, or something like intimate apparel you are likely to run into clicks which won't convert.



## ✓ What's your Google Shopping budget?

Your daily bids and budget are going to be very different from other merchants, even sometimes those in your product category. It's hard to say what a good budget or bid is with competition and different categories. However a good baseline for a minimum Google Shopping budget is **\$1,000/month**. Consider your ROI goals when setting your bids and budget. If you have a particularly strict budget you may have difficulty meeting it on Google.

## ✓ What Is The Quality Of Your Site?

Your online site is your home. Would you be a houseguest at someone's place if it was a mess? Site quality is a major conversion element for users, and Google uses site quality as part of its algorithm to determine merchant quality. If your site is undergoing testing, has multiple errors, or could be considered spammy you may want to hold off on creating PLAs.

## CHAPTER 3

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# CREATE PRODUCT LISTING ADS







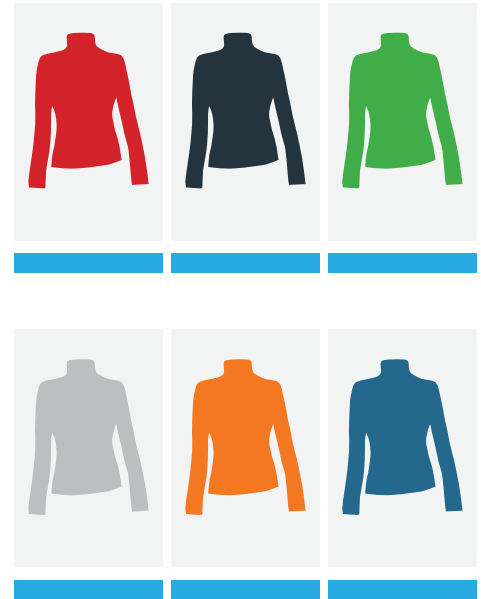
# CREATE PRODUCT LISTING ADS

- ✓ Create a data feed
- ✓ Establish PLA goals
- ✓ Install Tracking and Link Accounts
- ✓ Create ad groups in Adwords
- ✓ Set bids and budget

## Create a data feed .||

To list your products on Product Listing Ads, you'll need to create a data feed. A data feed is a digital representation of your products. Generally this is represented as a document which contains all of the product information you need to communicate to Google in order to list ads.

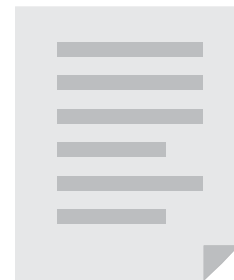
Data feed format is different for various comparison shopping engines, but most data feeds are excel files with columns such as title, description, price, quantity, image,etc. [Learn more about data feeds here.](#)



Your Google data feed should:

- ✓ **Contain all of your product information.** Make sure your product information is up to date and detailed. You want to always send Google correct prices, quantities, images, and product information.

Google Shopping results are powered by Google sifting through its stockpile of information and deciding which pages or products are the most relevant to the customer search. The more detailed information you can send Google the better Google can determine if your product is relevant. If you don't tell Google your sneaker is red, how can it pull that sneaker for a red shoe search?



- ✓ **Match Google's format requirements.** Google can suspend all of your ads if your data feed doesn't meet its format or content requirements. Ensure your data feed doesn't include any **restricted products or categories**, and follows **Google's data feed specifications**.

Here is an **example of a Google Shopping data feed**.

- ✓ **Be sent to Google regularly.** Your shoppers are on Google every day price comparing and browsing. If your product information ever changes- especially price or quantity, you need to communicate that to Google by sending your data feed at regular intervals. If you can't send your data feed automatically consider using a data feed provider. Remember that some data feed providers offer feed management while others just send your data feed.



- ✓ **Be easy to change.** You need to have access to your data feed. If you are using a data feed provider, you should have fluid lines of communication so you can update product information and labels whenever your inventory changes, or for sales and seasonal promotions, etc.

## DATA FEED PRODUCT TITLES AND DESCRIPTION .||

In addition to giving Google as much product information as possible, you can also optimize your product titles and descriptions to make them more Google and shopper friendly.

People read from left to right, likewise through research we've determined Google weights title and descriptions terms from left to right. If you design your product titles and descriptions based on this logic, they are more likely to show up for the queries you want them to.

- ✓ List important product details at the beginning of a product title or description followed by less important details. **Learn more about optimizing your product titles and descriptions here.**

### Data Feed Details

Google uses the same data feed for Google text ads as it does for your Product Listing Ads, so if you have a data feed already, you'll only need to make some minor adjustments.



Also remember that your product data feed is sent to the Google Merchant center, which you can access through AdWords. Some Google programs require an additional data feed, so you may have one or more data feed within the Google Merchant Center.

The Google Merchant Center is also the place where Google reports any data feed errors or issues, so be sure to check in on your data feed on a regular basis to prevent some or all of your products from being unavailable in search. If you aren't already using the Google Merchant Center you'll also need to verify your website through the login.

## Establish PLA Goals

Before you start any project you should consider what you want to get out of it, and what you already know. Architects don't build a house without detailed plans and years of schooling.

Determine what ROI you want on Google Shopping, how much you can spend and what products you want to have appear in search. Use internal data and Google Analytics to really get a feel for what you want with your Google Shopping campaign and how you want it to look. This is particularly important if you're using the new Google Shopping Campaign structure.



If you don't have any product performance data it's a good idea to start out slowly with PLAs and build out based on product performance.





## Install Tracking and Link Accounts

Goals are all well and good, but they aren't going to help you if you can't see performance data or look back at where you've been. Before you can effectively manage a PLA campaign you need to make sure to lay the foundation for Google Analytics and AdWords.

-  **Link AdWords and Google Merchant Center**  
The Google Merchant Center is where you send your data feed, basically telling Google what products you have and their relevant details. The AdWords login is where you manage your paid ad campaigns. In order to list products on Google Shopping, these two programs need to be able to communicate with one another, or be linked. Ideally you should also use and link Google Analytics to analyze product performance and leverage performance data.
  
-  **Install Google AdWords Tracking**  
AdWords is the program which you'll use to manage PLAs. It's here that you'll predominantly look at reports, change ads and make account changes. Google gets its information on your products from your data feed, but it can't track conversions and similar product data without information from your online store. Google needs to talk to your online store in order to aggregate that data in AdWords. You can do this in the AdWords login under Tools and Analysis tab by selecting conversions.

## ✓ Install Google Analytics Tracking

Google Analytics is the program which collects, saves and displays performance data for your products (AdWords does some of this as well). For Google Analytics to collect this information Google needs to communicate with your online store. For this to happen you need to install a code snippet on the backend of your site. [Check out our 35 page guide](#) on Google Analytics for more information on setting up tracking and generating reports in Analytics.

## Create ad groups in AdWords

Once you've sent your product information to Google you'll want to create groups of ads within Google using the AdWords login. Remember AdWords is where both Product Listing Ads and text ads are managed, and both use the same Google feed.

It's important to note that Product Listing Ads recently updated as Google Shopping Campaigns, a program which is currently in beta. Google Shopping Campaigns are a new way to structure ads within Product Listing Ads that integrate parts of the feed in the AdWords login and structure ad grouping based on a hierarchy. Moving forward you'll notice I'll say traditional or old PLAs, by which I mean the current PLA format, vs. the new or updated PLAs by which I mean Google Shopping Campaigns. I'll elaborate more on the differences later in this guide.

Also of note, it's possible to run the two types of Google campaigns simultaneously, which can create overlap with product ads.





**Traditional Product Listing** ads allow you to create ad groups (or ads for multiple products) based on the labels in your data feed. You can choose to group your ads based on 6 labels in the Google data feed:

- ✓ **I.D-** product id, or identifier (MPN, SKU)
- ✓ **Product Type-** e.g clothing, electronics
- ✓ **Brand**
- ✓ **Condition-** e.g new, used
- ✓ **AdWords labels-** The AdWords labels column isn't a required column in the Google data feed. However it's a major way to create custom ad groups for traditional Product Listing Ads. You can create custom ad groups for best sellers, products over a certain price, seasonal items, and almost any product attribute you'd like using the AdWords labels and AdWords grouping columns.

## NEW SHOPPING CAMPAIGN AD CREATION .||

With **Google Shopping Campaigns**, ad breakout is a little bit different, with AdWords labels columns replaced with custom label columns 0-4. Unlike traditional PLAs, Google Shopping Campaigns work on a layering system for ad creation. Instead of breaking out ad groups based on feed labels and branching out, Shopping Campaigns carve ad groups out of your data feed like cutting pieces out of a pie. Shopping Campaigns have a base of the all products product group (your whole feed), from which product groups for ads are cut out and whittled down.



You have the option of only using your All Products product group, just like you can with your All Products ad group:

Product group ?	Max. CPC ?	Benchmark CTR ?
▶ All products	--	--

From here you can choose one of 10 feed attributes through which to create a product group underneath all products:

- ✔ **Category** (Google Product Category)
- ✔ **Brand**
- ✔ **Item ID**
- ✔ **Condition**
- ✔ **Product Type**
- ✔ **Custom Label 0 - 4**

You'll notice the sixth option here is Custom label. The 5 available Custom Labels columns are similar to the old AdWords Labels column with one exception. You can only have 1 custom label per column, which is probably why Google lets you add 5 columns.





## Use Google Analytics

Remember to use performance data or Google Analytics to determine which products and product groups you want to create ad groups for. Delve into your product performance before you start to break out ads.

If you don't have access to any product performance data start by creating an ad group for your entire data feed, or an all products ad group. Use this group to accumulate product performance data and build out your ads based on what converts well.

## Set Bids And Budget

You can use these data feed labels to identify products or groups of products in your data feed which you would like to create ads for. Each group will have its own bid which you will need to choose based on which products you would like to rank higher on search or show up more frequently. You'll also need to set a daily budget for your whole Google Shopping campaign.



Product Listing ads are designed based on a bid hierarchy, so ad groups with a higher product bid will have precedence over those with lower bids. Remember to set up a bid hierarchy so that products which convert well are assigned a higher bid, and those which you want to limit visibility to are bid lower.

## Bids

With traditional product listing ads it's possible to have products in different ad groups at the same time. You might have a pair of shoes which is in a brand ad group (using the brand column



in the data feed), best seller ad group and a seasonal ad group (using AdWords labels). The bid assigned to this shoe is going to default to the highest bid you have among these three ad groups. This type of bid overlap can happen a lot depending on how many ad groups you have broken out and what type of products perform well for your online store. Keep bid hierarchy in mind when you create your Google campaign ad structure.

Google Shopping Campaigns do not work based on a bid hierarchy, so this isn't something you'll need to worry about if you're using the new campaign format. However you still want to give higher bids to product groups which you want to have more visibility, and lower bids to product groups like your all products group.

## Budget

You can set your entire campaign budget when you create your campaign, or go back in and change the amount of spend you'll allow daily under the settings tab. PLAs work based on CPC (cost per click) charges. You set a CPC bid for where you'd like to compete, and each time someone clicks your ad your AdWords account charges you a CPC based on other CPCs bids in your category. Each of those CPC charges comes from your overall PLA campaign budget (note you can have multiple campaigns).

Think of your PLA campaign budget as a Starbucks card. You put money on your card, and you can only buy drinks using the card until your balance runs out. Your PLA ads will be displayed on Google until your daily budget is reached, at which point Google will stop showing your ads for that day.





Choose a daily budget that makes sense for your online store, and consider some of the following budget best practices: .||



Monitor your campaign to make sure your ads are running.



Create AdWords Alerts (automate> create rule for campaigns) to send yourself reminder emails when your daily budget reaches a certain threshold.



Look at performance over time for your campaign to see at what time you've been reaching your budget every day (in the past week, month, etc) to determine a reasonable daily budget.

You can keep your COS lower with a lower daily budget, but remember that will limit your product exposure. Inversely you can give your products a lot of traffic, but that translates into higher daily spend on PLAs.

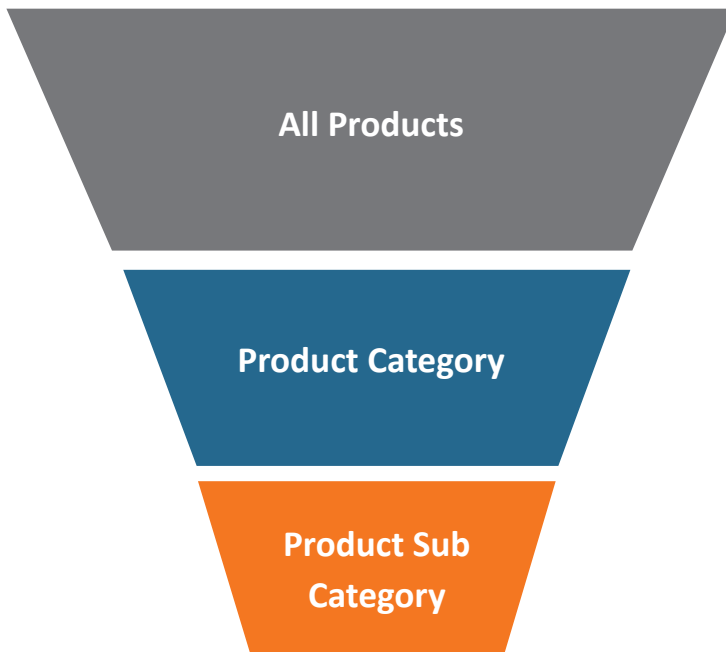
## NEW GOOGLE SHOPPING CAMPAIGNS VS. OLD PLAS

Google Shopping Campaigns are a new way to structure Product Listing Ads within AdWords. How Product Listing Ads work and where they appear in search is the same. The difference is how merchants can create ads within the AdWords login and how those ads are structured. .||



## Google Shopping Campaign Structure

As outlined in the section above on how to create product groups, the major difference between traditional Product Listing Ads structure and Google Shopping Campaigns is that Shopping Campaigns work based on remainder type of funnel. Ad groups are created from the entire data feed, and are broken down based on what remains. Traditional Product Listing ads allow more of a free for all with ad groups overlapping and containing the same products.



- ✓ **Hierachical**
- ✓ **Segments** “remaining products” from All product
- ✓ **Ad groups** not product groups
- ✓ **Custom Labels 0-4** (vs. AdWords\_labels)
- ✓ **10 Feed attributes**



Google Shopping Campaigns also allow merchants to see more of the data feed within AdWords, which makes looking at product data easier.

Depending on your online site and how broken out your current Google Shopping Campaign is, you may or may not want to create Google Shopping Campaigns.

Here are some questions to help you identify whether Google Shopping Campaigns are a good fit for your online store or if you should stick with Product Listing ads as is:

**Do you have an existing PLA Campaign with historical performance?**

**Is your PLA Campaign broken out extensively (e.g. best sellers, price buckets, etc)?**

**Are you using multiple AdWords labels in your data feed?**

**Does your PLA Campaign use filters?**



Hold off on starting with a Google Shopping Campaign if answered yes, to any of those questions

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**Do you have limited access to your data feed?**

**Are you only using an all products ad group?**

**Are your PLA ads fairly limited in how broken out they are?**

**Are you using few AdWords labels in your data feed?**



Good candidate for a Google Shopping Campaign if answered yes to any of those questions



While useful and more intuitive, Google Shopping Campaigns are also limiting depending on what your strengths are. If you already have a broken out PLA campaign, and you are knowledgeable about Google Shopping, your campaign may be limited with Google Shopping Campaigns. Inversely, if you have limited access to your data feed, and have difficulty breaking out your ads then the new PLA structure would be a good fit for your ads.



Here is a look at some of the limitations that Google Shopping Campaigns present as well as some of the benefits the new PLA structure gives merchants. Remember that Google Shopping Campaigns are still in beta, so Google may make additional changes to the program.

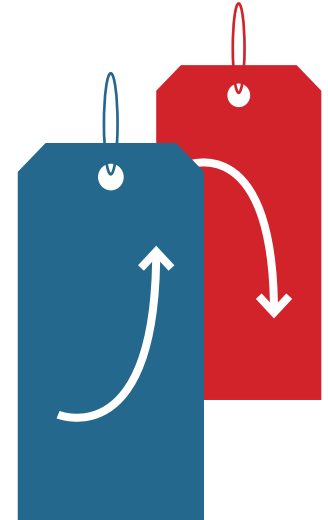
Benefit	Limitation
Easy build out	Limited segmentation
Data will already exist when you subdivide your groups	Less accessible graphical representation of performance over time, different locations for information like downloadable reports, change history within AdWords (dimensions)
Benchmark CTR & Bids	Layers cannot be retrieved once deleted
Products tab shows you all your product data directly in the AdWords login and is searchable by any attribute	Easy to delete entire campaign



## PLA BEST PRACTICES

### Audit

Once you've broken out your Product Listing Ads product groups, you should be actively auditing your ad groups to elevate products which perform well and limit visibility to products which garner a lot of clicks but low conversions. This means you should be in your AdWords campaign at least once a week, and ideally at least once a day. Which products perform well is going to vary based on the season, your sales and what's popular. ■■




Remember that with the traditional PLA structure your products may be in multiple ad groups, so be sure products which you want to show up have a higher bid, and those with a low ROI are in an ad group with the lowest bid. ■■

Here are some best practices for PLA ad group structure:

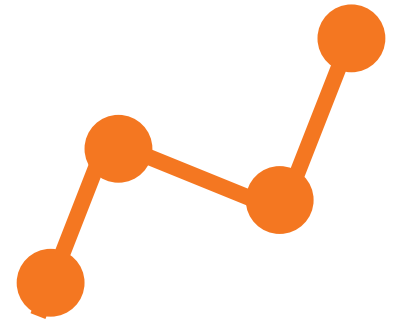
- ✓ Generally we recommend the All Products ad group be bid at \$.01 so any more granular ad group bids you make will override that all products group.
- ✓ Often you will also want to include a product in multiple product groups, or give it multiple targets such as an item which is in a category, has a particular brand and is also a best seller.
- ✓ Avoid creating ad groups for each of your products.



With the new Google Shopping Campaigns you'll want to decide which products and product groups you want to give more traffic based on conversions when you're structuring your campaign ads. This means you should have a good idea of what converts before you start creating your ads. 

You can also look at data trends in AdWords, and modify your performance variables in the report using the dimensions tab.

If you're unsure about how to find performance data in Google Analytics, check out this [Google Analytics resource](#).



## Day and Time Bids

In addition to elevating best sellers and down bidding poor performing product ads, you should also delve into Analytics to determine when product groups convert. Also, modify product bids based on time and day of the week (you can find this under the dimensions tab in AdWords). Change when your ads are running based on the day of the week and times for different days when people are more likely to purchase online. Just like your product groups, you'll want to audit these bids to make sure those products are converting during the same time periods.





## NEW GOOGLE SHOPPING CAMPAIGNS BEST PRACTICES



**Pick one way** of grouping products together and start with that.



**If you want to create a few product groups based on Brand start with that.** If you want to do it by Product Type or Category or Product ID, start with that. As you get more familiar with this new campaign structure you'll start to understand how your product groups are working together and you can get more granular from there.



**Start Slow.** It's better to start slow & get it right then to get too complicated too quickly & lose focus.



**Increase bid levels for Google.** CPCs on Google Shopping have been traditionally lower than text ads which is ridiculous considering how much better they convert. Google wants to give you visibility into how your competitors are bidding because they want a bidding war.



**Start the Switch.** It's not imperative you switch everything over right away, especially if you have an extensive campaign built out. You can begin building the campaign now and move over gradually. If you only have a basic campaign built out, with just one or two ad groups, you might as well start using the new campaign structure.

## ▶ CHAPTER 4

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# LOCAL PRODUCT LISTING ADS

A large, abstract geometric shape in a medium blue color, composed of several overlapping triangles and polygons, occupies the lower half of the page. It is positioned on the right side and extends towards the bottom edge.

## LOCAL PRODUCT LISTING ADS

While Google Product Listing Ads have been primarily aimed at driving online sales, the addition of local PLAs has provided value for physical, in-store sales as well.

Local PLAs provide tremendous value to retailers with a B&M presence in 2 ways:

- ✓ **They show local availability for Product Listing Ads.**  
Search queries can now yield results that show an item's availability at a nearby store.



For example, if I search for an “8 person tent” on Google, I can see that REI, a retailer with B&M stores, has a “Eureka Copper Canyon 8 tent” **in stock nearby**.

The screenshot shows a Google search for "8 person tent". The search results include a "Shop for 8 person tent on Google" section with five sponsored listings. The fourth listing, "Eureka Copper Canyon 8 Tent" by REI, is circled in red and has the text "In stock nearby" below it. Other listings include "Eagle's Camp Family Voyag..." by Cabela's, "Kelty Parthenon 8..." by Backcount..., "Coleman 8 Person Instan..." by Walmart, and "The North Face Mountain Ma..." by Campmor.

Product Name	Price	Retailer	Local Availability
Eagle's Camp Family Voyag...	\$169.99	Cabela's	Special offer
Kelty Parthenon 8...	\$423.95	Backcount...	
Coleman 8 Person Instan...	\$179.00	Walmart	
Eureka Copper Canyon 8 Tent	\$379.00	REI	In stock nearby
The North Face Mountain Ma...	\$549.97	Campmor	

Clicking through on “in stock nearby” takes me to a **Google local storefront**.

✓ **Local storefronts** (currently still in beta) are essentially a showcase for a qualifying merchant’s website and nearby store. They not only feature a map of the store’s closest location, it also shows your store’s phone number and the availability of related items also at that nearby store.

Setting up a local storefront is an innovative, user-friendly way to convert online traffic into in-store sales, however you’ll need to first be approved by Google to use the program as well as have a product feed, a local products feed, and a Google Places account.

Because local storefronts need to be Google-approved and monitored closely (for stock reasons), the overall process can get complicated. Don’t hesitate to reach out to one of our Data Analysts for more insight at [contact@cpstrategy.com](mailto:contact@cpstrategy.com).

## CHAPTER 5




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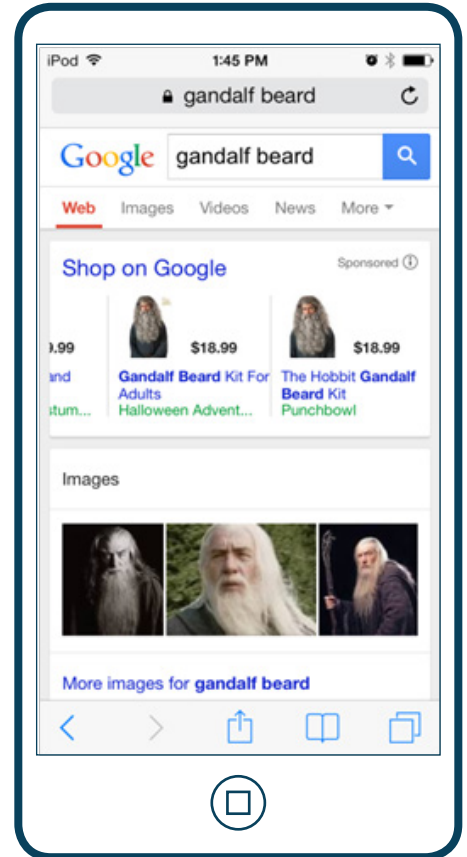
# MOBILE PRODUCT LISTING ADS



# MOBILE PRODUCT LISTING ADS



Q4 2013 made it clear that mobile product listing ads are going to be a huge factor to online sales performance in 2014. In our **2013 Google Ecommerce Research Study**, we gathered that year over year (YOY) in Q4, mobile Product Listing Ads (tablet and phone) were up:

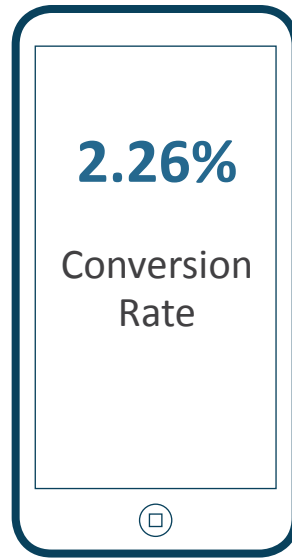
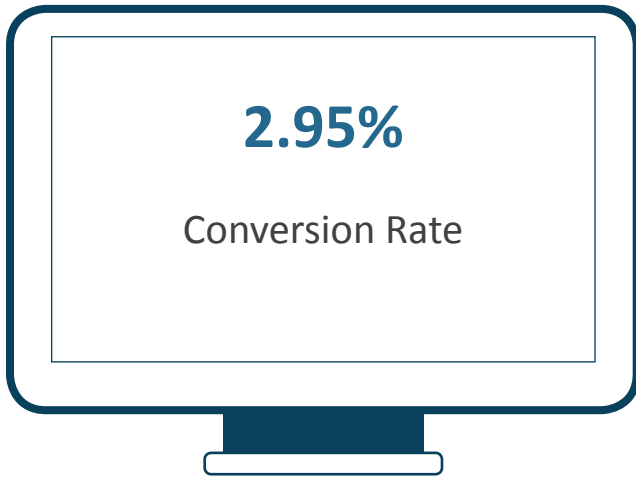
-  **326.22% for Traffic**
-  **102.43% for Revenue**
-  **259.37% for Orders**



As the PLA space stands right now, mobile product listing ads typically require a lesser bid (-75% to -25%) than desktop PLAs, but this trend may soon change as more retailers become more competitive on mobile.

The main takeaway here is to:

-  **Determine if some of your ad groups are being shown on mobile devices.**
-  **Determine if the mobile traffic % of overall traffic and conversion rate is significant enough to make actionable changes to your mobile PLA bids.**



We've found that with optimized bids, mobile PLA traffic can and will actually surpass desktop traffic, but the conversion rates are typically much lower. This trend isn't surprising considering how much real estate PLAs take up on a typical phone screen combined with the fact that it's easier to search on mobile first then fill out purchase info on a desktop.

## CHAPTER 6

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# GOOGLE DYNAMIC REMARKETING





# GOOGLE DYNAMIC REMARKETING

Entering 2014, the sophistication of a standard Google PLA campaign has risen tremendously, where the “minimal” requirements are really now an optimized feed, calculated bids, mobile bid optimizations, a tested ad group structure, and Google Dynamic Remarketing as a supplement.

The Google Dynamic Remarketing program has cemented itself as a vital addition to any Google PLA campaign because of its high-targeting capabilities and dynamic display ad format.

Need help setting up Dynamic Remarketing campaigns?

**There's a Guide for that.**



In a nut shell, Google Dynamic Remarketing (GDR) is a product feed-based retargeting program that allows you to target past visitors based on their past behavior (visited page, added to cart, past purchasers, etc.) with product-specific ads.

The image displays four dynamic remarketing advertisements arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each ad is designed to promote specific products from different retailers.

- Top Left Ad (Sycamore Home Goods):** Features a grid of four product images. The top-left image is highlighted with a white border and a mouse cursor. It shows a 'Victorian Style Copper Plated Kettle' priced at '\$49'. The ad includes the Sycamore Home Goods logo and navigation arrows.
- Top Right Ad (Sycamore Home Goods):** Features a carousel of product images. The first image is highlighted with a white border and a mouse cursor. It shows a 'Double Pot and Pan Set'. The ad includes the Sycamore Home Goods logo, navigation arrows, and a 'SHOP NOW' button.
- Bottom Left Ad (ACME OUTFITTERS):** Features a large image of a tent. The text reads 'GREAT DEALS AVAILABLE DURING SPRING!' and 'Orion 2 Person Delux Tent \$90'. The ad includes the ACME OUTFITTERS logo, navigation arrows, and a mouse cursor pointing at the tent image.
- Bottom Right Ad (Tredwe Industries):** Features three product images in a row. The middle image is highlighted with a white border and a mouse cursor. It shows 'Alpine Hikers 5.0' boots with a price of '\$116.95' (crossed out from '\$120.00'). The other two products are 'Slicker Big City' boots for '\$95.00' and 'Ladies Slouch Suede' boots for '\$120.00'. The ad includes the Tredwe Industries logo, navigation arrows, and a 'SHOP NOW' button.

## ▶ CHAPTER 7

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# NEW GOOGLE SHOPPING INNOVATIONS (SINCE THE PLA GUIDE 1.0)





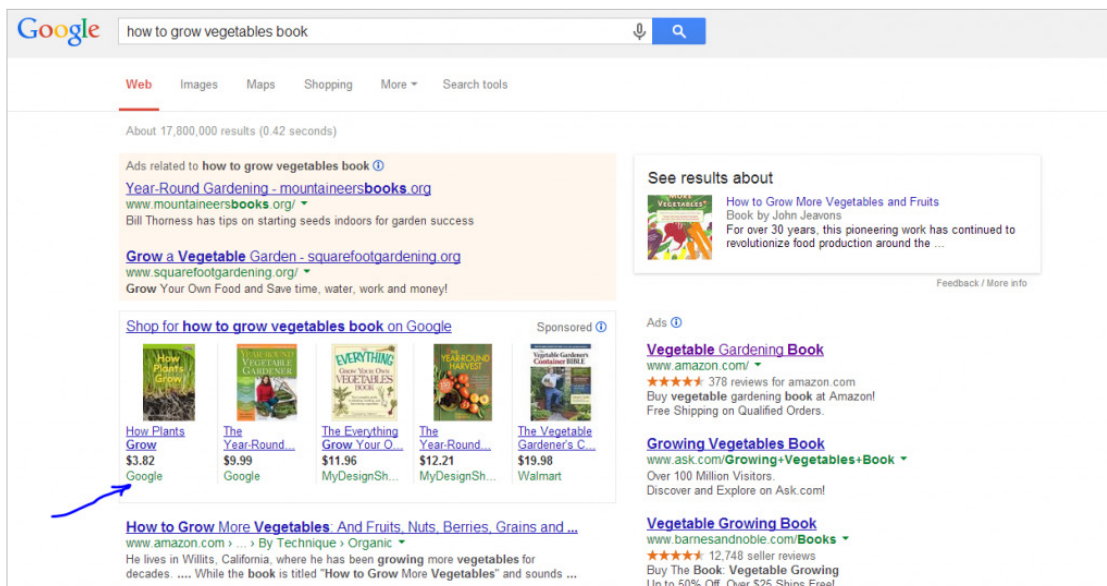
# NEW GOOGLE SHOPPING INNOVATIONS

Other than the big one (Google Shopping Campaigns), there have been some interesting, highly innovative advancements and tests with the Google Shopping program.

Not all of these are fully rolled out yet, but we've spotted tests in the wild and can anticipate that most, if not all, will be mainstays.

## GOOGLE PLAY TAKING OVER

We spotted Google dominating PLA listings when doing queries for different books. In many cases, Google nabs the first couple spots even if their product isn't the most relevant for that query. Not great for book retailers...



Read the full investigation here.

## PRICE CHANGES BEING DISPLAYED

This doesn't look to be fully integrated feature, but price change displays could be a huge differentiator for merchants on a comparison page.

The screenshot shows a product listing for '1-Day Acuvue TruEye 30 Pack Contacts' on the website 'ReplaceMyContacts.com'. The listing includes a 'Trusted Store' badge, a 5-star rating with 1,775 reviews, and 'No tax'. The original price is \$24.00 with \$7.50 shipping, totaling \$31.50. A green notification bubble states: 'This item is now \$35 below its 90-day average price at ReplaceMyContacts.com.' A 'Shop »' button is visible to the right of the listing.

Check out the full investigation here.

## TRUSTED STORES INCORPORATING SELLER REVIEWS

This one is here to stay. Essentially, merchants with the Trusted Stores badge will now have a much easier time attaining seller reviews on Google Shopping, thus giving Trusted Stores an even bigger advantage and differentiator over non-Trusted Stores.

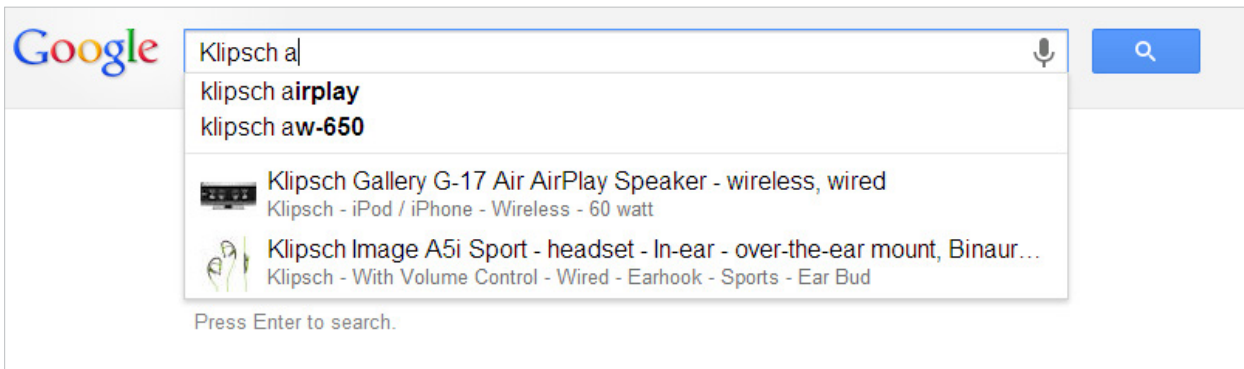
The screenshot shows Google Shopping results for 'OnlineShoes.com'. The listing features a 'Google Trusted Store' badge and a 4.7-star rating based on 6,630 reviews in the past 12 months. A sidebar on the left offers navigation for 'Walking Shoes', 'Women's Shoes', 'Dress Shoes', and 'Men's Shoes'. Below the main listing, there are 'Highlighted reviews' from 'Google Trusted Stores (1,000+ reviews)', 'Bizrate (4,000+ reviews)', and 'ResellerRatings.com (1+ reviews)'. Two specific reviews are shown with 5-star ratings and dates from November 2013.

Read the full news break here.



## INSTANT PRODUCT LISTING AD RESULTS

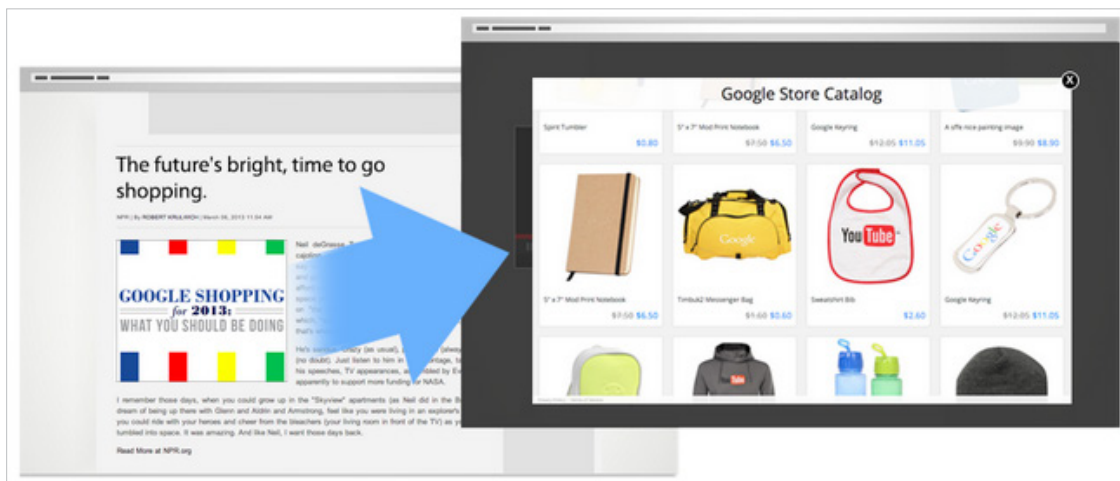
This innovation has only been spotted in a very small window, and **it's unclear whether this will be a fully-integrated feature in the future**. If it is, however, it will be both a huge landmark in the strides PLAs have taken in dominating Google search results as well as a clear marker in Google's huge investment in their ecommerce machine.



[Read the full analysis of the feature here.](#)

## GOOGLE ENGAGEMENT ADS

In December 2013, Google opened up its Engagement Ads program to every retailer and advertiser. Engagement Ads are an interesting advertising channel for even non-retailers, but the cool thing here is the intro of a Google Store Catalog, which allows shoppers to shop directly in the “ad.”



[Read the full analysis on Google Engagement Ads here.](#)

## GOOGLE’S UNLISTED RESTRICTED PRODUCTS

Google is notorious for suspending merchants for specific products/keywords within the merchant data feed, many of which are not listed in their [official restricted products list](#).



Here are some examples of ingredients/products we've found to be on the "unofficial" restricted products list:

Bhelliom Enterprises (Brand)

Astragalus Extract

**He Shou Wu**

Weapons (Guns, Gun parts/hardware, Ammunition, Knives, Bombs, Throwing Stars, Brass Knuckles)

Apricot Kernels

Muscle Marinade (Purus Labs)

Suppress NT (Nutrition Alliance International)

**Avidex**

**Black Dragon** by Blue Poppy Originals

**Hyland's Vaginitis**

**Hyland's Arthritis**

**Source Naturals Muscle Mass**

**DHEA**

L-Carnitine

**HyperQuell** 60 caps by Blue Poppy Originals

**pHion Balance Whole Body Detoxification** 90 Capsules





Google Shopping is continuously rolling out new features for retail search which incorporate and enhance PLAs. Research the value, cost, and implementation of each feature before you invest your time in updating PLAs.

Here are some mainstays of the program:

- ✓ **Special Offers:** Coupons available within Google search for merchants
- ✓ **Google Trusted Stores:** Badge on merchant site indicating seller quality score
- ✓ **Google Wallet:** Google's version of Paypal
- ✓ **Google Map Ads;** Ads which display in Google maps
- ✓ **Google Remarketing:** Google retargeting ads for customers who abandon your site
- ✓ **Mobile Ads:** Google ads on mobile search
- ✓ **Google+ Profile, pages:** Social network for Google which ingrates with search
- ✓ **Google Video Ads:** Google video ads on Youtube and Google search
- ✓ **Mobile click-to-call:** Allows Google searchers to call directly from a Google ad

# GET MORE ON GOOGLE, AMAZON, ADWORDS, & RETAIL SEARCH

Find out how to increase your ROI on **Google, Amazon, AdWords**, and retail search campaigns without logging into a platform, dealing with technical elements of your data feed, or poring over performance data.

[Dominate Retail Search](#)

