Google shares deeper insight into audience signals in Performance Max campaigns

Google has shared additional insight on how advertisers can help steer their most recent Google Ads campaign type, Performance Max. A Google spokesperson gave Search Engine Land additional clarity around 'audience signals,' one of the levers that advertisers can utilize when setting up these highly automated campaign types.

Audience signal as a jumpstart. Last week Ginny Marvin, Google Ads product liaison, indicated that the audience signals are used to "jumpstart" Performance Max campaigns only.

> *-Yes, signals are used to jumpstart only. They don't limit ads to those audiences. Aim is to find most conv/conv value.*
> *-Add assets for your high value audiences (can be for multiple specific segments)*
> *-Use audience insights to see top segments to inform assets & landing pages*
>
> *— AdsLiaison (@adsliaison)* ***April 1, 2022***

Google, however, added additional context around how audience signals can impact early performance within campaigns. "Including them early in the campaign lifecycle can be useful to help jumpstart performance, but they will also continue to inform our systems over the campaign lifecycle, especially as first-party data, in particular, is updated," the company said.

So not only can that audience signal help to jumpstart the campaigns, but will also *inform throughout the lifecycle* of the campaign. Additionally, these signals can help to inform

systems over time.

Of course, these audience signals are different than traditional audiences in Google Ads. Performance Max will expand beyond the audience signals provided and by nature there is no way to limit that expansion.

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How to handle multiple audience signals, multiple campaigns and groups. Knowing that the audience signals are used as directional help, we asked for clarification on when additional campaigns should be created. For example, would it be beneficial to duplicate campaigns and simply change the audience signal in each to see if one helped jumpstart faster? "Advertisers should create one campaign if they're using the same targeting and assets … you can associate audiences with assets and asset groups, and you can create multiple such groups in a campaign," Google said. They added that the multiple groups in a campaign "will help consolidate learnings and give ML more data to work with."

If you are concerned that too many audience signals may confuse your Performance Max campaigns, have no fear. Google stated that "the ML will also be able to quickly figure out which of the audience signals you provide are the most predictive of conversions at your target CPA/ROAS."

What happens if an audience signal is switched? Knowing that audience signals are used early in the campaign lifecycle to help jumpstart, there was industry chatter on what would happen if a signal was changed in an active Performance Max campaign. According to Google, advertisers are welcome to make signal changes, but "existing learnings will continue to be taken into consideration."

This means that the change of an audience signal will not reset the learnings back to zero, rather will be another dataset in consideration along with existing campaign learnings.

Why we care. Outside of assets and conversion inputs, audience signals are one of the most notable ways that advertisers can "steer" automation.

The audience signals will help to jumpstart performance and will also be used in continuing to inform systems over the campaign lifecycle. If Performance Max campaigns are underperforming changing these signals may help to better inform campaigns (especially with first-party data).

If you chose a flawed or inaccurate audience signal and a campaign isn't performing well, simply switching signals won't be a hard reset. The machine learning in a Performance Max campaign will still consider previous learnings even after an audience signal is switched.

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