# Think like a search marketer to drive growth with YouTube

Today’s consumers are constantly moving between channels and devices, and video is becoming an increasingly important part of their journey. In fact, in a study we conducted at Google, eighty percent of shoppers told us they have switched between search and video when they’re researching products to buy. Which begs the question, as a search marketer, how do you effectively add video to your strategy?

Custom intent audiences is the answer. They take a useful signal (what people are looking for) and let you engage them across different media. These audiences are designed to work with the search skill set that you already have with a few differences on the margins. (I’m focusing on video for today, but remember that you can also create these audiences on display and Gmail.)

## What are custom intent audiences?

Custom intent audiences help you reach customers on YouTube based on the terms they use to search for products or services on Google.com. You select a set of keywords, then your video ads will be shown to people whose past queries match your keywords when they’re watching YouTube. There are a lot of similarities and differences vs. traditional search campaigns when working with custom intent audiences. Let’s start with the similarities.

## Think like a search marketer

In many ways managing video campaigns with custom intent audiences should be quite familiar:

- **Choose the right keywords.** Generally, this is a great

way to build upon already-successful keyword lists. Start with your top converting keywords. Then go to all converting keywords. Then go to all assisting keywords if you want more volume. As with search, you want to drive volume at an acceptable CPA or ROAS. Run keywords through Keyword Planner to see if you're casting a wide enough net.

- **Segment brand and generic traffic.** As with search, you can expect to see differences in performance for people who are searching for a specific brand compared to less-specific searches. You won't need to get nearly as specific with your segmentation (you're probably too specific on your search stuff if I'm honest). Generally, one ad group for a brand and another for generic can get the job done for you.
- **Track conversions.** This is an obvious one, but it underscores that these audiences are designed to drive direct response. It's important to track conversions so you can monitor when a user watches your video ad and coverts on your site.
- **Bid to performance.** The reason that you should track conversions is so that you can set the right bids. Target CPA bidding works on video ads. Use your conversion columns to make decisions about how aggressive to get with your bidding.
- **Take it easy on frequency capping.** Frequency capping isn't even possible on search campaigns. You have that option with video, but I think it's good practice to take a lighter approach. These lists are populated by people who have searched for your keywords within the last seven days, so the campaigns behave more conservatively than you might expect from a video campaign.

# When to not think like a search marketer

While video campaigns with custom intent audiences by and large start out like a search campaign, there are some key differences that you should keep in mind.

- **Don’t worry about match types.** There’s only one match type that powers your custom intent audiences: broad. Anybody who has recently searched for your keywords or anything semantically related to them will be eligible to be in your custom intent audiences.
- **Be OK with large ad groups** (and I mean really large). You should even prefer them. Machine learning models within Google Ads learn at the ad group level, and more data means that learning happens faster. You can create segmented audiences if you’d like, but it’s a good idea to apply all of them into the same ad group. If your audiences are too narrow the system relies on generalized insights from the entire network. Those can be good, but more customized insights are almost always better. It’s OK to create what a search marketer might have considered a sloppy ad group. Fifty keywords in one audience is just fine. Three hundred keywords in one ad group is also fine. Don’t worry about conventional search guidelines here.
- **Decide which YouTube format works best for you** (this will probably be TrueView for action). TrueView for action is optimized to drive online actions like website clicks, signups and purchases. That’s probably the format for you. Depending on your overall objectives, though, you might consider standard TrueView, bumper ads, or TrueView for reach.
- **Take advantage of searches even when people don’t click on your ads.** Custom intent audiences are populated based on someone’s search – not whether they clicked your ad

or not. It’s not even based on if they’ve *seen* your ad. It’s about that original search and the intent behind it. Think about the impressions you’ve lost due to rank or budget. Think about the impressions you get that don’t turn into clicks. You can still reach those people with your custom intent audiences. This potential is what I find most exciting. If you have a video ad, you have a second chance at reaching somebody that didn’t connect with your search ad on that first go-round.

## Conclusion

I love search marketing. With custom intent audiences, you can apply a honed search skillset to video. And if you’re on the fence, consider this: On average, advertisers that run YouTube video ads in addition to Search ads see three percent higher search conversion rates and four percent lower search CPAs versus advertisers who run search ads alone. Video is now an integral part of a well-balanced performance campaign.

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