Google Shopping Actions vs. Google Shopping: A real-world case study

While Amazon has rapidly become more like Google with sponsored ads, Google has been quietly becoming more like Amazon with its Google Express marketplace, which is exposed via Google Shopping Actions (GSA).

With the launch of Shopping Actions, Google has made one of the broadest product changes since Google Shopping began. Online retailers have been wondering if they should stick to Google Shopping, try the new marketplace, or try both.

Will Google give preference for a Product Listing Ad (PLA) otherwise known as Google Shopping or will the giant prefer a cost per sale model with Google Shopping Actions?

As one of Google's approved Shopping Actions partners, we have been testing out GSA for hundreds of online retailers over the last few months.

The below case study is the first non-Google case study done by Feedonomics (my company) on Google Shopping Actions, and includes real performance data from a retailer eager to try the new marketplace.

A case study on Shopping Actions

Google has previously released its own Google Shopping Actions Case studies showing:

- 68 percent of shoppers are net new (meaning they would not have bought from a retailer who was not on Google Express)
- 35 percent increase in Average Order Value (AOV) for Ulta Beauty
- 20 percent increase in basket size for Target

With Ambush Board Co., we wanted to study the direct impact of GSA on PLA performance as well as the combined performance of running both in parallel.

Case Study Objective

1. Observe the impact on PLA performance by running GSA at the same time.
2. Observe the overall gains and losses by running PLA and GSA at the same time.

The study took place over four months.

Workflow

We optimized a feed for both Google Shopping and Google Shopping actions, provided orders from Google Shopping Actions back to Ambush Board Co., and then sent tracking numbers back

to Google Shopping Actions.

Costs increased by 80 percent when running both campaigns in parallel. However, the conversion value went up by a whopping 104 percent. Conversions also increased by 115 percent.

Results and takeaways

1. The best option to maximize sales is to combine PLA and GSA.
2. After using Google Shopping Actions, the PLA cost increased by 16 percent.
3. Overall PLA performance dropped by 20 percent, but that’s okay because TOTAL conversion value (revenue) increased by 104 percent.

The results are exactly what we initially expected based on the fact that Google is exposing GSA ads for low funnel searches and PLA ads for high funnel searches. The result was more clicks at a slightly higher Cost Per Click on Google Shopping alone, due to slightly worse performance and fewer conversions in PLA’s.

Having higher funnel search queries direct potential buyers to PLA’s (and ultimately back to the sellers website) is also a good thing, as this is where buyers can gain a better

understanding about a retailer’s brand and other information that may make purchasing from that brand more compelling.

The fact that PLA cost increased is surprisingly good for agencies, which typically charge a percentage of ad spend.

Overall, the total revenue for the company more than doubled, which is very exciting for retailers looking to try Google Shopping Actions in addition to Google Shopping.

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About The Author

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