



## Restoration strategy

Plan now for future opportunities and economic recovery scenarios

# Unprecedented times

As the world responds to the outbreak of COVID-19, our thoughts are with the people affected and the medical professionals working around the clock to help those most in need. At Microsoft, we're working to do our part by ensuring the safety of our employees, striving to protect the health and well-being of the communities in which we operate, and providing technology, tips and resources to our customers to help them do their best work while remote.

### **At Microsoft Advertising we are here to help you.**

As consumers remain home, search has grown in increasing importance. This resource is part of [The digital advertiser's guide to COVID-19](#), which covers immediate strategies, restoration strategies, future planning and account health, to help you continue to connect with your customers in meaningful and relevant ways.

Each of these resources are curated to help you and your business get the guidance you need no matter where what stage of the journey you are in.

We are also compiling key insights and industry trends on a weekly basis and publishing them on our [COVID-19 insights and resources hub](#) to allow you to make informed decisions for your business.

And finally, when people have a need and your brand is there to meet that need it creates a connection and builds trust. Never has that been more important than now. Consumers expect brands to step up and support them and the community in times like these. [Marketing with Purpose](#) is a framework to help you connect more authentically with your people, build trust and ultimately drive greater business value.

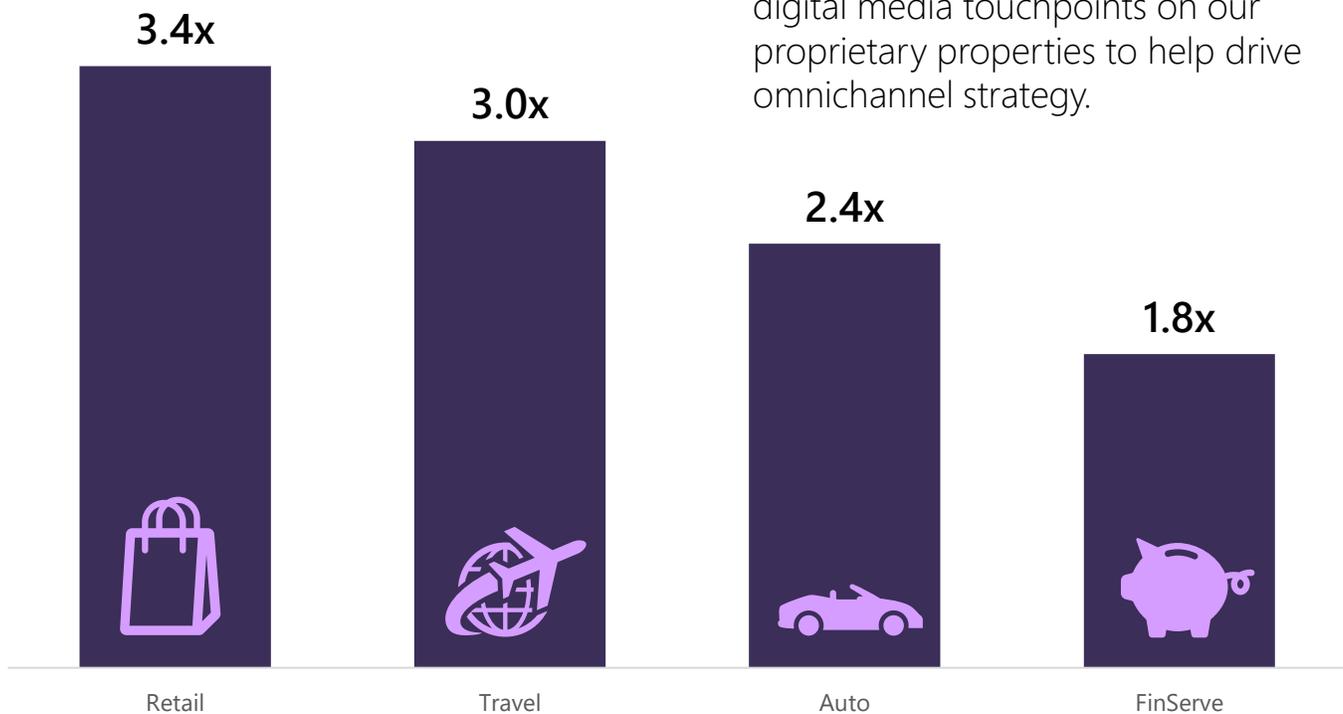
## The value of paid search

Paid search generates the greatest return on advertising spend (ROAS) across media channels, per dollar invested in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, for budgets impacted by COVID-19, when compared to other media channels, paid search has been impacted the least and benefited the most either retaining or receiving re-allocated budget.<sup>2</sup> Some may venture that paid Search is the most recession-proof tool, considering its ability to connect marketers with consumer intent.

Our multi-touch attribution study found that on average, search clicks are directly followed by a conversion **2.6x more** than clicks from other ad types, including social and video.

Advertisers are rapidly turning to more complex attribution models, away from depending on last click attribution and away from measuring media in silos.

Our multi-touch attribution study enabled Microsoft to statistically measure impact of digital media touchpoints on our proprietary properties to help drive omnichannel strategy.



1. Various Sources (Benchmarking); OAAA, 2018. 2. Advertiser Perceptions, "Coronavirus Effect on Advertising Report," March 26, 2020.

Microsoft internal data. N = 1000 users per vertical, August 2019 – January 2020, US and PC only. Analysis of paid media only. Inclusive of display, native, partner, referral (including affiliates), social, video and paid search. Publisher and platform agnostic. Multiple paid digital media click touchpoints required for analysis inclusion.

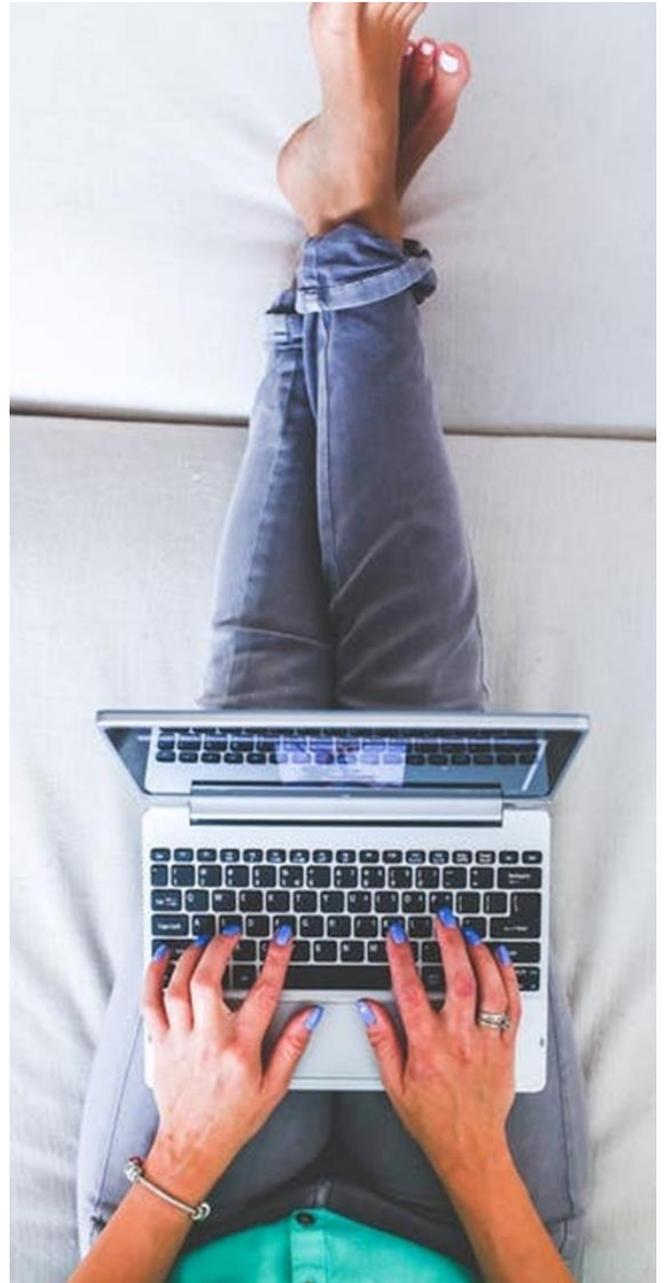
# How has consumer search behavior changed?

Working from home and other lifestyle shifts has led to **blended schedules** with the following marketplace trends COVID-19 vs. Pre-COVID-19<sup>1</sup>:

**Desktop & Tablet Volume Share** continues to grow respectively at 8% and 18% on average.

**Weekend Volume** grew significantly compared to Weekday Traffic by 12%.

**Nighttime Volume<sup>2</sup> (9pm-4am)** increased by ~15% compared to volume for all other hours of the day.



1. US and Microsoft Advertising core owned and operated (O&O) only, Time Periods: Pre-COVID-19 (January-February 2020); COVID-19 (March-May 2020)

2. Hours of Day converted from UTC to EST; adjusted for Daylight Savings

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## Remarketing

### User frequency: Build lists of audiences with longer look-back windows

People who didn't convert. Ensure you have 60-, 90-, 120- and 180-day audiences created. Once the market calms down, you'll be able to target all the users who visited your site throughout this time, though they may not have converted.

People who browsed, but didn't return. With these segments set up, you could even focus on people who were browsing during this time but haven't yet come back by targeting the 60-day audience and excluding the 30-day audience to reach users in the window of last having visited between 30-60 days ago.

### Build a "cancellation" audience list to later reach customers who cancelled a booking

Depending on the vertical, create Remarketing lists for users who may have cancelled their booking, so you might be able to remarket to them again later when the market calms or you have new offers.



## New consumer behavior trends

### Ad copy and creative

As we transition back to “normal,” start thinking through adjusting messaging around what will consumers need. Using RSA is a good strategy to quickly test new messaging that can also be used in native and other media channels.



### Adjust keyword and budget strategies

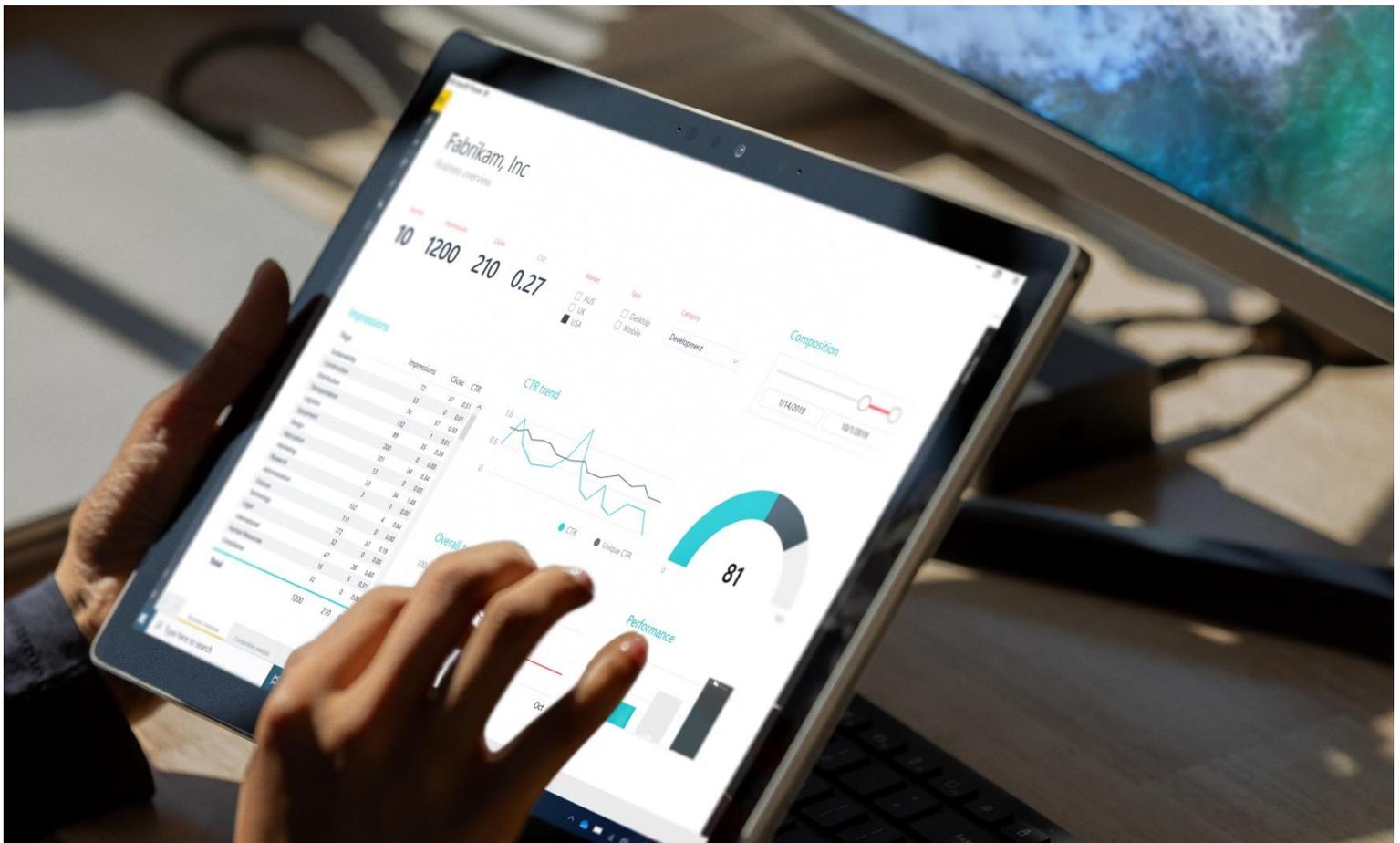
Scenarios to start thinking through: Will food, grocery and shopping deliveries see a significant drop as people want to physically go to stores more? Use Custom Audiences to target those customers who've been purchasing online. Will there be an increase in the need for financial advisor and guidance now that people have seen the effects of perhaps not being prepared through a recession? What will the housing market look like during the typical peak season if rates go back up? Will there be hesitancy to fly still even if restrictions lessen, and will that lead to more road trips? If so, will that put more demand on auto parts/services? Tourism impacts? Will trips be more of a "holiday" gift than typical retail gifts? Etc.

# Restoration strategy

## Benchmarks

### Adjust your KPIs

As we transition back to “normal,” start getting ready to apply more flexibility to your benchmarks. Consider adjusting bids and budgets to align with marketplace dynamics. Your Microsoft account manager can help you identify vertical-specific marketplace trends.



## Long-term marketplace considerations

### Sustain your campaigns running at lower budgets vs. turning off

- **Dynamic Search Ads (DSA).** Keeping DSA campaigns live will ensure your domains are in index and you will not need to initiate a new recrawl.



### Keep your current account structure as is

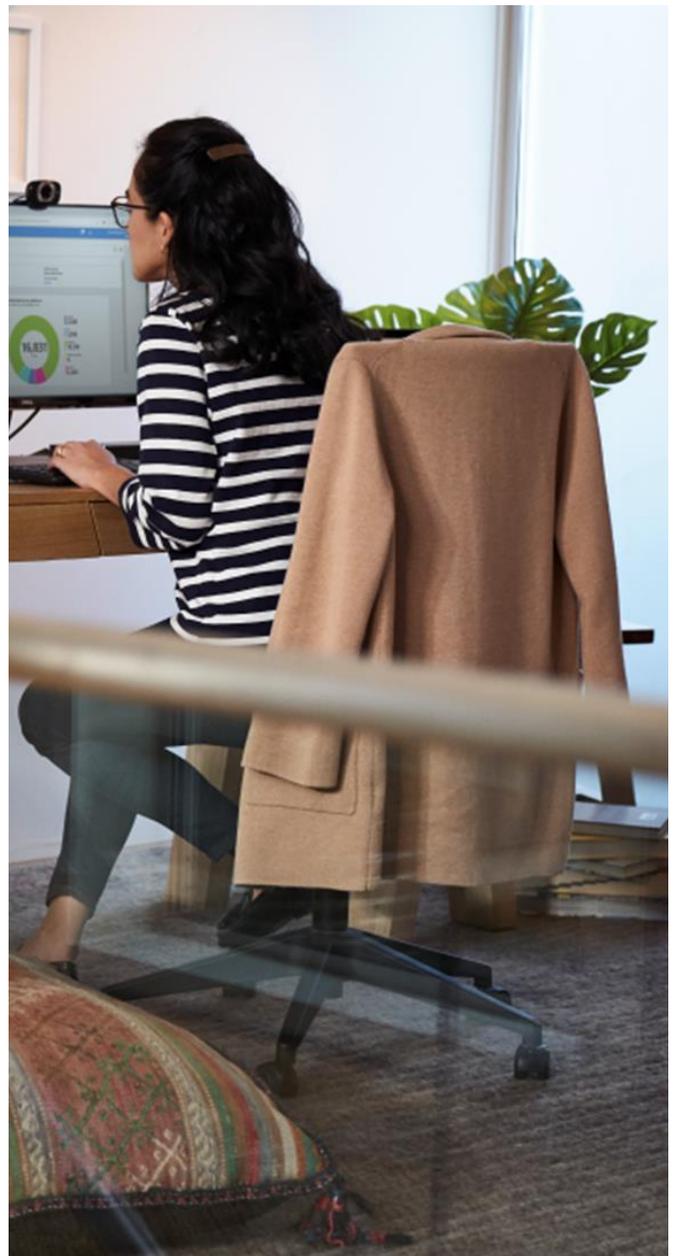
- **Maintain existing ad copies, keywords, etc.** This allows the system to maintain the learnings associated with your accounts and minimizes ramp up time.
- **If you must re-structure...**do it sooner rather than later and launch (even with low budgets) to set up for success for platform to start learning and building account history.
- **Google Import can help.** Use the Google Import tool if you'd like to mirror campaign structures. No special structures are needed for Microsoft Advertising, so you can use the automated-import function to keep your accounts in sync across platforms.

# Restoration strategy

## Long-term marketplace considerations

Refine targeting to optimize for significant changes in consumer online behavior

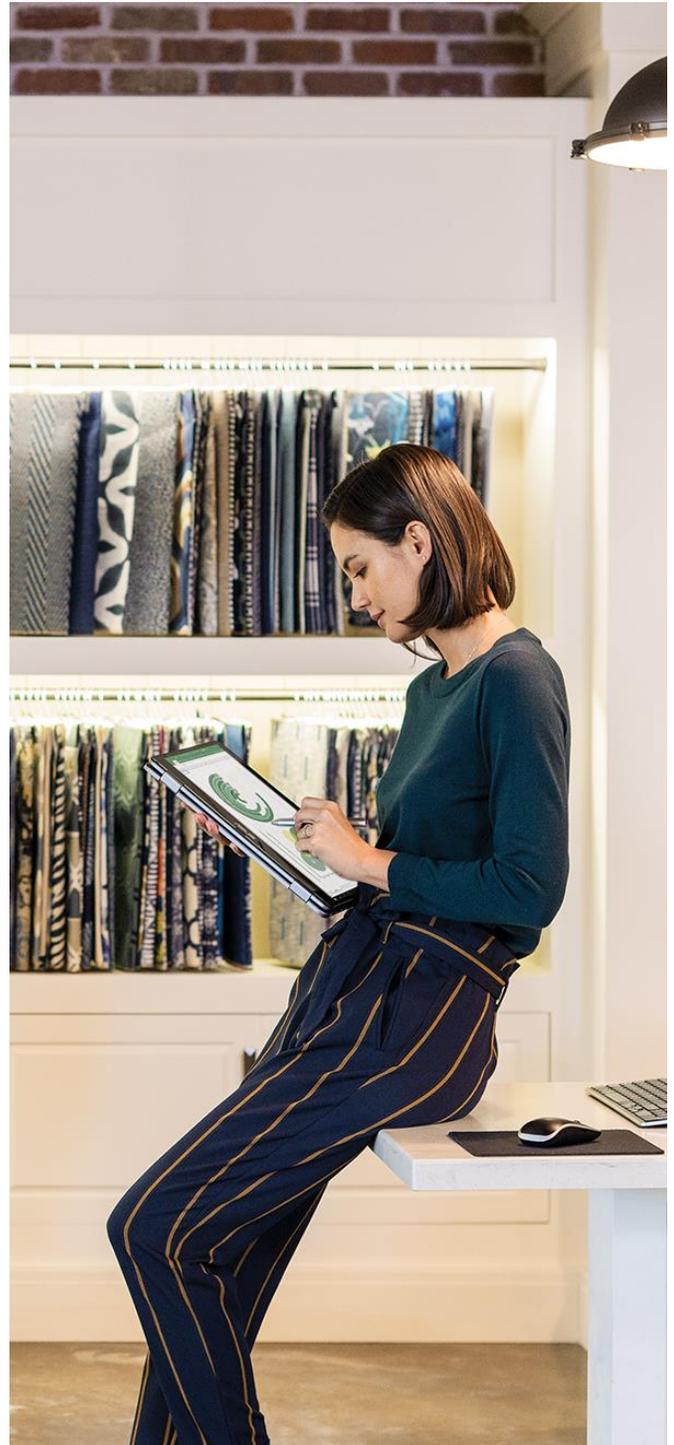
- **Device targeting.** With significant increases in desktop and tablet volume, increase your bid modifiers for these devices. Especially if they are negative or at zero.
- **Dayparting expansion for day of week & time of day.** With unprecedented online volume increases around nights and weekends, ensure your ads are turned on and bid modifiers are optimized for all hours to maximize the revenue opportunity for your business.
- **Location targeting.** [Identify and expand the geographies](#) that are converting most during this time from zip codes and cities to states, countries and more. For example, if your campaigns have been turned off, you can ease into a relaunch by starting with [targeting those locations](#) further into recovery.



## Shopping considerations

### Retail shopping behaviors may change

- **Optimize for new shopping behaviors.** Review search query reports at the offer level to check for new search queries driving traffic to your Product Ads
- **Shop online, pick up in store.** We've seen this trend in the market and expect this behavior to continue to grow as stores begin opening again.
- **Send your full product feed.** Upload your complete product offering feed with recommended fields (GTIN, MPN, Brand, Color, Size, Shipping costs, multiple images, etc.) to ensure your products are eligible to serve in new shopping experiences.
- **Product Audiences** (dynamic remarketing). Pair customers with specific products based on products they have looked at, considered, or already purchased on your website.



## Checklist: Ads

- Ad rotation should be set to [optimize](#).
- Check your editorial rejections as COVID-19-related terms are disallowed.
- Begin the (required) move to [Expanded Text Ads](#) and add Responsive Search Ads (RSA) to your ad groups as an efficient way to swiftly change your text ad messaging.
- Use ad customizers and IF functions where applicable. Use audiences to land effective messaging.
- Shopping: Use Local Inventory Ads to indicate availability of items and adjust product group bids based on inventory changes.
- Shopping: As your inventory levels grow, re-evaluate your product group strategy and product prioritization to meet your campaign goals.
- Check the extensions you're using. Use "delivery, curbside pickup, other services" that are unique and applicable to your business.
- Consider Disclaimer in ads pilot (US only) to highlight specific information such as safety measures being taken for your business.

# Checklist: Keywords

- Monitor keyword recommendations specific to your account surfaced in Microsoft Advertising user interface.
- Continue to use “Broadience” (broad match + audience targeting) to help you expand reach and identify new opportunities after the initial period of greater volatility has passed.
- Reevaluate strategy on keywords around delivery, curbside pickup, fees waived (COVID-19-terms are restricted).
- To capture newly emerged queries, create or reactivate Dynamic Search Ads (DSA) as a “catchall” with a lower bid and use tools like [Microsoft Advertising Intelligence](#) and [Keyword Planner](#).

# Checklist: Audience

- Reevaluate Remarketing list frequencies (ex: 1, 3,7, 14, 30 days) to target customers still looking to purchase.
- Use In-market Audiences to target customers who are in-market for your product (especially for areas of opportunity for you).
- Use Product Audiences (dynamic remarketing) to maximize the performance of your shopping ads.
- Create a separate Audience Ads campaign to reconnect with your ideal audience in high-quality and brand-safe native placements.
- Add images to your search campaigns to expand your audience reach and drive increased performance.
- Refine targeting settings to reflect consumer trends for your business around geographies, time of day, etc. Use the [Bing COVID-19 Tracker](#) to help.

# Checklist: Bidding & Budget

- Once the market has “leveled” out and fluctuations have lessened, begin moving back to automated bidding with adjusted targets.
- When using manual bids, monitor SOV to adjust bids and leverage ECPC.
- Ensure you are setup for real-time success if you are re-entering the auction by leveraging first page bid recommendations in the UI.
- Check accuracy of online conversion tracking to properly account for online purchasing demand shifts. Recommended to implement [Universal Event Tracking](#) (UET) on your site.
- Begin planning for increases (or decreases) in campaign budgets as the markets shifts from greater volatility to a new normal.
- Monitor SOV to adjust budgets based on new trends, inventory, etc.

## Checklist: Feeds

- Send a complete feed with all product offers and include recommended fields – GTIN, MPN, Brand, Color, Size, Shipping Cost, Multiple Images, and more
- Optimize product titles and descriptions for improved product matching and relevance. Use the Search Term Report at the offer level for relevant terms to include and test.
- Leverage Custom labels in your feed to customize your product groups to meet your business goals.
- Import your Google product offerings to Microsoft Merchant Center to mirror your campaigns from Google.
- Schedule automatic downloads of product feeds to keep your prices and inventory fresh.
- Once stores open again, use Local Inventory Ads to drive traffic to your physical stores. Also a great option for the Shop online, pick up in store trend

# Checklist: Merchant Center

- Schedule your Merchant Promotions and include any relevant promotional codes.
- Opt into Automatic item updates for price and/or availability to ensure your Product Ad details match the customer experience on your landing pages.
- Use the new List view for ad groups to easily see your product group taxonomy and make bulk operations to your product groups like bid changes by percentage or filter products.
- Campaign priority settings (low, medium, high) give you more control over which campaigns and products take precedent

# Checklist: Audience

- Product Audiences (dynamic remarketing) can help you take your shopping ads to the next level with increased performance.
- Use Product Ads on the Microsoft Audience Network to expand your reach and get your products in front of customers where they are today.

# Checklist: Reporting

- Review share of voice metrics with Click share and Absolute top impression share reporting to see how traffic volume compares to your competitors.
- Use the Product match count reporting to identify product serving issues within your feed and campaigns.
- Easily add negative keywords from your search term reports to filter unqualified traffic to your Product Ads.
- Regularly review your Product negative keyword conflicts report to ensure negative keywords are not limiting how your Product Ads are serving.
- Check your feed error reports to trouble shoot rejections and resubmit corrections.
- Review the Untargeted offers report to confirm all product offers are targeted by a campaign. An All Products as a catch-all bucket for new products or low-bid products is recommended.
- Review your Product partition report to view product group performance and use the Product dimensions report to see product SKU level performance.

# Checklist: Bidding & Budget

- Balance between using automation and manual reviews. Monitor [auto-bidding](#) but keep a close eye to adapt to a fluctuating marketplace.
- Adding Enhanced CPC will leverage auction-time signals and increase the likelihood of clicks driving conversions.
- Test new auto bidding pilots for Shopping: Maximize Clicks and Target Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)
- Plan budgets to meet the increased traffic demands by monitoring SOV.
- Allocate additional budget to your current best-performing and products.
- Monitor your daily budgets and adjust as needed with the changing environment.

# Resources

## Microsoft Advertising

### [COVID-19 insights and resources for advertisers](#)

As consumers remain home, search has grown in increasing importance. Our goal is to provide you with regularly updated insights and trends to allow you to make informed decisions for your business.

### [Microsoft Advertising blog](#)

A comprehensive range of blogs that discuss issues relevant to advertising, search and our solutions.

### [Marketing with Purpose](#)

Trust, loyalty and love create a sweet spot for purchase consideration. Learn how you can drive business results by making people feel seen and respected through inclusive marketing and purposeful personalization.

To learn more about Microsoft Advertising, please visit [www.microsoft.com/advertising](http://www.microsoft.com/advertising)

## Microsoft

### [Microsoft's response to COVID-19](#)

At Microsoft, we're working to do our part by ensuring the safety of our employees, striving to protect the health and well-being of the communities in which we operate, and providing technology, tips and resources to our customers to help them do their best work while remote.

### [Microsoft's Small and Medium Business COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

Practical guidance for keeping your business up and running and getting the most out of your Microsoft technology investments.

### [LinkedIn COVID-19 business resource center](#)

As businesses of all sizes grapple with the same key questions in the wake of COVID-19, the purpose of this community is to bring people together to share what they're learning and how they're managing through change during this time.

Microsoft Advertising. Intelligent connections.