



Your guide to perfect product listings on Google Merchant Center

Find out how to navigate through the complexity of sending perfect feeds to Google Merchant Center

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Google's rise in ecommerce... and complexity

As a 90's baby, Google has tenure in digital advertising and ecommerce compared to most of today's big tech companies. While brands and retailers have only started testing shopping capabilities and ad formats from the Meta's and TikTok's of the world, they've been running sophisticated campaigns on Google Shopping and Google Ads for the last two decades – Google Ads now accounts for [28.4% of all ad revenue](#).

But with its maturity, Google (and the ecommerce ecosystem as a whole) has become more nuanced, and in turn, more complex for businesses to navigate. Each year brings new guidelines for product content, new tools to operate, new technologies to understand, new markets and channels to expand to, and so on.

Instead of feeling overwhelmed by the intricacies of Google Merchant Center, this guide will help you simplify the process of uploading and managing your product content across Google Shopping, Ads, Search, etc. Remove the stress of updating and organizing product feeds, so you can take full advantage of all Google platforms as the perfect grounds for capturing consumer awareness, interest, and dollars.

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How to (*not*) get disqualified on Google Merchant Center

Reigning as the most visited website in the world, it's safe to say Google knows best when it comes to providing users with content that keeps them coming back for more. Years of analyzing consumer behavior across its many platforms have made Google Merchant Center (GMC) one of the strictest gatekeepers of robust and highly accurate product listings and ads.

Adherence to Google's specific guidelines is not just a best practice but a prerequisite for successful product promotion. Without providing the mandatory attributes and giving meticulous attention to product data, Google is quick to hand out warnings and disqualify product ads.

Why was my product ad disqualified?

If you find yourself on the receiving end of GMC warnings or disqualifications, it could be for a number of reasons. From data discrepancies and errors to policy violations, recognizing these potential pitfalls is the first step toward ensuring a smooth journey with the Merchant Center.

Mandatory product data attributes for Google Merchant Center approval

These attributes are the bare minimum requirements for products on GMC. Products that fail to include all of these data points will be disqualified from Google and your corresponding listings and ads will be removed.

Top reasons businesses receive warnings

- Missing mandatory attributes
- Incorrect formatting
- Incorrect price
- Incorrect availability
- Missing country-specific requirements
- Inappropriate content (ie. nudity)

Depending on the type of product or country you're selling in, additional attributes like multipack, bundle, certification, tax, shipping, age group, color, gender, material, pattern, size type, item group id, and others may be required. Regional inventory feeds also demand their own set of attributes, like offer id and region id.

Beyond product data specifications, businesses must align with additional policies for data related to [shopping ads](#), [landing pages](#), tax and shipping rates, [checkout](#), and [currency and language](#).

- id
- title
- description
- link
- image_link
- price
- condition
- availability
- brand
- GTIN (or MPN)

Roadblocks on the product content journey to Google success

While Google Merchant Center's strict requirements are for good reason, they're not the easiest to follow. Sometimes the product information Google is looking for simply doesn't exist. Sometimes it's hidden in data silos. And sometimes it changes so frequently that it's always outdated. Yes, the ROI of selling and advertising across Google platforms is huge, but the process of uploading and continuously managing product content on GMC is also a huge undertaking.

The Google product content journey

To understand the full extent of the struggle companies face in creating listings and ads for Google, it helps to visualize the long, hurdle-ridden route product content takes before it reaches consumers.



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Let's use a retailer like **ALDI**, for example.

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Organize product information

If ALDI wants to list its products on Google Shopping or set up Google [Dynamic Search Ads](#), it first needs to gather and organize its product information coming from various sources (ie. ERP, PIM, suppliers, etc.) Thinking back to the long list of GMC specifications, it needs to ensure that the data is accurate, up-to-date, optimized, and adheres to these guidelines.

Segment audiences

Given that ALDI operates in numerous markets, the retailer will need to segment its product feed to ensure the right products are displayed to the right audience. This is where ALDI needs to tailor attributes such as language, currency, and regional specifications to match the requirements of each market.

Reconfigure data for specific Google channels

Once ALDI's product feed is error-free in GMC, the retailer needs to reformat the data again – this time according to the specific requirements for Google Shopping vs. Google Dynamic Search Ads. Each Google platform, ad format, etc. has its own specifications in addition to the specifications of GMC.

STEP 1

STEP 2

Create a centralized product feed

To consolidate all of the information for its various products and brands, ALDI needs to develop a centralized product feed. Again, the feed should be formatted according to GMC's specifications.

STEP 3

STEP 4

Upload the product feed to GMC

ALDI can now upload the product feed to Google Merchant Center, monitor for any errors or disapprovals, and address them accordingly.

STEP 5

STEP 6

Add shipping and tax information

For Google Shopping, ALDI needs to set up shipping and tax information for each market to ensure users see correct shipping costs and tax details when viewing its products on the platform.

STEP 7

Create ad campaigns

To set up Google Dynamic Search Ads, ALDI needs to define bidding strategies, target audiences, and budget allocations based on the performance goals of each market.

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Roadblocks on the product content journey to Google success

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ALDI

Alas, ALDI's products are now live on Google Shopping and promoted in ads to consumers. However, this journey illustrated above only covers the basic steps of using GMC, leaving out the ongoing monitoring, maintenance, and enhancements that follow.

By automating the product content journey, ALDI's team has saved **66 hours** of work per month and its business has seen a **30% increase** in possible impressions on the **Google Marketing Platform**.

Discover how

Manual setup, maintenance, and optimization

Taking into account the complexity of the Google product content journey, many businesses struggle to set up and maintain their product content on GMC and the respective Google platforms effectively. They're reliant on manual processes that demand substantial effort from various teams companywide.

Beyond the initial setup, ongoing challenges emerge as businesses invest significant time in optimizing product listings, ensuring detailed product descriptions, and curating high-quality images. The struggle to keep data consistently updated, meet standard requirements to avoid suspensions, and manage errors becomes a continuous battle. The intricate task of identifying and rectifying errors demands valuable resources, both in terms of time and expertise.

Business impacts

The ramifications of these challenges are not just operational but have tangible business consequences. Mismanagement of GMC poses the following risks to companies:

- **Lost revenue:** When Google disapproves or removes product listings and ads the flow of transactions is disrupted.
- **Damaged brand reputation:** The potential damage to brand reputation is a major concern when incorrect information is displayed. Consumer trust is critical in ecommerce, and any discrepancy in product data can lead to customer dissatisfaction and erode hard-earned credibility.
- **High costs:** Digital ads don't come cheap. Ensuring that listings and ads are optimized to their full potential prevents companies from wasting budget on ads that don't convert.

Best practices for creating perfect Google ads and listings

By mitigating these Merchant Center challenges and transforming them into opportunities for growth, companies can achieve success in all of their Google endeavors. In this section, we'll explore helpful features available in GMC, tips for optimizing your product content, and best practices for boosting performance across the entire Google ecosystem.

Google Shopping Ads and product listings

As a [\\$75 billion retail market](#), Google Shopping is an extremely valuable channel for any business. It sees 1.2 billion product searches per month, and the number of clicks on the channel is growing by 17.7% every year. Supplemented with a strong Google Shopping Ads campaign, you can significantly improve the visibility of your products and drive relevant traffic and conversions for your ecommerce business.



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The following best practices will empower you to create highly effective ads and product listings on Google Shopping.

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➤ **Free product listings:** Taking advantage of [free product listings](#) is a strategic move to expand your online visibility without incurring additional costs. By participating in free listings on Google, your products can be showcased alongside paid ads, providing an additional avenue for potential customers to discover your offerings. This not only diversifies your online presence but also allows you to tap into a broader audience and drive more organic traffic to your product listings.

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➤ **Use structured data markup:** Implementing structured data markup on your website allows you to provide additional context to Google's crawlers. By incorporating schema markup on your website, you're essentially offering a more detailed and organized presentation of your product information to search engines. This not only enhances the visibility of your products in search results but also improves the accuracy of the data Google can extract. Structured data helps Google understand the context of your content, making it more likely to be featured in rich results, such as product snippets and enhanced search listings.

➤ **Utilize GMC feed rules:** Employ feed rules in Google Merchant Center to optimize and automate data adjustments. You can dynamically modify your product data without the need for manual updates, streamlining the process of keeping your product feed accurate and up-to-date. For instance, you can use feed rules to standardize titles, adjust prices, or combine attributes.

➤ **Utilize custom labels:** Use custom labels to categorize and segment products based on specific criteria, such as seasonality or best-sellers. By creating tailored groupings, it's easier to optimize bid strategies and campaign performance. For example, you can increase bids for high-margin products or adjust advertising strategies based on the performance of specific product categories.

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➤ **Utilize promotions:** Take advantage of promotional features in GMC to boost the appeal of your products. Highlighting special offers, discounts, or free shipping directly in your Google Shopping Ads makes your products more enticing to potential customers. For instance, tools like [Google Promotion Feeds](#) allow you to schedule upcoming promotions and expedite the approval process.

➤ **Price competitiveness report:** Google offers a [price competitiveness report](#) that allows you to compare how other retailers are pricing the same products you sell or plan to sell. With an overview of the average price for each product and the breakdown of benchmark prices over time, you can make informed decisions to remain competitive, adjust pricing strategies, or even highlight your products as the best value for customers. Find out how it works [here](#).

➤ **Certification attribute:** Introduced in June 2023, the [certification attribute](#) is now essential for products with specific information requirements, such as local energy efficiency labeling regulations. It helps you ensure compliance with these regulations, while also providing consumers with transparent product details needed to establish trust.

Find out how Productsup enables you to easily add the certification attribute to your Google Shopping listings and ads with [Advertising PX](#).



Performance tracking tip!

Reference Google's [best sellers report](#) to see the top performing brands and products currently used in Shopping ads and free listings. You can use this information to determine your own inventory levels for your product feed.

Google Search Ads

Driving conversions with Google Search Ads is all about optimizing product content for keyword searches. You need to keep your ads relevant by providing engaging and accurate information. By incorporating these best practices into your Search Ads strategy, you can optimize your ad performance, reach the right audience, and drive meaningful results for your business.

➤ **Utilize Performance Max:** Google's [Performance Max](#) tool uses AI technologies to optimize attributions, bidding, budget, audiences, and creatives in real time and across all Google channels. It automates a lot of the Google Ads functionalities using machine learning systems, selecting the channel and ad that will best convert according to the goal you set. You can create up to 100 Performance Max campaigns in your Google Ads account.

➤ **Add negative keywords:** Regularly review and update your list of negative keywords to prevent irrelevant clicks. Exclude terms that are not aligned with your product offerings to improve ad targeting. For example, a sunglasses brand could exclude terms like “wine glasses” or “drinking glasses” to avoid shoppers searching for the wrong product.

➤ **Implement ad extensions:** Google offers ad extensions that provide additional information and enhance visibility for your Search Ads. For instance, you can include site link extensions to add additional links under the main ad, callout extensions to promote unique offers to shoppers, like free shipping or 24-hour customer service, and structured snippet extensions to provide a quick list of your product catalog. Find more information about Google ad extensions in this comprehensive guide from [Shopify](#).

➤ **Optimize landing pages:** The success of Search Ads isn't just dependent on the ad content. The content you direct users to through the ad needs to maintain the same level of excellence. This means respective landing pages should be relevant to the ad content. It's also good practice to improve loading times, optimize for mobile devices, and include clear call-to-actions on landing pages.

➤ **Experiment with bids:** Experiment with different bidding strategies provided by Google. Implement smart bidding options, such as Target CPA or Target ROAS, for automated and optimized bidding.

➤ **Leverage remarketing lists:** Leverage remarketing lists to re-engage users who have interacted with your site or products previously. You can then implement audience targeting to reach those specific customer segments.

Performance tracking tip!

Conduct A/B testing for ad variations to identify high-performing elements. Test different headlines, descriptions, and call-to-actions to refine your ad content.

Google Local Inventory Ads

[Google Local Inventory Ads \(LIAs\)](#) are a powerful omnichannel tool for driving foot traffic to physical stores and creating more personalized, engaging shopping experiences for local customers. Creating perfect LIAs involves a combination of optimizing your product data in Google Merchant Center and implementing best practices for local advertising. Here are best practices to enhance your Google LIAs:

- **Optimize local inventory data:** Tailor your product data for local relevance by including details like store codes, availability, and pricing specific to each store location. This level of customization enhances the accuracy of your ads.
- **Implement local product availability:** Leverage the Local Product Availability feature in GMC to highlight the availability of products in nearby stores. This information encourages local customers to visit your physical stores.
- **Use a local inventory feed:** Employ a local inventory feed to provide detailed information about the availability of products in each store. This feed should be regularly updated to reflect changes in stock levels.
- **Leverage Google My Business integration:** Integrate your Google My Business account with GMC. This ensures consistency between your online inventory and the information available on your Google My Business listings.
- **Utilize local extensions:** Implement location extensions in your Google Ads campaigns to display additional information about your nearby stores, including addresses, contact details, and business hours.
- **Ensure mobile optimization:** Given local searches tend to be carried out via mobile, ensure that your landing pages are mobile-friendly for a seamless user experience.

- **Promote special offers and in-store events:** Use LIAs to highlight special promotions, discounts, or in-store events, creating a sense of urgency and encouraging potential customers to visit your physical stores.
- **Leverage existing campaigns** Instead of creating entirely new campaigns just for LIAs, condense your operations by adjusting your settings for existing Shopping and Performance Max campaigns to also show LIAs in conjunction. More information on how to enable local products in your campaigns can be found [here](#).
- **Adjust bids during peak times:** Raise your local ad bidding during the peak shopping hours of the day. For instance, you're likely to attract more shoppers from 3-10 p.m. as opposed to the morning hours. Find more detailed recommendations for optimal LIA bidding strategies [here](#).



Performance tracking tip!

Use GMC's local storefront tracking feature to monitor when users click on LIAs and later opt for online shopping instead of visiting your physical store. You can use this information to identify what hours to lower bidding.

For a more technical, comprehensive understanding of how Google LIAs work and guidance on how to set them up effectively, check out our [Google Local Inventory Ads guide](#).

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Simplify and streamline your Google Merchant Center experience with Productsup



Even with these tips and tricks for managing Google Merchant Center, many companies aspire for a seamless, plug-and-play experience – a system that operates consistently without demanding continuous manual intervention or further development resources.



Operating GMC with Productsup's Advertising PX

As the leading Product-to-Consumer (P2C) software company, Productsup offers a single place to upload and manage all of your product content across the entire Google ecosystem. Our [Google Merchant Center Integration](#), as part of our [Advertising PX](#) offering, provides a direct connection between your product data and GMC. Within our platform, you can source, aggregate, enhance, and syndicate product data, all while ensuring your content meets the requirements of GMC and each individual Google channel.

Leveraging advanced features like automated product data management, AI data mapping, inventory synchronization, and bulk product updates, Productsup users gain ultimate efficiency. In fact, one of our customers reduced the time it takes to upload new products to Google from 9 hours to 90 minutes.

Learn more about how Productsup can support your business with Google Merchant Center to empower you to lower costs, boost performance, and grow revenue.

[Read more about Productsup and GMC](#)

[Get in touch with our team](#)

[Explore our pricing](#)

To help simplify the process of managing product content across Google platforms, Google is launching a new version of Google Merchant Center, called Google Merchant Center Next. The update will pull information from merchant websites automatically, which is a useful feature for small businesses with smaller product catalogs that don't change very often. However, large enterprises with more complex feeds require a tool that is equipped to handle high volumes of data. The Productsup P2C platform processes over 2 trillion products per month for global companies like:

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Our customers



Simplify and streamline your Google Merchant Center experience with Productsup

Productsup³

Empowering commerce

Get in touch today!

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