

## Creative in Performance Max Playbook

How to get started and develop your creative strategy for Performance Max campaigns

2023 edition









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Optimal creative effectiveness

# Good creative is good for business'





Increased ROI for effective creative

YouTube's ABCDs drive results<sup>1</sup>



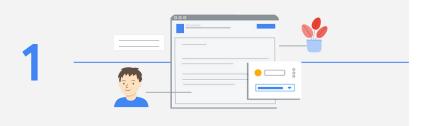


#### **Performance Max:**

Uses the full power of Google's Al to multiply conversions across Google Ads and Search Ads 360 inventory

#### Good in, good out:

High quality creative inputs allow Google's AI to learn and adapt, finding the best creative asset combinations to drive optimal performance



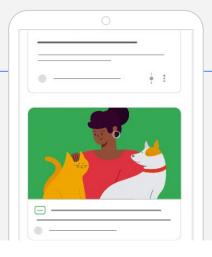
Upload variations of images, text and video **creative assets** 

2



Google's AI uses those assets to find the best performing combinations

3

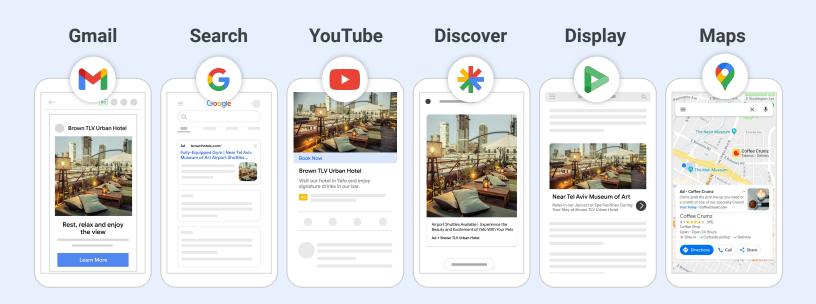


Access the full breadth of Google Ads inventory from a single campaign to engage customers for your specific goals

# The right creative assets help you maximise conversions by unlocking valuable inventory

The best way to maximise your conversion potential is to be present across all of Google's channels — the right message for the right user in the right place, at the right time..

But you can only optimise for these channels if your creative assets fit their unique ad inventories.\*



These creative assets are managed through Asset Groups

\*Video assets can be auto-generated using uploaded image assets, only if advertisers do not add their own video to Performance Max. In September 2023, image and video assets can be auto-generated using product images uploaded in the GMC feed. Autogen videos with GMC Assets can generate 5 videos (both horizontal and vertical), although this may change in the future.

## Getting Started with Asset Groups



## What is an asset group?

## Asset groups are key to making the most out of your large, diverse performance asset library.

When you create a Performance Max campaign, you'll upload different creatives to an asset group (similar to ad groups) including text, images, videos, logos, and final URLs.

Asset variety is a key component in driving performance. To meet best practice, each asset group should contain:

20x

**Images** 

**5X** Videos

**5**x

Logos



#### Structure your asset groups based on key categories within your business.

We recommend creating and managing a small number of broad asset groups based on key product or service categories within your business. You can then simply add new assets to these groups over time.

25x

For example, where a retailer may have separate asset groups promoting menswear and womenswear, a telecommunications business may have separate asset groups for broadband, TV, and Mobile packages.

#### What does good look like?

- Make sure your image assets meet our quality requirements (e.g. <u>Discovery</u>, <u>Image Ads</u>, <u>Video</u>
   <u>Ads</u>) to enable serving on as many surfaces as possible to achieve better performance.
- Ad strength is a great directional indicator in assessing if an asset group has the right assets to drive best performance.
- Refreshing and optimising your assets is one of the most impactful ways to continually drive improved performance gains. More assets means more potential ad formats that can be created for different channels and users.

## Video Assets in Performance Max



## Why video?

It's no secret that creative is crucial to marketing effectiveness. Video ads that appear on YouTube are a key part of Performance Max campaigns. Video creative is not just a nice-to-have... it's a must-have!

#### YouTube drives discovery and decision making

Millions of us discover new brands and products for the first time on YouTube. In fact, **90**% of viewers under 25 watch YouTube to discover new brands.<sup>2</sup>

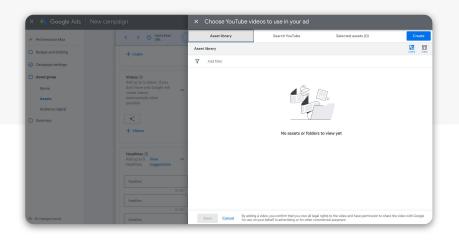
Plus, it's helping them decide what to buy. **51%** of U.K. viewers say they bought from a brand after seeing it on YouTube.<sup>3</sup>

#### Online video drives brand and performance metrics

Another key benefit of video marketing is its full funnel impact. Video drives brand as well as performance goals.

Advertisers that include at least one video in their Performance Max campaigns saw an average increase of 12% total incremental conversions<sup>4</sup>

Video Ads on Performance Max appear on YouTube where they can reach new leads you haven't spoken to yet, or re-engage existing leads in a new context with fresh creative. In doing so, they drive awareness of your brand and consideration for your products. Adding a video asset is simple: all you need to do is upload a YouTube link to your asset group. Videos need to be at least 10 seconds long (15-30 sec recommended) and follow any aspect ratio between 16:9 to 9:16.



## The impact of video in Performance Max

Whether you're new to Performance Max or looking to improve campaigns, we highly recommend using video creatives optimised tailored to our platform best practices.

#### YouTube drives discovery and decision making

In an internal study, we found advertisers that upload at least one video to Performance Max campaigns saw an average increase of 12% total incremental conversions.<sup>4</sup>

#### Online video drives brand and performance metrics

Having video assets in landscape, vertical, and square aspect ratios will help with maximising your presence across different types of inventory across channels.

Advertisers with at least 1 video of each orientation (horizontal, vertical, and square) in their Performance Max Campaigns delivered 20% more conversions on YouTube compared to horizontal videos alone.

## Advanced: Upload multiple video assets and aspect ratios

For optimal performance we recommend you have three different video assets, including at least one vertical asset in each asset group.

If you can do this, there are several benefits.

You can make each ad clearer and more memorable. Rather than jamming lots of products or sellings points into one video, spread them across multiple ads.

Nudge users into action with multiple messages. Having different ads in rotation lets you build purchase intent and frequency while reducing ad fatigue.

Multiple assets provide the Performance Max AI with more ways to learn and to optimise. As with any AI, the better the ingredients, the better the end result!



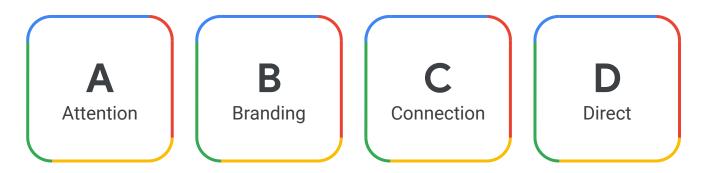
## Creating Video Assets



### **Creative Effectiveness**

#### Our ABCDs of effective creative on YouTube

Crafting a successful ad involves making many decisions: some big, some small. But by factoring <u>four simple principles</u> into each decision, your work is more likely to achieve your marketing goals.



Once you have that big idea, the ABCDs can help you bring it to life on YouTube in the most powerful way.

#### Intro

- Brand logo
- Voiceover & supers
- Introducing the product in the first seconds of your video

#### Design

- Visible on all screens (even mobile)
- Bright footage for small, dim screens
- Important info is in viewable area

#### **Selling Point**

- Highlighting the offer
- Product close-ups
- Showing minimalistic UX

#### **Format**

- Portrait, Square, Landscape
- 10" /15" /30" Guarantee at least 3 videos per asset group including a vertical video

### **Creative Effectiveness**

#### Use our universal safe zones when planning for graphics & text

Overlays, CTAs, and buttons appear in different places depending on the format, campaign type, and screen. Use these safe areas to ensure that critical elements like logo, product, supers, etc. fall within these areas to avoid the risk of elements being covered on certain inventories.





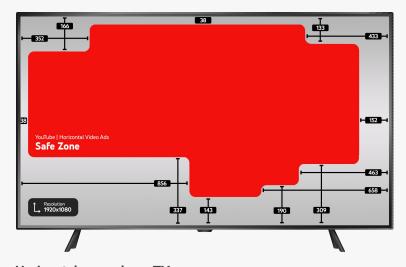
#### Vertical example on mobile

Use same vertical safe area for TV, desktop, and tablet



#### Square example on foldable device

Use same square safe area for TV, in-feed on TV, desktop, and tablet



#### Horizontal example on TV

Use same horizontal safe area for mobile, desktop, and tablet.

#### **DOWNLOAD .PNGs HERE:**

- → Horizontal Overlay
- → Vertical Overlay
- → Square Overlay

Right-click + "Save Image As" to download the .png-files

### **Creative Effectiveness**

#### **Automated video assets**

If you don't upload a video to your campaign, then one or more video assets will be automatically created from static images and text in your asset group. These videos can then run across YouTube and YouTube Shorts.



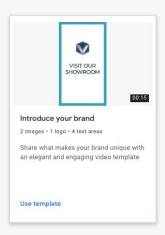
#### Here is an example of automatically generated videos:

Please note: Automated ads only use static images and text (incl. assets from GMC feeds). In addition, there is a limited number of templates. We therefore strongly recommend creating your own video assets for the best performance.

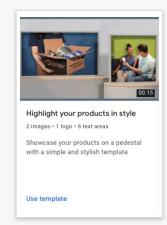
#### Video builder

If you don't have video assets, another way to get started is the free video builder tool in Google Ads. You can access this tool from the asset library or when you create your Performance Max campaign.

There are 22 video ad templates to choose from. Just select a template, upload images and logos, change colours or fonts, and finish by choosing your music from a predefined library.









#### Adding voice-over with Al

In Google Ads you can also find the AI voice-over tool. Choose from a number of languages and voices, add copy for the voiceover to narrate, and our AI will add this to your video!

Voice-over is a proven driver of performance. On YouTube we see up to **20**% more conversions and **18**% lower CPA compared to ads without voice-over.<sup>5</sup>

## Using Google's editing service

If you would like to utilise our production team, or would like an introduction to one of our certified partners, then please speak to your Google Sales counterpart.

#### **Production Creative Works**

Our internal production team can help you optimise your existing video and static assets for your Performance Max campaign at no additional cost. We will follow our Ads Creative best practices to ensure that your assets are ready to go live.



Pre...
You provide an existing landscape video asset



Post...
Google produces
platform specific asset

### Edit video assets

#### Edit existing video assets:

- Adjust the storyline
- ★ Change the duration
- ★ Change aspect ratio
- ★ Modify music, sound effects, and voice-overs
- ★ Edit text overlays
- ★ Brand the video
- Zoom into key content or quicken the pace

#### Build image assets



#### **Resize Images**

★ Crop or change the size of existing image assets per Performance Max specifications

#### **Compose Image Ads**

★ Using existing high quality images, a logo, and the text copy

#### **Animate Static assets**

★ Turn static images and text into high quality videos

#### **Google Ads Creative Partner Programme**

Partner with a certified creative agency to maximise your ad's impact.

Certified creative partners can offer asset development and market-specific insights to optimise your creative for Google Ads campaigns. Partners can offer support during the original creation process through to experimentation and optimisation to get the very best performance from your videos.

Search by region, language, budget, or campaign type at:

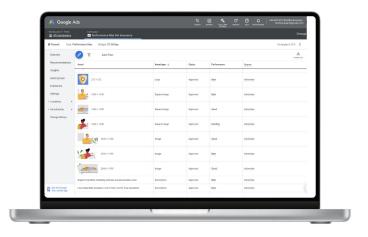
**Google Ads Creative Partner Programme** 

## Google tools to analyse and optimise creative

## How to see how your assets are performing

Once you have your ads up and running, track performance and gather insights that can be fed into future creative development. In Google Ads you can easily see what's working or not.

Use the <u>asset group report</u> to view status, ad strength, conversions, conversion value, and audiences across all of your asset groups



#### How often to refresh your assets

It takes around 3-4 weeks for videos to ramp up and see consistent performance. A good rule of thumb is to check asset ratings once a quarter and replace outdated or "low" performing assets as needed.

#### Using the 'asset audience insight' report

Another great resource is the 'asset audience insight' from your Performance Max insights tab. These simple yet powerful reports use Google data to show which assets resonate best with different audiences.



With these insights you'll find which groups of users the asset resonates most with, including details on how each segment is defined.

You'll also see affinity indexes showing interest in the asset for the given audience segment relative to all users.

Use this information for creative development and to generate more assets that resonate with potential users.

#### How to optimise the accompanying ad headline text

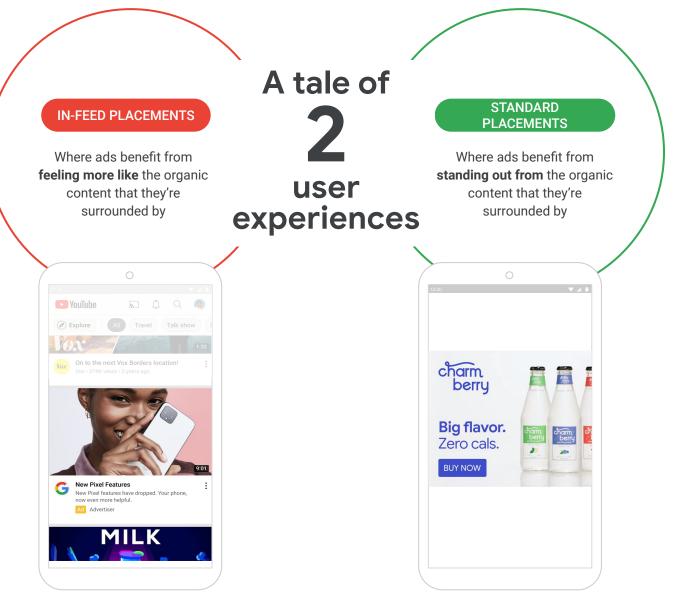
Another tip for testing and learning is on the Insights Page of your Performance Max campaign. Take a look at the 'search terms insights' to see which categories are converting at a higher rate. Use these insights and search terms when you're writing your headlines and description lines.



## Image Assets in Performance Max



When thinking about images, keep in mind that there are two distinct sets of best practices for Performance Max, because Google's Al benefits from a combination of assets that is optimised for two different consumer experiences.



## Best practice across images

#### **General best practices**

These insights are associated with top performing image ads regardless of placement, so apply them to your Performance Max image assets across the board. We recommend 20 image assets in square (1:1), landscape (1.91:1), and portrait formats (4:5).

## Focus tightly on your subject

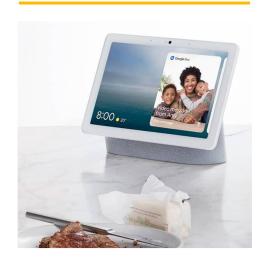
Show a single product, medium or big, and frame it centrally

## Be bright and bold

Avoid dark images or complex visual metaphors

## Keep your image definition sharp and high-quality

Upload high resolution – you don't want your assets to show up blurry or pixelated







## Best practice across images

#### **Nuance for in-feed placements**

These insights are associated with top performing image ads across YouTube and Discover.

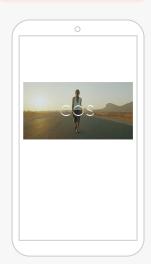
#### Visualise authentic use cases

 Avoid plain / stock background add real life context instead.

#### Avoid overlaid text and overlaid logos

- The image on its own should entice and not compete with the logos and headlines / descriptions that will be automatically paired with it by the system.
- Images with no overlaid text, or overlaid text under 20 characters, perform up to 1.2X better against their campaign goal than images with longer overlaid text.

#### **EXAMPLE FOR IN-FEED**



#### **Humanise your product**

- If possible, show a person (or human element e.g. hand) using the product in situ to showcase its benefits.
- Images that feature people perform over 30% better for their campaign goal versus images that don't.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Branding** is optional

As branding elements (text / logo)
will be automatically paired with
these images, keep the focus on the
product - but on-pack / on-product
branding can work well.

#### **Nuance for standard placements**

These insights are associated with top performing image ads across Display networks.

#### Showcase against a simple background

 White or single-coloured backgrounds offset products & copy more effectively.

#### Product can stand on its own

 Limit people (if not necessary for displaying the product).

#### Be concise with copy

 Use a single message + CTA and keep the visual focus on the product.

#### **EXAMPLE FOR STANDARD**



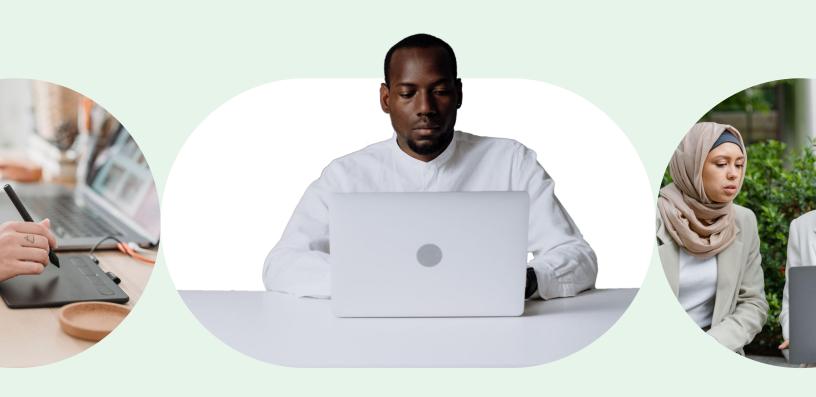
#### Include your logo

This will help your eligibility for more inventory, but remember to keep the visual focus on the product itself.

#### **Show your identity**

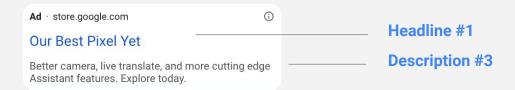
 Use distinctive brand elements: logos, packaging, symbols, faces, colors, words, styles, fonts, taglines, and / or imagery.

## Text Assets in Performance Max

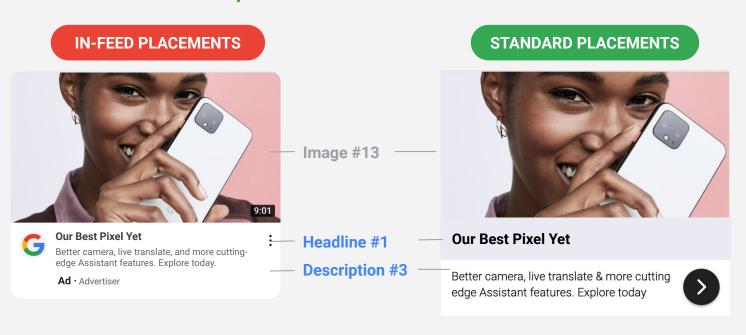


In addition to being used across Search placements, Performance Max uses text assets in combination with other asset types to surface your ads across YouTube, Display, Discover, Gmail, and Maps

#### The same text assets used in Search...



#### are used across other placements.



### Best practice across Text

#### **General best practices**

These insights are associated with top performing headlines and descriptions regardless of placement, so apply them to your Performance Max video assets across the board.

#### If your product is new, hook with that

Headlines that feature "new" or a synonym tend to outperform, but try not to feature a particular year (e.g. 2023).

#### Feature an offer if you have one

• Make it feel more like an opportunity than a number: % off, mentioning a discount, installments, rebate, etc.

#### **Experiment with personalisation**

- Using words like 'you' in your ad text can help you drive engagement by connecting more authentically with audiences
- Personalised headlines perform up to 1.3X and personalised descriptions perform up to 2X for their campaign goal vs. non-personalised descriptions.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Nuance for in-feed placements**

These insights are associated with top performing headlines and descriptions across YouTube and Discover..

#### Don't oversell

· Avoid superlative or comparative claims.

#### Include a more subtle call-to-action

 Over-index on CTAs that encourage an experience for the consumer: e.g. "test," "try," "enjoy,"

#### Avoid time pressure

 Terms such as "now," "today," "soon," etc. tend to create negative pressure for the consumer and lower performance.

#### Ground the language in real life

· Avoid extreme or metaphorical language.

#### **Nuance for standard placements**

These insights are associated with top performing image ads across Display networks.

#### Bring out your superlatives

• Examples include: "best," "more preferred," "latest"

#### Include a bolder push to act now

 Include direct CTAs to better stand out against the ad placement surrounding copy.

#### Create a sense of urgency

• Examples include: "hurry," "right now," "limited time," etc.



#### examples for in-feed

Comfortable daily driving with the new Tanto

7 new Nespresso coffees

Test Hypnôse mascara virtually

Enjoy up to 40% off & free shipping!

Discover all the offers we have for you!



#### examples for standard

Best for your home with GROHE

Hurry & get a €60 discount

Buy now Idole L'Intense de Lancôme

Deliver what you want to eat right now

Open your Current Account in 1 minute

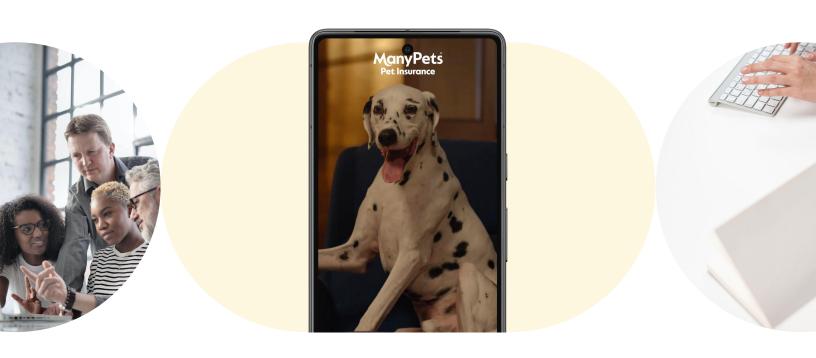
## Creative Checklist



### Performance Max creative checklist

	Asset	Component	Specifications	Min required to run a campaign	Recommended to upload
<b>₩</b>	Image	Landscape image (1.91:1)	1200 x 628 recommended; 600 x 314 min; 5120 KB max file size	1	
		Square image (1:1)	1200 x 1200 recommended; 300 x 300 min; 5120 KB max file size	1	20
		Portrait image (4:5)	960 x 1200 recommended; 480 x 600 min	0	
<b>₩</b>	Logo	Square logo (1:1)	1200 x 1200 recommended; 128 x 128 min; 5120 KB max file size	1	- 5
		Landscape logo (4:1)	1200 x 300 recommended; 512 x 128 min; 5120 KB max file size	0	
<b>₩</b>	Video	Video	horizontal, vertical, or square, >=10 seconds in length; *required* 1x vertical video	3	5
<b>₩</b>	Text	Final URL		1	1
		Headline	30 characters max; include at least one with 15 characters or less	3	15
		Long headline	90 characters max; try to make sure headlines are at least 30 characters long	1	5
		Description	90 characters max	1	5
		Short description	60 characters or less	1	5
		Business name	25 characters max	1	1
		Call-to-action	Automated by default, or select from a list	1	1
		Display URL path	15 characters max each	0	2
	Extensions*	Sitelinks	Sitelink text 25 characters max 2 description lines recommended, 35 characters max	0	20
		Callouts	Callout text 25 characters max	0	20
		Structured Snippets	List at least 3 features, services, or products related to your header. Each item is limited to 25 characters.	0	20
		Call		0	20 (Phone Call goal)
		Lead Forms	Main form: Headline (30 char max), Business name (25 char max), Description (200 char max) Form Submission: Headline (30 char max), Description (200 char max)	0	1 (Lead Gen goal)
		Price	Required header (25 char) and Description (25 char)	0	20
		Promotion	Required Item - product or service being promoted (20 char)	0	20
		Location		0	1 if you own your location
		Affiliate Location		0	1 if you have locations you do not own
		Image	Coming soon!		

## Performance Max Creative Case Studies



### **ManyPets**

### ManyPets innovates and boosts ROAS by **2X** with Performance Max

"By combining high performing channels and creatives into one campaign, we have been able to target and convert prospects at each stage of the funnel for a combined lower CPA, compared to traditional campaign types – great success to be had in a pivotal time of growth for us."

Kerry Hughes, Performance Marketer, ManyPets

27%

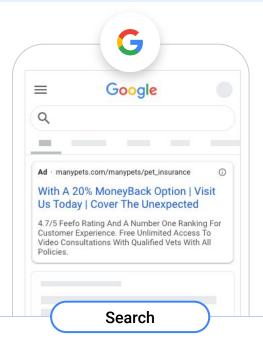
Increase in overall sales from Google Ads

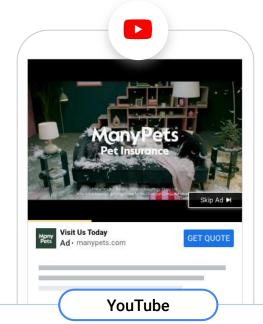
**X2** 

Higher ROAS

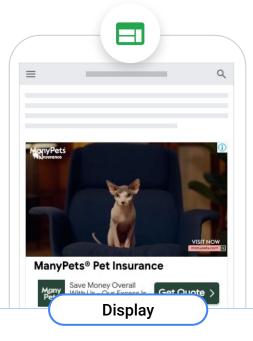
29%

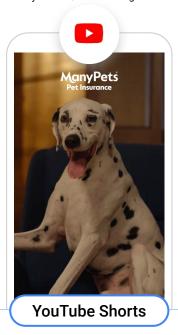
Reduction in overall Google Ads cost-per-sale





youtu.be/am7D8ZeagaY





youtu.be/nuy0wAaPj\_Q





## Car Finance 247 & Mediacom achieve **34%** lower CPA with Performance Max

"Performance Max has proven to be a great addition to our acquisition strategy, allowing us to reach new audiences at an efficient CPA. We're now looking to scale, which will enable us to help more people get car finance."

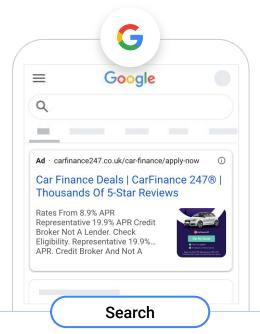
Emily Henshall, Head of Paid Digital, CF 247

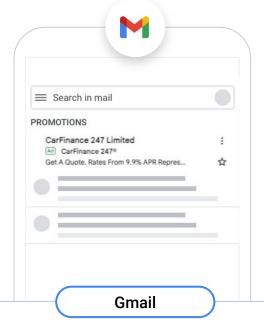
34%

Lower CPA

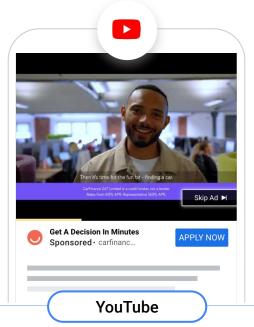
5%

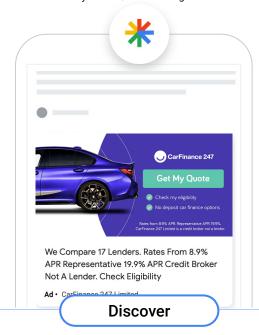
Increase in additional leads





youtu.be/am7D8ZeagaY





## Mulberry

Mulberry boosts sales by 900% with Performance Max

"Performance Max has demonstrated positive initial results for Mulberry, and following the great results we are excited to explore Performance Max further and test across more generic categories and additional regions."

Meeral Siddiqui, Senior Digital Marketing Executive, Mulberry

10X

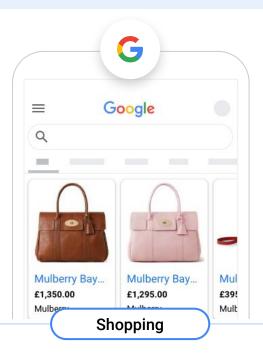
559%

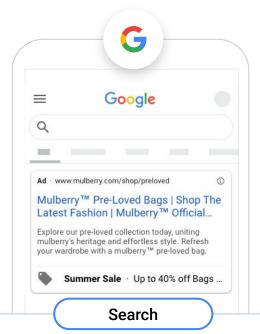
213%

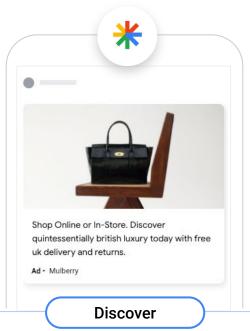
Product sales

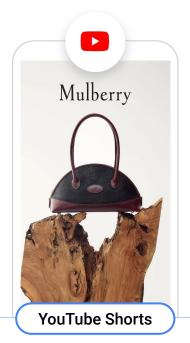
Increase in revenue

Increase in clicks









youtu.be/JJjdVBhoOOk

## Frequently Asked Questions





#### When should I create multiple asset groups?

Initially, we recommend creating one asset group with audience signals (optional) to let Performance Max show the right combination of assets to the right audiences. You may create multiple asset groups for the following use cases:

- You can create unique asset groups for different final URLs if the assets are final URL specific (i.e. not generic enough to be used across URLs in the domain and using URL expansion)
- You can also create multiple asset groups for the same final URL if you want to customise your
  messaging (i.e. assets) by audience. Please note that audience signals are not hard targeting/exclusions
  and we may expand targeting beyond the selected signals.

#### Is there a maximum number of asset groups I can create in a campaign?

You can create up to 100 asset groups per campaign, but please refer to the guidance above.

#### How can I assess asset performance ratings?

The performance column ranks assets against other assets of the same type in the asset group. It will show you which assets of the same type are:

- Low, as in low performing against all other assets of the same type across properties.
- Good, as in it performs well enough against all other assets of the same type.
- Best, as in one of the highest performers of all assets of the same type on one or more properties.

#### What are the benefits of opting into URL Expansion?

With URL expansion enabled, Google may replace your Final URL with a more relevant landing page based on the user's search query, and generate a dynamic headline or description to match your landing page content. This also allows Performance Max to crawl additional pages on your website to match to relevant search queries that can contribute to your performance goal.

If you turn Final URL Expansion OFF, the campaign will only target the Final URL(s) from the Asset Groups in your campaign. Note that turning this off may limit serving in the text portion of your Performance Max campaigns.

### What is the best way to test different asset groups for the same product (e.g. targeting "women's heels" with <u>evergreen</u> messaging versus <u>wedding</u> messaging")?

In general, your goal should be to provide as many high quality assets as possible, as inputs and allow the campaign to test different variations of creatives to drive the best performance. The audience signals you add to your asset group will be used as signals to determine which ad/messaging should serve to which user.

Asset group reporting is now fully launched, and this will allow you to see conversions, conversion value, cost, and a variety of other metrics at the asset group level. Use this data to understand how each asset group is contributing to your overall campaign performance. If you're looking to increase conversions for a specific asset group or campaign, focus on adding more assets. We will provide additional experimentation tools in the future to help you test different asset variants.

•••

### I see some video assets in the campaign, which I have not created; they have source labeled as "Automatically created". What are they?

Videos allow your ads to run on more networks, and are likely to increase performance. To help you achieve better results, Performance Max will automatically create videos for you if you don't have any in your asset group, based on the images and text assets you've provided. You will not have the option to preview a generated video, but will be able to see a link to the generated video post-construction under *Asset reporting*.

#### How are auto-generated video assets created and can I see them before they serve?

Based on the text and image assets available in your asset groups, we may generate one or more video creatives if you have not uploaded video assets of your own. The generated videos can serve on all compatible placements, similar to advertiser-uploaded videos. You will see a notification during asset group construction that you should provide video assets for the Performance Max campaign or Google can automatically create videos using headlines and images.

Please note that both static uploaded image assets and images in the GMC feed can be used to generate videos.

Advertisers will not have the option to preview the generated video, but will be able to see a link to the video post construction in Asset reporting.

#### Will I know if auto-generated videos are being created?

Google may generate video assets if an asset group does not have an advertiser-generated video. We call this out in the asset group construction flow.

#### What happens when I change the static assets (text, images) in my asset group?

Once you change any assets in your asset group, any old auto generated videos will be removed automatically and new videos using the latest assets will be generated. This happens almost immediately after assets are refreshed.

#### How can I see how my video assets are performing?

The Asset performance report will list all auto-generated videos in an asset group, but will not show performance ratings for these videos today (this is being considered for the roadmap). Please note that Performance Max campaigns will optimise to serve the right assets to the right audience based on your performance goals.

#### How can I stop auto-generated video assets from serving?

The auto-generated video assets will stop serving as soon as you upload your own video assets. For Performance Max + GMC feed campaigns, auto-generated videos will not be created if you do not add any assets aside from the product feed to your campaign. This is the case today, but we cannot guarantee that this will still be the case in the near future.

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#### How can I set up a Performance Max campaign if I have assets in multiple languages?

The general best practice is to have one Performance Max campaign targeting "All languages", and have asset groups broken out for each language if you have assets in multiple languages. By targeting all languages, you can reach people who speak more than one language and may search/view content in several languages. Google's Al will identify the right user for each asset and serve ads accordingly. Please note, we cannot guarantee that users will only see ads in their preferred language. If there are strict requirements around language targeting, then please create a separate campaign per language. However, this is not an optimal setup for the best performance in Performance Max.

For example; If an advertiser wants to launch a Performance Max campaign in Switzerland where users speak 3 languages, the recommended set up, in order of preference, would be:

- 1. Create one campaign, target all languages, and create separate asset groups for languages 1,2,3.
- 2. Create one campaign, target the 3 languages, and create separate asset groups for languages 1,2,3.
- 3. Create 3 Performance Max campaigns, one for each language.

If your campaign is targeting a certain language, but your assets are in a different language, you will continue to serve ads. But as a best practice, please make sure the assets' language matches the targeted language.

### Sources

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