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The
GOOGLE ADS
PERFORMANCE
PLAYBOOK

Structure and optimize your campaigns smarter.

3K   500

1. Current Best Practices for Campaign Structure

The core principle for modern Google Ads structure is consolidation to maximize the data signal for the algorithm.

Campaign Type	Strategic Structure & Grouping	Business / Budget Context	Key Takeaway from Course
Search Campaigns	Consolidation is Key. Less campaigns, less Ad Groups is better. **Campaign Split**: If conversions are sufficient (≥ 15 in 30 days is minimum 1), split campaigns by market (e.g., US vs. UK). Ad Groups can be identical across these campaigns. **Branded Keywords**: Create a separate campaign exclusively for branded keywords—do not mix them with non-branded terms.	**Large Inventory**: Split campaigns into Product Categories. Ad Groups can then be split by Product Subgroups. **Keyword Strategy**: Group Ad Groups by strategic intent: **Long-Tail vs. Transactional**: Separate informative ("how to") from commercial ("buy X") keywords. **Testing**: Use one Ad Group for top-performing keywords and a separate one for testing new keywords.	Audience is Observational Only: In Search, audiences are primarily observational. Do not group Ad Groups based on interests or audiences, as they will overlap and dilute the signal.

Campaign Type	Strategic Structure & Grouping	Business / Budget Context	Key Takeaway from Course
PMax Campaigns	**One PMax Campaign Per Market.** **Asset Group Split:** Create Asset Groups based on products or services, using very specific search topics—ensure minimal overlap between these topics. **Audience Signal**: Make each audience signal product or service specific, including custom segments, your own data, and interests.	**Any Budget:** Functions as a 'saucer' beneath your core campaigns. Essential for discovering new opportunities (keywords, topics). Run alongside Search and Video campaigns, not instead.	**Exclusions are Key**: Must create a brand exclusion to avoid PMax pushing brand terms. Avoid running multiple PMax campaigns simultaneously for the same market. You cannot exclude ad placements directly, so exclude them on the account level to apply to PMax.

Campaign Type	Strategic Structure & Grouping	Business / Budget Context	Key Takeaway from Course
Demand Gen Campaigns	**Location & Time Zone Grouping is Vital.** **Campaign Split:** Group campaigns by locations or targeted location groups (e.g., Latin America). Avoid grouping markets with large time zone differences (e.g., UK with US/Australia). **Budget Rule:** Your daily budget should be ≥ 5 times your target CPA. Structure the market size to ensure the budget is spent.	**Conversion Focus:** Designed for conversions, not awareness. Considered the most promising campaign type for video campaigns.	**Test Strategy:** **Audience Testing:** Group Ad Groups by very different audiences (interests, languages) using the same creatives/copy to isolate the audience signal. **Creative Testing:** If audience is set, group Ad Groups by audience, then test different video creatives using the same copy. **Content Iteration:** If you generate frequent new content, group videos by release time (e.g., "5 videos of Week 10 in one ad") to quickly identify top-performing video assets. Combine winners into new ads later.

2. Weekly Campaign Optimization Checklist
Consistent, focused optimization is critical to feeding the algorithm with the right signals.

Action	Frequency	Campaign Type	Objective
Budget Adjustment	As needed	All	Adjust daily budget based on weekly/monthly goals. Budget changes do not trigger the learning phase.
Bid/Target Adjustment (tCPA/tROAS)	Once every 7 days (maximum)	All	Adjust tCPA or tROAS by no more than 20% at a time to prevent campaigns from re-entering the learning phase.
Bid Cap Adjustment	Once every 7 days (maximum)	Search (using Bidding Portfolios)	Change bid caps within search campaigns to lower CPA or increase ROAS.
Bidding Strategy Change	Once every 2 weeks (maximum)	All	Do not change the core bidding strategy (e.g., Max Clicks to Max Conversions) more frequently than once every two weeks.

Action	Frequency	Campaign Type	Objective
Review Search Terms Report	Weekly	Search, DSA	Filter Search Terms by high spend (last 14 days) and zero conversions/conversion actions. Exclude irrelevant, high-spend terms.
Review Search Keywords	Bi-Weekly	Search	Filter Keywords by high spend (last 14 days) and zero conversions. Pause these underperforming keywords.
Review PMax Topics/Assets	Weekly	PMax	Check the topics under which your ads are shown to find new keyword/targeting ideas. Evaluate asset performance and replace assets with "Low" or "Poor" ratings.

Action	Frequency	Campaign Type	Objective
Audience Performance Review	Bi-Weekly	PMax, Demand Gen	At the Ad Group level, review audience segments. Remove specific segments that have high spend and zero conversions to focus targeting.
Creative Refresh (Ads)	Bi-Weekly / Monthly	Search, Video, PMax, Demand Gen	Update ad copy/creatives. Focus on scheduling and regularly updating Shorts creatives for YouTube. Ensure all ad groups have at least 2 active ads.
Negative Keyword List Update	Bi-Weekly	All (Especially Search)	Update shared negative keyword lists. Use exclusions to prevent your ads from showing on irrelevant terms.
Check Conversion/ Event Setup	Monthly / After Major Changes	All	Ensure all events and conversions are firing correctly and being recorded in Google Ads and GA4.

Troubleshooting diagnostics cheat-sheet

High CPA: You are paying too much for conversions.
- Check Search Terms: Filter for high spend + 0 conversions. Exclude irrelevant terms.
- Review Bids: Lower your Bid Caps (Portfolio Strategy) or lower your tCPA target slightly.
- Check Landing Page: Ensure the page answers the user's specific query immediately.

Low CTR: People are seeing your ad but not clicking.
- Hook Them: Test new headlines that focus on a direct benefit or a problem/solution angle.
- Match Intent: Ensure your ad copy contains the keywords the user is actually searching for.
- Refine Audience: Your targeting might be too broad (e.g., showing "luxury" ads to a "bargain" audience).

Low Conversion Rate: You have clicks but no sales/leads.
- Speed & Mobile: Check your site load speed and mobile experience.
- Offer Mismatch: Does the landing page promise exactly what the ad offered? (e.g., "50% off" in ad -> full price on site).
- Re-track your last changes and website updates.
- **Tracking Check:** Verify your conversion tracking is actually firing.

Zero Impressions or Low Spend: The campaign is not spending.
- Raise Bids/Caps: Your tCPA might be too low for Google to find any profitable conversions.
- Check Negatives: Ensure you haven't accidentally added a "broad match" negative keyword that is blocking your main terms.
- Loosen Match Types: If using only Exact match, test Broad match to find volume.

PMax "Learning" for > 7 Days: The algorithm is stuck.
- Consolidate: Merge small campaigns to pool data.
- Switch Strategy: Temporarily switch to Max Conversions (without a tCPA target) to force spend and gather data, then switch back once stable.

Creative Fatigue (High Frequency / Performance Drop): A campaign that was performing well suddenly sees a drop in CTR and conversions, while CPA rises.
- Check Frequency: If Frequency is high (e.g., > 5-7 per week), users are tired of seeing the same ad.
- Refresh Assets: Swap out images or video hooks. Keep the core message but change the visual delivery.
- Rotate Ads: Ensure ad rotation is set to "Optimize" so Google can automatically test fresh variations against tired ones.