Life after Google Shopping: Don’t be a one-trick pony

Google shopping is the 800-pound gorilla and it’s the default ad platform many people jump on. If it’s not Google, it’s Facebook and Instagram that people want to pour money into. However, what a lot of brands miss out on is having a true cross channel marketing strategy.

The best marketers I know are able to work across ad platforms and are not a one trick pony. They can help guide, suggest and recommend how to incorporate and share information between ad platforms. They are as tactical as they are strategic for the brands they work on.

One quick note, sometimes people call shopping ads by the old name product listing ads (PLAs). That was the first name Google gave the ad format back in 2012/2013. I think the two names are mostly interchangeable but for the sake of simplicity, I’m going to refer to everything as shopping ads.

There is life after Google shopping, even as the ad format expands to more Google-owned properties. I’m going to show you the light! Or least make you consider doing more than Google shopping.

As we tell people in our shopping academy, if you are not looking at opportunities beyond Google Shopping, you are leaving tons of money on the table. People spend a lot of time outside of Google, Facebook and Instagram.

What other channels can you take your shopping feed? Plenty!.. If you know where to look.

Here are the three paid social ad platforms I run ads for clients when I need to expand beyond Google.

Of course, I’m not including the obvious choice: Facebook / Instagram. Even if they keep trying to launch FB shop and make their shopping product better. Here are three paid social platforms you should care about:

Pinterest

I was a few months away from moving to London (UK) to live and work on brands like ASOS and Jack Wills (British Inspired Holister), when I first heard about Pinterest in the fall of 2012.

I didn’t think much of the platform at that time as I don’t need a mood board in my life. The key demo for Pinners and the people who use Pinterest are parents, hands-down. If you sell anything to parents then it should be on your radar, even if it’s only from a remarketing and organic play.

- Date Launched: January 2010
- Active Users: 300 million (as of August 2019)
- Gender: 70% Women & 30% Men
- Mobile Traffic: 85%
- USA Traffic: 50%

Thirty percent of new users are men because most women are already on the platform. There are about 2 billion searches each month and 40% of the people on the platform make above $100K / year.

We won’t have this for each platform because they don’t release the data but some of the top Pinterest search categories are retail, auto, food, beauty and fashion, home, and travel. Outside of going after parents, those are the industries we think about running ads for on Pinterest.

Snap

Many people think of Snap (formally Snapchat) as a chat and messaging platform for generation Z. However, it is not just a platform for those currently under 18 years old. In fact, roughly 25% of the platforms users are above 25 years of age and that is not slowing down.

Especially with Will Smith and others setting up shows on the platform. The Snap team is working hard to broaden the content on the platform and become your favorite place to have your tight knit community come together. Plus, over 38% of Snap's audience doesn't use Instagram in a given day.

- Date Launched: July 8th, 2011
- Active Users: 229 million (as of Q1 2020.)
- Gender: Snap does not tell but my gut says more women than men are on the platform.
- Mobile Traffic: 99% (it's an app)
- USA Traffic: does not say

Snap reaches 90% of all 13-24 year-olds and 75% of all 13-34 year-olds in the US. Like Pinterest, usage is high as an average of more than 4 billion Snaps are sent each day. People are joining at a faster rate as the platform has seen an increase of 39 million users (or 20% increase) year-over-year. Video ads do really well on the platform. If your brand goes heavy on video, Snap is worth a test.

TikTok

Maybe you heard Levi's and TikTok are testing out shopping ads (maybe you have not). Either way, this is the latest ad platform to launch shopping ads as an ad format.

- Date Launched: September 2016
- Active Users: 680 million (as of November 2018)
- Gender: 60% Women & 40% Men

- Mobile Traffic: 99% (it’s an app)
- USA Traffic: n/a

TikTok does not release a lot of data on their users and most people are guessing about the demographics of the ad platform but it’s one to keep your eye on.

What should you be launching if you want to take on paid social and runnin some killer shopping campaigns? Well I’m going to throw down some knowledge and tell you.

Pro Tip: Audience hack with Snap Ads

Back in the day you could get really good audience insights from Facebook. Over the years that has gone away as features get removed.

One cool thing about Snap and their third party audience lists is that you can upload your customer lists in Snap’s ad manager and as you add a customer list to your ad set, you can get a high level overview of who is on that list. All anonymized of course.

Even if you don’t find success with Snap ads, you can use the ad account to gather insights on your customers and who they are, which you can use for targeting on other ad platforms (including Facebook and Instagram).

How to use shopping campaigns with paid social

You can do a lot of different campaigns on any ad platform but the three I default to are remarketing, retention and prospecting, in that order.

Your goal should be to hit profitability and reinvest what you

are making back into the business or in your ad spend. Here are some campaigns that I test out in each segment.

Remarketing: This is the lifeblood of paid advertising because if you can not convert people with remarketing, you are in trouble. The best remarketing lists to use are the following:

1. Add To Cart + Initiated Checkout
2. View Collection/Category Page
3. View Product Descriptions Page (PDPs)

Retention: Keeping your customers and having them come back and buying a 2nd and 3rd time is how you grow a business. There are a few customer lists you can test using shopping campaigns with.

1. All Customers
2. Customers with 2x Average Order Value
3. People with 2+ Order (in the last 365 or 730 Days)

Prospecting: If your remarketing and retention campaigns are working together, then you can start to look at prospecting and going after customers who may not be as familiar with your business and brand.

1. People who like/follow your account profile (have not bought or visited site)
2. Lookalike based off audiences lists that have succeed above
3. Lookalike audiences with a high intent interest audience added on top

These are the three ways we look at taking our Google shopping feed over to paid social and running shopping ads. Can you dig it?

Conclusion

As we started off, if you are not looking at opportunities

beyond Google Shopping, you are leaving tons of money on the table. No brand grows at scale by just advertising on one ad platform.

Thinking about your cross channel marketing strategy and how you can make sure you reach people at the right time with your ads is just as important as being on the platforms they care to use. There is life after Google shopping.

Opinions expressed in this article are those of the guest author and not necessarily Search Engine Land. Staff authors are listed here.

About The Author

Duane has been called an international man of mystery and digital nomad by friends. He has lived in 6 cities across 3 continents and visited 40 countries around the world. He uses his curiosity for people and love for people watching to run better marketing campaigns for clients. After leaving Toronto in 2011 to gain an international view of the world. He has worked for Telstra in Australia and brands including ASOS, Jack Wills and Mopp (bought Sept. 2014) while in London, UK. He now lives in Montreal, Canada helping brands grow through data, CRO and marketing at Take Some Risk Inc.
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