

# The most wonderful time of the year:



## Pay-Per-Click Strategies to Maximize Holiday Sales

As the Internet quickly becomes a destination for time-strapped shoppers, more people will turn to online retailers to purchase their holiday gifts.

So how do you go about targeting these prime, holiday consumers? The answer is through optimal product promotion, writing compelling ads, and creating user-friendly landing pages.

Did you know? ...  
**46.7%**  
of holiday shoppers will buy gifts online.\*

... the average holiday shopper plans to do

**36%**  
of his or her shopping online – whether it be comparing prices, researching products or actually making a purchase.\*

... the average holiday online shopper will spend about

**22%**  
more than the average adult.\*

# Promoting the products

As more consumers turn to the Internet for their holiday shopping, it is important to think about how to best make your company or product stand out from the crowd. Google has created two great features, *Product Extensions* and *Product Listing Ads*, to help eCommerce sites promote their products using a data feed within a Google Merchant Center. Using these new features, your product images will be viewed with price, allowing customers to make shopping decisions before clicking on your ad. As a result, you will save money while generating highly relevant traffic that has a smaller chance of suffering from sticker shock once they reach your site.

## Product Extensions

A product extension (PE) allows you to use your Google Merchant Account to highlight your products directly in your PPC search ads on Google.com. These ads do not appear on other Search network sites nor on the Display network. They can, however, appear on m.google.com when viewed on high-end mobile devices with full Internet-enabled browsers.

Children's Bedding | RosenberryRooms.com [+](#) [Q](#)  
www.rosenberryrooms.com - rated ★★★★★ 322 reviews  
Quality Bedding, Furniture and Decor for Children. Free Shipping!  
 Hide products from Rosenberry Rooms for luxury kids bedding

<a href="#">Beach Baby Custom Crib Bedding Set</a> <b>\$580.00</b>	<a href="#">Bunny Ballet Custom Crib Bedding Set</a> <b>\$580.00</b>	<a href="#">Sweet Pea Custom Crib Bedding Set</a> <b>\$580.00</b>	<a href="#">Hi Flyin' Monkeys Custom Crib Bedding Set</a> <b>\$580.00</b>	<a href="#">Classic Giraffe Custom Crib Bedding Set</a> <b>\$580.00</b>

Product extensions accompany a standard text ad with standard keyword targeting. Product details are pulled from a merchant's Google Merchant Center Account; the ads feature multiple products from that sole merchant. When your Google Merchant Account contains a product that is relevant to a searcher's query, product extensions can show the images, titles, and prices of your closest matching products along with your ads. Product offerings may be shown in a plus box ad. When a user clicks the product image they are taken to the destination page listed in your Merchant Center Account.

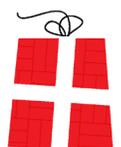
Ads

  
[JoJo Designs Blue/Brown 4-piece Twin-size ...](#)  
**\$99.99 - Overstock.com**

  
[Kathy Ireland Abigale Twin Mini Comforter ...](#)  
**\$149.99 - The Home Decorating Company**  
Free shipping on orders over \$100

## Product Listing Ads

A product listing ad (PLA) is a stand-alone shopping ad that can appear in a variety of formats and feature relevant product information such as image, price, or name. A PLA can also include an optional promotional message that is managed in the AdWords account. PLAs focus on targeting product information to users and are not designed to focus solely on merchants. Ads from competing advertisers may appear together in cases where multiple merchants are selling the same products.



# Promoting the products

Even though PLAs and PEs are different ad formats, they work together to provide a single product ad offering in AdWords. Take a look at the results page for the search “childrens bedding”. You will see all the ways that utilizing these features helps to promote your product to consumers, especially during the busy holiday season.

childrens bedding  Advanced search

About 2,040,000 results (0.28 seconds)

**Children Bedding at JCP | JCPenney.com** Ads  
[www.jcpenny.com/ChildrenBedding](http://www.jcpenny.com/ChildrenBedding) - ★★★★★ 4,995 seller reviews  
Save on **Children Bedding**. Free Shipping on Orders \$69+  
[Show map of 3 Orland Sq Dr, Orland Park and nearby jcpenny.com locations](#)

**Kids Bedding & Sheets | GarnetHill.com**  
[www.garnethill.com/KidsBedding](http://www.garnethill.com/KidsBedding)  
Buy unique sheets, comforter covers and more for **kids** at Garnet Hill!

**Company Kids® Bedding | TheCompanyStore.com**  
[www.thecompanystore.com](http://www.thecompanystore.com)  
Cozy, High-Quality 100% Cotton Design - Comfort - Value Since 1911  
Just for Girls - Baby & Toddler - Down to Basics - Bedding Favorites for Boys

**Girls Bedding | Childrens Bedding | Baby Bedding | Bedding for Girls**  
[www.rainbee.com/](http://www.rainbee.com/)  
Girls bedding, Boys bedding, teen bedding, and **baby bedding** for your nursery. ...  
Rainbee offers a large bedding collection to suit your **childrens bedding** needs ...

**Kids' Bedding | Overstock.com: Kids' Quilts, Blankets and Sheets**  
[www.overstock.com](http://www.overstock.com) > Home & Garden > Bedding & Bath > Bedding  
Buy brand-name **Kids' Bedding** for everyday discount prices on Overstock.com! \$2.95 shipping and product reviews on Kids' Quilts, Blankets and Sheets.  
Twin, Kids Bedding - Boys, Kids Bedding - Girls, Kids Bedding - Bed In A Bag

**Amazon.com: Kids' Bedding: Pillows, Sheets & Pillowcases ...**  
[www.amazon.com/Kids-Bedding-Bed-Bath/b?ie=UTF8&node...](http://www.amazon.com/Kids-Bedding-Bed-Bath/b?ie=UTF8&node...)  
Results 1 - 24 of 4919 – Online shopping for **Kids' Bedding** from a great selection of Bedding & Bath; Pillows, Sheets & Pillowcases, Comforters, Pillow Shams, ...

**Shopping results for childrens bedding**

 <a href="#">JoJo Designs Pink and Purple Butterfly - Kids Bedding</a> \$110	 <a href="#">JoJo Designs Pink and Orange Butterfly Bedding</a> \$60	 <a href="#">Funky Zebra Pink Twin Bedding by</a> \$100	 <a href="#">JoJo Designs Madison Youth Bedding</a> \$100	 <a href="#">JoJo Designs Cowgirl Youth Bedding</a> \$100
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**JoJo Designs Blue/Brown 4-piece Twin-size ...**  
  
\$99.99 - [Overstock.com](#)

**Kathy Ireland Abigale Twin Mini Comforter ...**  
  
\$149.99 - [The Home Decorating Company](#)  
Free shipping on orders over \$100

**Children's Bedding**  
[www.rosenberryrooms.com](http://www.rosenberryrooms.com)  
This advertiser is rated ★★★★★  
Quality **Bedding**, Furniture and Decor for **Children**. Free Shipping!  
[Hide products from this advertiser](#)

 <a href="#">Blossom Lilac Kids Bedding Collection</a> \$256.00	 <a href="#">Bandana Breeze Kids Bedding Collection</a> \$256.00
 <a href="#">Fleur Lilac Kids Bedding Collection</a> \$256.00	 <a href="#">Floral Garden Pink Kids Bedding</a> \$256.00

**Funky Girls Bedding**  
[www.littlemissmatched.com](http://www.littlemissmatched.com)

# Writing the ads

Product extensions and product listing ads are just two of the ways you can begin to stand out from the crowd this holiday season. You will also want to write compelling ads that will be distinctive from the numerous other competitors on the page. Here's how:

## **The Promotion**

The holiday season is a time of year that requires some of your best promotional ideas. So, as we come to the end of this year's peak shopping days, implement a unique deal that can really entice a potential buyer as he or she scans for the perfect holiday gift.

Free shipping, 10% discounts, and coupons go a long way to boost conversions at other times of the year, but you may need a little something extra for the holiday. Perhaps your business can offer a guaranteed delivery date, a free gift box included, or an already prepared holiday gift set (even more enticing if you are able to offer a more traditional promotion like free shipping as well).

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## **The Plan and Audience**

At this point, start launching those ads that speak to your audience. You may have missed the holiday go-getters and the hardcore bargain shoppers, but keep an eye out for the last-minute people as well. Consumers are just waiting for your advertisements to call out to them. Lure potential buyers onto the product page with an ad that says "You have the perfect deal for me, the last-minute shopper."

And what about those people that just plain forgot about someone on their list? It happens to the best of us, but this leaves the perfect opportunity for your ad copy to promise the perfect fix for their forgetfulness. Lucky for them, you have a promotion in line that might even reward them for their absentmindedness! With a clever ad headline and benefit-driven ad copy, you'll be sure to drive some last-minute conversions.

In short, whatever your promotion plan is, make sure it speaks to the right buyers' motivation. The late-to-the-game shopper who needs a delivery guarantee has a much different mindset than the early shopper who is out to get the most popular product.

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## **The Competition**

Need some ideas? Don't be shy to research what your competitors are offering in the holiday prime time. Take the time to internally evaluate if you are in the position to offer a better promotion. If nothing else, ensure that your ad copy calls out what makes your product, company, or promotion better and different than your competitors'.



# Writing the ads

## **Extra Incentives**

Let's not forget what the holiday season is about, either. Go ahead and romanticize this time of the year, illustrating how your company is getting into the "holiday spirit." Use language in the ad copy that speaks to the values of the holiday – a time to spread joy and cheer, to give and get, to spend time with family and friends, and to enjoy the celebration of the end of one year and the beginning of another. Thus, to elaborate, your ad text and promotions should align with the searcher's holiday sentiment. Creatively insert words that will remind the shopper of the holiday season and the reason for buying and giving gifts.

Additionally, a promotion that gives as much as it gets will hold more value in the holiday shopper's mind. Try connecting your business with a charity this time of year and really get involved with the holiday spirit. Not only will customers respond well to your business's generosity, but charitable advertising campaigns are some of the best and most creative marketing strategies to design and implement.

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## **December 26**

In the same way that you target the early bird shoppers, the bargain shoppers, and the last-minute shoppers, your advertising campaign should also be prepared with promotions that target clearance shoppers as well as those who are spending holiday money and gift cards. Sure, 'Black Friday' and 'Cyber Monday' are known as the biggest shopping days of the year, but there are many people just waiting for the days after Christmas and around the New Year.

## *Optimizing your landing page*

You have designed the perfect promotion and implemented a clever and innovative PPC ad campaign. Don't make the mistake of losing conversions due to a convoluted and tedious landing page. Stick to landing page best practices and oversimplify the conversion process. Make certain that the product and its price are very clear, the terms of the promotion are easy to both find and read, and that the conversion action is a simple procedure for the potential buyer.

**Make sure your headline is visible and relevant.** Headlines should be appropriate for the user, convey your key benefit, and be located at the top where the user will look first. Try to work your keyword into the headline to help a visitor confirm they clicked on the correct ad. This will also improve your PPC quality score. Ask yourself if the headline reinstates the user's potential problem or gives a brief definition of the service/product offering. If yes, then you are on the right track.



# Optimizing your landing page

**Design a clean, simple and visually appealing landing page.** A few images can help bring a page to life, but keep these to a minimum. A landing page should lend itself to a quick and simple recognition of the 'key message' and should not be confusing. Too many images, callouts, or messages create clutter and confuse a user. Keep in mind that visitors have likely been searching through several ads and landing pages before getting to yours; if they don't quickly see what they are looking for, they will leave. You have 3-6 seconds to get your message across, so make sure your visitors don't spend that time trying to focus their eyes.

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**Strategically position your conversion form on the right.** How do people read landing pages? After scanning the headline, a visitor's eyes are going to move to the right. If you have a conversion form, place it on the right-hand side to follow the behavior. If you have a shopping cart button instead, follow the same logic. Make sure any required fields are marked with an asterisk or similar notation. If you have a phone number field that won't accept dashes or dots between numbers, explain this and provide an example so people aren't discouraged if it doesn't work correctly. They will not try to submit multiple times, so make sure your conversion process is as straightforward as possible.

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**Simplify your conversion form.** Cut down the conversion or contact form to as few fields as possible to help minimize the visitor's perceived risk of submitting information. Do you ever use the telephone number to follow up with customers? If not, don't make it a required field as you may be funneling out valuable leads by requiring the information. Users consider what information is being requested and how long is it going to take to fill out the form before deciding which action to take next. If users feel you are asking too much based on what they are getting in return, they will not convert. Sometimes it is better to get more conversions with less information than to get very few conversions with a complete personal history and profile. Make sure you weigh what is important for your business strategy and adjust accordingly.

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**Keep the important stuff above the fold.** Headlines, forms, and call to action should all be on the top third of the page in order to help guarantee a visitor sees it. Make sure you prioritize the elements on your page along with your content – if you don't make it clear for your user they will prioritize on their own, which risks taking away the wrong message or action.

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**Tell people what they are getting, in plain English.** No one wants to submit personal information unless they are sure they know what they are getting. No matter what you are offering, whether it is a PDF whitepaper download, catalog in the mail, or simply a request for a follow-up call, make sure you spell out everything the user is getting prior to them filling out the form. They want to know what the reward is before they hand over their contact info.

# Optimizing your landing page

**Keep quality score in mind along with user experience.** Be sure to include keywords on your page to help improve your PPC quality score, and consider load time. Page load time is also a factor in quality score, and you only have roughly 3 seconds – any longer and your quality score is likely to be impacted. Avoid using flash animation, which can increase your load time and result in usability issues for some users.

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**Allow people another place to go from there.** Include a logo that links to your homepage or other deep links within your site. A visitor may not be ready to commit yet but are still interested – give them an option to learn more about your products or company.

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## Winter or holiday themes

Following general landing page best practice is always an important step to guiding users to convert, but there's always room for creativity especially during the holiday season. Below are some tips to creating holiday marketing landing pages to boost sales.

- Make your ads and landing pages relevant to the holiday, utilizing winter/holiday themes and colors.
- Insert ads and landing pages that express the winter mindset. Giving, joy, celebration, tradition, and friends and family are words that catch the eyes of an audience with holiday warmth on their minds.
- Make your ad benefits winter and holiday-related. Products, catalogues, and specials should read gifts, wish lists, and holiday specials.



# Winter or holiday themes

Implementing all of these strategies will allow you to optimize those ready-to-convert consumers and enter the busy holidays with your business' best foot forward.

If you are interested in an account audit or in having a professional paid search agency implement these changes and more, please visit [www.hanapinmarketing.com](http://www.hanapinmarketing.com) or call 812.330.3134.

The screenshot shows the Red Envelope website interface. At the top, the logo reads "red ENVELOPE" with the tagline "the place for unique and personalized gifts". Navigation links include "catalog" and "radio". A search bar contains the text "You searched for Holiday Clearance on Google". A red banner below the search bar offers a discount: "Save 10% on any order, 15% on orders \$80+, and 20% on orders \$125+. Enter promo SRCHladder at checkout." The main content area features a large image of a smiling woman in winter attire with the text "time is running out" and "finding the perfect gift just got easier". Below this, there are navigation links for "for her", "for him", "home", "baby & kids", and "jewelry". At the bottom, there are three smaller promotional tiles: "holiday catalog collection", "dress him up", and "everything she wants".

## About Hanapin Marketing:

Hanapin Marketing is a paid search agency based in Bloomington, Indiana. Founded in 2004, the company manages and optimizes clients' paid search programs- increasing sales while simultaneously decreasing budgets. From ad copy composition to keyword research to landing page optimization, Hanapin's core objective is to maximize our clients' return on investment. Hanapin Marketing also publishes industry-leading blogs, PPC Hero and SEO Boy.