

**SELL  
MORE**



**& GROW**



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# Intro

## SELL MORE AND GROW

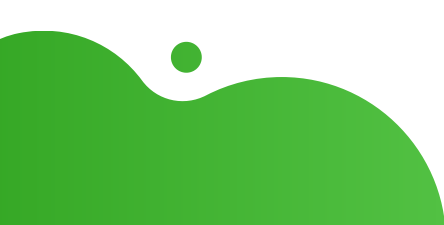
That is what each merchant and paid search manager has in mind when he gets up in the morning. The role of paid channels, like Google Shopping, Facebook or Amazon, are at a point where they're the number one source of sales for online stores. It is the fastest way for retailers to sell more.

The only way to list your products on these channels is to provide them with a feed file that contains all your product data. To improve your performance on paid channels, you need to optimize your PPC-campaigns continuously. You should also optimize your data feed continuously.

[This is the comprehensive guide to data feed management and optimization.](#)

This eBook will tell you how to optimize your data feeds for better ROI, step-by-step and with practical examples. I hope it will help you achieve your goals.

If you have questions, please let us know. We are here to Help Merchants Grow!



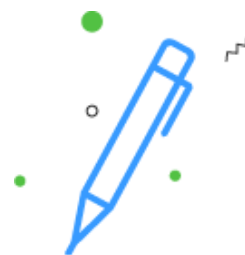


# Author

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Jacques van der Wilt is a digital commerce industry leader, start-up mentor, and entrepreneur. He's the founder of DataFeedWatch: a leading global data feed management and optimization company that helps online merchants grow through optimizing their product listings on over 1000 shopping channels in more than 50 countries.

Prior to founding DataFeedWatch, Jacques has held leadership positions in both the US and Europe and founded several tech start-ups. He is also a seasoned guest speaker at industry events and a mentor at Startup Bootcamp.



# DATA FEEDS LAY THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH SUCCESSFUL PCC CAMPAIGNS ARE BUILT

## The Feed is the Foundation

There are three ways in which data feed optimization is able to contribute to campaign performance.

### 1. Meet the requirements

Your data feed file must fit the feed specifications of each channel you want to advertise on. That is the only way to get your products uploaded and have the channel approve your feed.

### 2. Improve feed quality

If your product ads contain better information than your competitors', you are more likely to make the sale. Better data = more sales.

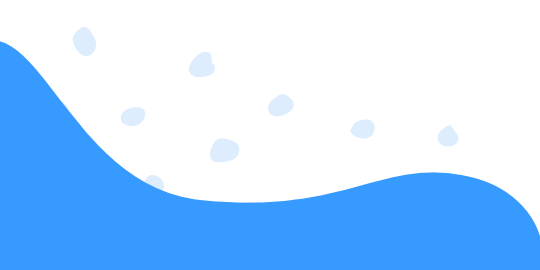
### 3. Increase ROI

You improve campaign performance by focusing on profitable products and by bidding on the most important attributes. A feed that contains the right products and includes data on margin, season, product type, etc., will enable the campaign manager to boost his ROI significantly.

## Data feed optimization is a marketing task

Data feeds used to be a technical task that marketers were happy to leave to the IT-department. Optimizing campaigns goes hand in hand with data feed optimization. It should be done by the same person.

Data feed optimization should be instant and continuous. You want to adapt your feeds to the reality of today and tomorrow.



# CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS A DATA FEED

## DEFINITION:

A data feed is a file that contains all your products and all attributes for each product. It is like exporting all product data from your store.

“Feed” may sound technical, so think of it as your product catalogue in an Excel file.

*fx*

|   | A  | B               | C                                | D   | E     |
|---|----|-----------------|----------------------------------|---|-------|
| 1 | ID | brand           | product_title                    | image link  | price |
| 2 | 44 | G-STAR          | grey tee shirt w/ black anchor p | <a href="https://store-w40xof">https://store-w40xof</a> | 39    |
| 3 | 34 | Harper          | tan leather woven belt           | <a href="https://store-w40xof">https://store-w40xof</a> | 52    |
| 4 | 36 | Benjamin Buttor | red petty coat                   | <a href="https://store-w40xof">https://store-w40xof</a> | 110   |
| 5 | 65 | Gucci           | white knight duffle              | <a href="https://store-w40xof">https://store-w40xof</a> | 495   |
| 6 | 69 | Collette        | aligator clutch                  | <a href="https://store-w40xof">https://store-w40xof</a> | 279   |
| 7 | 62 | Coco Lee        | Jam2                             | <a href="https://store-w40xof">https://store-w40xof</a> | 89    |
| 8 | 33 | Anna            | multi-colored bangles            | <a href="https://store-w40xof">https://store-w40xof</a> | 50    |

Every row contains 1 product. The headers of each row show the attributes. These headers are also called the “fields” of the data feed.

If things were that simple a merchant could export a file like this from his shopping cart and then upload it directly from his desktop to any given channel.

It's a bit more complicated for several reasons:

- Adding new products and removing others
- Changing prices and putting products on sale
- Products going out of stock

## 1. Different formats

Every shopping channel has different feed formats. The merchant needs to create a different file for each channel.

In their most basic form, product data feeds shopping feeds are CSV, TXT or XML files containing product information.

These are used by product marketing channels like Amazon, Google and Facebook.

|             | Google Shopping | Facebook           |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Feed format | txt, xml        | csv, tsv, txt, xml |

## 2. Improve feed quality

Every day retailers make changes to their online store to:

- Add new products and remove others
- Change prices and put products on sale
- Products go out of stock

These changes need to be reflected in their data feeds. They should create a new feed and upload the latest version to their preferred shopping channels every day.

## 3. Manual labor

Creating a new feed for each channel and manually updating and uploading it several times a day is nonsense work for a retailer or a marketer. They are better off automating the process and putting time and resources elsewhere.

# CHAPTER TWO: WHY SHOULD YOU CARE

## – REASONS TO HAVE A WELL-OPTIMIZED FEED

There are 3 main benefits to optimizing your data feeds:

- fewer disapproved products
- more clicks and conversions
- Products go out of stock

### 1. Fewer Disapproved Products

Most data feeds contain some errors: missing fields, wrong URLs, no variants, etc. On many channels, this will lead to ‘disapproval’.

In other words: these products will not be listed. A data feed tool enables you to fix these errors so you can list and advertise all your products on the channels of your choice.

Following a simple “if then” rule, any field that is incorrect can be corrected using the following setup.

The screenshot shows a configuration interface for a data feed rule. The main rule is named 'color'. It has a condition 'Add static value' set to 'red'. Below this, there are two 'IF' conditions. The first 'IF' condition is 'description includes red', which triggers the 'red' static value. The second 'IF' condition is 'description includes blue', which triggers the 'blue' static value. There is also a third 'IF' condition 'description includes purple' which triggers the 'purple' static value. The interface includes buttons for '+OR', '+AND', and 'Edit Values (0)'.

In the example above, the original product list had no field for attribute, which is a required field for the product to appear online. So using the automated tool, in any instance where the “description” includes the word “red,” “red” will become the static value.

A similar “if then” equation was set up for blue, green, etc.

The rule then applies to the entire product list, and going through this step is much easier than going through the entire feed one product at a time.



## 2. More Clicks and Conversions with a Better Data Feed

There are many other ways automated solutions can help you improve your data feeds to increase your sales (that would be beyond reach were you to do them manually). Here are a few examples:

- **Better product titles:** By adding the brand, type, color, size, etc. you can have a more compelling title than whatever was originally written in the data feed. For example, “Levis 501 blue jeans” is a more compelling title than “501” which may have been the original title.

- **Excluded items:** Exclude products that are out of stock, out of season, or low margin by setting up another “if then” rule.
- **Added categories:** If the channel understands what you are selling, they will be able to better match your products to the right queries. That will increase your conversion rate.

## 3. Increase ROI & detailed performance data

With the proper data feed tool, you can know the performance of every single product on each channel. This enables you to distinguish your best selling products from the unprofitable products so that you can remove products that don't sell to improve your ROI.

|                                     | PRODUCT ID | TITLE                               | CHANNEL NAME       | IMAGE_LINK | REVENUE | VISITS | TRANS-ACTIONS | CONVL. RATE |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|---------|--------|---------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1876       | 501 Original Fit - Dark stonewash   | Google Shopping    |            | 0.0     | 179    | 0             | 0.0%        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1822       | Tailored Western Shirt - Pool color | Keikoo.co.uk       |            | 0.0     | 321    | 0             | 0.0%        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1559       | Levi's Belt 10732 'Dark Brown'      | Amazon Product Ads |            | 0.0     | 101    | 0             | 0.0%        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1871       | Levi's Shoes 214894 'Navy Blue'     | Keikoo.co.uk       |            | 0.0     | 211    | 0             | 0.0%        |

The accuracy of your **product data determines the ad relevance** for a customer search. In this context, it's not a very good strategy to outsource or delegate the most **valuable asset of your product advertising campaigns** to the IT department: **your product data**.

We can give you more than a dozen reasons why **feed management is such a crucial component of your product advertising**, but let's focus on the most important ones.

## eCommerce is Multichannel

Multichannel selling has evolved immensely over the past years. Just a few years ago a multichannel strategy only meant having a brick-and-mortar presence and an online store.

Things got so diverse and complex that we are now looking at an ecommerce multichannel strategy.

Long gone are the times when an ecommerce strategy meant focusing only on SEO. According to Hubspot, "if you rely on free/direct sources of traffic, you are fighting share losses."

Nowadays you need to find a way to seamlessly integrate direct traffic, paid search, comparison shopping engines, marketplaces, mobile and social media.

That's a lot! Each medium comes with its own peculiarities and strategies, but only by combining all of them can you stay on top of your competition and crush your ecommerce quotas.



**The bottom line is that your products should be where your clients are.**

## The Feed is the Foundation of your Campaigns

When it comes to ecommerce multichannel strategies, your product feed is the foundation of your campaigns and the quality of the data feed will determine its success.

The quality of your feed is what makes or breaks your Shopping Ad campaigns. When it comes to optimizing your product advertising campaigns, **the feed is the first place to start looking for revisions.**

## Campaign manager = Feed manager

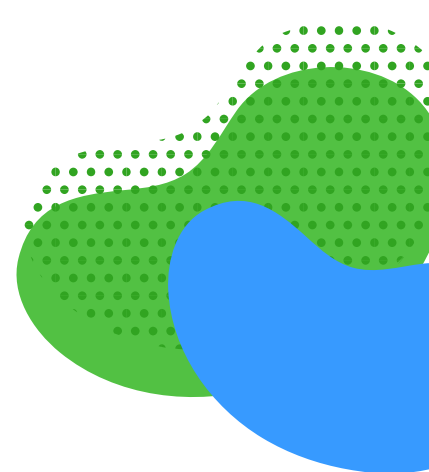
A few years ago, data feed optimization was a complex and technical task. The large retailers that could afford the early data feed tools, would get their own account manager and get help with the complex interface and their feed management.

Today, the ecommerce market is evolving at a staggering pace and campaign managers need to adapt quickly to any change. Therefore, marketing managers want and need to manage their own feeds.

Trying out new things or doing simple optimizations like custom labels or excluding certain products can be done instantly.

## Data Feed Optimization = Continuous

**Feed optimization goes hand-in-hand with campaign optimization** and is therefore also a continuous process. Basic feed mapping can be set up once, as the feeds for your shopping channels will be updated automatically every day. However, there are many things you can optimize continuously.



**EXAMPLES:**

- You need new custom labels all the time, based on your campaign objectives. If you want to bid more for products that are on sale: create a custom label this week.
- Exclude all products of a certain brand that you are negotiating a deal with.
- If you want to play around with different titles or descriptions: add multiple versions to your source feed.
- Remove unprofitable products from your feeds.
- Update your categories if you start selling new product types.

The same way you closely monitor your paid campaign performances on a daily or weekly basis, you need to constantly evaluate and improve the feed.

**The feed is never done.** There is always something you can do to improve your campaign performance!



# CHAPTER THREE: MEET FEED REQUIREMENTS

Every channel has its own feed specification. This means you need to create a separate data feed for each channel you want to advertise on. **Creating a data feed that meets the channel's requirements is step 1.**

There are three types of requirements:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| FILE FORMATS       | THE TYPE OF FILE: XML, CSV, ETC.                        |
| REQUIRED FIELDS    | THE FIELDS THAT YOU MUST INCLUDE                        |
| FIELD REQUIREMENTS | VALUES OR FORMATS THAT ARE REQUIRED FOR SPECIFIC FIELDS |

## Data Feed File Format

The file format refers to the type of file that a channel wants. XML and CSV are the most common file types. There are four feed formats you'll come across in paid campaigns.

- Extensive markup language (XML) – suitable for tech savvy merchants and usually submitted in an RSS or Atom format.

Content Settings

Feed Pattern

```

1 <?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8" ?>
2 <rss version="2.0" xmlns:g="http://base.google.com/ns/1.0">
3   <channel>
4     <title>Data feed Title</title>
5     <link>http://www.example.com</link>
6     <description>Data feed description.</description>
7     <each type="product">
8       <item>
9         <g:id>{sku}</g:id>
10        <g:item_group_id>{sku|parent}</g:item_group_id>
11        <title>{CDATA[{name}]}</title>
12        <link>{CDATA[{url|parent}]}</link>
13        <g:price>{price,[number format 2]}</g:price>
14        <description>{CDATA[{description,[strip tags],[substr 0 1000]}]}</description>
15        <g:product_type>{CDATA[{category path}]}</g:product_type>
16        <g:google_product_category>{CDATA[{mapping:1}]}</g:google_product_category>
17        <g:image_link>{CDATA[{image}]}</g:image_link>
18        <g:condition>new</g:condition>
19        <g:availability>in stock</g:availability>
20        <g:shipping_weight>{weight,[number format 2]} kg</g:shipping_weight>
21        <g:gender>{custom:google_gender}</g:gender>
22        <g:age_group>adult</g:age_group>
23        <g:color>{CDATA[{color}]}</g:color>
24        <g:size>{CDATA[{size}]}</g:size>
25        <g:brand>{CDATA[{manufacturer}]}</g:brand>
26        <g:mpn>{CDATA[{sku}]}</g:mpn>
27        <g:gtin>{CDATA[{upc}]}</g:gtin>
28      </item>
29    </each>
30  </channel>
31 </rss>

```

{sku}

SKU {sku}

- Comma Separated Values (CSV) – much like an excel-file. CSV is a format where the first row specifies the column header (field names) and each product is listed in a separate row.

| A  | B        | C              | D         | E     | F            | G                  | H     | I              | J      | K             | L        | M            | N |
|----|----------|----------------|-----------|-------|--------------|--------------------|-------|----------------|--------|---------------|----------|--------------|---|
| id | title    | link           | condition | price | availability | image_link         | brand | google_prtin   | mpn    | product_type  | shipping | description  |   |
| 1  | Bambo Na | https://ca new |           | 5.9   | in stock     | https://cair Bambo |       | 551 5 703538 1 | 310131 | Babies Nappie | GB::3.00 | ( Bambo Natu |   |
| 2  | Bambo Na | https://ca new |           | 5.99  | in stock     | https://cair Bambo |       | 551 5 703538 1 | 310132 | Babies Nappie | GB::3.00 | ( Bambo Natu |   |
| 3  | Bambo Na | https://ca new |           | 7.1   | in stock     | https://cair Bambo |       | 551 5 703538 1 | 310143 | Babies Nappie | GB::3.00 | ( Bambo Natu |   |
| 4  | Bambo Na | https://ca new |           | 6.99  | in stock     | https://cair Bambo |       | 551 5 703538 1 | 310144 | Babies Nappie | GB::3.00 | ( Bambo Natu |   |
| 5  | Bambo Na | https://ca new |           | 6.99  | in stock     | https://cair Bambo |       | 551 5 703538 1 | 310135 | Babies Nappie | GB::3.00 | ( Bambo Natu |   |
| 6  | Bambo Na | https://ca new |           | 6.1   | in stock     | https://cair Bambo |       | 551 5 703538 1 | 310136 | Babies Nappie | GB::3.00 | ( Bambo Natu |   |

- Tab delimited (TXT) – a text file is similar to the CSV, but more difficult to read.

```

ID      product_title  link      image link      price
37      [Sample] Levi's, blue denim womens shirt      https://store-
w40xoh.mybigcommerce.com/levis-blue-denim-womens-shirt/
https://cdn2.bigcommerce.com/n-nr1m3w/w40xoh/products/37/images/142/hero-gf-12s-
80031__63154.1348201710.1280.1280.jpg?c=2      29.0
44      [Sample] G-STAR, grey tee shirt w/ black anchor print      https://store-
w40xoh.mybigcommerce.com/g-star-grey-tee-shirt-w-black-anchor-print/      39.0
34      [Sample] Harper, tan leather woven belt      https://store-
w40xoh.mybigcommerce.com/harper-tan-leather-woven-belt/
https://cdn2.bigcommerce.com/n-
nr1m3w/w40xoh/products/34/images/251/GF_sportG_91892__79067.1348465412.1280.1280.jpg?
c=2      52.0
36      [Sample] Benjamin Button, red petty coat      https://store-
w40xoh.mybigcommerce.com/benjamin-button-red-petty-coat/      110.0

```

- JavaScript Object Notation (.json) – is considered to be a low overhead alternative to XML.

```

{
  "item": {
    "id": "1234",
    "title": "Table made from unicorns",
    "description": "White table made of happiness: width 75 cm,
height: 73 cm, Max weight: 50 kg",
    "link": "https://www.example.com/tables/unicorn/fancy",
    "availability": "in stock",
    "price": {
      "value": "399.67",
      "currency": "EUR"
    },
    "color": "rainbow"
  }
}

```

Before creating your feed, you need to check with the shopping channel for which format they require. Some channels accept multiple formats.

Alternatively, if you use a data feed tool like DataFeedWatch, all channel requirements are pre-loaded. Your data feeds will automatically be generated in the right format.

## Required Fields

Each channel needs a minimum amount of information to be able to list your products. These are the required fields. If you do not have these fields in your feed, the channel will not approve your feed.

Although requirements vary from channel to channel, most of them will always need:

- ID (a unique identifier)
- Title
- Price
- Image
- URL

In addition, channels will often ask for a lot more information. For example, these are the minimum requirements for Google Shopping:

The screenshot shows the 'Map Fields' interface for Google Shopping. It lists required fields and their corresponding mappings. The fields are: ID, Title, Description, Link, Image, Price, Availability, Identifier, and Brand. Each field has a dropdown menu for the field name, a dropdown menu for the value, and a button to 'Edit Values'. The 'ID' field is mapped to 'variant\_id'. The 'Title' field is mapped to 'title'. The 'Description' field is mapped to 'description'. The 'Link' field is mapped to 'url'. The 'Image' field is mapped to 'img\_src'. The 'Price' field is mapped to 'price'. The 'Availability' field is mapped to 'availability'. The 'Identifier' field is mapped to 'true'. The 'Brand' field is mapped to 'brand'. The 'ID' field is also mapped to 'url'.

| Field        | Mapping      | Value        | Button          |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| ID           | variant_id   | All Products | Edit Values (1) |
| Title        | title        | All Products | Edit Values (1) |
| Description  | description  | All Products | Edit Values (1) |
| Link         | url          | All Products | Edit Values (2) |
| Image        | img_src      | All Products | Edit Values (1) |
| Price        | price        | All Products | Edit Values (1) |
| Availability | availability | All Products | Edit Values (1) |
| Identifier   | true         | All Products | Edit Values (1) |
| Brand        | brand        | All Products | Edit Values (1) |
| ID           | url          | All Products | Edit Values (1) |

## Field Specifications

Channels sometimes have very specific requirements for individual fields. These are the most common examples: **Character limitation: Certain fields cannot have more than a number of maximum characters.**

### EXAMPLES:

- Google **does not accept more than 150 characters** in the title. In most cases, 70 or fewer characters will be displayed.
- Facebook **limits the title to 100 characters.**
- Bing is being the most generous with a **255-character limit.**

### Predefined values:

Some fields only have a few predefined values.

### EXAMPLES:

- Availability: preorder, in stock, out of stock, available for order
- Gender: male, female, unisex
- Age Group: newborn, infant, toddler, kids, adults
- Condition: new, used, refurbished

The screenshot shows a configuration interface for a product feed. On the left, there is a dropdown menu labeled 'condition' with a question mark icon. To its right is a button labeled 'Add static value'. Below the 'condition' dropdown is a blue button labeled 'Add Optional Field'. In the center, a 'Select static value' dropdown menu is open, displaying a list of predefined values: 'new' (highlighted in blue), 'refurbished', and 'used'. To the right of the 'Select static value' dropdown is a button labeled 'All Products' and a button labeled 'IF'. Further right is a button labeled 'Edit Values (0)' with a small upward arrow icon.

### Numerical fields:

Price, UPC or ISBN codes, shipping weight and shipping cost are fields for which only numerical values are allowed.



### Text fields:

Most attributes require an alpha-numerical format. **Titles, descriptions, product types and many others need a text format.**

### Category Fields:

Categories are usually predefined values from a channel's taxonomy.

#### EXAMPLES:

A Google Shopping category **can be expressed as an ID or as the full path of a certain product.**

Such as: **2271 or Apparel & Accessories > Clothing > Dresses.**

## Feed Specifications per Channel

You can find more information about the exact feed specifications for approximately 40 channels [here](#).

Some of the channels will not give you the list of required fields unless you are registered with them.

## The Most Common Problems with Fields

Feed issues can span from basic mistakes (such as price mismatch or incorrect availability), to missing product data, all the way to processing errors. And if there's one thing they all have in common, it would be a crippling effect on your ads.

## Product ID

It is important that the ID for each product is unique. Each variant should have its own unique ID, not just the parent-IDs but for all variants.

The **product ID is your product's transaction history and quality score information carrier.**

Without it, your Shopping ads won't run.

### Solution:

Every product submitted needs to own a unique ID in order to pass the verification and be served among the ads results.

- **Identify which items are missing the ID value.**  
You can do it by reviewing the report in Google Diagnostics, or checking out the Feed Products tab in DataFeedWatch.
- **Assign a proper attribute from your online shop.**  
It should be a field that is populated, and unique, for all products. Popular choices would be SKU, variant\_id, or a UPC.

In DataFeedWatch **you can review your shop items in a filtered view to easily identify the right field.** If none of your ID fields are populated for all your products, you can also **populate this attribute using rules - for example by adding a static value or using a lookup table.**

## GTIN

Some channels require the Global Trade Identification Number (GTIN).

### **DEFINITION:**

GTIN is the numerical version of the bar code. It is called UPC in the US and EAN in Europe. This identifier is created by GS1, an international non-profit organization. It's a unique ID according to international standards.

Google and other channels have a database with most of the world's GTINs to identify each product and all product specs exactly. Also, **if you provide the wrong GTIN, Google will know instantly and they will disapprove that product.**

Google for example verifies all the GTINs submitted and will notify you if yours are incorrect. The most common GTIN issues include:

- **Invalid GTIN**  
GTIN submitted is incorrect. It might be a matter of additional, especially non-numeric, characters in the product code. The only way to verify that would be to check the affected items in Google Merchant Center Diagnostics. If the GTINs seem alright to you, try contacting the manufacturer to request an up-to-date list of GTINs.
- **Ambiguous GTIN code**  
Google cannot recognize the GTIN submitted as it might have too many or too few digits. Global Trade Item numbers are usually 8, 12, 13, or 14 digits long.
- **Reserved GTIN**  
The GTIN you submitted hasn't been released for use yet by GS1. It's reserved for future use.
- **Restricted GTIN**  
The GTIN you've submitted is invalid because it has one of the following prefixes: "2", "02", or "04". These product codes are restricted for special purposes and internal systems, therefore cannot be used as a GTIN attribute for Google Shopping.

If you have any doubts about the GTINs you have at disposal, you may [find the GTIN Validation Guide](#) useful.

### Product Title

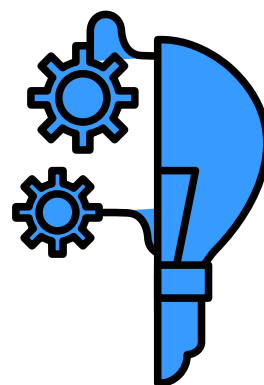
There are two title requirements that often lead to disapprovals by Google and several other channels.

#### Issue: CAPITALS!! in your Titles

In general, you are allowed to use capitalized words across your titles (even in the data feed) as long as it's moderate. There are no clear boundaries in place, but let's say having your brand name in uppercase while the rest of the title is composed of non-capitalized text should be fine.

Many channels do not accept SHOUTING!! **A good data feed tool automatically removes capitals and exclamation marks for you.**

Still, you want to make sure that Capitals are present wherever they are needed so you **"Recapitalize" for maximum effect**. Ex: change your title from 'GPS TRACKER' to 'GPS Tracker'.



**NOTE:**

This common issue applies exclusively to the product feed and not to your product landing pages. Your product titles in the product feed are capitalized and Google doesn't like it. It's specifically the use of uppercase that is triggering the error in your Merchant Center account.

Product titles on your website can be capitalized to the extent that you want and Google won't mind.

The product title passed via the data feed needs to be uncapitalized.

**Solution:**

There are a couple of approaches you could take if you need to get rid of excessive capitalization in your product titles that are passed via the product feed:

**Method 1:** *Change capitalization in the feed, leave it be on your website.*

In DataFeedWatch you can easily fix your capitalization across the entire feed in a matter of seconds. All you need to do is visit the 'Edit values' section for the 'title' attribute and choose what you want to do:

Change values for "title" ✕

Mapping type: Recapitalize Input:  Text to: capitalize Apply to: output field All Products IF 🗑️

For words longer than: 1

Add Rule Cancel Clear Done

Depending on what your original titles looked like, you may need to apply one or more of these rules to get your title into the perfect shape. As you polish them up, you can always take a [peek at the preview](#).

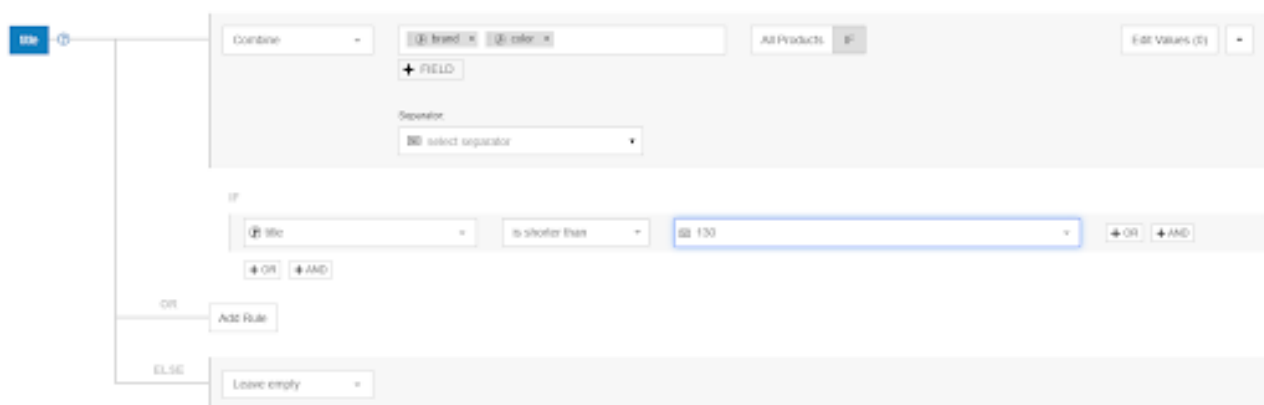
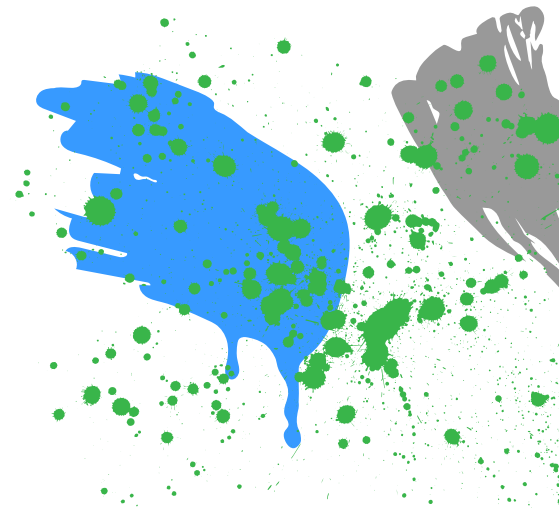
**Method 2:** *Change capitalization directly in your web-shop.*

Probably a more time-consuming method, but if you want to keep your titles the same on both the landing pages and in the feed - that's the way to go. The store data is usually a live source for the product feed so any changes you make over there would carry over to your Shopping feed.

Issue: Character length

Most channels have a limit for the number of characters in the title. A data feed tool should cut off your title to make sure this limit is not exceeded. If that is not the case, crop it with a simple rule.

**Solution:** Combine title with other attribute if the title is shorter than 130 characters (to make sure you don't exceed 150 characters)



## URL

There are several things that can go wrong with your product-URLs:

### Issue: Wrong domain

When you set up your account on a chosen channel, **one of the first things you need to do is claim a domain**. The domain of the product URLs in your feed **must match the domain claimed exactly**.

#### **NOTE:**

Many websites use alternative domain names. Shopify stores, for example, have a Shopify subdomain. 'mydomain.myshopify.com'.

If the product URLs in the data feed includes the Shopify subdomain (mydomain.myshopify.com), all products in that feed might get disapproved.

This is caused by the mismatch between a domain claimed in the GMC and a domain of product URLs imported in the data feed.

### **Solution:**

To avoid this problem make sure that the products URLs in the feed contain the same domain name as the one claimed.

If that is not the case you will need to replace the domain in the feed using mapping rules or claim a different domain.

Link: rename "ProductURL" for all products and replace " mydomain.myshopify.com" with "mydomain.com" for all products.

In DataFeedWatch this replacement is done automatically if the Google Merchant Center domain (as entered in DataFeedWatch) is different from the domain in product URLs.

### Issue: https

Sometimes the data feed contains regular http-URLs, but the product pages are actually on a https-URL.

That will lead to disapproval, yet can be quickly fixed by a 'replace' rule.

### **Solution:**

Rename "url" for all products and replace "http" with "https"

### Issue: Variant-URLs and different prices for variants

Many merchants with variants have just one product page (1 URL) with a pull-down for sizes, colors or other variant options. If all variants of a product have the same price, that is no problem.

**If the price is different for variants of the same product, that may lead to disapproval of these products by Google or other channels.**

The price for a variant that is listed in the data feed, is not equal to the price that is listed on the corresponding product URL (because that price only shows if that variant is selected from the pull-down).

### **Solution:**

Most ecommerce platforms will export a unique URL for each variant. **If you include that URL in your data feed, the issue is resolved.**

If you do not have unique URLs in your source feed, you can create URLs **by combining your 'parent URL' with a unique attribute (like variant ID).**

### **NOTE:**

You need to know how the URLs in your store are 'structured'; it will only work if the new, unique URLs that you create lead to the product page for each variant.

## Price

Price is another field that is under heavy scrutiny: Google and other channels will check if the price in the feed is equal to the price on the product page. If it is not, it will disapprove that product. These are the most common fixes that retailers need to make to their prices.

### Issue: Mismatched Price

If the price on your site changes, your feed needs to be updated. With a data feed tool, daily updates will happen automatically.

If you change price several times per day, you definitely want to update your data feeds accordingly. Same goes for products that are on sale.



**Solution:**

To fix the issue, you will need to identify what the root of the problem is. Checking the affected items in the channel's diagnostics panel usually helps.

*Is it that your prices change a few times per day?*

If so, the best solution might be to increase data update frequency in Google Merchant Center. (For that to work, don't forget the data feed also needs to be synced with your store frequently).

*Maybe you've used the wrong price field from your data source?*

Correcting the price mapping might help.

*Perhaps it's your structured data markup that holds the old price data?*

This could be misleading for Google and end up in product disapproval. More about tackling this issue here (it can be resolved analogically to the 'incorrect availability microdata' issue)

Common price errors include lack of currency, incorrect formatting, and submitting free products (e.g. samples) with your Shopping feed.

**Issue: Missing or incorrect price**

Price has always played a key role in the success of Shopping ads. Now, with the new 'Compare by store' feature introduced along with free advertising on Google Shopping, it only gains importance.

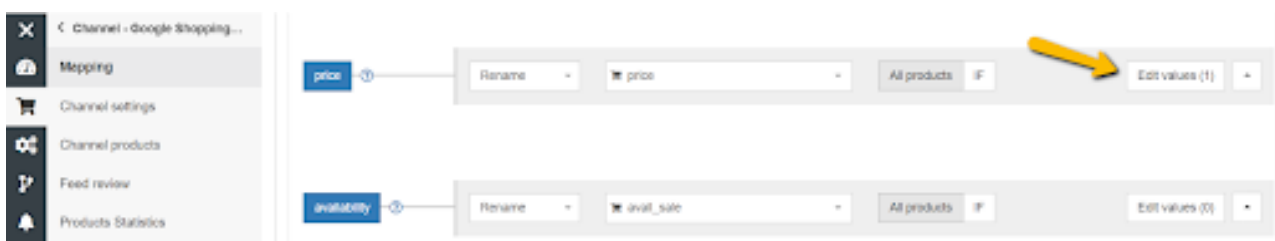
Probable cause: There are 2 possible reasons for why you received the Missing or incorrect required attribute [price] error:

- You haven't assigned the currency (especially if it's accompanied by another error: 'Unsupported currency in attribute price')
- You provided no price or incorrect value for price

**Solution:**

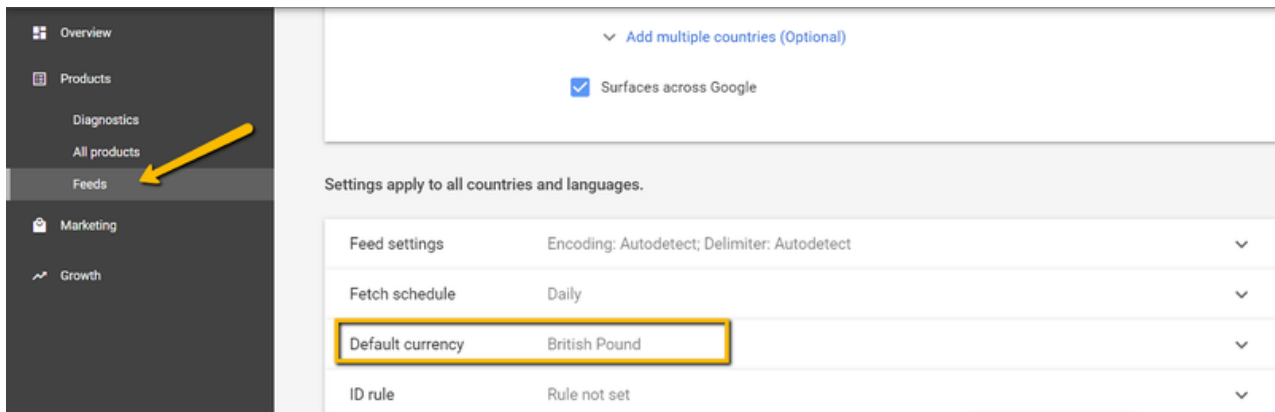
*Scenario 1: Missing currency or incorrectly formatted currency*

You may have sent over the correct prices, but including the currency is just as important. To specify the currency in the feed proceed to 'Edit values', and use the 'add a suffix' option.





Remember to include the currency code (USD) and not the symbol (\$).



### Scenario 2: No price provided or incorrect value for price

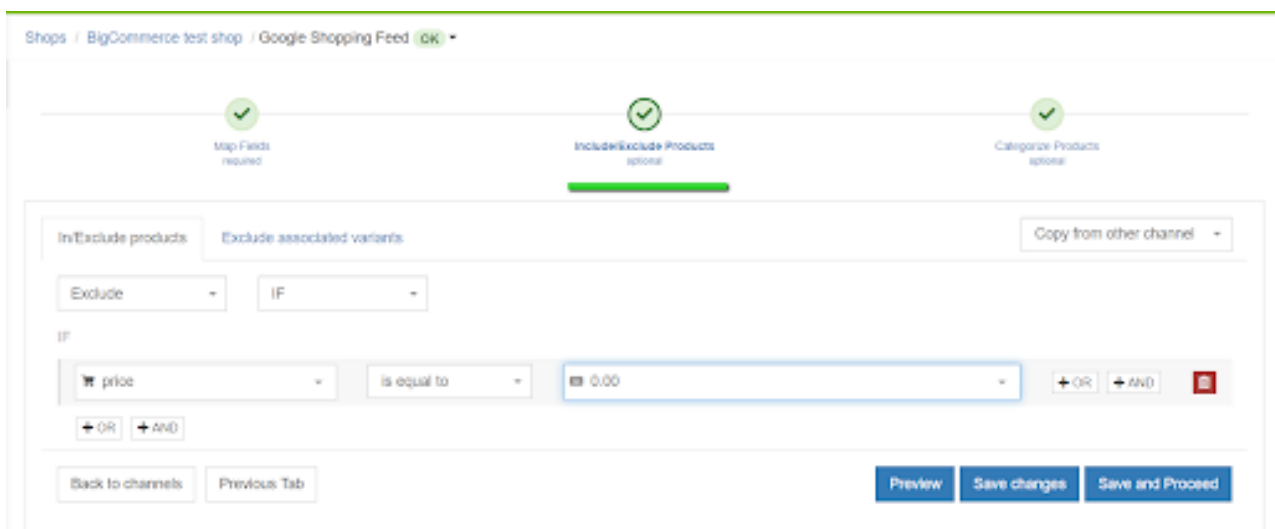
'Missing or incorrect required attribute [price]', one of the initial error messages you receive upon uploading your feed, is connected with not fulfilling basic requirements for the price attribute.

Unsupported price values include:

- 0.00;
- blank field;

Here's how to correct your mapping for the 'price' feed attribute:

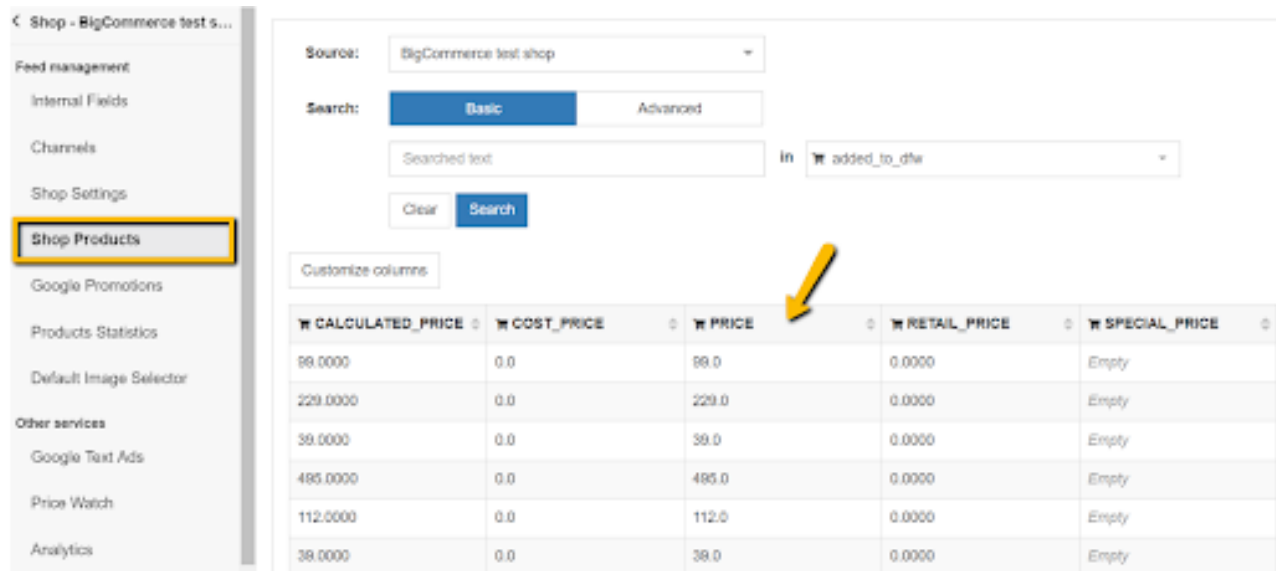
If the feed contains items offered for free at your store the solution would be **to exclude them**. You may do so in the 'Include/Exclude products' section by setting up a rule based on price:



If you're missing the price value for some of your products, it's worth checking further.

Perhaps you've initially chosen the wrong 'price' field from your shop system. For example, 'sale\_price', which is only populated for items that are on sale at any given time.

**Identify the right field from your source and make sure you've assigned it to the 'price' attribute.**



Source: BigCommerce test shop

Search: Basic Advanced

Searched text: in added\_to\_dfw

Clear Search

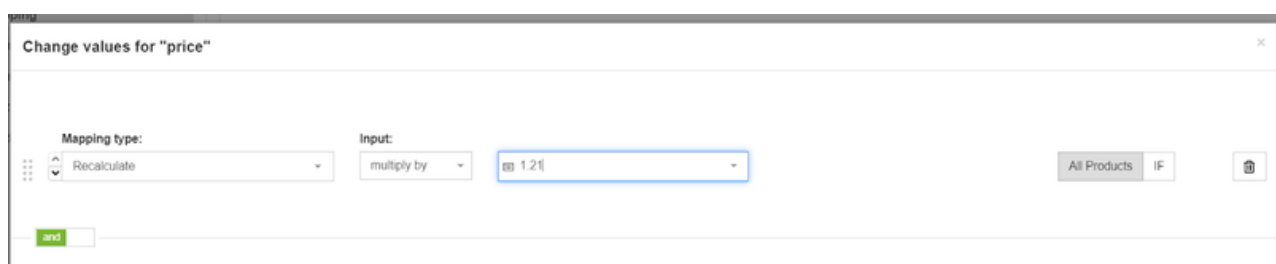
Customize columns

| ⌵ CALCULATED_PRICE ⌵ | ⌵ COST_PRICE ⌵ | ⌵ PRICE ⌵ | ⌵ RETAIL_PRICE ⌵ | ⌵ SPECIAL_PRICE ⌵ |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------|
| 99.0000              | 0.0            | 99.0      | 0.0000           | Empty             |
| 229.0000             | 0.0            | 229.0     | 0.0000           | Empty             |
| 39.0000              | 0.0            | 39.0      | 0.0000           | Empty             |
| 495.0000             | 0.0            | 495.0     | 0.0000           | Empty             |
| 112.0000             | 0.0            | 112.0     | 0.0000           | Empty             |
| 39.0000              | 0.0            | 39.0      | 0.0000           | Empty             |

### Issue: VAT

#### **Solution:**

If your online store exports prices excluding VAT but your product pages list the price including VAT, you can apply a simple fix. **'recalculate' your prices to include VAT** (multiply by 1.21 to add 21%) and enter the new price in your channel feed.



Change values for "price"

Mapping type: Recalculate

Input: multiply by 1.21

All Products IF

and

### Issue: Too many decimals

Imagine you create a price field for a channel that accepts 2 decimals (e.g. 12.45) and your prices have 4 (12.4500). You need to cut off the last 2 digits to make sure that your products will not be disapproved.

**Solution:**

Rules with Regular Expressions (RegExp) will do that for you. In your data feed tool, you can create a rule like this:

**Change values for "price"**

Mapping type: Replace single value

Input: `([0-9]+([0-9](2))([0-9](2)))`

with: `$!`

☒ use regexp

All Products IF

If that looks complicated and you are not familiar with RegExp, just ping the support staff (support@datafeedwatch.com) of your data feed tool – they will get you any regular expression you need.





**Issue: Sales Price**

If you have products on sale, you need to make sure that this sales price is shown in your feed. If that is not the case:

Google and other channels won't approve your feed. You do not benefit from the sale if you don't communicate the lower price.

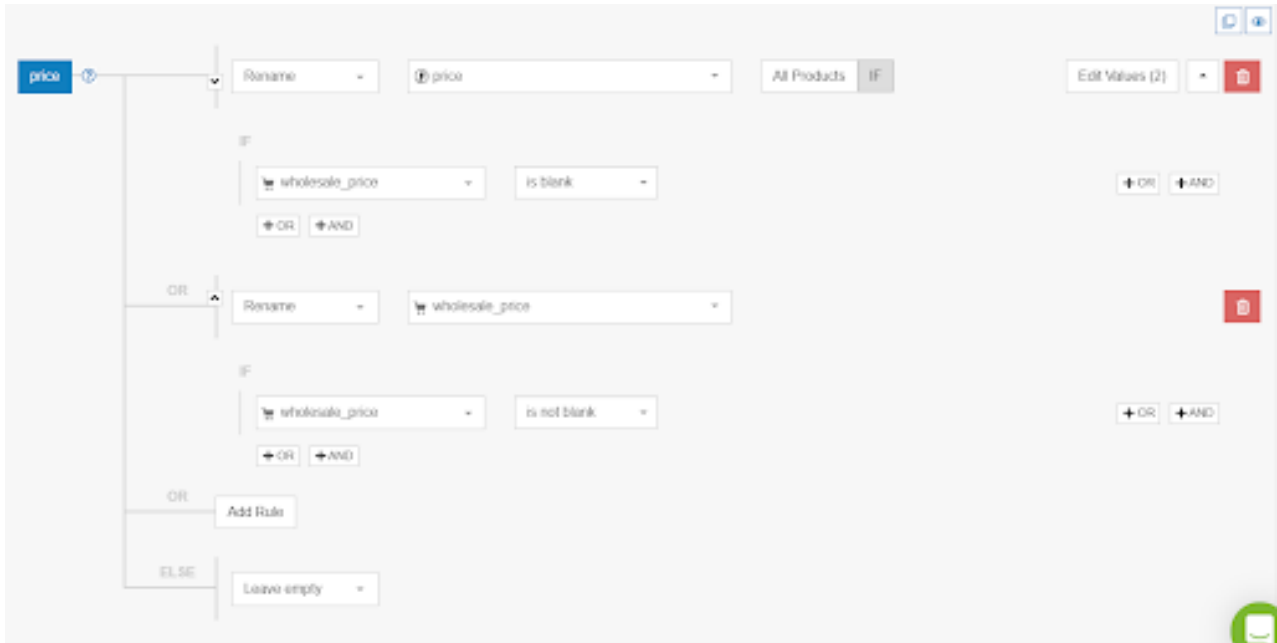
**Solution:**

Defining your sale\_price and the timeframe for that, gives Google Shopping the ability to show your product ads as 'On Sale' making them more attractive for potential buyers.

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|  <p>Salomon Speedcross 5 9.5<br/>Men's Black<br/>4.6 ★★★★★ 940<br/>More options</p> <p><b>\$96.73</b><br/>REI<br/>Free shipping</p> <p>Compare prices from 5+ stores</p> |  <p>Salomon Men's Speedcross 5<br/>Trail Running Shoes, Black</p> <p><b>\$129.99</b><br/>DICK'S Sporting Goods<br/>Free shipping</p> |  <p>Salomon Men's Speedcross 5<br/>GTX Trail-Running Shoes Blue<br/>4.7 ★★★★★ 423<br/>More options</p> <p><b>\$104.93</b> <del>\$160.00</del><br/>REI<br/>Free shipping</p> <p>Compare prices from 3 stores</p> |  <p>Salomon Women's Speedcross 5<br/>Shoes<br/>4.6 ★★★★★ 577<br/>More options</p> <p><b>\$97.50</b> <del>\$100.00</del><br/>Salomon.com<br/>Free shipping</p> |
|---|---|---|--|

If you have products on sale, you need to make sure that this sales price is shown in your feed. If that is not the case:

Google and other channels won't approve your feed. You do not benefit from the sale if you don't communicate the lower price.



Usually, the input field for the sales price only contains a value for the products that are on sale; for the other products it will be empty.

## Shipping & Tax

For Google Shopping, the Google Merchant Center is the best place to create settings for Shipping and Tax.

If you have a shipping cost structure that is too complex for the Merchant Center, you need to create it in your feed. For most other channels, you also need to add the shipping cost to your feed.

Shipping 3

All IF

country +

Add static value ▼ United Kingdom ▼ All Products IF

price +

Combine ▼ 10.00 ▼ GBP ▼ All Products IF

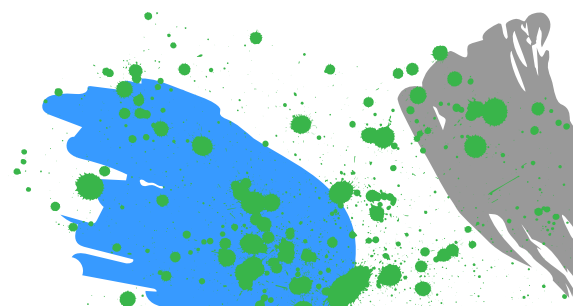
+ FIELD

Separator:

space ▼

**NOTE:**

The rates set in your feed will overwrite the rates set in your Google Merchant Center!



## CHAPTER FOUR: IMPROVE FEED QUALITY

After meeting all requirements, your feed is good to go. You can start advertising on the shopping channels of your choice. This is where things get interesting. This is what separates amateurs from pros.

If the feed is properly optimized it will catch better-qualified traffic with a higher likelihood to buy.

There is a simple rationale to it:

- The more information you provide to the channel, the better the channel can match your products to what the consumer is searching for.
- The more detailed the information in the product ad, the more likely the consumer is to click and buy.
- Better information leads to a higher CTR and conversion rate.

**This chapter will show you the following ways to improve the quality of your data feed:**

1. Create better TITLES
2. Develop your DESCRIPTIONS
3. Improve your IMAGES
4. Set AVAILABILITY
5. Add MISSING FIELDS
6. Create CATEGORIES
7. Choose VARIANTS or PARENTS
8. Schedule MULTIPLE UPDATES per day

### Titles

The title is one of the most important items in your data feed because it shows in the Product Ad. Optimizing the title is important because **both the consumer and the channel's algorithms are looking at the (key)words in your title.**

### Why Product Titles are Important – The Impact of Product Titles

Product titles are one of the feed attributes that, when enhanced, **have an immediate impact on the performance of your ads.** There have been dozens of case studies done around this topic, but still many e-retailers dismiss the importance of this attribute.

**EXAMPLES:**

A couple of years back Search Engine Land presented a case study that showed just how important it is to optimize your titles. There were 3 groups of products - one control group with original titles, and 2 groups with enriched titles that included category information, additional attributes and finally search terms.

**The result?**

The more keyword-rich product titles saw a CTR **uplift of 18 percent; while the CTR increase on the exact query match to the term that was added to the title was 88 percent!**

Title optimization is a crucial part of improving your campaigns. By increasing impressions you grow your advertising revenue, and thus improve your ROAS.

Giving suitable details in your titles makes them work well for high-purchase intent searches.

It will ensure a better match between the search query, and the ad that is shown. This then results in higher conversion rates.

**Include Brand, Color and Other Relevant Attributes**

The title should be relevant and compelling so that it convinces shoppers to click your ad instead of the one next to it.

If you sell watches, you don't want the title to be JR 1436. That does not mean anything. You want it to show the most important information, eg. Fossil Men's watch JR1436. **So make sure you include Brand (Fossil) and Product type (Men's watch) in your Title.**

Queries that include the brand, product type, color, size, gender and other attributes indicate that the shopper is already advanced in the buying process. Longer searches are very likely to convert compared to shorter searches that include brand and product type only.

**What should you include?**

The attributes you will want to include depend on the vertical you're in. Here's a chart with the best practices on how to structure your titles based on category.

## Recommended Title Structure per Vertical

Relevant **key attributes and their sequence in the title differ across products type and industries**. Like for example model numbers are an important attribute for electronics but not an attribute to highlight when it comes to clothing.

We have prepared a sneak peek of how to structure your product title depending on the vertical.



## Include Keywords

Ensure that important keywords are included. **Use the search term report to see which queries have converted and use them in your titles.** Also, you should be mirroring product information from the website, so when users click the ad, they will find the same information on the site.

### The Role of Keywords in The Product Titles

The attributes of your titles are a proxy for keywords, so optimizing them and other feed data is crucial to improving the campaign's performance.

**Shopping algorithms share common points with SEO**, therefore putting the most important words in the product title is crucial for the optimization process.

If you know your industry well and you have analyzed customers' paths, you know how they go about searching for your products.



- Will they search by brand name? Then use your brand first. But if your brand is largely unknown or you are selling unbranded items, use descriptive words first.
- Will they search by category or maybe by product's UPI (as in the case of electronic devices)?

Your knowledge will help you understand the intent of your customer and find applicable keywords to boost the title.

Reports and statistics are worth trusting when it comes to finding the right keywords for your titles. Don't forget to explore your search query report, starting with queries that are converting well and those that aren't.

**Use keywords with a positive impact on your product feed health.** Properly optimized titles can boost your campaign impressions and clicks quickly.

**Consider the order of keywords.** The sequence matters as there is a weight put on keywords placed at the beginning of the title. **While choosing keywords and their order don't forget about testing.** Check out multiple title formulas and keywords. That is the best way to tailor your tactics according to performance.

## What Does An Optimized Product Title Look Like?

### Structure vs. Important Information

**The structure of the title is just as important as the information included in it.** They are two complimenting components.

To figure out which attributes should be added, you need to understand how the algorithm chooses products to be displayed.

Generally, comparison search engines consider the words at the beginning of the product title as the most significant when selecting ads relevant to the search query. So **the order also matters.**

Here are some recommended title structures that can be used as templates:

- Brand + Product Type + Color + Material
- Brand + Size (length, width, height) + Product Type + Color
- Material + Product Type + Color + Brand
- Style + Color + Product Type + Brand
- Product Type + Size + Color + Feature + Brand



## Advertising Product Variations Efficiently

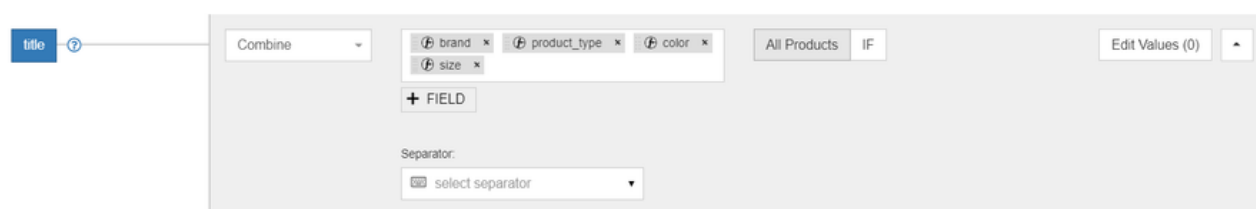
If you're selling a product with multiple variants, **each color, size, material, and pattern must be submitted as a unique item with the unique title.**

This is when you have to decide if you want to advertise a “parent” product on its own, or also advertise its variants. Pay attention to this detail as it’s easy to overlook.

## How to Include All The Important Attributes in Titles

When you have completed a comprehensive analysis of your reports, vertical and product types, you can then **combine the most relevant attributes in your title.** This can easily be done using DataFeedWatch, with the assistance of rule-based mapping.

To include every relevant attribute in your title, you can simply combine them, like below:



## Tested Tactics to Optimize Your Title

### ● Keep length limits in mind:

Pay attention to your title lengths. Ensure they don't exceed the maximum character length to avoid your title being truncated.

### ● Avoid Capitalization

Capitalized text is common in spam and untrustworthy ads. Use capitalization only when it's needed. Including abbreviations, phone numbers or countries.

### ● Don't include promotional text

Don't add information such as price, sale price, sale dates, shipping, delivery date, other time-related information, or your company's name. That information is reserved for other attributes.

### ● Avoid words from foreign languages

Unless they're well understood by everyone, including words from foreign languages might cause confusion for shoppers and negatively impact your ads performance.

### ● Distinguish between variants

Be specific and add the distinguishing details of each variant. Does your product come in different colors or sizes? Include these attributes in the title (and remember to use your variant images!)

## A/B Testing Product Titles in DataFeedWatch

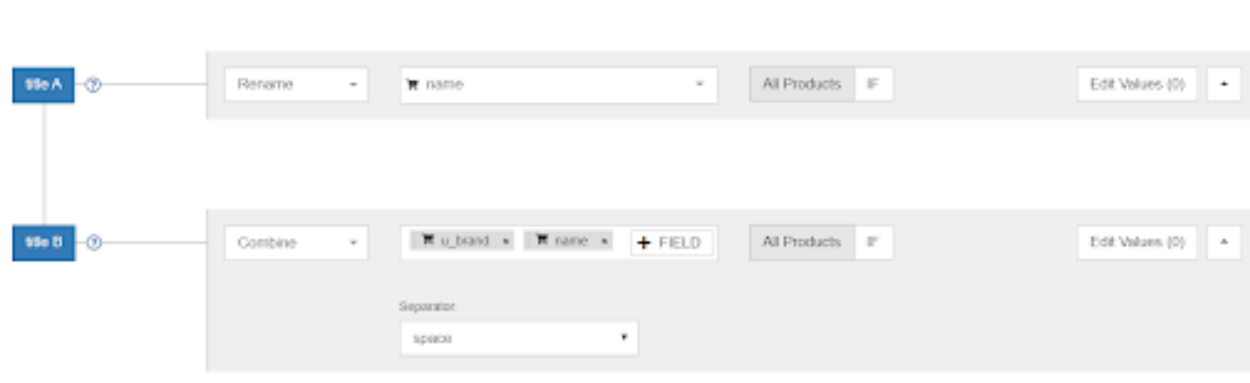
### How does it work?

- First and foremost, the new functionality enables you to simultaneously run 2 different versions of titles across your product portfolio. Then you can compare the performance data sets in a clear overview.
- This opens a window of opportunity for the Retailers to easily discover the perfect title configuration and make strategic adjustments across their feeds.

Before we get hands-on with the functionality, let's understand the mechanism:

1. **Tracking:** for the A/B test to make sense, you need a method for collecting performance data on each. We achieve this by automatically appending a tracking parameter to the product link.
2. **Channels:** A/B test for titles is available across all channel feeds that contain product URLs (see point above). Google Shopping, Facebook, Instagram, and Google Search Ads are just a few examples. For eBay or Amazon feeds, the experimental feature is not available.
3. **Distribution:** only one title version can be assigned to each item ID. We distribute the A-title and the B-title evenly between all products. Therefore, the Variant A will be assigned to the products 00001, 00003, 00005, etc. and the Variant B to the products 00002, 00004, 00006, etc.

The results are based on a group of products that have been assigned to a version A or B.



## Descriptions

People that clicked your product ad are interested in learning more about your product. The Description will get them more detailed information and hopefully convince them to buy your product.

### Clean up Your Descriptions

Make sure that your descriptions are well written and make corrections if necessary.

### Add the relevant information

Make sure that the description contains all the details that a customer may be looking for. If it doesn't, append extra information by combining your Description with other attributes. For example, **combine description with free shipping and color and size and material for all products.**

### What if You Do Not Have a Description?

If your products do not have a description (or it was not exported from your store), **you can create one by combining regular text, product type, title and all relevant attributes.**

#### PRO TIP:

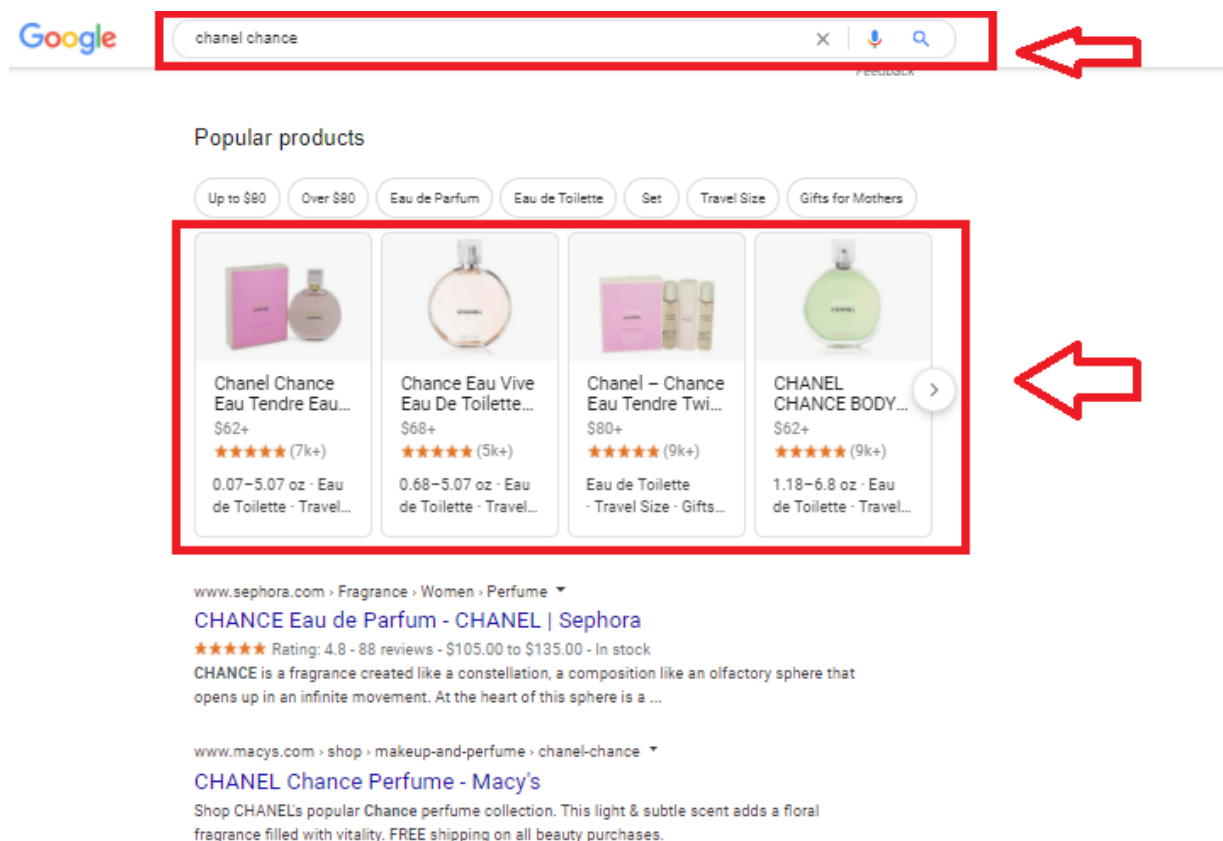
To improve and rewrite descriptions, use the lookup table. This way you will ensure that the potential customers will be exposed to clear and easily readable product description when interacting with the ad.

#### PRO TIP FOR GOOGLE SHOPPING:

##### Optimize Product Descriptions for Snippets

Featured snippets are selected results in Google search. In product page SEO, optimizing for featured snippets can help an ecommerce business introduce a consumer to the product before they visit the website.

As a result, when a consumer enters a keyword related to your product, they will get a featured snippet of it in the search results:



### How to optimize your product pages for featured snippets?

- Focus your keywords on search intent. If your product appears at the right time, answering the intent of the searchers, they will be more likely to purchase it.
- Break down your product descriptions. Enumerate every product feature with a bullet list to make the product description easier for Google to crawl. Also, don't forget about the readability of the product description. To check the text readability fast, you can use tools like TrustMyPaper that offer editing and proofreading services.
- Analyze how people are looking for products. One way you can check it is in the "People also ask" box in Google results. These insights will help you better understand how consumers are looking for product information and expand your list of keywords.

### Images

The role of imagery itself is an increasing phenomenon across all eCommerce platforms. While being an online retailer you just cannot overlook the significance of high-quality visual representations in the era of image search and shoppable images.

**Images play one of the biggest parts in a customer's decision to purchase an item.** Not having the best one can drastically lower the quality of your feed and hinder your overall results.

A healthy Product Feed, including well-optimized images, is the heart of a satisfying ad campaign's performance.

The product image is the single most important part of any product ad. The image dominates the ad and people focus more on images, and less on text. It is crucial that your feed contains the best image and, if possible, multiple images per product.

### Why Google Shopping Product Images are so Important

3 days after hearing information people are likely to remember only 10% of it. However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retained 65% of the information three days later.

The challenge with online shopping is that people can't touch or see the actual product. That's why the role of images is enormous.



### Grab Attention With the Image

**The combination of images and text results with better campaign performance.** The image is the most important component of your ad also because that's the first thing shoppers can compare with competitors.

By selecting the right image you can tell shoppers something important about your product, service or brand. Shoppers crave images as they are easy to digest.

### Select the BEST IMAGE

These are the three most common image problems that merchants experience:

#### ● The Wrong Color / Variant

A product often has color variants. For each color there is an image associated in the feed. If you cannot match the blue product to the blue image, any other color may show up in the search results.

#### ● Disapproved Images with Text Overlay

Sometimes images contain text, like Free Shipping or On sale. Google and other channels disapprove products with these text overlays. Make sure that the image with the overlay doesn't not show up in your feed.

#### ● The Worst Picture is Shown

You have several images on your site, showing the product from different angles or in different situations. But in the feed you want the primary image, the one that does the best job selling it. Without any control over your images, your feed may contain the picture that shows the bottom or the backside of your product.

## Use Additional Images

**Make use of the `additional_image_link` attribute** and add up to 10 extra images to your listing. Usually, additional images show the product from a different angle or with product staging elements.

Shopping channels often show multiple images of a product. They'll display the main image with clickable thumbnails on the side. That is a compelling view, so it is worthwhile to add all your images to a feed.



## Test Lifestyle Images vs. Plain Images

Any retailer wants the campaign to be bland and uninspiring. To avoid wasting your ad spend, check if dynamic lifestyle images suit your product or service better.



So, **investigate which product images or lifestyle images are more suitable and find which works best** for your brand.

**PRO TIP:**

If you're a Shopify store owner - check out this advanced hack on [how to set lifestyle images in your feed](#). The solution uses a custom attribute to pull in and favor lifestyle images over studio images.

## Regularly Conduct A/B Testing

**The feed is not just a cold set of data.** This especially concerns your product images. How else could you discover what is the most vital component of your ad if not by making A/B tests?

**Check image variations, analyze the results and apply adjustments** to improve the performance of your ads. Take the guesswork out of the equation and find out what your customers respond to.

## Why Google Shopping Product Images are so Important

### ● Text on the image

Since clear images of a product help to inform online shoppers, promotional text on ads is often forbidden. If you want to add extra text, utilize the product description section.

### ● Broken links

If the shopping engine can't access the link, it won't be shown, simple as that. Avoid adding spaces or other unreadable elements to your URL. Also, make sure you double-check the URL is still valid and hasn't been moved or removed altogether.

### ● Watermarks

A watermark may seem like a great idea for branding but it is an easy way to land yourself a disapproval.

### ● Generic Images

Beware of the "generic images" disapproval! This happens when for some reason you don't have images for a product and you fill the image\_link field with a default image, usually simply your company logo.

**PRO TIP:**

You can now [automatically improve uploaded images](#) in Google Merchant Center. Ensure they meet requirements, and improve overall user experience with automatic image improvements.



## Availability

It is crucial to advertise only products that are available (in stock), so that you will not:

- advertise products that you cannot deliver (and thus not waste your advertising money).
- lose sales by not advertising products that you have ready to ship.

Shopping comparison engines want you to **include all products in your feed and indicate for each product if it is available**.

**The 'Availability' field indicates whether your product is 'in stock' or 'out of stock'. If it is set to 'out of stock'.**

You can create one simple rule in a data feed tool to set Availability automatically based on a field like Quantity or Stock status.

The screenshot shows a configuration interface for a data feed tool. On the left, a blue box labeled 'availability' is connected to a rule configuration area. The rule is set to 'out of stock' with a dropdown menu showing 'Add static value' and 'out of stock'. Below this, there are two conditional rules connected by an 'OR' operator. The first conditional rule is 'IF' 'manage\_stock' 'is less or equal to' 0. The second conditional rule is 'IF' 'manage\_stock' 'is greater than' 0. Each conditional rule has a dropdown menu for 'Add static value' and a dropdown menu for the value (0). There are also buttons for '+OR' and '+AND' to add more conditions.

Exclude all products from your data feed for which you have 1 or less in stock.

## Missing Fields

Sometimes your product feed does not contain certain attributes (fields) that are mandatory or that you need in order to optimize the quality of your feed.

The most obvious examples are:

- **Color:** For example Google requires 'color' to be a separate field for merchants that sell apparel. On most other channels it is not mandatory, but a color field will still help to match your product with search queries
- **Product type:** never mandatory, but much better for your bid strategy.
- **Brand:** another attribute that enables shopping channels to compare products.

These types of attributes are usually mentioned in other fields (like Description or Title). With a data feed tool, you can extract these attributes easily and add them as a separate field.

The screenshot shows a rule configuration interface. At the top, a rule is defined for the 'color' attribute with a static value of 'red'. Below this, an 'IF' section contains two conditions: 'description' includes 'red' and 'title' includes 'red', connected by an 'AND' operator. There are also 'OR' and 'ELSE' branches for further rule configuration. The interface includes various input fields, dropdown menus, and buttons for adding rules and values.

### Add As Many Attributes As You Can

In general, **the quality of your data feed increases with every bit of information you add**. More information enables the shopping channel to better match your product with a search query (and thus increase conversion rate) and to compare your products with the offerings of other merchants.

### Optional fields

Although not required, **Optional Fields can be a gold mine**. Fields such as **the shipping cost, sale price, product types and others can be real ROI boosters**, since the products will not only show up more often in search queries but will also convert better.

### Custom fields

Some channels will even allow you to submit information in a field that you can name yourself. That is a good solution if you would like to include an attribute in your data feed, where the channels do not have a field.

## Categories

Most of the channels require advertisers to provide categories for their products.

The taxonomy is crucial for the product ads as it helps channels identify if the products in a feed are a good match for any given shopper query.

Some channels do not require a category or accept your own product types or follow the Google taxonomy. That is easy enough!

Nonetheless, the taxonomy is important on all channels, but in particular to Google Shopping because:

- The right category increases the chance that your products will show up for the right search queries and your CTRs will improve
- By having better CTRs your product ads will have a better chance when competing with similar products

If your ads become more relevant, the costs of your Shopping Ads will go down.

**Other channels use Google's Product Category: Bing Shopping, Facebook Dynamic Product Ads, and Criteo.** Once you're done with selecting the right categories for Google, you can proceed and expand your multichannel strategy

#### PRO TIP:

If you are selling in more than one country and you have mapped your categories in English, you can use the categorization for all the other countries where Google Shopping has a presence.

## Categories Challenges

With the automatic product categorization by Google, there is a risk of getting your products assigned incorrectly. That may bring about negative consequences for the advertiser, such as item disapprovals or having their ads triggered by irrelevant searches. This is why Google allows Merchants to override the automatically assigned category with 'google\_product\_category' attribute.

Selecting the right category for your products is not rocket science, but the downside is that **Google has more than 6,000 categories**. Finding the right category becomes a tedious task especially for those who have large feeds with hundreds and thousands of diverse products.



## Manual Categorization

You may choose to overwrite the categories that Google automatically assigns to your products.

The title says it all: you have to manually categorize all products. **To do so, you need to go to Google's Taxonomy page, download the entire list of categories and subcategories.** You can then proceed to select the best category for each product.

You can download the list of products here and then use the search functionality in Excel to find the best categories for each product. This strategy works well if you don't have lots of products in your feed.

**KEEP IN MIND:**

Choose wisely: an item could be a good fit for more than one category, so in this case, you have to select the most appropriate one.

## Automatic Categorization

### How is this different from Google's automatic categorization?

The key distinction is that you can automatically assign categories of your choice, rather than leaving that up to the algorithms.

Such a **solution can be done only with the help of a third-party tool**. At DataFeedWatch, we have created a system to match each product type to the most appropriate Google subcategory, in a matter of seconds:

1. **You select the Default Category** so that the products don't get disapproved - it should be a general category (if some products are not mapped with your subcategory rules, they will be put in this particular category)
2. **Choose field in your input feed** that corresponds to your product types/categories
3. **Generate rules** based on this field in the data feed
4. **Type in a few letters and select** the best category for that type of product

The screenshot displays the DataFeedWatch interface for automatic categorization. At the top, three status indicators are shown: 'Map Fields required' (green checkmark), 'Include/Exclude Products optional' (green checkmark), and 'Categorize Products optional' (green checkmark). Below these, the 'Default category' is set to 'Apparel & Accessories'. The 'Auto generated rules' section shows 'product type' selected as the field, with a '+ Generate' button highlighted by a red arrow and the number 3. A dropdown menu is open, showing a list of categories including 'Home & Garden > Linens & Bedding > Bedding > Mattress Protectors', 'Home & Garden > Linens & Bedding > Bedding > Mattress Protectors > Mattress Encasements', 'Home & Garden > Linens & Bedding > Bedding > Mattress Protectors > Mattress Pads', and 'Sporting Goods > Outdoor Recreation > Camping & Hiking >'. The word 'mattress' is entered in the search bar, and the 'mattress' category is highlighted by a red arrow and the number 4. The interface also includes buttons for 'Back to channels', 'Previous Tab', 'Preview', 'Save changes', and 'Save and Proceed'.

**The process is pain-free and much faster** than having to do it manually. And to make it even better; **if Google changes anything in their taxonomy we automatically update your categories.**

By mapping your categories using this system you cut down the risk of having products disapproved in the Merchant Center.

If category mapping is your Achilles heel then we suggest you read this guide on [how to map the categories for Google Shopping without going crazy.](#)

### Variants or Parents

Should you include all variants in your data feed to Google and other shopping channels, or only the parent products? There are pros and cons to each decision so let's see which option you should go for.

#### DEFINITION:

Variants are **a group of identical products that only differ by attributes like 'color', 'material', 'pattern', or 'size'**. A T-shirt (parent product) in 3 sizes and 5 colors may have a total of 15 Variants.

### Why Include Variants in Your Feed?

#### ● **Mandatory for certain channels**

Some channels require you to include all variants as a unique product.

#### ● **More clicks**

People may be looking for a red T-shirt. If you are not showing the red variant, your T-shirt will not show up in the search results. Same goes for size or material. If people enter a very specific search query (that includes attributes like the above), they are probably ready to buy.

#### ● **Availability**

Channels like Google will not show products that are out of stock. The information about availability/quantity in your source feed is on variant level, so you have no data on the parent level. Since you must add a value for each product, you have no other choice but to set it to 'in stock'. This means that you will spend your advertising dollars on out-of-stock-products.



### ● Avoid wrong product data

Fields like color, size, age group and gender are not available on parent level. But Google and other channels require you to enter this data for every product. That means that you need to enter fixed values for all products.

Prospective buyers may still make it to your product pages, but they will be quick to leave your page when they find out that you don't offer what they were searching for.

#### DEFINITION:

**A parent product is “the main product” with all attributes** in 1 field instead of having each variant as a separate product.

### Why Only Include Parents in Your Feed?

#### ● Mandatory for certain channels

Some channels only want to receive a feed with parent products. They need the variants-information as well, but they want to receive that with all colors (or all sizes, etc.) in a single field.

#### ● Different Variant Prices

Some variants cost more than others. That T-shirt may be \$10 for all colors, but the XXXL is \$12. Google compares all prices in the feed with the prices on the Product pages. If that is not the same, Google will reject that product.

Many shopping carts have one URL for all variants. On that page there is only one price. The other prices will only show if you select another color or size from the pull-down on that page.

So, Google will end up disapproving all variants with a price that is different from the price of the 'default-variant'. Downloading parents will only prevent mass-disapproval if you do not have a unique URL for each variant.

#### ● Cost

You have fewer products in your source feed which makes it cheaper and easier to handle. Some retailers may have 1 million variants, but only 25,000 parent products. The cost of data feed optimization for 1 million products is often too high. But for 25,000 it's affordable.

## Variants or Parents?

In most cases, **we think that including Variants is better**. Go for Parents-only if you have so many variants that data feed optimization is unaffordable.

The cost of presenting the wrong data about color, availability, and other variant-data will often outweigh the savings on your data feed.

**Most shopping carts have a way to export all variants from your store.** A good data feed tool is able to adapt your feed to each channel's requirements.

If only parents are exported it will generate a new feed with all variants, based on the information in the parents-only feed. Or, 'merge' all variant-options into a parents-feed.

### Multiple Updates Per Day

Accurate data is crucial to feed quality. Prices and quantities change throughout the day. Updating your data feeds several times per day helps you to keep your data as accurate as possible. It will also increase your campaign performance.

#### Benefits of multiple daily feed updates

- **Adjust the quantities of your stock**

Advertising products that are out of stock means your ad spend is completely wasted. If your customer clicks on a product that you no longer have in stock, it creates a bad customer experience and may negatively affect your campaign.

- **Special offers**

You may be offering hourly special offers to your customers. Having frequent daily feed update capabilities allows you to manage this process more effectively.

- **More effective re-pricing**

After reviewing competitor prices for the same products, you may decide that your prices need to be adjusted so that they are more competitive than other online shopping deals.



## How to Update Multiple Times per Day

**You need your shop to export your feed multiple times per day or schedule multiple downloads in your data feed tool.** Please note that downloading your product data from your store multiple times per day only makes sense if your channels also accept uploading frequently.

### Updating Google Merchant Center

Google only allows you to upload your feed once per day, but they also accept an update of prices and quantities once per day. You need to create a separate feed called Google Inventory Update feed that contains only 5 fields:

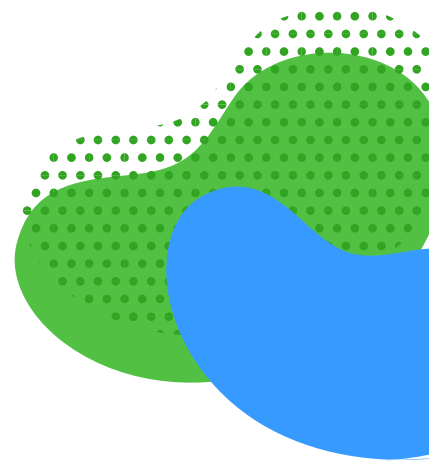
- id
- price
- availability
- sale price
- sale price effective date

### Update to Google FTP

If you have an FTP-account with Google, it is possible to upload your feed (via FTP) many times per day. Here's more info on how to do that.

### Update to other shopping channels

Other channels also work with 'fetching' (from http) or uploading (via FTP) and they all have their own specifications. The most important thing is to make sure that you know how often you are allowed to update on a channel and make sure that the download frequency is in line with that.





# CHAPTER FIVE: IMPROVE ROI

When your feed is meeting all channel requirements and is as optimized as can be, it is time for the last round: **Make modifications to your feeds that will have a direct impact on your campaign-ROI.**

This chapter explains how the data feeds and the campaigns are completely interlinked. You can optimize your campaigns by adding and removing products and data to your feeds.

## Improve Your ROI – Campaigns' Best Practices

1. **Do not advertise all your products**
2. **Remove unprofitable products**
3. **Bid on product type**
4. **Add gross margin to your feed**
5. **Use Price Watch**
6. **Bid on your best sellers**
7. **Lower the bids on your losers**
8. **Use custom labels**
9. **Promotions**
10. **Use RegEx**
11. **[BONUS HACK] Product IDs**



### Do Not Advertise All Your Products

Why would you advertise all your products? There are many good reasons to **exclude all kinds of products from your data feeds**. Consider these examples as inspiration to make your own selection.

#### ● Your cheapest products

The gross margin on a \$10 product may be as low as \$2.50. If your CPA exceeds that number, you will lose money every time you sell one of these items.

## ● Summer Coats In The Winter

Why advertise products for when it's not the right season? People may click those ads, but they won't end up buying the product

The screenshot shows a feed tool interface with three main sections at the top: 'Map Fields required' (green checkmark), 'Include/Exclude Products optional' (green checkmark), and 'Categorize Products optional' (red X). The 'Include/Exclude Products' section is active, showing a rule configuration. The rule is set to 'Exclude' with the condition 'IF'. The rule criteria are 'description' includes 'winter' and 'description' includes 'jacket'. The 'Categorize Products' section is marked as optional and red.

## ● Competitive Categories

If you know that 'clickers' usually never become 'buyers' for a certain category or brand, because your competitors are always undercutting your prices, why advertise them at all?

In a feed tool **you can create rules that allow you to exclude products** based on more than one criterion

The screenshot shows a feed tool interface with three main sections at the top: 'Map Fields required' (green checkmark), 'Include/Exclude Products optional' (green checkmark), and 'Categorize Products optional' (red X). The 'Include/Exclude Products' section is active, showing a rule configuration. The rule is set to 'Exclude' with the condition 'IF'. The rule criteria are 'price' is less than 10, 'g\_brand' includes 'Orlnd', and 'g\_product\_type' includes 'Shorts'. The 'Categorize Products' section is marked as optional and red. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Back to channels', 'Previous Tab', 'Preview', 'Save changes', and 'Save and Proceed'.

## Unprofitable Products

There are many products that generate a loss instead of a profit. **The trick to optimizing your spending is to identify your "Losers" and remove them from your campaign.**

Examples of unprofitable products are:

- many clicks and no conversions
- many conversions at a very high CPA

Removing unprofitable products is the single most important step to increasing your ROI.

**If you are not using a data feed tool, you need to go on each channel and create filters to identify the unprofitable products.**

After you've identified the products you can proceed and exclude them from the feed. Since many channels do not offer tracking, you will never know which products (sold on which channels) are profitable and which are not.

A good data feed tool tracks all your sales and makes it very easy to identify and remove unprofitable products with just a few clicks.

Show Parent Products

Pause/Unpause ▾

Customize Columns

Visits ▾

is greater than ▾

100

ROAS ▾





is less than ▾

8

☒

Pause selected products

Unpause selected products

|                                     | ID   | TITLE                               | CHANNEL         | IMAGE_LINK  | VISITS<br>(CLICKS) | CPC  | COST   | TRANS-<br>ACTIONS | CPA   | REVENUE  | ROAS |
|-------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|--------------------|------|--------|-------------------|-------|----------|------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1875 | 501 Original Fit - Dark stonewash   | Google Shopping |  | 365                | 0.41 | 148.00 | 12                | 12.33 | 1,099.92 | 7.4  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1822 | Tailored Western Shirt - Pool color | Kelkoo.         |  | 265                | 0.31 | 82.00  | 8                 | 10.25 | 533.28   | 6.5  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1559 | Levi's Belt 10732 'Dark Brown'      | Shopzilla       |  | 348                | 0.22 | 75.00  | 12                | 6.25  | 403.00   | 5.4  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1871 | Levi's Shoes 214894 'Navy Blue'     | Kelkoo          |  | 392                | 0.17 | 67.00  | 11                | 6.09  | 303.71   | 4.5  |

## Bid on Product Type

Most shopping channels enable you to make bids based on their categories. Some channels, especially Google Shopping, also let you bid on your own product types.

### DEFINITION:

**Product type is how you categorize your products in your online store.** It is often equal to the navigation on your site. Don't confuse it with Google Product Category: that is their categorization.

Google Product Categories are often used to set bids in Shopping Campaigns, but in most cases they are too generic.

### EXAMPLE:

If you sell rings, you probably have silver, gold and diamond rings in your store.

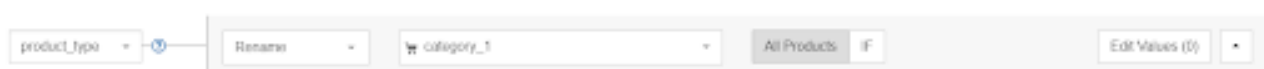
**Separate bids for each of these three ring-types is not possible if your bids are based on Google categories**, because there is only one suitable category: "Apparel & Accessories > Jewelry > Rings".

That is why you should consider mapping "Google Product Type": Use your own unique categorization and set bids for them in your Shopping campaign. The field "Product type" is not required, but it is definitely worth using.

## How to Add Product Types to Your Feed

### 1. Rename from Category

You can simply rename your Categories to Product Types with a single rule



## 2. Create Product Type from Description

If your shopping cart does not output any category data, you can still create a field for product type, based on keywords in your descriptions (or other fields).

The screenshot shows a configuration interface for a product feed rule. The rule is named 'product\_type' and is set to 'All Products'. It features a main 'IF' condition with two branches connected by an 'OR' operator. The first branch is an 'IF' condition with two sub-conditions connected by an 'AND' operator: 'description' includes 'silver' and 'description' includes 'ring'. The second branch is an 'OR' condition with a static value 'gold rings'. Below this, there is another 'IF' condition with two sub-conditions connected by an 'AND' operator: 'description' includes 'gold' and 'description' includes 'ring'. The 'ring' value in the second 'IF' condition is highlighted with a blue border. At the bottom, there is an 'Add Rule' button.

Overall, having the product type in your product feed it's one of the many things you'll need to do to improve the quality of the feed. Adding product types to your feed and using them in your bidding strategies is important because it will increase the frequency of your products showing up in the search results.

## Add Gross Margin to your Feed

If you know what the gross margin (or margin category) for each product means you can optimize your bids based on that.

What could be more effective?

Instead of bidding the same amount on all football shoes, you can bid more on the ones with a high margin (and vice versa).

Most retailers do not store gross margins in their shopping cart product data, so it cannot be exported. **Margin-data is usually available in financial systems. So the trick is to export the data and merge it with the source feed from your store.**

Merging the two feeds: your source feed and financial data, is easy to do with a good data feed tool.

To add gross margin data you can also use a lookup table.

|  | A           | B      | C |
|--|-------------|--------|---|
|  | Category    | Margin |   |
|  | Shoes       | 0.2    |   |
|  | Jackets     | 0.25   |   |
|  | Accessories | 0.1    |   |
|  |             |        |   |
|  |             |        |   |
|  |             |        |   |
|  |             |        |   |
|  |             |        |   |
|  |             |        |   |
|  |             |        |   |

## Check Your Price Rank

Price rank is how your product-prices rank among your competitors. The product with the lowest price has a price rank of 1. If one of your products has a price rank of 4, that means that there are 3 competitors offering the same product at a lower price.

### Use a repricing tool to create automated rules

With a price ranking tool you can create rules and criteria for the **automated repricing, based on competitor's prices, product types, shopping channels or marketplaces:**

- for a certain product type or brand you always want to have the best price so you set up a rule that automatically makes your product 1-10% cheaper
- you want to be number one for some products, but the price should never less than X
- you can select which competitors you want to re-price against. Let's say you always want to be the cheapest but never cheaper than Company A and B since they'll always be cheaper than you

### Set up feed updates

When the prices change in your online store, you need to make sure that the prices in the feed have the same information. **You don't advertise for products that have different prices from your shop price**, because shopping engines will disapprove of those products.

## Optimize your feeds with repricing data

Automatically export to your data feed tool the price rank of your products in a CSV file that contains 2 columns: Unique ID and price rank.

With the price rank information, you can create additional rules like:

### 1. I want to exclude products with a price rank lower than 3.

Even if you've repriced it, advertising a product with a price rank lower than 3 is not going to bring a lot of sales. You can **exclude it from the channels where it ranks 4th**. Then if the price rank changes from 4 to 3 the products are included again.

### 2. The repricing app knows if a product from the competition is out of stock.

Maybe for that out of stock product, you were ranking 4th on Google, but since it's out of stock you want to start advertising again.

You may use Price Watch to get ahead of the competition and competitor metrics. The goal of Price Watch is to provide you with as much relevant information about your competitors as possible. However, we know this amount of data can sometimes be overwhelming. That is why we are always thinking of ways in which to present data in a more coherent manner.

## The Most Important Metrics

The **most popular metric among our customers is the cheapest competitor metric**. It shows us which of your competitors are offering the same products as you, but for the lowest price.

The cheapest competitor metric will help you identify your competitors who are selling the same products for the lowest prices. **It will also show the difference in price numerically or as a percentage**. You can choose to filter by specific competitors. This is a good option if you have already identified your top competitors.

In many cases, the **product with cheapest or most competitive price is ranked in the first position** on Google Shopping. The algorithm takes into account the quality of the website, maximum CPC and many other factors. Despite that, product price is always a major factor.

The product that ranks in first position is often cheaper than the average price. Therefore, a consequence of a poor pricing structure can be ranking lower down the page of search results. This can have a negative impact on business due to lower impressions, and thus directly impacting your ROI.

## Custom Labels

Google Shopping enables you to create product groups based on Category, product Type, ID, Condition, Brand, Channel, and Channel exclusivity.

If you would rather break down your product groups by another attribute, custom labels on Google Shopping offer you the opportunity to create groups of products based on conditions you are able to set yourself.

### DEFINITION:

Custom labels are, according to Google, “a way to tag your products in your data feed with attributes that matter to you, such as ‘margin’, to separate your high- and low-margin products”.

Custom Labels are 5 optional columns, named: **custom\_label\_0**, **custom\_label\_1**, **custom\_label\_2**, etc., that can be added to a product feed. The values in the custom label columns are at the discretion of the advertisers. In fact, there are no requirements or rules dictated by Google.

Custom Labels **allow for a greater freedom when it comes to shopping bidding strategies**. Adding these values for every individual product allows you to segment the biddings on your Product Listing Ads within your Shopping Campaigns.

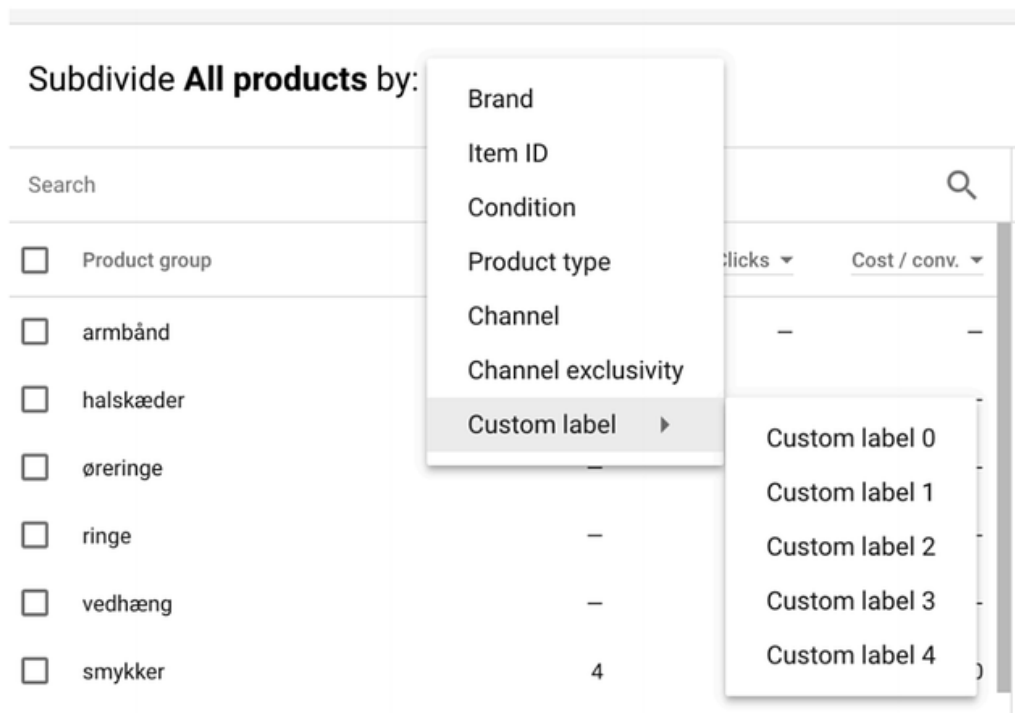
While the other feed attributes are tied to a specific product and always have to be the same as shown on the advertiser's website, **custom labels can be anything and potentially change any time you want**.

In fact, their value is not showing anywhere else other than in your Google Ads account.



In other words, you can **set a separate bid for all products that are 'labeled' high margin.** Or 'Winners' and 'Losers', or 'low price rank'.

1. First you need to add the custom labels to your feed. That is best done with a data feed tool.
2. Then you can adjust your bids in your Google shopping campaign by subdividing your product groups with custom labels



## How To Set Up Custom Labels For Google Shopping

Let's see how you can set Custom Labels directly in the feed.

### Create Custom Labels Using Static Value in DataFeedWatch

With the 'static value' rule you can extrapolate a word from any product attribute and populate a custom label column with that same word. In the example below, the rule looks up all products where the word 'shirt' appears in the title and populates a custom label column with the same word. This way I can aggregate all shirts into one product group in Google Ads.

**Create a Custom Label for Season** or other attributes for which you do not have a separate field:

**Create a Custom Label for Season** or other attributes for which you do not have a separate field:

The screenshot shows a configuration interface for a custom label named 'custom\_label'. The interface is divided into two main sections: a static value section and a conditional rule section.

**Static Value Section:**

- Field: **custom\_label**
- Value: **winter**
- Scope: **All Products**
- Logic: **IF**
- Buttons: **Edit Values (0)** and a red delete icon.

**Conditional Rule Section:**

The rule is defined by three conditions connected by 'OR' logic:

- Condition 1: **description** **includes** **winter**
- Condition 2: **description** **includes** **fall**
- Condition 3: **description** **includes** **autumn** (highlighted with a blue border)

Buttons for **+AND** and **+OR** are visible between the conditions. A red delete icon is present for each condition. An **Add Rule** button is located at the bottom left of the conditional section.

**Create a Custom Label for Margin** based on price:

The screenshot shows a configuration interface for a custom label named 'margin\_label'. The interface is divided into two main sections: a static value section and a conditional rule section.

**Static Value Section:**

- Field: **margin\_label**
- Value: **high margin**
- Scope: **All Products**
- Logic: **IF**
- Buttons: **Edit Values (0)** and a red delete icon.

**Conditional Rule Section:**

The rule is defined by three conditions connected by 'OR' logic:

- Condition 1: **price** **is greater than** **100**
- Condition 2: **price** **is between** **50** **and** **100**
- Condition 3: **price** **is less than** **10** (highlighted with a blue border)

Buttons for **+OR** and **+AND** are visible between the conditions. Red delete icons are present for each condition.

**Create a Custom Label for Top Sellers.** You can label individual products as a Top Seller by mapping it from the product ID:

The screenshot shows a rule configuration interface. On the left, a dropdown menu is set to 'custom\_label'. The main configuration area has a tab labeled 'All Products' and a rule type of 'IF'. Below the 'IF' tab, there are three rows of conditions, each with a dropdown for 'variant\_id', a comparison operator 'is equal to', and a text input field containing a product ID. The first two rows have red 'X' icons, while the third row has a blue border around its input field. To the right of each row are buttons for '+ AND' and a red 'X' icon. Below the conditions are buttons for '+ OR' and 'Add Rule'. At the bottom, there is an 'ELSE' section with a dropdown set to 'Leave empty'.

If you have a list of Topsellers, you can also just upload them to DFW and use 'is-in-list':

The screenshot shows a rule configuration interface similar to the one above. The 'variant\_id' dropdown is set to 'is in list'. The text input field contains '(No file specified)'. To the right of this field is a dropdown menu labeled 'Add from drive'. Below the conditions are buttons for '+ OR' and '+ AND'. To the right of the main configuration area are buttons for 'Edit Values (2)' and a red 'X' icon. Below the conditions are buttons for '+ OR' and 'Add Rule'. At the bottom, there is an 'ELSE' section with a dropdown set to 'Leave empty'. A yellow arrow points to the '(No file specified)' text field.

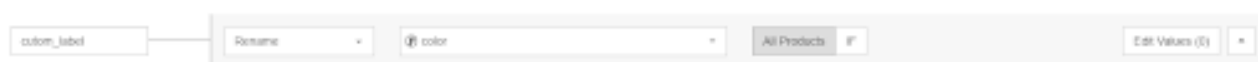
## Create Custom Labels with Rename

With the 'Rename' rule, **you can in fact set a custom label to a value which already exists either in your primary or supplemental feed.** One of the most common usages of this rule would be **populating the GTIN column with the product ID values** (if the two are equal).

**This way, developers don't need to create the GTIN column themselves and you can save them additional work.** But it is when coupled with the supplemental feed feature that the 'set to' rule gives its best.

Create a Custom Label for Color or size, or weight or age or gender or any attribute that is already in a field in your feed:

Create a Custom Label for Color or size, or weight or age or gender or any attribute that is already in a field in your feed:



### PRO TIPS:

- **Bid more aggressively on bestselling and seasonal products**

When it comes to large eCommerce websites, chances are only a relatively small fraction of the product catalogue is actually relevant at a given time. For example, for a bookshop, the bulk of sales would be mainly driven by the most trending books of the season.

Given your time is limited and you can't optimize all the thousands of products you have in the feed, it makes sense to prioritize just those books. What you can do then is pulling a report for the bestselling products of the week and putting them into a Google Sheet.

- **Be more competitive on high-value/high-margin products**

You can use the same strategy (supplemental feeds + custom labels) to segment products based on their strategic value, which can be either about margin or price.

Again, you can either bid more aggressively on valuable products or put them in a separate campaign with a higher budget. You can also create multiple segments based just on the product price.

- **Be less competitive on products with missing or wrong attributes**

Sometimes it can happen that the feed generated is not 100% accurate. Some products might be missing the description, which is highly recommended but not mandatory.

Some others may have a default image because the actual one wasn't able to be sourced. You can use supplemental feeds to fix some of these issues, chances are you won't be able to fix all of them.

Exclude, or at least set a low bid, on products with missing attributes, as they basically look bad compared to the competitors' ones. You can go to the diagnostic tab in your Google Merchant Center account and download the full list of products with attribute issues.

## Promotions

Google Promotions is a program for merchants using Google Shopping. It enables them to add Promotions to their product ads on Google Shopping.

Google Merchant Promotions enhance shopping ads by showing special offers such as:

- **euros off**
- **percentage off**
- **buy-one-get-one-half-price**
- **free shipping**
- **free merchandise with purchase**

and more.

Merchant Promotions are labelled in shopping ads with an annotation which triggers a pop-up with additional details and a “Shop” button. They proved to significantly increase CTR and ultimately Conversion Rate, Revenue and ROI.

Promotions can be sent to the Google Merchant Center in a separate feed. The new feed needs to have the following required fields:

- **Promotion ID**
- **Product Applicability**
- **Offer Type**
- **Long Title**
- **Promotion Effective Dates**
- **Redemption Channel.**

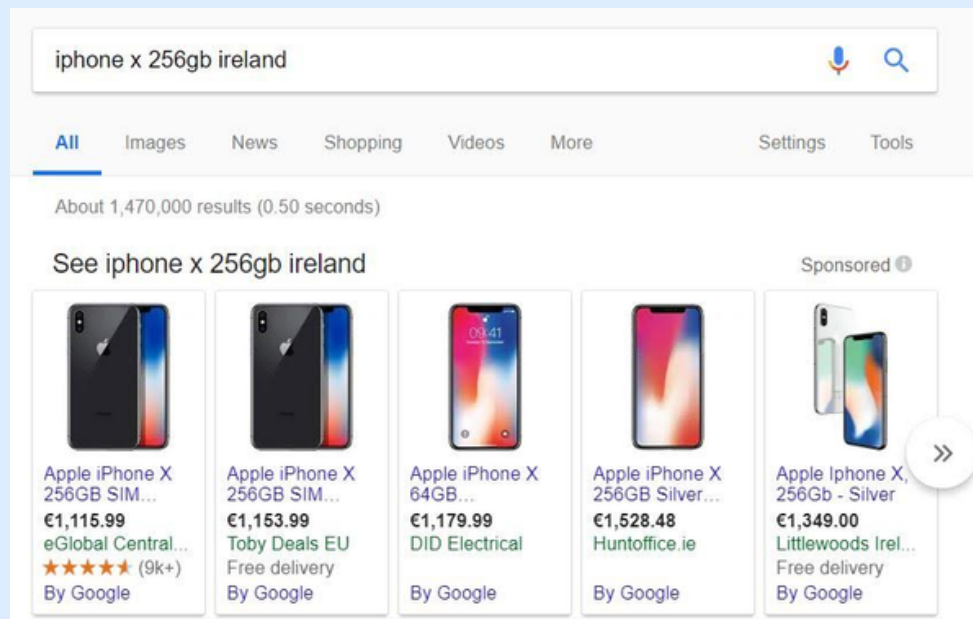
### Benefits from Google Merchant Promotions

Google Merchant Promotions are the best way, after the products' price, to make your shopping ads stand out from competitors'.



**EXAMPLE:**

Imagine the following scenario:



You really don't want to be Huntoffice.ie. In fact, they are selling the same iPhone X as their competitors, just for a few hundred euro more.

How many chances would they have to get a click through? If shoppers were looking for an iPhone X 256gb, they would definitely click on the cheapest of the results, the first one. But let's assume you actually are the Huntoffice.ie's PPC manager.

Well, you better think of a creative way to sort things out if you don't want to be laid off. **Placing a "Special Offer" label in Shopping Ads would definitely help unlucky PPC professionals.**

**People would get curious about what this offer can mean for their wallet and would click on it. They might find out that, using the promo code shown in the promotion pop-up, they would actually save money compared to the first advertiser.**

Huntoffice.ie would get a click through, a conversion and a nice return on the advertising investment.

The good thing about Google Merchant Promotions is that they can be applied at the product level. So you can use them to fight your toughest competitors in expensive auctions, while maybe keeping a high price on products you are already dominating the market for.

This way you can save the margin where you know you can afford it.

## Benefits from Google Merchant Promotions

- Increase conversions: Give shoppers a reason to buy now.
- Capture multi-screen traffic: Google shows “special offer” links on desktop and mobile devices.

### PRO TIPS:

- Be very careful when you complete the fields above. In fact, **once a promotion goes live, you won't be able to edit it anymore**. The only way to do that would be to create a new promotion, which would need to be reviewed again and therefore it would take at least another 24 hours.
- **Set the effective start date as early as possible**, even the same day you are creating the promotion. **Google will start to review your promotion only from that date**. Therefore, you want to make sure everything is set and approved before the actual promotion start date.
- If you mention specific products in the promotion title, **make sure you select "specific products" in the product availability field**. Instead, if your promotion title is something like "15% off all products", then you have to select "all products". **Failing to do so will result in the promotion being disapproved**.

## Use RegEx

Regular Expression, or RegEx, is a sequence of characters that define a search pattern, mainly for use in pattern matching with strings, or string matching, i.e. "find and replace"-like operations.

Don't let this one scare you away. While it may seem tricky at first, you'll be able to get the hang of it.

### Benefits from Using RegEx

This function is extremely helpful in data feed optimization because **it allows you to match to many characters while only using one string**.



You can use regular expressions in many ways such as:

- finding and replacing duplicate words,
- fixing multiple sizes at once,
- removing too many spaces in between words.

An example of this is, if your title contains extra spaces in between words and not just at the beginning and end, a regex string could match with the extra spaces in between the words: `replace_pattern( \s, ' ', [title] )`.

Or enter a similar regex rule in DataFeedWatch using the 'Edit Values' option:

The screenshot shows the 'Change values for "title"' interface in DataFeedWatch. It includes a 'Mapping type' dropdown set to 'Replace single value', an 'Input' field containing the regex `/s+`, and a 'with' field containing an empty string. A checkbox labeled 'use regexp' is checked. On the right, there are buttons for 'All Products', 'IF', and a trash icon. At the bottom, there are 'Add Rule', 'Cancel', 'Clear', and 'Done' buttons.

## Bonus Hack: Product IDs

Over time the performance of your products will accumulate which can negatively affect their future performance. This is especially true if you've optimized products that used to not be performing well. So you may not see the desired results.

### DISCLAIMER:

This hack isn't approved or recommended by Google, but if past bad performance connected to your products is dragging your campaigns down, there is a solution.

Any time you change the ID of your product, all the previous history gets wiped and it will be treated like a new product even if everything else stays the same. Normally this isn't an ideal situation, especially because it takes up to 3 business days for the product to get reapproved.

But, if you're truly looking for a hack to erase previous performance, this could be a solution for you.



# CHAPTER SIX: WHICH CHANNEL YOU SHOULD ADVERTISE ON

Ramp up your multichannel strategy. The question is the same for all merchants, but the answer is different for each one of them.

Every channel has its own feed specification, so you need to create a different feed for each advertising channel. You need to decide on the:

- Type of channel
- Which channel

## Which channel should you advertise on?

There are six types of advertising channels that merchants can explore:

- Search Engines
- Marketplaces
- Comparison Shopping Engines (CSE)
- Retargeting Networks
- Social Networks
- Affiliate Networks

### Search Engines

**Reach people who are actively searching for a product.**

Whenever a user is searching for a specific product on Google or Bing, the search engine matches the search query with the advertised products. Then, display your product ad on the Search Engine Result Page (SERP).

Merchants pay per click (CPC). There is a limited number of ad slots, so only ads with the highest bids are displayed.

### Marketplaces

**Reach people who are actively searching for a product.**

Marketplaces are like big department stores where consumers can buy all kinds of products. The fundamental difference is that users are never redirected to the merchant's website. **The transactions are done on the marketplace and the merchants only handle the shipping.**



Amazon and eBay are the biggest marketplaces globally. In Europe, they compete with dozens of local marketplaces.

The marketplace charges a commission for each transaction: it ranges between 5 – 15 % depending on the marketplace and product category.

### Comparison Shopping Engines (CSE)

**Reach people who are looking for the best deal.**

There are hundreds of CSEs, from US giants like Connexity or eBay Commerce Network to European Networks like Kelkoo or Idealo to local CSEs per country like Mail.ru or Beslist.nl.

Consumers can search for a specific product on a CSE and they can instantly compare prices offered by different merchants. A click on a product takes them straight to the merchant's website.

**The most common form of payment is Cost Per Click (CPC)** which means merchants pay for each click to their website.

### Retargeting Networks

**Reach people who visited your online store before.**

Most people visit your site, check out a product and leave. Retargeting networks enable you to show your product-ads for the products that they were interested in to these people, on a later date when they are visiting a different website. This is an effective strategy for many retailers.

Google offers re-marketing and so does Facebook. There are many other networks dedicated to retargeting, like Criteo and AdRoll. Retargeting network charges vary between CPC, CPA or CPM.

### Social Networks

**Reach people who are not searching for a product**

Product ads are shown when people are communicating and sharing with their friends on social networks like Facebook and Pinterest.

The advantage of these networks is that you can target very specifically, you can advertise your products to people with certain demographics (female 30-35 years old in New York state) or specific interests (hobbies, jobs) or look-alike-audiences.

## Affiliate Networks

### Reach people who are not searching for a product.

Affiliate networks are platforms that intermediate between publishers and advertisers. Advertisers upload their products to the platform and website owners (publishers) can then display those products on their websites.

Anyone who clicks the ad is redirected to the merchant's page to make a purchase. Merchants pay a commission for every sale or lead. This commission is collected by the affiliate network who shares it with the publisher.

The most popular affiliate Networks are Rakuten Linkshare, Awin, Commission Junction and Shareasale and European counterparts like TradeDoubler.

### How to pick the channel that is best for you

You need to do a little research to find out which channel will perform best for you. These are steps you can take:

#### ● Check the categories per Channel

Some Channels are specialized in certain product categories. Check out a few channels and see what categories they offer. If they have a category for your products, you might want to give them a try.

#### ● Check if competitor's products are there

You can go a level deeper. Enter a few of your products in the search bar of a shopping channel and check the results. Are they selling your products? Are your competitors advertising on this channel? If few competitors are offering your type of products, it may be that they already found out that it does not work.

#### ● Trial and Error

The proof of the pudding is still in the eating. Pick a few channels (start with no more than 3) and start advertising. After a while, you can see which channels get you more sales and cost less. Then replace the worst channel by another one and see if it does better.



# FINAL THOUGHTS

With a couple of hours available and a good WiFi connection, everyone has the possibility of learning and educating themselves on data feed management. It is clear that data feed optimization plays a big role in the optimization of PPC campaigns.

## KEEP IN MIND

**Every optimization in this eBook can be implemented in minutes!**

It's easy to be overwhelmed and lose sight of the big picture. But **most optimization tactics work for every merchant**. You may need to tailor it to your own needs, but you can start implementing them right away.

If you're a retailer or you manage retail clients, your main priority is to maintain inventory feeds and ensure that all products advertised are in stock and up to date.

Even with a small inventory, unless you monitor what is in stock 24/7, keeping products up to date in real time is not something people excel at.

We hope we have covered all the basics and more of data feed automation and optimization. We hope you'll put a lot of our recommendations to work. If you need advice we'll be happy to help. We are only several pixels away!





# BOOST YOUR ROI

GROW WITH DATAFEEDWATCH

Get the all-in-one feed management tool. Start transforming your feeds, easily sell across multiple channels, get product-level analytics, and more.

*Special*  
**OFFER**

**10%** OFF THE FIRST  
3 MONTHS

**Start Now**





# DataFeedWatch

## About Us

DataFeedWatch is a leading Feed Management Solution that combines Data Transformation with Help & Advice, empowering Merchants and Agencies to succeed on 2,000+ eCommerce channels like Google, Facebook and Amazon.

The company operates in 60+ countries on 5 continents and is regarded as the most intuitive solution in the market.

many  
thanks

for reading our guide!



**DataFeed**Watch

