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.

/billyschlotter
billyschlotter.com

BILLY SCHLOTTER
Digital Advertising & Marketing Strategy
Sioux Falls, SD