

Search smarter, scale further

How to use Performance Max for holiday wins

You've mastered search advertising—from persona-driven keywords to optimized bids. But shifting trends are shaping new opportunities this holiday season, and we've got the insights and tools to keep you ahead. This season, success is about embracing automation without losing transparency or control.

Performance Max helps you reach your ideal audience at the right moment, combining campaign goals, audience signals, and search themes with our proprietary data and inventory. The AI-powered solution delivers greater scale and efficiency while you maintain full control over your budget and brand identity.

Get started with these three strategies for boosting holiday advertising outcomes with Performance Max.

01 Launch earlier and cast a wider net

Our latest research shows that search intent starts rising in October, long before the Cyber Five. With Performance Max, it's easy to show up early across channels your customers are already using.

Action:

Use Performance Max to layer in native and display reach early in the season. Prime your search pipeline for peak intent later in the year.

65% of November conversions and 44% of December conversions come from **October clicks**.¹

70% Nearly 70% of consumers begin Black Friday/Cyber Monday research weeks ahead.²

02 Let AI do the heavy lifting while you fine-tune for ROI

Performance Max helps you optimize budgets, test creative, and choose high-ROI placements across Microsoft surfaces while maintaining precision. Keep visibility and control with search-term reports, asset performance insights, and audience segmentation.

Action:

Use Copilot in Microsoft Advertising Platform to evaluate headline and image variations. Feed those directly into Performance Max to scale.

53% Performance Max ads in Copilot boost engagement by up to 53%.³

03 Target your ad spend for maximum impact

With Microsoft Advertising audience intelligence, you can easily identify and prioritize high-value customers across formats while keeping search as your intent-signal command center.

Action:

Keep your core search campaigns running and then layer Performance Max on top to remarket to warm buyers with product ads and native deliveries.

2.8x Performance Max ads in Copilot drive 2.8x visibility in Copilot placements, and nearly half (49%) of converting user journeys involve five different ad formats.⁴

PMax checklist for holiday season

Asset groups

- ✓ Build new Holiday-specific asset groups to avoid disruption on evergreen products.
- ✓ Update headlines, descriptions and images to include any holiday messaging and promotions.
- ✓ Utilize Ads Studio, update image assets with seasonal backgrounds.
- ✓ (Retail) Assess product images, include seasonal images if relevant.

Retail

- ✓ Plan out merchant promotions, schedule in merchant center.
- ✓ Optimize feed attributes to include any additional inventory, including gift card purchases.

Budget allotment

- ✓ Evaluate Q4 budget, starting with October. Set aside budget for Cyber Week.
- ✓ Use budget estimator, compare historical budgets and performance.

Search themes

- ✓ Add top-volume search queries from insights and/or past Holiday search terms as search themes to PMax campaigns.

Bidding strategy

- ✓ Consider lowering your Target ROAS to allow further volumes and account for the increased competition.

Seasonality adjustments

- ✓ Create seasonality adjustments—get setup for success in the days leading up to, during, and right after cyber week (Black Friday, Cyber Monday, etc.).

Micro conversions

- ✓ If struggling with conversion volume, Adding 'add to cart' as a secondary micro conversion to serve as an intent signal outside of just purchases.

Ad scheduling

- ✓ Review current ad scheduling to ensure peak times are not excluded. **If importing from Google, adjust schedule based on time zone of the user.*
- ✓ Set up ad schedule to start and stop campaigns that are promotional.

Extensions

- ✓ Create and schedule promotion extensions.
- ✓ Create or update image extensions.

Reporting

- ✓ Use search term insights to refine search themes.
- ✓ Audit audience performance from previous year (if applicable).



**Celebrate smarter,
scale further**

Advertisers can gain an edge on the competition by starting early, leveraging AI, and strategically managing their spend. Microsoft Advertising's Performance Max and Copilot offer search marketers a scalable, intelligent advantage for smarter search this holiday season.



**Learn
more**

Download our [holiday playbook](#) or scheduling a [free consultation](#) with a Microsoft Advertising expert today.