GOOGLE ADS · CONSUMER GOODS E-COMMERCE · SHOPIFY DTC

WHEN THE NUMBERS *don't seem right,* FIX THE MEASUREMENT FIRST.

> *"You cannot optimize your way out of a measurement problem. That is not a media buying lesson. It is a strategy lesson."*

A Google Ads account reported 900% ROAS. Shopify purchase data showed 1.04x. The account was break-even before COGS. The fix wasn't the campaigns. It was the tracking.

CONVERSION TRACKING | CAMPAIGN RESTRUCTURE | BRAND ISOLATION | UTM STRUCTURE

KEY OPTIMIZATIONS

- **Tracking rebuild.** Updated the primary conversion event to purchases only. Page views, add-to-carts, and session events were demoted to secondary. Google's algorithm was finally optimizing toward a completed sale.
- **Brand campaign isolation.** Separated brand and non-brand into dedicated campaigns with their own budgets. Stopped cheaper brand clicks from crowding out prospecting spend and unlocked clean data for each audience type.
- **Spend reduction during data reset.** Cut quarterly budget ~38% from Q1 to Q2 while clean purchase data accumulated. Held structure in monitoring mode before rebuilding campaigns. Scale followed the signal.
- **UTM structure + Shopify as source of truth.** Implemented full UTM tagging so every campaign's revenue could be reconciled against Shopify. Ended the gap between what Google reported and what the business actually earned.

FULL-FUNNEL AUDIT FINDINGS

- **Platform ROAS was a fiction.** Google counted every interaction as a conversion, reporting ~900% ROAS. Shopify purchase-only data showed 1.04x. The account was break-even before a single cost of goods.
- **Brand campaigns drove more new customers than expected.** After isolation, brand showed a 71% new customer rate, well above typical expectations. The keyword strategy behind it is counterintuitive enough to warrant its own post.

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

1.04x → 2.29x
Real ROAS (purchase-only)
Q1 baseline → Q4 sustained

+42%
Revenue growth
Q1 through Q4

−36%
Quarterly ad spend
Q1 vs. Q4, same channel

~$27K
Quarterly profit swing
Break-even → profitable

84%
New customer rate
Maintained throughout

2.91x
Peak efficiency (Q3)
Highest ROAS, lowest spend

QUARTERLY PROGRESSION

QTR	PHASE	ROAS
Q1 '25	Baseline	**1.04x**
Q2 '25	Tracking Fix	2.01x
Q3 '25	Optimization	**2.91x ↑**
Q4 '25	Stabilization	2.29x

Q3 = peak efficiency. Q4 scaled back up while sustaining 2.29x ROAS.

THE PRINCIPLE

Most Google Ads problems get diagnosed as campaign problems: wrong keywords, wrong bids, wrong creative. Sometimes that is true. But a lot of the time the real issue is upstream. The tracking is not measuring what matters, and the account structure does not reflect how the business actually works. You can spend years optimizing against a number that was never real. Finding the gap is harder than fixing it, and most accounts have something like this sitting in them.

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PAID SEARCH · BRAND STRATEGY · GOOGLE ADS

ONE MOVE THAT CHANGED *everything about brand performance* ISOLATE YOUR BRANDED TERMS

Branded keywords buried in a general campaign can't be measured, managed, or scaled. Pulling them into their own campaign turned a blind spot into the highest-ROAS asset in the account.

> *"When brand terms share a campaign with non-brand, budget goes wherever Google decides. Isolate them and suddenly you control the lever, and you can see it working."*

BRANDED SEARCH | GOOGLE ADS | SHOPIFY | DTC E-COMMERCE

THE PROBLEM

- **Brand and non-brand in the same campaign.** Two campaigns total: PMax and General Search. Brand keywords competed for budget alongside non-brand.
- **No visibility into brand performance.** With terms blended, there was no way to know what brand was driving, or whether it cannibalized organic traffic.
- **Budget flowed to volume, not intent.** Google pushed spend toward high-impression non-brand queries, starving high-converting brand terms of budget.

THE MOVE

- **Branded-Terms moved to its own Search campaign.** Pure brand terms plus consideration-phase queries like "is it food safe" and "vs mineral oil," all in one owned campaign.
- **Budget capped at 25–30% of total spend.** Protects every high-intent branded query without crowding out non-brand or cannibalizing organic traffic.
- **Negative keywords enforced account-wide.** Brand terms excluded from all non-brand campaigns. Clean segmentation, no cross-campaign bleed.
- **Research-phase targeting as the differentiator.** Capturing people validating before they buy, not just repeat buyers, produced the 71% new-customer rate.

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

4.04×
brand campaign ROAS verified via Shopify

23.89%
CTR on Branded-Terms benchmark: 5–10%

71%
new customers from brand campaign

$0.90
avg CPC on brand terms efficient brand defense

1.74×
efficiency multiplier
28% budget → 49% revenue

+20%
AOV vs account avg
$62 vs $52

BEFORE VS. AFTER

METRIC	BEFORE	AFTER
Campaign structure	Blended	**Isolated**
Brand ROAS visibility	None	**4.04× verified**
Budget control	Google decides	**28.3% capped**
New customer signal	Unknown	**71% new**
Research-phase targeting	None	**Active**
Cannibalization risk	Unmanaged	**Negatives in place**

WHAT THE CLIENT GOT

- *A clear read on what brand equity is worth in paid search*
- *The ability to scale brand spend with a known return*
- *Proof brand acquires new customers, not just repeat buyers*
- *Data to defend the 25–30% brand budget floor*
- *Negatives that keep the rest of the account clean*

THE PRINCIPLE

Isolating branded terms doesn't just clean up your account structure. It gives you a permanent read on what brand equity is worth in paid search. Once you can see it clearly, you can defend it, scale it, and stop leaving money behind.

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FROM FROZEN ACCOUNT *to 69% Open Rates* IN TWO PHASES

> *"The platform was the problem. Not the campaigns, not the content, not the audience. Fix the foundation and the performance follows."*

A specialty accessories e-commerce brand migrated platforms without a warm-up plan and lost their entire sending capability six weeks before the holidays. What followed was a two-phase rescue and rebuild.

KLAVIYO | SHOPIFY | FLOW AUTOMATION | FULL-FUNNEL

KEY OPTIMIZATIONS

- **Platform diagnosis.** Identified the sending infrastructure itself as the root cause of inconsistent performance, not creative, frequency, or list quality.
- **Emergency list segmentation.** Suppressed unengaged contacts and structured a phased re-engagement to protect sender reputation before the holiday window.
- **Strategic 6-week warm-up.** Treated domain warm-up as a campaign in itself, sequenced by engagement tier to hit the holiday send with the full list ready.
- **Platform migration to Klaviyo.** Moved to an e-commerce-native platform with deep Shopify integration, enabling behavioral triggers and true lifecycle automation.
- **Full lifecycle flow build.** Built welcome series, abandoned checkout, and browse abandonment flows from scratch to run revenue on autopilot.

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

54–69% Consistent campaign open rates (verified, Klaviyo)	**0.3%** Previous platform low-end (Mailchimp, unmanaged)
~5x Active list growth after full re-engagement	**6 wks** From frozen account to full holiday send
1.41% Browse abandonment flow conversion rate	**1.05%** Abandoned checkout flow conversion rate

** Open rates are Klaviyo-measured and bot-filtered. Data verified April 2026.*

FULL-FUNNEL AUDIT FINDINGS

- **Mailchimp's open rate variance told the story.** Pre-migration data showed swings from 0.3% to 40%+ with no pattern. Inconsistency that extreme isn't a content problem. It's infrastructure.
- **Active list was far smaller than the raw contact count.** 50,000+ contacts on file, but only a fraction were actually sendable. Segmentation revealed the real addressable audience before the rebuild.

THE PRINCIPLE

Most email problems get diagnosed as content problems. Wrong subject line. Wrong send time. Wrong frequency. But when open rates swing from 0.3% to 40% with no pattern, the infrastructure is the variable. Fix the foundation first. Consistent 54% beats an occasional 70% every time, because you can build on it. Predictability is the real deliverable.

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LIFECYCLE AUTOMATION · PAID MEDIA · ECOMMERCE

TURNING PAID TRAFFIC *into inventory movement* WITHOUT MORE AD SPEND

> *"The discount email converted zero users. Friction, not price, was the barrier. Once we removed it, the revenue was already there, waiting."*

A specialty bike retailer was paying to drive traffic that stalled at the cart. We diagnosed the leak, built a lifecycle layer around it, and recovered margin-intact revenue with no discounts required.

META ADS | GOOGLE ADS | EMAIL | SMS | GA4

KEY OPTIMIZATIONS

- **Channel role clarity.** Meta reframed as awareness and retargeting fuel, not a direct revenue channel. Google optimized for high-AOV component conversions. Each channel given a defined job in the funnel.
- **GA4 funnel exploration.** Used funnel exploration reports to pinpoint cart abandonment as the primary leak. Shifted optimization focus from traffic acquisition to mid-funnel throughput.
- **3-day delay strategy.** Intentionally delayed the abandoned cart sequence to match buyer decision behavior. Specialty parts buyers need time to verify compatibility. Patience outperformed urgency.
- **Discount-free recovery sequence.** Email 1 (reminder, no discount) drove 68% of recovered revenue. The 10% off email drove zero conversions, validating that friction, not price, was the barrier.

2026 ROADMAP

- **Scale high-intent search.** Increase budget on PMax Shopping to capitalize on the $216 AOV and proven conversion behavior.
- **Remove the discount.** Replace Email 2's 10% off with a "Book a Repair" CTA. Test whether install friction, not price, is what stalls hesitant buyers.
- **Earlier email capture.** Deploy a site popup for Meta traffic to collect emails before the cart stage, expanding the lifecycle retargeting pool.

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

42% reduction in cart abandonment rate	**34.9%** abandoned cart email CTR
$851 recovered at 100% margin	**3×** industry email CTR benchmark (10–14%)
$216 avg order value, Google Ads channel	**57,768** new users driven by Meta campaigns

ABOUT THIS CLIENT

Specialty bicycle repair & parts retailer operating a hybrid model: high-touch local service and national ecommerce for specialty components.

Review period: Full calendar year 2025.

Stack: Meta Ads · Google PMax · Mailchimp

THE PRINCIPLE

When paid media drives volume without a retention layer, you're renting demand instead of owning it. The real leverage isn't in finding more customers. It's in recapturing the ones who already showed up. A sequenced lifecycle layer built around buyer behavior, not urgency tactics, is how you close the loop.

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PAID SEARCH · PROGRAMMATIC · B2B TELECOM

EVERY TACTIC HAD A JOB.
not every KPI knew it.
SO WE REWROTE THE SCORECARD.

> *"If a campaign is built for awareness, grading it on CPA just tells you it's failing at a job it never had."*

A regional B2B broadband and cybersecurity provider was running search and programmatic with an awareness tactic graded on CPA and no tracking on form fills. Fixing the scorecard turned activity into countable leads.

GOOGLE ADS | PROGRAMMATIC | CTV | LEAD TRACKING

KEY OPTIMIZATIONS

- **Re-scored the awareness tactics.** CTV carried a CPA target on an awareness campaign. Moved it to vCPM, cost per completed view, and completion rate, and let display retargeting chase the clicks.
- **Segmented programmatic by industry.** Broad, lookalike, and retargeting groups ran for a few months, then got cut into six core segments: Education, Financial, Government, Health Care, IT Pros, and Manufacturing.
- **Pointed search at business buyers.** Search terms leaned residential. Tested broad vs. exact match, moved core terms to exact, and layered bid adjustments by city, device, and weekday.
- **Cut low-value inventory.** Added an invalid traffic filter and bid down or cut weak sites, while keeping budget pacing in the 90s.

FULL-FUNNEL AUDIT FINDINGS

- **Form fills weren't being counted.** Search was judged on clicks and calls. Mid-year tracking for form fills and engagement showed what the traffic did: about two minutes on site per visit.
- **Customer logins were inflating traffic.** Account login and password pages were reporting as site visits. Traced it to the tag setup and narrowed it to one login page.

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

+145%
Active users from paid 2023 vs. 2022

+133%
Sessions from paid 2023 vs. 2022

+75%
User conversion rate paid traffic, year over year

376
Calls from search ads 2023 campaign

278
Contact form submissions from search ads

$42.60
Display CPA in September against a $175 goal

BEFORE VS. AFTER

METRIC	BEFORE	AFTER
CTV scorecard	CPA	**Awareness metrics**
Audience targeting	Broad audiences	**6 industry segments**
Lead tracking	Clicks + calls	**Forms + engagement**
Search match type	Broad	**Exact on core terms**
Inventory quality	Unfiltered	**IVT filter active**

** Client anonymized. YoY figures compare paid traffic, 2023 vs. 2022.*

THE PRINCIPLE

Most underperforming campaigns get diagnosed as targeting or creative problems. A lot of the time the tactic is fine and the scorecard is wrong. Awareness gets graded on CPA, leads go uncounted, and the account looks broken against a goal it was never built for. Give every channel its real job, measure that job, then optimize.

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