



Remarketing Right on Cue

Programmatic Remarketing on Google Display

10 Takeaways for Mastering Programmatic Remarketing on Google Display

First, set up your site to enable remarketing.

- 1 Tag your entire desktop and mobile site.
Why: *Tags capture the customer insights needed for strong remarketing lists.*

Next, get ready to send the right messages to the right prospects.

- 2 Focus your remarketing lists on homepage viewers, category page viewers, product or offer page viewers, cart abandoners and past converters.
Why: *You can tailor your bids and ads to the ways your most valuable visitors interact*

Choose your bids and ad formats for maximum success.

- 3 Pair remarketing with Conversion Optimizer.
Why: *Dynamic bids usually lead to better results and can save time better spent on other vital areas.*
- 4 Use all display ad sizes and formats, including text, mobile, image and HTML5.
Why: *This helps reach your audience at exactly the right moment.*
- 5 Use dynamic remarketing to show the most personalized ad possible.
Why: *Consumers who see ads with the actual offer they viewed, or similar offers, are more likely to return to your site to complete a purchase.*
- 6 Take the next step: move from Conversion Optimizer to target return on ad spend.
Why: *Moving from target CPA to target ROAS typically results in the most total value at your*

Optimize your settings for best results.

- 7 Remove exclusions for languages, locations and placements.
Why: *When people have visited your site already, they are more likely to purchase regardless of the context.*
- 8 Automate your frequency caps.
Why: *Google's algorithms will optimize frequency caps for you, based on how likely each viewer is to click on and convert from your ad.*

Now go prospecting for even more qualified customers.

- 9 Use Similar Audiences or auto-targeting to expand your remarketing lists and reach new customers.
Why: *These features can boost remarketing volume and acquire new customers at the right cost.*
- 10 Use In-Market Audiences to acquire new mid-funnel customers.
Why: *You can drive more qualified traffic to your site when you reach people who are actively researching or intending to buy what you offer.*

Introduction

Today's consumers live in a wonderful world of choice. Information is at their fingertips on millions of review sites, news feeds and videos, all of it ready to change their buying decisions. On average, consumers spend 15+ hours per week researching on mobile sites and apps and visit websites 6 times in the purchase process.¹

How can your business break through to those consumers while they're in a buying state of mind? Meet **Programmatic Remarketing on Google Display**.

This AdWords solution lets you engage site visitors with relevant ads *even after they've left your site*. It helps you be there in the moments that matter to keep your brand top of mind and successfully close the sale. At the heart of programmatic lies automated bidding, where our predictive algorithm will intelligently adapt bids to react quickly to the constantly changing markets. Our best-in-class technology uses millions of real-time context and audience signals like device, user location and many more to bid the exact value of each auction to drive results.

In a world where consumers are inundated with too many choices and marketers are swamped with a ton of account optimizations, programmatic is crucial in the automation of your everyday tasks so that you can focus on higher level strategy. Simply put, this means you can drive better return on investment (ROI) with less manual work. You win, your business wins and your boss is a happy camper.

In this whitepaper, we'll dive into programmatic remarketing best practices to help you get ready to win over those ready-to-buy customers. Our programmatic remarketing best practices cover the following types of remarketing and will be referenced throughout the paper:

- **Standard remarketing** - This covers re-engaging past site visitors with static ads, or "standard ads." This typically works best for businesses with fewer products or stringent legal restrictions.
- **Dynamic remarketing** - This covers re-engaging past site visitors with personalized, higher-performance ads, or "dynamic ads." This typically works best for businesses with a wide selection of products or services.

Note that while we dip our toes into dynamic remarketing here, we have a full guide dedicated to this topic coming out in the near future.

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¹ Source: Google/Nielsen Study: Mobile Path to Purchase: Five Key Findings, November 2013.

Set Up Smart

1. Tag your entire desktop and mobile site.

Tip:

If you have a mobile app, you can also tag your entire app with a remarketing tag. Learn more about setting up [remarketing for mobile apps](#) and [driving mobile app engagement](#).

A common pitfall advertisers face is tagging their site partially, which means they may be missing some of their site visitors from their remarketing lists. To make the most of Programmatic Remarketing on Google Display, add the same remarketing tag across your entire desktop and mobile sites.

Tags are tiny bits of code that help you learn more about visitors and what they want. The more you know, the more effective your remarketing will be. As visitors come to your site, tags will work with cookies to generate a notice of their visit.

Adding and changing tags on every page of your site can be time-consuming for your webmaster, so we also suggest you implement a [container tag](#). It's a master tag your webmaster adds across your entire site just one time. From then on, you can easily add new site tags and change existing tags such as the remarketing tag and other tags you may need for your online marketing efforts. [Google Tag Manager](#) allows you to manage tags in this way through an easy to use visual interface and doesn't require you to change code on your site.

To get started, [create](#) the container tag and place its snippet of code in the global header or footer of your website.

Tip:

If using the GA tag, make sure you select the "[Use GA tracking code](#) instead of the AdWords remarketing tag" option in your AdWords account. You'll find this option in AdWords under Shared Library > Audiences > View Tag Details.

There are two types of remarketing tags you can use to opt into Programmatic Remarketing on Google Display: the standard **AdWords Remarketing tag** and the **Google Analytics (GA) tag**. Either works well, so the choice really depends on what tag you already use on your site.

Let's dive in a little deeper:

Tip:

Use [Google Tag Assistant \(GTA\)](#) to help verify that you've correctly installed tags like Google Tag Manager. You can download and install this chrome extension from the [Google Chrome Store](#).

| Tag | Key Benefits |
|----------------------------------|--|
| GOOGLE TAG MANAGER (GTM) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you're placing a completely new tag on your website, GTM is recommended. It's a single, site-wide tag that uses rules to fire Google and third party tags.• Place the container tag on every page of your site. You'll be able to quickly add and update tags (such as the AdWords or Google Analytics tag) from an easy, user-friendly interface. |
| GOOGLE ANALYTICS (GA) TAG | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you want to use detailed site analytics data for remarketing, the GA tag is recommended. GA also provides full-featured website analytics capabilities to analyze and optimize performance.• If you're already running GA, you can enable remarketing easily from the UI without any tag updates. Under your advanced settings, set Enable Advertiser Features to ON.• Create remarketing lists based on web page URLs, custom parameters, or your customers' website behavior, such as time on site or number of pages visited. |
| ADWORDS TAG | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you're looking to enable remarketing only, the AdWords tag is recommended.• If you're already running Remarketing lists for search ads (RLSA), just continue to use the same tag.• Create remarketing lists based on web page URLs or custom parameters. |

Segment Your Prospects

2. Focus your remarketing lists on homepage viewers, category page viewers, product or offer page viewers, cart abandoners and past converters.






Once your site is tagged, it's time to define your remarketing lists. You want to create different lists based on each customer's journey through your website so that you can target them with different bids or ads. Being able to identify which stage your customers have reached in their purchase journey can also determine how valuable they are and result in more effective targeting and messaging that accurately reflects their needs.

Tip:

As an alternative to the category page viewers segment, some companies use a “Search Results viewers” segment. For example, many airline ticket websites are focused on flight searches, and a search tool often provides the main path into their site.

A remarketing list is a subset of your site visitors who are [segmented](#) by their on-site activities. For example, you may want to show one ad to someone who visited your shoe store’s homepage, and another ad to people who visited a product-level page for a specific pair of t-shirts.

Below are five remarketing lists we recommend, moving from the largest and broadest to the most precisely targeted. If you’re using dynamic remarketing, these lists are automatically created for you. If you’re using the Google Analytics remarketing tag, the [remarketing list set-up](#) is handled in the Google Analytics front end. But the basic [setup instructions](#) for your remarketing lists are the same whether you set up in Google Analytics or in AdWords.

| Homepage Viewers | Category Page Visitors | Product or Offer Page Viewers | Cart Abandoners | Past Converters |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Message: <i>“Discover great deals”</i> | Message: <i>“Check out new arrivals”</i> | Message: <i>“30% off today only”</i> | Message: <i>“Free shipping”</i> | Message: <i>“You may like other products like this”</i> |

Recommended List Segmentation Strategy

As a caveat, list segmentation will vary slightly depending on whether you’re implementing standard or dynamic remarketing. We’ll note the differences below where appropriate.

List 1: Homepage viewers. These people visited your homepage but didn’t move any further into your site.

- **Your strategy:** Since this list is segmented based on the broadest interactions that a person can have with your website, your messaging should be more general and speak to what your brand has to offer, such as *“Discover great deals from Acme Clothing.”*
- **How to do it:** Go to the Audiences section of the Shared Library. [Create a remarketing list](#) where the URL equals your homepage URL “http://www.YourDomain.com.”

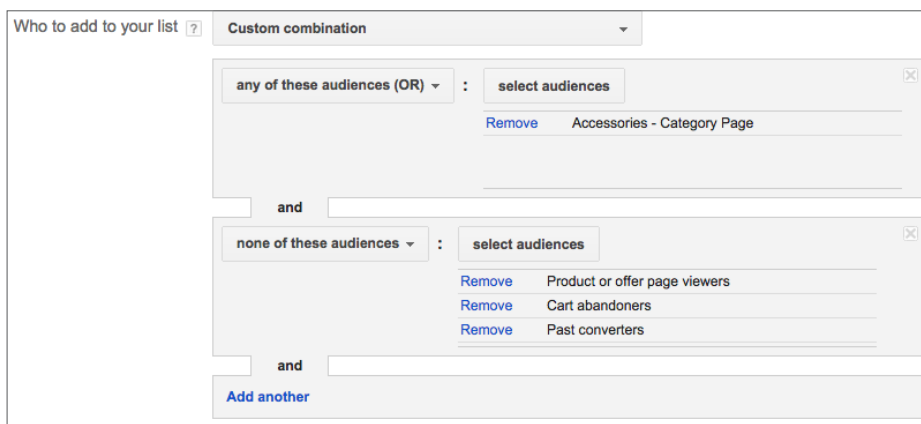
List 2: Category page viewers. These people have visited a category-level page of your site, but not specific products. For a clothing apparel company, a “t-shirts” or “jeans” page would be a category-level page. This list implementation will depend on whether you’re applying standard or dynamic remarketing. Below are steps to creating lists for each type of remarketing:

Tip:

As an alternative to the category page viewers segment, some companies use a “Search Results viewers” segment. For example, many airline ticket websites are focused on flight searches, and a search tool often provides the main path into their site.

Standard Remarketing

- **Your strategy:** Showcase display ads for different product categories. Since people on this list have indicated interest in a particular product category, let’s say auto insurance, your messaging can speak to special offers or discounts.
- **How to do it:**
 - Create separate remarketing lists for each [product category](#) using a URL that contains the “categoryname.”
 - Exclude all users who moved even deeper into your site so you don’t overlap lists. You can do this by [creating a custom combination list](#) containing your product category page viewers and exclude lists 3 - 5 (Product or offer page viewers, cart abandoners, past converters). Repeat for each category.



Custom Combination Lists

Dynamic Remarketing

- **Your strategy:** Since ads are automated, the need for creating a remarketing list for each product category goes away. These automated ads can dynamically pull in products that your potential customer viewed and speak to special offers, discounts or new arrivals. You’ll want to create one remarketing list as a catch-all for those who went further into your site to view your category level pages.
- **How to do it:**
 - Create a catch-all list for all viewers of your category-level pages using URLs that contain each “categoryname.”
 - Exclude all users who moved even deeper into your site with custom combination lists so you don’t overlap lists.

List 3: Product or Offer page viewers. People who viewed specific product pages on your website but added nothing to their shopping cart. If we continue with the clothing apparel company example, your “Acme Brand shirts with heart” webpage would be a product-level page.

- **Your strategy:** You'll want to re-engage users with dynamic ads containing the product or service the person previously viewed (we'll get more into dynamic remarketing later in this guide). Your messaging may also speak to special discounts or offers to resonate with your potential customer.
- **How to do it:** Create a remarketing list and include all people who have reached specific product pages on your site. Exclude cart abandoners and past converters.

List 4: Cart abandoners. These might be people who added products to a shopping cart but didn't complete the purchase, or who filled out a lead form but didn't submit the form.

Note: While this list is usually much smaller than the homepage viewers list, both lists have a key role to play. Your cart abandoners list will usually drive stronger performance while your homepage viewers list will drive a higher volume.

- **Your strategy:** You'll want to bring these "almost customers" back to complete the conversion.
- **How to do it:**
 - Select "[Visitors of a page who did not visit another page](#)" from the drop-down menu. Choose the shopping cart or lead form page.
 - Now *exclude* people who actually converted by selecting the "thank you page" or any other confirmation page that indicates that people have converted or submitted a completed lead form.

List 5: Past converters. These people actually bought something on your site, or took some other valuable action like submitting a lead form.

- **Your strategy:** You'll want to upsell or cross-sell to these customers since they've purchased from your site before. Your messaging might speak to other products that people similar to yourself may have also purchased.
- **How to do it:** Create a remarketing list for people who have reached your purchase confirmation page.

We recommend that you limit the overall number of your remarketing lists to the above strategy or similar, depending on your site structure and traffic volume. Fewer lists means you'll have more people in each of those lists, and that will make it easier for you to optimize with more statistical significance.

Your cookie length duration will depend on your business objective and the length of time you expect your ad to be relevant for the visitor. For example, a shoe retailer may choose a cookie length of 30 days since it may not take as much time for a person to purchase shoes. An auto insurance company, on the other hand, may choose a cookie length of a few months or a year plus due to their longer sales cycle.

Tip:

If you use Google Analytics, you can create [advanced remarketing lists](#). While we recommend limiting your total number of lists, this strategy can help you serve more tailored messages to different customer segments or personas.

Set Your Bids and Ad Formats For Success

3. Pair remarketing with Conversion Optimizer

Any advertiser who's ever manually optimized their bids can understand what an exhaustive and painful process it can be. There are endless optimization possibilities so it can be difficult for advertisers to take into account all the various variables that will have an effect on performance in real time.

Whether you're a small business with a tight budget or a large company with a lot of marketing dollars, our automated bidding tools solves your toughest challenges when it comes to maximizing performance and increasing productivity. Conversion Optimizer offers a smarter, faster and more efficient way to buy display by using a sophisticated, real-time bid optimization technology to generate bids that will place your ads in the places where they convert the most. Conversion Optimizer's machine learning improves over time as it continuously analyzes each impression, click and conversion from the ad auction to learn what works and doesn't work.

Tip:

[Target ROAS](#) is the most powerful automated bidding solution, which optimizes the total value of your conversions at your desired level of return on ad spend. Since Target ROAS requires advertisers to pass along conversion values to AdWords, which can take more time to set up, many advertisers start with the next best thing: Conversion Optimizer. Don't worry: We'll talk more about Target ROAS in an upcoming section.

Programmatic remarketing advertisers typically achieve the best performance when using Conversion Optimizer: it can save you time and drive 20% more conversions at the same or lower cost-per-acquisition (CPA).² Conversion Optimizer maximizes results by prioritizing the most recent visitors (who tend to drive higher conversion rates and lower CPAs) with more aggressive bids.

Here are some tips for using Conversion Optimizer:

- Start your target CPA at a level that matches your historical results. Targets that are too aggressive can affect your volume and create big swings in weekly spend.
- Let Conversion Optimizer run on its own for 2-3 weeks. The algorithm needs time to adjust to your targets and stabilize performance. Don't make major changes to your campaign settings, targeting or bidding during this time, since that can reset the algorithm.
- Once you have enough data, monitor performance and [adjust your CPA targets as needed](#). Let's say you sell shoes for \$100 and have profit margins that allow you to spend up to \$10 per acquisition. You should steadily increase that target CPA of \$10 to gain more volume and drive more conversions. As a rule of thumb, allow one week between adjusting your CPA targets.

² Source: [Google Internal data, 2013](#)

4. Use all display ad sizes and formats, including text, mobile, image and HTML5

Programmatic remarketing works to find people in the moments that matter. Ads work best for this effort when they're tailored to the customer you're trying to reach. Use all types of ad sizes and formats and you can appear in more places at the right time. Any limitations or restrictions, such as not having certain ad formats, may mean missing an opportunity to catch a person's attention when it matters most.

The timeliness of your ads are also critical for programmatic remarketing. Our robust algorithm leverages many signals to determine those crucial moments when shoppers are most likely to purchase and will bid accordingly. Let's say you're a shoe retailer and a potential customer's just abandoned her shopping cart. Our internal data has shown that when shopping cart abandonment occurs, the likelihood of a conversion is significantly higher just moments after the abandonment (while she's still in a shopping frame of mind).

You can increase your chances of appearing in those first few moments after someone's abandoned her cart if you use as many ad sizes and formats (text and image) as possible. HTML5 ads are also highly recommended since these ads can run seamlessly across devices and screens and lead to a stronger user experience.

Below, you can find the top ten recommended ad sizes across desktop and mobile. Some ad sizes, like 300x250 and 336x280, are shown across both desktop and mobile devices. Smaller ad sizes, like 320x50, are shown mostly on mobile.

| Ad size | Appears on... |
|---------|-------------------------|
| 300x250 | Both Desktop and Mobile |
| 336x280 | Both Desktop and Mobile |
| 728x90 | Both Desktop and Mobile |
| 160x600 | Both Desktop and Mobile |
| 320x50 | Mostly Mobile |
| 320x100 | Mostly Mobile |
| 468x60 | Both Desktop and Mobile |
| 120x600 | Mostly Desktop |
| 300x600 | Both Desktop and Mobile |
| 970x90 | Mostly Desktop |

5. Use dynamic remarketing to leverage what you know about your customers

Tip:

If you implement Dynamic Remarketing during your Remarketing campaign setup, the recommended list segments will be added to your account automatically. For a comprehensive set-up guide, see our [Help Center](#).

Supercharge your remarketing investment with dynamic remarketing. It takes your standard programmatic remarketing to the next level by automatically generating custom ads that feature products most relevant to the user. Shoppers who see ads with the actual product they looked at recently, or similar products, are more likely to return to your site to complete a purchase. These ads save you from having to create tens of thousands of ad groups featuring all the inventory from your website. **If your business has a wide variety of products or services, dynamic remarketing is a must-have for your programmatic remarketing campaigns.**

Dynamic remarketing is available across **all verticals** including retail, travel, hotels, education, real estate, jobs, classifieds and finance.

6. Take the next step: move from Conversion Optimizer to target return on ad spend

In a world where you have few products and all conversions hold the same value to your business, Conversion Optimizer is an easy starter bid automation tool. In reality, a business could offer a wide selection of products that range in price, or product value. In reality, not all conversions are created equal. Let's say you're a furniture store. Your value per conversion can range from \$10 for a clock to \$500 for a sofa. Setting a single CPA target would mean that you'd be bidding too high for your lower value products (e.g. clocks) and too low for your higher value keywords (e.g. sofas).

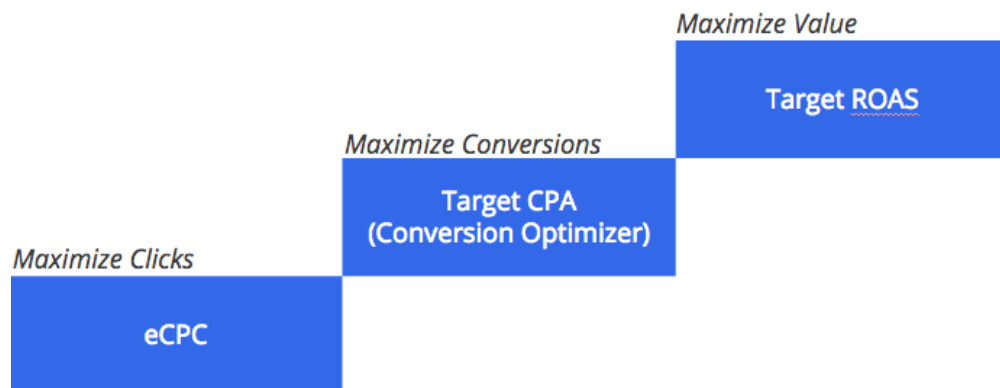
Take your automated bidding to the next level with Target ROAS. It solves precisely the challenge mentioned above by taking into considering product value (as one of many signals) when setting a bid. **When target ROAS is paired with dynamic remarketing campaigns, advertisers typically see 40% better return on ad spend with the same conversion volume.**³ Target ROAS functions seamlessly with programmatic remarketing to achieve the best performance for each impression by leveraging signals such as recency and frequency of site visits, location, time of day, user interests and demographics.

Target ROAS is the most sophisticated bidding solution since it builds upon the enhanced cost-per-click (eCPC) and target CPA models. Our best-in-class technology aims to get you more sales, which will result in higher cart sizes or valuable leads. Target ROAS can adjust your bids in real time based on the prices of the products the user viewed on

³ Source: Google Internal data, 2014.

your site. For instance, a person who viewed a \$5000 flat screen TV will be considered more valuable than someone who viewed a \$50 remote control. This real time bidding algorithm is exclusive to AdWords as it is the only bidding system that can make predictions and bid changes on the auction level.

Intrigued? [Learn more](#) about target ROAS and how to set up conversion values.



Automated bidding solutions

Remove Restrictions for Best Performance

7. Remove exclusions for languages, locations and placements

Reach and timing matter in remarketing. The more people you reach, the more chances you get to reconnect with your past site visitors and offer them compelling ads and offers *regardless* of their context and location. This means more opportunities for your ads to appear during time-sensitive moments when your potential customers are most likely to convert, such as the cart abandonment example in the earlier section.

You're targeting visitors who have already expressed an interest in your business, so you want to add as few constraints as possible for things like placements, languages or geography. Those kinds of targeting criteria can significantly lower the reach and effectiveness of your remarketing campaigns.

Here are some basic "dos" for remarketing settings:

- **Do remove language settings.** If a person has visited your site, they probably understand the language of your ads. If you have different ads for different languages, try creating a separate campaign for that language with another remarketing list.
- **Do remove location settings.** Even if you don't deliver to, say, Japan, you may want to include Japan in your lists because some Japanese people may want to gift your

product to friends who live in your delivery regions. If you have different terms and conditions for different countries, create a separate campaign with a separate list segmentation to test this out.

- **Do remove performance-based placement exclusions.** For best performance, it's best not to exclude any placements. Even if certain placements didn't perform well previously, our automated bidding solutions will optimize placements in real time to achieve your performance goals.

Consider [brand safety filters](#) for placements where you absolutely would not want your brand to show up. Review the [Placement and Performance Report](#) to identify and negate any placements that are off-brand for your business.

8. Automate your frequency caps

Advertisers often ask us which frequency cap gives the best performance.

The answer varies from case to case, of course. When the programmatic bidding algorithm finds that someone is unlikely to click after a certain number of impressions, it will stop showing ads in that situation. Our automated bidding solutions and ad auction will naturally automate your frequency caps for you to optimize towards the consumer experience as well as for performance.

Tip:

If you're buying audiences across different networks and exchanges, it's a good practice to consider ad frequencies across those platforms.

Look for New Qualified Customers

9. Use auto-targeting or Similar Audiences to acquire new prospects

Use look-a-like targeting to help you add new, highly qualified customers to your prospect pool. These fresh prospects may have made similar purchases, browsed similar websites or have similar interests as your existing customers. There are two ways you can achieve this: Auto-targeting and Similar Audiences. If you want to use look-a-like targeting but have control over your budget and ads, use Similar Audiences. Otherwise, you'll be opted into Auto-targeting by default.

Auto-targeting allows you to expand your existing remarketing lists only to audiences with a significantly high probability of conversion. It works best for moderate remarketing expansion. If you're already using eCPC or Conversion Optimizer with your remarketing, auto-targeting is the right solution to start with and is turned on by default.

You have two options with [auto-targeting](#): “conservative” and “aggressive.” While both can help you find additional customers, they behave differently. Use conservative targeting when you want more conversions, but want to stay close to your CPA. Use aggressive targeting when you want as many conversions as possible and are comfortable with some variation from your current CPA.

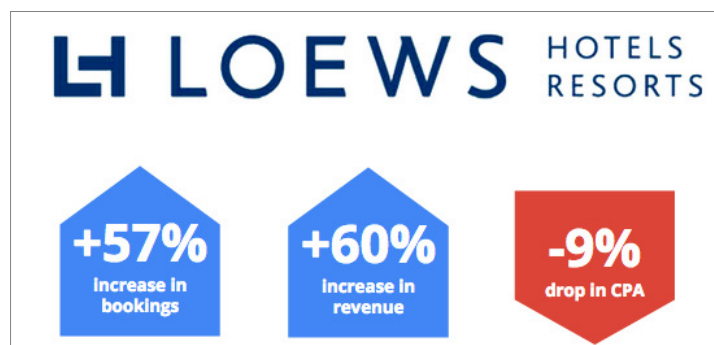
While auto-targeting is a great place to start, we recommend Similar Audiences for advertisers who want to get more sophisticated with their new customer acquisition tactics. This means being able to set appropriate bids for acquiring new customers and delivering tailored ads to people who have never been to your site before. Let’s dive in a little deeper to Similar Audiences.

Similar Audiences reaches new customers who share characteristics with your existing remarketing campaigns. It’s a simple, targeted way to generate high-value, incremental site traffic using our rich audience data and intelligent look-a-like modeling algorithm. It also works best for broader remarketing expansion. Below are our best practices for getting the most out of Similar Audiences:

- Create a separate campaign so that you can tailor your budget and create specific messages.
- Target specific lists based on your marketing objectives (“similar to homepage visitors” vs. “similar to converters” will differ in performance).
- Don’t layer on any additional targeting (with the exception of geo-targeting) which can cut down on your volume.

CASE STUDY: Loews Hotels

Similar Audiences and Remarketing together helped the luxury lodging group Loews Hotels find new customers and grow revenue by 60%. Loews Hotels wanted to reach potential customers who were likely to be interested but hadn’t yet visited their website or didn’t know the brand. Since they found that remarketing lists generated \$60,000 in revenue for just \$800 invested, Loews based their Similar Audiences on their remarketing lists. **Result:** Loews Hotel saw a 60% uplift in revenue, 57% more bookings, and cost-per-acquisition drop by 9%.



10. Use In-market audiences to acquire new mid-funnel prospects

If you're looking to drive consideration among people who are already researching or planning to buy the products you offer, run an [in-market audiences](#) campaign in parallel with your remarketing efforts. In-market audiences is a mid-funnel targeting strategy that can complement your lower funnel remarketing efforts.

In-market audiences drive new qualified customers to an advertiser's website, which can help grow your remarketing lists. This helps programmatic remarketing campaigns perform better as they reach even more qualified users.

To get started, create a separate ad group or campaign for your in-market audience segments. Always target the in-market segment that's most relevant to your business. Begin with the segment that most resembles or complements the product or service that you sell in your ad.

In-market audiences, by design, reach highly qualified users who have purchase intent; don't add any additional targeting (e.g. gender, remarketing, etc.) to the ad group or you'll limit your reach.

Conclusion

With all the choices consumers have today, it's only natural that they shop around. (Don't you?) Programmatic Remarketing on Google Display is a powerful way to bring those customers *back to you* when they're ready to buy. Engage them with tailored ads at the right moments to keep your brand top of mind and close the sale.

Happy remarketing!

You can learn more about Programmatic Remarketing on Google Display, including how to set it up in your account, in the [AdWords Help Center](#).

To learn more about Remarketing lists for search ads best practices, see our guide [Winning the Second Chance: Reaching High-Value Customers with RLSA](#).

To view other Google Best Practices, check out the full collection at g.co/googlebp.