

VOLUME #1

20 checks for better acquisition decisions

Find where acquisition costs climb, budget loses efficiency, and first orders stop growing. Run the checks with your own data.

Before you compare

Use the same currency, customer definition, and date basis. Compare periods with equal time for orders and refunds to arrive. Keep unknown and unmatched records visible.

#1

New customers

Separate first purchases from existing demand.

#2

Spend efficiency

Check cost changes and the return on added spend.

#3

Traffic and delivery

Find where delivery and demand no longer match.

#4

Customer value

Compare products, offers, and customer value.

#5

Campaign decisions

Check goals, cost coverage, and decision timing.

CHECK #1 / 20 • NEW CUSTOMERS

Cost per new customer rises while purchase CPA stays flat

Split matched campaign orders into first and repeat purchases before comparing costs.

Cost per new customer rises while purchase CPA stays flat

Cost per customer (\$)

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



Purchase CPA hides the rising cost to acquire a new customer.

What you see

Ad spend per verified new customer rises while reported cost per purchase stays flat or falls. Returning customers take more of the matched orders.

Check first

Split matched campaign orders into first and repeat purchases before comparing costs.

Data needed

- Campaign spend and reported purchases by date
- Order ID, customer key, purchase time, valid-order status, and full available order history
- One campaign assignment per first purchase, plus unmatched status

Run the check

#1 Use complete customer order history to mark each customer's first valid purchase.

#2 Apply one stated source-assignment rule. Keep unmatched customers visible.

#3 Compare spend, purchase CPA, new customers, and new-customer cost over equally mature periods.

#4 For prospecting campaigns, inspect customer exclusions and new-customer settings.

Calculate

Campaign acquisition cost = campaign spend / distinct verified new customers assigned once to that campaign. Compare with platform purchase CPA separately. Also report total paid spend / all store new customers as a blended planning ratio.

Compare groups

- Campaign purpose
- New, returning, and unknown customer status
- Source and device
- Promotion period

Healthy result

New-customer cost stays within the brand's agreed acquisition limit, and better purchase CPA also accompanies better new-customer results.

Investigate when

Use the brand's comparable-period range and stated acquisition limit. There is no universal acceptable gap between purchase CPA and new-customer cost.

Possible causes

- Returning buyers receive more delivery because customer exclusions are incomplete.
- The campaign now reaches more people who already know the brand.

Rule out

- Changed customer matching or incomplete order history
- An intentional repeat-customer campaign
- Different attribution windows or delayed orders

What to do next

Correct customer classification or exclusions when they're wrong. Set separate reporting goals for acquisition and repeat purchases.

Limits of this check

Source assignment describes where orders are credited. It doesn't prove that advertising caused those orders.

CHECK #1 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Cost per new customer rises while purchase CPA stays flat

Run a read-only check for: Cost per new customer rises while purchase CPA stays flat.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Campaign spend and reported purchases by date; Order ID, customer key, purchase time, valid-order status, and full available order history; One campaign assignment per first purchase, plus unmatched status.

Check: Ad spend per verified new customer rises while reported cost per purchase stays flat or falls. Returning customers take more of the matched orders.

Calculate: Campaign acquisition cost = campaign spend / distinct verified new customers assigned once to that campaign. Compare with platform purchase CPA separately. Also report total paid spend / all store new customers as a blended planning ratio.

Slice by: Campaign purpose; New, returning, and unknown customer status; Source and device; Promotion period.

Use this comparison rule: Use the brand's comparable-period range and stated acquisition limit. There is no universal acceptable gap between purchase CPA and new-customer cost.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: Changed customer matching or incomplete order history; An intentional repeat-customer campaign; Different attribution windows or delayed orders.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: new-customer reporting

Platform definitions and detection can differ from first-ever purchase. Align definitions and retain unknown status.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/12077475?hl=en>

Shopify: customer reports

First-purchase history, new versus returning customers, and equal-age cohort comparisons.

<https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/reports-and-analytics/shopify-reports/report-types/default-reports/customers-reports>

Google: attribution settings

Time zone, attribution settings, and conversion windows affect comparisons.

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/10597962?hl=en>

CHECK #2 / 20 • NEW CUSTOMERS

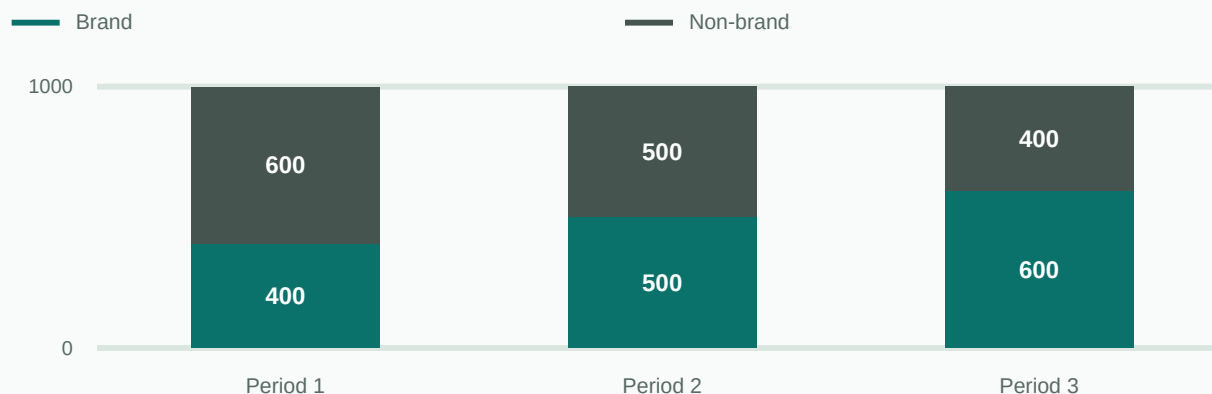
Brand search grows while non-brand first orders fall

Separate searches containing your brand from other searches, then compare verified first orders.

Brand gains replace non-brand first orders.

First orders

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



Total first orders stay at 1,000.

What you see

Brand-search order share rises while non-brand first orders fall and total first orders fail to grow.

Check first

Separate searches containing your brand from other searches, then compare verified first orders.

Data needed

- Paid-search spend and visible queries by date
- Reviewed brand dictionary and unclassified query coverage
- First-order source assignment and total store first orders

Run the check

#1 Classify visible queries with a reviewed brand dictionary. Don't classify from campaign name alone.

#2 Report unclassified query coverage and platform category totals separately.

#3 Compare first-order counts, spend, and contribution for each group.

#4 Inspect non-brand demand, budget limits, stock, and bidding changes.

Calculate

Brand share = brand-assigned first orders / all paid-search-assigned first orders. Keep unclassified search traffic separate.

Compare groups

- Brand versus non-brand intent
- First versus repeat order
- Product
- Promotion period

Healthy result

Brand and non-brand results remain clear separately. Total first-order growth supports the claimed acquisition growth.

Investigate when

Compare with matched promotion and seasonal periods. A high brand share alone isn't a failure.

Possible causes

- Non-brand coverage or prospecting spend fell.
- Promotions increased demand among people who already knew the brand.

Rule out

- Lower competitor brand bidding
- Cheaper brand clicks without lost non-brand volume
- Stock restrictions or a planned brand campaign

What to do next

Report brand capture separately. Test the constrained non-brand opportunity before reallocating budget.

Limits of this check

Brand search can add value. This split can't measure how many brand-search orders would occur without ads.

CHECK #2 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Brand search grows while non-brand first orders fall

Run a read-only check for: Brand search grows while non-brand first orders fall.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Paid-search spend and visible queries by date; Reviewed brand dictionary and unclassified query coverage; First-order source assignment and total store first orders.

Check: Brand-search order share rises while non-brand first orders fall and total first orders fail to grow.

Calculate: Brand share = brand-assigned first orders / all paid-search-assigned first orders. Keep unclassified search traffic separate.

Slice by: Brand versus non-brand intent; First versus repeat order; Product; Promotion period.

Use this comparison rule: Compare with matched promotion and seasonal periods. A high brand share alone isn't a failure.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: Lower competitor brand bidding; Cheaper brand clicks without lost non-brand volume; Stock restrictions or a planned brand campaign.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: search terms insights

Visible search terms and grouped category insights have different coverage.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/11386930?hl=en>

Google: conversion lift

Attributed results and measured causal lift are different quantities.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/14102450?hl=en-GB>

CHECK #3 / 20 • NEW CUSTOMERS

Retargeting spend rises while total first orders stay flat

Compare retargeting spend with total first orders and the size of the eligible audience.

Retargeting spend rises. Store first orders stay flat.

Matched, mature periods

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Measure	Before	After
Retargeting spend	\$10,000	\$16,000
Credited orders	100	160
Store first orders	1,000	1,000

More credited orders don't establish added first orders.

What you see

Retargeting spend and its credited orders rise, but verified first orders across the store stay flat.

Check first

Compare retargeting spend with total first orders and the size of the eligible audience.

Data needed

- Campaign purpose, spend, and credited orders by date
- Total store first orders
- Eligible audience size and full-period reach where available

Run the check

- #1 Use consistent campaign-purpose definitions and date windows.
- #2 Trend spend, audience size, frequency, and total first orders.
- #3 Check whether direct or email-attributed orders changed in the same period.
- #4 If the allocation concern remains, plan a controlled retargeting test.

Calculate

Report retargeting spend share, credited orders, verified store first orders, and audience size as separate measures. Don't subtract attributed orders to estimate lift.

Compare groups

- Retargeting window
- New versus returning customer
- Audience size where available
- Email and promotion calendar

Healthy result

Spend follows the available audience and the campaign's stated role. The brand has evidence for the extra orders it expects to buy.

Investigate when

Use the account's matched-period range. Don't use a universal frequency cap or a fixed retargeting budget share.

Possible causes

- The audience is too small for the current budget.
- Retargeting receives credit for demand also reached by other channels.

Rule out

- A large recent traffic increase
- Changes to email activity
- A campaign intended to increase repeat purchases

What to do next

Test a bounded budget change with a suitable control. Evaluate total eligible-customer outcomes before adopting the change.

Limits of this check

Flat first orders are a reason to investigate. They don't establish that retargeting has zero value.

CHECK #3 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Retargeting spend rises while total first orders stay flat

Run a read-only check for: Retargeting spend rises while total first orders stay flat.
First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.
Required inputs: Campaign purpose, spend, and credited orders by date; Total store first orders; Eligible audience size and full-period reach where available.
Check: Retargeting spend and its credited orders rise, but verified first orders across the store stay flat.
Calculate: Report retargeting spend share, credited orders, verified store first orders, and audience size as separate measures. Don't subtract attributed orders to estimate lift.
Slice by: Retargeting window; New versus returning customer; Audience size where available; Email and promotion calendar.
Use this comparison rule: Use the account's matched-period range. Don't use a universal frequency cap or a fixed retargeting budget share.
Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.
Rule out: A large recent traffic increase; Changes to email activity; A campaign intended to increase repeat purchases.
Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.
Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: conversion lift

Attributed results and measured causal lift are different quantities.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/14102450?hl=en-GB>

CHECK #4 / 20 • NEW CUSTOMERS

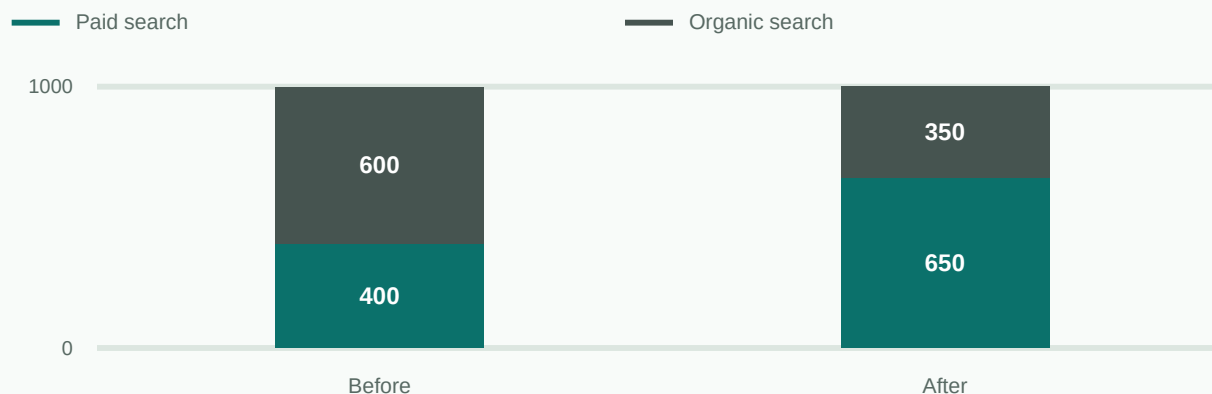
Paid search growth offsets falling organic first orders

Compare paid and organic first orders using the same order and source definitions.

Paid gains offset organic losses.

First orders

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



The total is unchanged.

What you see

Organic-search first orders fall while paid-search first orders and spend rise. Combined first orders remain flat.

Check first

Compare paid and organic first orders using the same order and source definitions.

Data needed

- First orders assigned once to paid search, organic search, or another source
- Paid-search spend by date
- Search visibility, stock, and promotion records

Run the check

- #1 Plot paid, organic, unknown-source, and total first orders.
- #2 Check whether the decline remains after correcting tagging changes.
- #3 Compare organic visibility, indexing changes, site releases, and stock.
- #4 Calculate the extra paid spend associated with holding total volume steady.

Calculate

Combined search first orders = paid-search-assigned first orders + organic-search-assigned first orders. Assign each first order once and show unknown sources separately.

Compare groups

- Paid versus organic search
- Brand intent where known
- Landing-page group
- Device and promotion period

Healthy result

Total first-order growth supports higher spend. Organic performance remains stable after allowing for known seasonal changes.

Investigate when

Use matched seasonal periods and stable tagging coverage. A change in source labels alone isn't a demand change.

Possible causes

- Organic visibility or relevance declined.
- Paid acquisition expanded while organic or direct demand weakened.

Rule out

- A source-classification change
- A deliberate paid-led launch
- Different order maturity across periods

What to do next

Investigate the organic decline and report the cost of maintaining volume. A site migration can explain the decline; it doesn't erase it.

Limits of this check

The chart doesn't prove paid search caused the organic decline.

CHECK #4 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Paid search growth offsets falling organic first orders

Run a read-only check for: Paid search growth offsets falling organic first orders.
First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.
Required inputs: First orders assigned once to paid search, organic search, or another source; Paid-search spend by date; Search visibility, stock, and promotion records.
Check: Organic-search first orders fall while paid-search first orders and spend rise. Combined first orders remain flat.
Calculate: Combined search first orders = paid-search-assigned first orders + organic-search-assigned first orders. Assign each first order once and show unknown sources separately.
Slice by: Paid versus organic search; Brand intent where known; Landing-page group; Device and promotion period.
Use this comparison rule: Use matched seasonal periods and stable tagging coverage. A change in source labels alone isn't a demand change.
Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.
Rule out: A source-classification change; A deliberate paid-led launch; Different order maturity across periods.
Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.
Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: attribution settings

Time zone, attribution settings, and conversion windows affect comparisons.

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/10597962?hl=en>

CHECK #5 / 20 • SPEND EFFICIENCY

New-customer cost rises as ads cost more or response falls

Break the cost into its measured parts before changing ads, bids, or landing pages.

Impression cost drives higher acquisition cost.

Same source and reporting window

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Measure	Before	After
Cost / 1,000 impressions	\$10	\$12
Click rate	1.0%	1.0%
Orders / clicks	4.0%	4.0%
New customers / orders	50%	50%
New-customer cost	\$50	\$60

Only impression cost changed.

What you see

New-customer acquisition cost rises. Impression price, click rate, purchase rate, or new-customer share explains the arithmetic change.

Check first

Break the cost into its measured parts before changing ads, bids, or landing pages.

Data needed

- Spend, impressions, clicks, purchases, and new customers for the same population
- Campaign, placement, device, and date
- Attribution settings and purchase-delay coverage

Run the check

#1 Confirm that spend, impressions, clicks, orders, and new customers describe the same population.

#2 Compare each factor over equally mature periods.

#3 Hold mix constant where practical and measure each factor's contribution to the change.

#4 Investigate the factor that changed, using campaign and source settings.

Calculate

For one aligned click-based population: $\text{spend/new customers} = \text{CPM} / (1,000 \times \text{clicks/impressions} \times \text{orders/clicks} \times \text{new customers/orders})$. If populations don't align, report the factors separately and show the unexplained difference.

Compare groups

- Channel and campaign
- Audience and placement
- Device
- Product and promotion period

Healthy result

The measured factors reconcile to the cost change. The resulting acquisition cost remains within the brand's stated limit.

Investigate when

Use the brand's comparison range and acquisition limit. No universal CPM, click-rate, or purchase-rate cutoff applies.

Possible causes

- CPM increased.
- Click-through rate declined.
- Purchase conversion rate or new-customer share declined.

Rule out

- View-through orders mixed with click-based orders
- Changed placement, device, or customer mix
- Different click and conversion dates

What to do next

Investigate price, click response, purchase response, or customer mix according to the measured change. Change one relevant factor in a controlled test.

Limits of this check

This calculation locates the cost change. It doesn't identify the cause of a lower click or purchase rate.

CHECK #5 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

New-customer cost rises as ads cost more or response falls

Run a read-only check for: New-customer cost rises as ads cost more or response falls.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Spend, impressions, clicks, purchases, and new customers for the same population; Campaign, placement, device, and date; Attribution settings and purchase-delay coverage.

Check: New-customer acquisition cost rises. Impression price, click rate, purchase rate, or new-customer share explains the arithmetic change.

Calculate: For one aligned click-based population: $\text{spend/new customers} = \text{CPM} / (1,000 \times \text{clicks/impressions} \times \text{orders/clicks} \times \text{new customers/orders})$. If populations don't align, report the factors separately and show the unexplained difference.

Slice by: Channel and campaign; Audience and placement; Device; Product and promotion period.

Use this comparison rule: Use the brand's comparison range and acquisition limit. No universal CPM, click-rate, or purchase-rate cutoff applies.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: View-through orders mixed with click-based orders; Changed placement, device, or customer mix; Different click and conversion dates.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: attribution settings

Time zone, attribution settings, and conversion windows affect comparisons.

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/10597962?hl=en>

CHECK #6 / 20 • SPEND EFFICIENCY

Higher spend produces fewer new customers per dollar

Compare mature results by spend level within the same channel and demand conditions.

The added spend costs more per new customer.

Cost per new customer (\$)

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



Spend rises from \$20,000 to \$30,000. New customers rise from 500 to 600.

What you see

Matched higher-spend periods produce fewer verified new customers per dollar than lower-spend periods.

Check first

Compare mature results by spend level within the same channel and demand conditions.

Data needed

- Spend and verified new customers across comparable spend periods
- Stock, prices, promotion dates, and channel mix
- Contribution and the brand acquisition limit, if set

Run the check

#1 Group comparable periods by actual spend level.

#2 Compare new customers, contribution, and cost at each level.

#3 Check that order maturity and demand conditions are comparable.

#4 Use an experiment or suitable causal design before claiming the return caused by extra spend.

Calculate

Observed added-spend cost = change in spend / change in new customers. If new customers don't increase, report that directly. Don't return a negative acquisition cost. This descriptive difference isn't causal incremental CAC.

Compare groups

- Spend level
- Channel and campaign family
- Promotion and season
- Product availability

Healthy result

Higher spend adds customers at economics the business accepts, after accounting for uncertainty and demand changes.

Investigate when

Use the brand's economic limit and a comparison stable enough to inform the decision.

Possible causes

- The account has exhausted its cheaper acquisition opportunities.
- Extra spend went to weakening creative.

Rule out

- A seasonal demand decline
- Stock or offer changes
- Unmatured purchase results

What to do next

Test a smaller spend range around the suspected change. Set the budget from measured outcomes and an explicit economic limit.

Limits of this check

A spend-band comparison alone can't tell you what would have happened without the extra spend.

CHECK #6 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Higher spend produces fewer new customers per dollar

Run a read-only check for: Higher spend produces fewer new customers per dollar.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Spend and verified new customers across comparable spend periods; Stock, prices, promotion dates, and channel mix; Contribution and the brand acquisition limit, if set.

Check: Matched higher-spend periods produce fewer verified new customers per dollar than lower-spend periods.

Calculate: $\text{Observed added-spend cost} = \text{change in spend} / \text{change in new customers}$. If new customers don't increase, report that directly. Don't return a negative acquisition cost. This descriptive difference isn't causal incremental CAC.

Slice by: Spend level; Channel and campaign family; Promotion and season; Product availability.

Use this comparison rule: Use the brand's economic limit and a comparison stable enough to inform the decision.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: A seasonal demand decline; Stock or offer changes; Unmatured purchase results.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: conversion lift

Attributed results and measured causal lift are different quantities.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/14102450?hl=en-GB>

Google: conversion delay

Late conversions can change a fixed period's apparent acquisition efficiency.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/6239119?hl=en>

CHECK #7 / 20 • SPEND EFFICIENCY

More budget goes to weaker acquisition segments

Rank segments by mature acquisition economics and check why the stronger segment can't deliver more.

The higher-cost segment gains spend share.

Spend share before and after

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Segment	Before	After
A - \$80 per customer	40%	70%
B - \$40 per customer	60%	30%

Segment B is budget constrained; Segment A has no measured limit.

What you see

A weaker segment receives more spend while a stronger segment has observed delivery limits and available stock.

Check first

Rank segments by mature acquisition economics and check why the stronger segment can't deliver more.

Data needed

- Segment spend, verified new customers, and contribution
- Budget and delivery limits at the source reporting level
- Stock and dated budget changes

Run the check

- #1 Compare mature results using one cost and source-assignment basis.
- #2 Locate the segment receiving the added spend.
- #3 For stronger segments, inspect delivery limits, stock, and available demand.
- #4 Model a bounded reallocation and test it before assuming returns will remain constant.

Calculate

Compare spend share with cost and contribution per new customer. Use platform delivery-limit measures at the grain where they exist; don't create query-level lost-impression-share figures from aggregate data.

Compare groups

- Channel or campaign family

- Search intent where available
- Budget versus rank limits
- Stock and contribution

Healthy result

Budget differences have an explicit economic or test reason. Better measured results are checked against the capacity to spend more.

Investigate when

Use actual contribution limits and observed delivery constraints. Judge budget limits and rank limits separately.

Possible causes

- Budget caps restrict stronger search segments.
- Added spend went to a weaker campaign family.

Rule out

- Intentional capped research spend
- Stock or margin constraints
- A stronger segment too small to absorb more spend

What to do next

Test moving a bounded amount from the weaker segment to the constrained stronger segment. Treat rank limits separately from budget limits.

Limits of this check

Good historical averages don't guarantee the same return at a higher budget.

CHECK #7 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

More budget goes to weaker acquisition segments

Run a read-only check for: More budget goes to weaker acquisition segments.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Segment spend, verified new customers, and contribution; Budget and delivery limits at the source reporting level; Stock and dated budget changes.

Check: A weaker segment receives more spend while a stronger segment has observed delivery limits and available stock.

Calculate: Compare spend share with cost and contribution per new customer. Use platform delivery-limit measures at the grain where they exist; don't create query-level lost-impression-share figures from aggregate data.

Slice by: Channel or campaign family; Search intent where available; Budget versus rank limits; Stock and contribution.

Use this comparison rule: Use actual contribution limits and observed delivery constraints. Judge budget limits and rank limits separately.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: Intentional capped research spend; Stock or margin constraints; A stronger segment too small to absorb more spend.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: get impression-share data

Distinguish budget limits from rank limits and preserve the source reporting grain.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/7103314?hl=en-GB>

Google: conversion lift

Attributed results and measured causal lift are different quantities.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/14102450?hl=en-GB>

CHECK #8 / 20 • SPEND EFFICIENCY

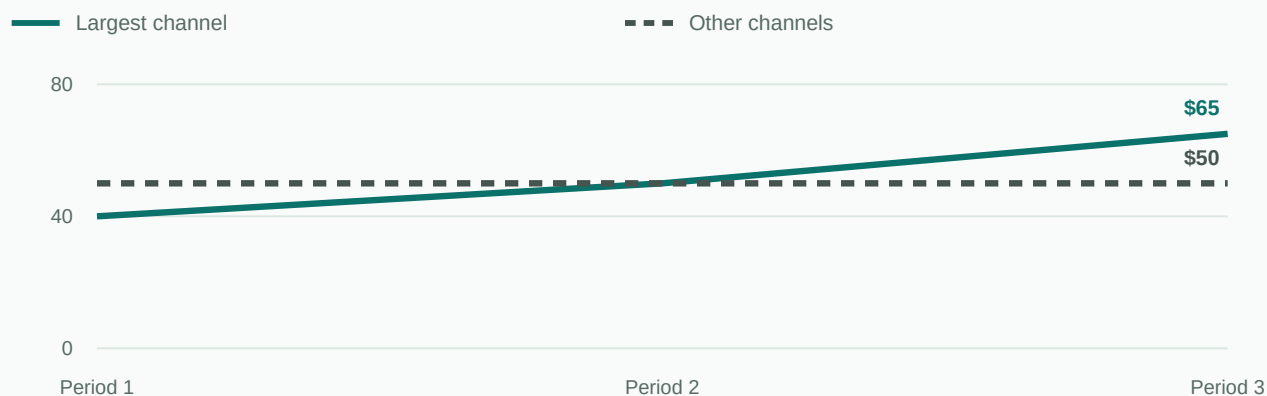
Cost per new customer rises in your largest paid channel

Compare channel concentration with the same channel's cost and contribution trend.

Cost per new customer rises in the largest channel

Cost per new customer (\$)

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



Customer cost rises in a channel that holds 70% of spend.

What you see

The channel with the largest spend share has rising new-customer cost or falling contribution, and the whole account depends on it.

Check first

Compare channel concentration with the same channel's cost and contribution trend.

Data needed

- Spend and verified new customers by channel
- Contribution at the same customer age
- Price, promotion, and channel-mix history

Run the check

- #1 Rank channels by spend share and assigned first orders.
- #2 Compare the leading channel's economics with its own matched baseline.
- #3 Calculate how a stated cost increase would change the total acquisition budget.
- #4 Separate measured deterioration from an untested risk scenario.

Calculate

Channel spend share = channel spend / total paid spend. Evaluate that share alongside mature customer cost and contribution. Concentration is exposure, not proof of failure.

Compare groups

- Channel
- New-customer source coverage
- Spend level
- Impression price and purchase response

Healthy result

A concentrated channel may be healthy when its economics are stable or improving and the exposure is acceptable.

Investigate when

Use the brand's economic limit and risk tolerance. A large spend share alone doesn't establish a problem.

Possible causes

- The business depends heavily on one auction or delivery system.
- A temporary fall in media prices previously improved the channel's results.

Rule out

- Stable or improving contribution
- A deliberate short test
- Misassigned new customers or delayed purchase reporting

What to do next

Address the measured cost driver. Test additional acquisition routes only where their economics and risk benefit justify the work.

Limits of this check

Adding channels can make acquisition less efficient. This check doesn't recommend diversification by default.

CHECK #8 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Cost per new customer rises in your largest paid channel

Run a read-only check for: Cost per new customer rises in your largest paid channel.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Spend and verified new customers by channel; Contribution at the same customer age; Price, promotion, and channel-mix history.

Check: The channel with the largest spend share has rising new-customer cost or falling contribution, and the whole account depends on it.

Calculate: Channel spend share = channel spend / total paid spend. Evaluate that share alongside mature customer cost and contribution. Concentration is exposure, not proof of failure.

Slice by: Channel; New-customer source coverage; Spend level; Impression price and purchase response.

Use this comparison rule: Use the brand's economic limit and risk tolerance. A large spend share alone doesn't establish a problem.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: Stable or improving contribution; A deliberate short test; Misassigned new customers or delayed purchase reporting.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

CHECK #9 / 20 • TRAFFIC AND DELIVERY

More search spend goes to terms that produce fewer first orders

Group visible search terms by intent and compare purchase outcomes and spend share.

Lower-response search terms gain spend share.

Share of classified search spend

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Search group	Before	After
Product terms - 4% first orders / clicks	80%	60%
Research terms - 1% first orders / clicks	20%	40%

Unavailable query data stays unclassified.

What you see

Spend shifts toward less relevant or earlier-stage searches while verified first orders per click fall.

Check first

Group visible search terms by intent and compare purchase outcomes and spend share.

Data needed

- Visible search terms, clicks, spend, and date
- Reviewed intent groups and unclassified coverage
- Verified first purchases linked at an available reporting level

Run the check

#1 Review the brand, product, comparison, and research terms in the export.

#2 Record how much spend or traffic the visible terms cover.

#3 Compare mature first-order outcomes within each intent group.

#4 Check recent keyword, matching, landing-page, and exclusion changes.

Calculate

For each reviewed intent group, compare spend share, first orders/clicks, and contribution. Retain an unknown group. Don't infer hidden terms from visible-term performance.

Compare groups

- Query intent
- Match type where available
- Device
- Landing page and product

Healthy result

Purchase campaigns reach relevant terms, and any research traffic has a separate stated goal and budget.

Investigate when

Use the brand's observed intent-group range and economic limit.

Possible causes

- Matching expanded into less relevant searches.
- Campaign structure mixes different purchase intentions.

Rule out

- A deliberate upper-funnel test
- A change in visible-query coverage
- Device or product-mix changes

What to do next

Review the weak terms and test narrower matching, exclusions, or a separate intent group. Keep purposeful research traffic distinct.

Limits of this check

Query reports omit some terms. Category insights and visible queries have different coverage.

CHECK #9 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

More search spend goes to terms that produce fewer first orders

Run a read-only check for: More search spend goes to terms that produce fewer first orders. First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Visible search terms, clicks, spend, and date; Reviewed intent groups and unclassified coverage; Verified first purchases linked at an available reporting level.

Check: Spend shifts toward less relevant or earlier-stage searches while verified first orders per click fall.

Calculate: For each reviewed intent group, compare spend share, first orders/clicks, and contribution. Retain an unknown group. Don't infer hidden terms from visible-term performance.

Slice by: Query intent; Match type where available; Device; Landing page and product.

Use this comparison rule: Use the brand's observed intent-group range and economic limit.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: A deliberate upper-funnel test; A change in visible-query coverage; Device or product-mix changes.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: search terms insights

Visible search terms and grouped category insights have different coverage.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/11386930?hl=en>

CHECK #10 / 20 • TRAFFIC AND DELIVERY

More spend reaches the same people without adding first orders

Compare reach, frequency, and first orders over the same reporting window.

Spend rises faster than reach. First orders stay flat.

Matched periods from one source

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Measure	Before	After
Spend	\$10,000	\$16,000
Unique reach	100,000	103,000
Frequency	2.0	3.1
First orders	100	100

Use full-period unique reach; don't add daily reach.

What you see

Spend and frequency rise while reported unique reach and verified first orders remain flat.

Check first

Compare reach, frequency, and first orders over the same reporting window.

Data needed

- Spend, impressions, and source-reported unique reach for each full period
- Verified first orders
- Campaign purpose, audience settings, and ad start dates

Run the check

#1 Use equal-length periods and the same source reporting grain.

#2 Trend spend, reach, frequency, and mature first orders.

#3 Check whether response per impression fell across ads or mainly on older ads.

#4 Inspect audience changes and test a new audience or message only if the evidence supports it.

Calculate

Use source-reported unique reach for the full selected window. Never add daily unique reach or sum reach across platforms. Compare indexed trends rather than unlike units on one scale.

Compare groups

- Audience
- Campaign purpose
- Creative age as an investigation slice
- Placement and reporting window

Healthy result

Added spend reaches additional eligible people or improves customer outcomes at acceptable cost. Repeated exposure can be useful.

Investigate when

Use the audience's own matched-period pattern and economic result. There is no universal unhealthy frequency value.

Possible causes

- The available audience is small relative to spend.
- Response fell mainly on older ads.

Rule out

- A short planned launch
- Changed reach estimation or reporting windows
- A repeat-purchase campaign with a different goal

What to do next

Test the specific audience or response concern. Use customer outcomes to decide whether to keep the change.

Limits of this check

Reported reach may be estimated. This comparison doesn't prove that all useful demand has been exhausted.

CHECK #10 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

More spend reaches the same people without adding first orders

Run a read-only check for: More spend reaches the same people without adding first orders. First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Spend, impressions, and source-reported unique reach for each full period; Verified first orders; Campaign purpose, audience settings, and ad start dates.

Check: Spend and frequency rise while reported unique reach and verified first orders remain flat.

Calculate: Use source-reported unique reach for the full selected window. Never add daily unique reach or sum reach across platforms. Compare indexed trends rather than unlike units on one scale.

Slice by: Audience; Campaign purpose; Creative age as an investigation slice; Placement and reporting window.

Use this comparison rule: Use the audience's own matched-period pattern and economic result. There is no universal unhealthy frequency value.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: A short planned launch; Changed reach estimation or reporting windows; A repeat-purchase campaign with a different goal.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

CHECK #11 / 20 • TRAFFIC AND DELIVERY

More budget goes to regions and devices with worse acquisition costs

Compare geography and device together before judging the account average.

Region B mobile gains spend share as its new-customer cost rises.

New-customer cost / spend share

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Region / device	Before	After
Region A / desktop	\$40 / 20%	\$40 / 10%
Region A / mobile	\$45 / 20%	\$45 / 10%
Region B / desktop	\$50 / 30%	\$50 / 20%
Region B / mobile	\$60 / 30%	\$90 / 60%

Region B mobile's spend share rises as its cost per new customer rises.

What you see

Weak region-and-device segments gain spend share while their new-customer cost or contribution deteriorates.

Check first

Compare geography and device together before judging the account average.

Data needed

- Spend and verified new customers by region, device, and date
- Contribution, shipping costs, and stock coverage
- Source matching and reporting coverage for each group

Run the check

#1 Use segment definitions available in both spend and customer data.

#2 Report results and unknown assignments without forcing a match.

#3 Compare each segment with its own past and relevant peers.

#4 Check stock, delivery costs, checkout issues, and planned market tests.

Calculate

Compute each segment's spend share, new customers, cost, and contribution. Use a fixed-mix comparison to separate performance changes from allocation changes.

Compare groups

- Region × device
- Channel
- Product or pack
- New-customer source coverage

Healthy result

Spend changes follow acceptable segment economics or a documented test. Strong segments don't hide unplanned losses elsewhere.

Investigate when

Use comparable segment history and actual contribution. Don't apply a universal 20% region gap.

Possible causes

- Expansion regions haven't met their acquisition case.
- A changing device mix hides differences between regions.

Rule out

- A bounded market-entry test
- Small or poorly matched segments
- Changed shipping costs or product availability

What to do next

Test a segment-specific budget or experience change. Keep test spend and established acquisition spend visible separately.

Limits of this check

A device difference can come from attribution or customer matching. It doesn't identify a checkout defect by itself.

CHECK #11 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

More budget goes to regions and devices with worse acquisition costs

Run a read-only check for: More budget goes to regions and devices with worse acquisition costs.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Spend and verified new customers by region, device, and date; Contribution, shipping costs, and stock coverage; Source matching and reporting coverage for each group.

Check: Weak region-and-device segments gain spend share while their new-customer cost or contribution deteriorates.

Calculate: Compute each segment's spend share, new customers, cost, and contribution. Use a fixed-mix comparison to separate performance changes from allocation changes.

Slice by: Region × device; Channel; Product or pack; New-customer source coverage.

Use this comparison rule: Use comparable segment history and actual contribution. Don't apply a universal 20% region gap.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: A bounded market-entry test; Small or poorly matched segments; Changed shipping costs or product availability.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: attribution settings

Time zone, attribution settings, and conversion windows affect comparisons.

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/10597962?hl=en>

CHECK #12 / 20 • TRAFFIC AND DELIVERY

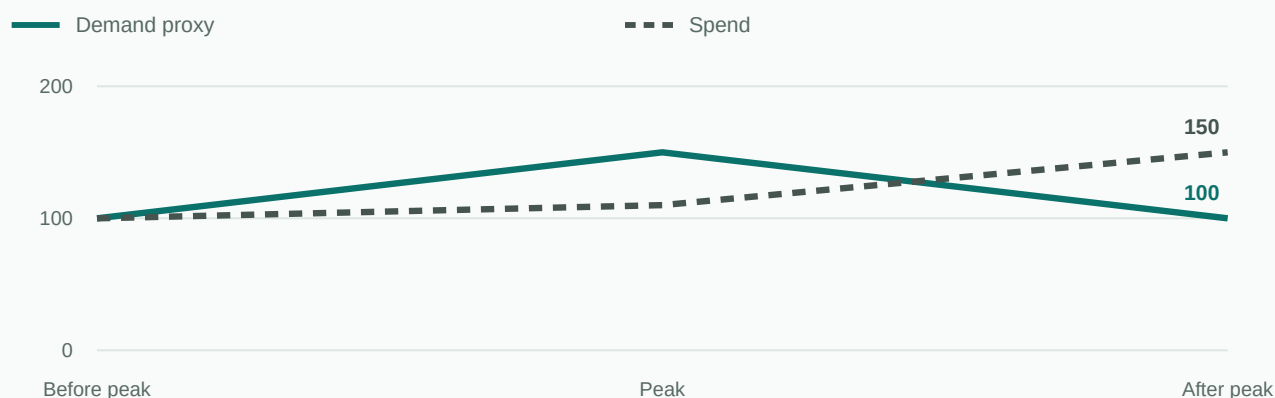
Budget stays high after demand and acquisition efficiency fall

Compare the spend calendar with independent demand measures and mature first orders.

Spend peaks after demand. Customer cost rises.

Index: first period = 100

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



New-customer cost: \$40 to \$50 to \$65. Name and date the actual demand source.

What you see

Spend remains high or increases after a measured demand peak, while mature new-customer cost worsens.

Check first

Compare the spend calendar with independent demand measures and mature first orders.

Data needed

- Spend and verified new customers by date
- A named external or non-paid demand indicator with dates
- Promotion, price, stock, and budget-change calendar

Run the check

- #1 Identify the demand measure and its coverage.
- #2 Overlay budget changes with demand, stock, and mature first orders.
- #3 Compare like seasonal periods and promotion plans.
- #4 Test whether a different timing pattern improves acquisition outcomes.

Calculate

Use separate indexed series for spend and a named demand proxy. Assess cost per new customer by comparable seasonal period. Don't use paid conversions alone as an independent demand measure.

Compare groups

- Week and season
- Promotion status
- Channel
- Inventory and cash constraints

Healthy result

Budget timing reflects observed demand and business constraints. Off-peak periods use suitable economic expectations.

Investigate when

Use the brand's own demand history and acquisition limit. A fixed seasonal lag or spend-change percentage isn't justified.

Possible causes

- Budget decisions arrive after the demand peak.
- Peak-season expectations are being applied to lower-demand periods.

Rule out

- Inventory protection
- Cash limits
- An intentional launch or advance-demand campaign

What to do next

Test a revised spend schedule against comparable demand periods. Record the inventory and cash assumptions.

Limits of this check

A demand proxy isn't total market demand. Timing correlation doesn't prove the return from moving budget.

CHECK #12 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Budget stays high after demand and acquisition efficiency fall

Run a read-only check for: Budget stays high after demand and acquisition efficiency fall. First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Spend and verified new customers by date; A named external or non-paid demand indicator with dates; Promotion, price, stock, and budget-change calendar.

Check: Spend remains high or increases after a measured demand peak, while mature new-customer cost worsens.

Calculate: Use separate indexed series for spend and a named demand proxy. Assess cost per new customer by comparable seasonal period. Don't use paid conversions alone as an independent demand measure.

Slice by: Week and season; Promotion status; Channel; Inventory and cash constraints.

Use this comparison rule: Use the brand's own demand history and acquisition limit. A fixed seasonal lag or spend-change percentage isn't justified.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: Inventory protection; Cash limits; An intentional launch or advance-demand campaign.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: insights and demand forecasts

Demand indicators are qualified source measures, not full market demand.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/10256472?hl=en>

Google: conversion delay

Late conversions can change a fixed period's apparent acquisition efficiency.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/6239119?hl=en>

CHECK #13 / 20 • CUSTOMER VALUE

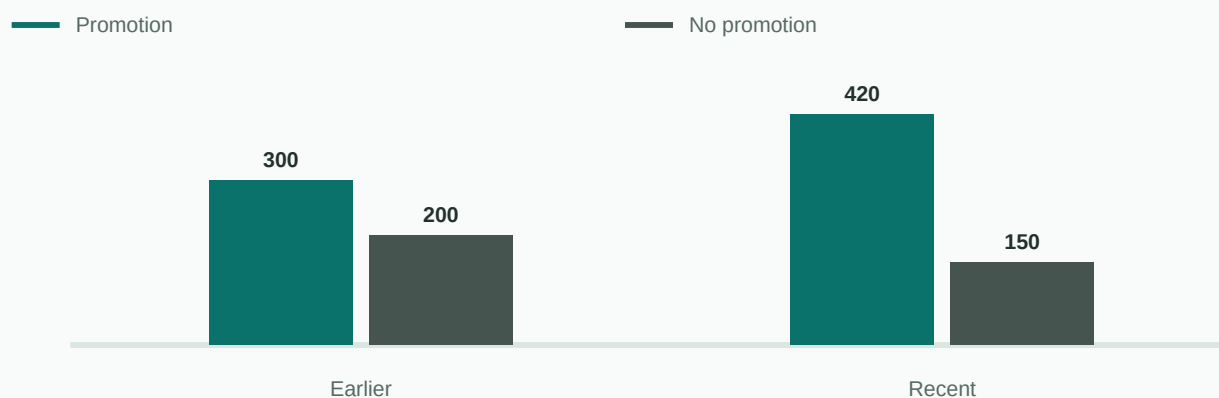
Promotions add first orders while full-price acquisition declines

Separate promotion and non-promotion results, including contribution after discounts.

Promotion first orders rise. Full-price first orders fall.

First orders per comparable week

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



Compare matched seasonal and stock conditions.

What you see

Promotion periods generate more first orders, but first orders outside promotions fall under comparable conditions.

Check first

Separate promotion and non-promotion results, including contribution after discounts.

Data needed

- First orders, discount amounts, net revenue, and variable costs
- Promotion dates, offer terms, and stock history
- Acquisition spend for comparable promotion and ordinary periods

Run the check

- #1 Mark promotion periods and identify eligible first purchases.
- #2 Compare matched seasonal periods with the same stock conditions.
- #3 Calculate contribution and mature repeat outcomes for the offer cohorts.
- #4 Check whether the result meets the stated promotion case.

Calculate

Compare first-order counts and contribution after variable costs and acquisition spend. Net revenue already includes discounts; don't deduct them twice.

Compare groups

- Promotion versus non-promotion
- Offer depth
- New-customer source
- Product and cohort age

Healthy result

Promotion results meet the brand's stated economic case. Non-promotion performance remains visible and is judged separately.

Investigate when

Use the actual contribution calculation and the brand's promotion case. A promotion-dependent business isn't automatically unhealthy.

Possible causes

- The offer generates temporary demand without improving ordinary acquisition.
- Discount-led acquisition produces lower order value or slower payback.

Rule out

- A deliberate promotion-led business model
- Seasonal or stock differences
- Cohorts compared at different ages

What to do next

Report promotions separately. Test offer depth or non-price acquisition against an explicit contribution goal.

Limits of this check

Matched cohorts describe differences. They don't prove the offer caused lower customer value.

CHECK #13 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Promotions add first orders while full-price acquisition declines

Run a read-only check for: Promotions add first orders while full-price acquisition declines. First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: First orders, discount amounts, net revenue, and variable costs; Promotion dates, offer terms, and stock history; Acquisition spend for comparable promotion and ordinary periods.

Check: Promotion periods generate more first orders, but first orders outside promotions fall under comparable conditions.

Calculate: Compare first-order counts and contribution after variable costs and acquisition spend. Net revenue already includes discounts; don't deduct them twice.

Slice by: Promotion versus non-promotion; Offer depth; New-customer source; Product and cohort age.

Use this comparison rule: Use the actual contribution calculation and the brand's promotion case. A promotion-dependent business isn't automatically unhealthy.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: A deliberate promotion-led business model; Seasonal or stock differences; Cohorts compared at different ages.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Shopify: profit reports

Product cost and discounts affect reported gross profit. Acquisition contribution also requires explicitly included variable costs.

<https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/reports-and-analytics/shopify-reports/report-types/profit-reports>

Shopify: customer reports

First-purchase history, new versus returning customers, and equal-age cohort comparisons.

<https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/reports-and-analytics/shopify-reports/report-types/default-reports/customers-reports>

CHECK #14 / 20 • CUSTOMER VALUE

Returning customers use offers reserved for new customers

Join offer redemptions to purchase history as it stood before each redemption.

15 returning customers use a first-purchase offer.

Rule: first purchase only

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Customer status	Count	Share
Eligible	80	80%
Ineligible	15	15%
Unknown	5	5%

Keep unknown status separate.

What you see

Verified existing customers redeem an offer whose rules restrict it to first purchases.

Check first

Join offer redemptions to purchase history as it stood before each redemption.

Data needed

- Offer ID, redemption time, discount amount, and order ID
- Customer purchase history available at redemption
- The offer rules and eligibility settings in effect at that time

Run the check

#1 Confirm the offer's written eligibility rule and dates.

#2 Match redemptions to complete earlier purchase history.

#3 Separate ineligible redemptions, valid exceptions, and unknown customers.

#4 Inspect offer settings and quantify the actual discount granted to ineligible orders.

Calculate

Ineligible redemption share = verified ineligible redemptions / redemptions with known eligibility. Report unknown eligibility separately. Report actual discounts granted, not assumed recoverable profit.

Compare groups

- Offer code
- Customer status at redemption
- First versus repeat purchase
- Discount and product contribution

Healthy result

Known redemptions follow the offer rule, with documented exceptions and an explicit unknown group.

Investigate when

For a strictly first-purchase-only offer, any verified repeat-customer redemption is a rule exception. Prioritize by affected spend; no arbitrary 5-point increase is needed.

Possible causes

- Offer restrictions don't enforce the stated eligibility.
- Customer accounts or matching rules allow earlier buyers to appear new.

Rule out

- An authorized exception
- Incomplete order history
- A recent identity or login change

What to do next

Correct the eligibility rule or its enforcement. Remove misclassified redemptions from first-purchase reporting.

Limits of this check

The discount granted is observed. The sales or profit that would remain after removing it require a separate estimate or test.

CHECK #14 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Returning customers use offers reserved for new customers

Run a read-only check for: Returning customers use offers reserved for new customers.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Offer ID, redemption time, discount amount, and order ID; Customer purchase history available at redemption; The offer rules and eligibility settings in effect at that time.

Check: Verified existing customers redeem an offer whose rules restrict it to first purchases.

Calculate: Ineligible redemption share = verified ineligible redemptions / redemptions with known eligibility. Report unknown eligibility separately. Report actual discounts granted, not assumed recoverable profit.

Slice by: Offer code; Customer status at redemption; First versus repeat purchase; Discount and product contribution.

Use this comparison rule: For a strictly first-purchase-only offer, any verified repeat-customer redemption is a rule exception. Prioritize by affected spend; no arbitrary 5-point increase is needed. Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: An authorized exception; Incomplete order history; A recent identity or login change. Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Shopify: discount eligibility

Inspect the actual offer eligibility configuration rather than assuming the label enforces first-purchase eligibility.

<https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/discounts/discounts-faq>

CHECK #15 / 20 • CUSTOMER VALUE

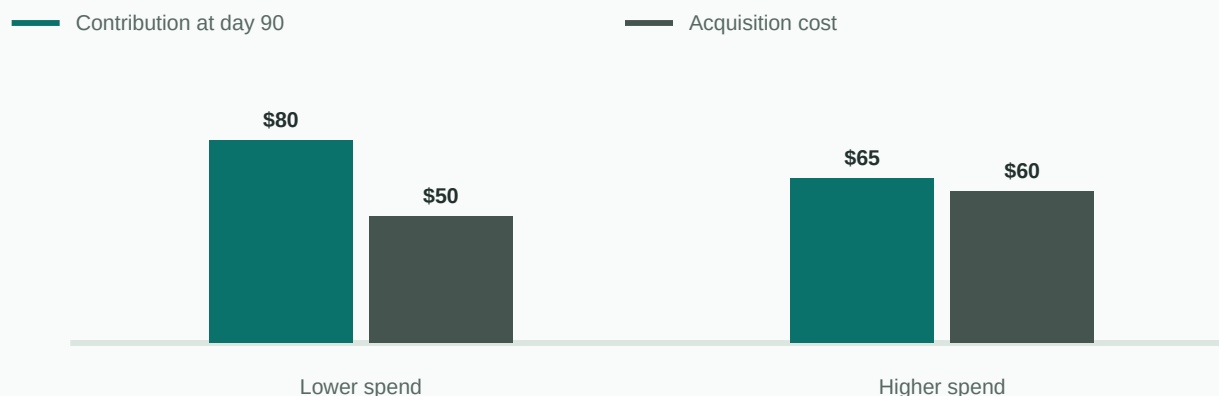
Higher-spend cohorts generate less contribution per customer

Compare customer groups at the same time since first purchase, using contribution rather than revenue alone.

The higher-spend cohort contributes less per customer.

Dollars per acquired customer

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



Day 90 is an example age, not a required target.

What you see

Customers acquired in higher-spend periods generate less contribution at the same age, while acquisition cost rises.

Check first

Compare customer groups at the same time since first purchase, using contribution rather than revenue alone.

Data needed

- Customer acquisition date and one cohort assignment
- Orders, net revenue, and included variable costs through the same customer age
- Assigned acquisition spend and source coverage

Run the check

#1 Group customers by first-purchase period and source using one stated assignment rule.

#2 Choose an age observed for every cohort being compared.

#3 Calculate contribution with matched refund and cost treatment.

#4 Compare product, offer, and source mix before attributing the change to spending.

Calculate

Contribution per acquired customer at age D = (cohort net revenue through age D minus included variable costs) / acquired customers. Compare with acquisition cost per customer separately.

Compare groups

- Acquisition spend level
- First product or pack
- Offer
- Channel and cohort age

Healthy result

Higher spending still brings customers whose observed contribution supports the acquisition case at the selected age.

Investigate when

Use an age-specific business case and matched cohorts. Don't assume a universal 60-day or 90-day payback requirement.

Possible causes

- Higher spending changes the customer or pack mix.
- Acquisition messages or offer pages favor lower-value orders.

Rule out

- Younger cohorts with less observation time
- Different return or cost coverage
- An intentional entry-product strategy

What to do next

Test the offer, product, or source mix that explains the value change. Evaluate acquisition cost and contribution together.

Limits of this check

Equal-age comparison improves comparability but doesn't remove all selection effects.

CHECK #15 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Higher-spend cohorts generate less contribution per customer

Run a read-only check for: Higher-spend cohorts generate less contribution per customer.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Customer acquisition date and one cohort assignment; Orders, net revenue, and included variable costs through the same customer age; Assigned acquisition spend and source coverage.

Check: Customers acquired in higher-spend periods generate less contribution at the same age, while acquisition cost rises.

Calculate: Contribution per acquired customer at age D = (cohort net revenue through age D minus included variable costs) / acquired customers. Compare with acquisition cost per customer separately.

Slice by: Acquisition spend level; First product or pack; Offer; Channel and cohort age.

Use this comparison rule: Use an age-specific business case and matched cohorts. Don't assume a universal 60-day or 90-day payback requirement.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: Younger cohorts with less observation time; Different return or cost coverage; An intentional entry-product strategy.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Shopify: customer reports

First-purchase history, new versus returning customers, and equal-age cohort comparisons.

<https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/reports-and-analytics/shopify-reports/report-types/default-reports/customers-reports>

Shopify: profit reports

Product cost and discounts affect reported gross profit. Acquisition contribution also requires explicitly included variable costs.

<https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/reports-and-analytics/shopify-reports/report-types/profit-reports>

CHECK #16 / 20 • CUSTOMER VALUE

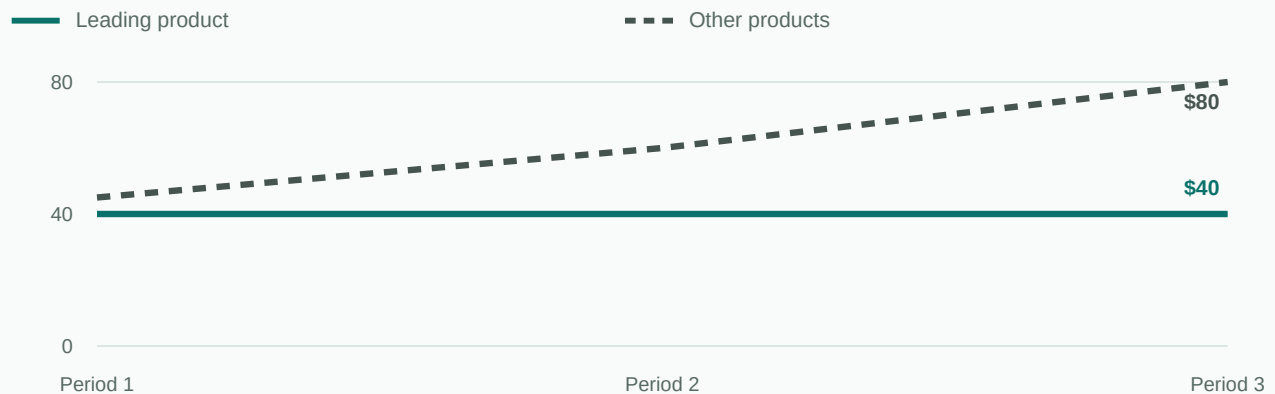
Acquisition cost rises outside your leading product

Compare first-order product mix with product-level acquisition cost and contribution.

Cost per new customer rises outside the leading product

Cost per new customer (\$)

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



The leading product grows from 60% to 80% of first orders as acquisition cost rises elsewhere.

What you see

The leading entry product keeps a stable acquisition cost and gains first-order share. Acquisition cost rises across the other products as a group.

Check first

Compare first-order product mix with product-level acquisition cost and contribution.

Data needed

- First-order line items and one stated entry-product assignment
- Product-level spend allocation, if supported
- New customers, contribution, stock, and campaign mix by period

Run the check

- #1 Define how mixed-product first orders are assigned.
- #2 Compare product share, acquisition cost where supportable, and observed contribution.
- #3 Check stock and product maturity before comparing.
- #4 Assess whether concentration matches the brand's intended product strategy.

Calculate

Define one entry-product assignment per first order, or a weighted rule whose shares sum to one. Product acquisition cost requires a documented spend allocation; otherwise compare campaign-to-product mixes without inventing SKU spend.

Compare groups

- First product
- Channel
- Spend level
- Offer and cohort age

Healthy result

A leading product may be healthy when it has strong contribution and concentration is deliberate. Other products have clear test economics.

Investigate when

There is no universal unhealthy product-share threshold. Require deterioration or a breached business constraint before calling concentration a problem.

Possible causes

- The media mix works better for the leading product.
- New products were judged against a mature product before adequate testing.

Rule out

- A deliberate single-product acquisition strategy
- Stock restrictions
- Unsupported allocation of ad spend to products

What to do next

Keep the strong entry product where its economics support it. Test other products with separate budgets and decision rules.

Limits of this check

More product variety isn't automatically better. Don't claim product CAC without a supportable spend assignment.

CHECK #16 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Acquisition cost rises outside your leading product

Run a read-only check for: Acquisition cost rises outside your leading product.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: First-order line items and one stated entry-product assignment; Product-level spend allocation, if supported; New customers, contribution, stock, and campaign mix by period.

Check: The leading entry product keeps a stable acquisition cost and gains first-order share. Acquisition cost rises across the other products as a group.

Calculate: Define one entry-product assignment per first order, or a weighted rule whose shares sum to one. Product acquisition cost requires a documented spend allocation; otherwise compare campaign-to-product mixes without inventing SKU spend.

Slice by: First product; Channel; Spend level; Offer and cohort age.

Use this comparison rule: There is no universal unhealthy product-share threshold. Require deterioration or a breached business constraint before calling concentration a problem.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: A deliberate single-product acquisition strategy; Stock restrictions; Unsupported allocation of ad spend to products.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Shopify: profit reports

Product cost and discounts affect reported gross profit. Acquisition contribution also requires explicitly included variable costs.

<https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/reports-and-analytics/shopify-reports/report-types/profit-reports>

CHECK #17 / 20 • CAMPAIGN DECISIONS

Purchase campaigns bid for actions that aren't purchases

Inspect the campaign's active bidding goal, not just the account's list of conversion events.

A purchase campaign bids for cart additions.

Purpose: acquire first purchases

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Event	Bidding	Tracked
Add to cart	Yes	Yes
Purchase	No	Yes

Spend stays at \$1,000. Verified first purchases fall from 20 to 8.

What you see

A campaign intended to acquire purchasing customers actively optimizes for another event, while verified first purchases remain weak.

Check first

Inspect the campaign's active bidding goal, not just the account's list of conversion events.

Data needed

- Campaign purpose and the actual goals selected for bidding
- Conversion-event definitions and dated configuration changes
- Spend and verified first purchases by campaign

Run the check

- #1 Record the campaign's intended outcome.
- #2 Inspect selected goals and actions actually used by bidding.
- #3 Check custom goals as well as primary and secondary labels.
- #4 Compare mature first-purchase outcomes before proposing a goal change.

Calculate

Compare campaign intent with the actual events used for bidding. Report spend attached to mismatched goals and the associated verified first purchases.

Compare groups

- Campaign purpose
- Active goal and conversion action
- Goal-change date
- Verified purchase and customer status

Healthy result

The active goal matches the campaign's stated role. Any upper-funnel campaign has a separate success measure and budget.

Investigate when

This is a configuration mismatch against the campaign's stated purpose. No universal conversion-rate threshold is required.

Possible causes

- The campaign was set to optimize for an intermediate event during setup.
- Account defaults or custom goals include unintended conversion actions.

Rule out

- A deliberate awareness or consideration campaign
- A custom goal whose event names hide their actual meaning
- Recent changes still within the account's observed learning period

What to do next

Correct the mismatch after checking purchase tracking. Plan the change and its evaluation window before applying it.

Limits of this check

An active goal mismatch is observable. It doesn't quantify the performance improvement from changing the goal.

CHECK #17 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Purchase campaigns bid for actions that aren't purchases

Run a read-only check for: Purchase campaigns bid for actions that aren't purchases.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Campaign purpose and the actual goals selected for bidding; Conversion-event definitions and dated configuration changes; Spend and verified first purchases by campaign.

Check: A campaign intended to acquire purchasing customers actively optimizes for another event, while verified first purchases remain weak.

Calculate: Compare campaign intent with the actual events used for bidding. Report spend attached to mismatched goals and the associated verified first purchases.

Slice by: Campaign purpose; Active goal and conversion action; Goal-change date; Verified purchase and customer status.

Use this comparison rule: This is a configuration mismatch against the campaign's stated purpose. No universal conversion-rate threshold is required.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: A deliberate awareness or consideration campaign; A custom goal whose event names hide their actual meaning; Recent changes still within the account's observed learning period.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: primary and secondary actions

Inspect active campaign goals and the custom-goal exception, not just action labels.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/11461796?hl=en>

CHECK #18 / 20 • CAMPAIGN DECISIONS

Acquisition cost exceeds observed customer contribution

Calculate contribution after variable costs, then compare it with acquisition cost at the same cohort age.

Acquisition cost exceeds contribution by \$10.

Dollars per acquired customer

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



After included costs, at one stated customer age: -\$10 per customer.

What you see

At the brand's chosen evaluation age, the acquired cohort has generated less contribution than its assigned acquisition cost.

Check first

Calculate contribution after variable costs, then compare it with acquisition cost at the same cohort age.

Data needed

- Cohort customers, net revenue, and included variable costs through the chosen age
- Assigned acquisition spend and cost coverage
- The brand evaluation age and acquisition policy, if set

Run the check

- #1 Use net revenue with consistent discount and refund treatment.
- #2 Include the variable costs needed for the stated contribution measure.
- #3 Compare acquisition spend with contribution at a fully observed age.
- #4 If the brand expects later payback, show observed results separately from the forecast.

Calculate

Acquisition surplus at age D = cohort net revenue through D minus variable costs through D minus assigned acquisition spend. Per-customer surplus divides this by acquired customers. Keep overhead and cash timing separate.

Compare groups

- Acquisition cohort
- Channel and source coverage
- Product and offer
- Cost coverage and observation age

Healthy result

Contribution covers acquisition cost by the brand's stated payback age, or the planned shortfall remains within a documented budget.

Investigate when

Zero surplus is the mathematical breakeven for the defined costs and age. The acceptable payback age and any early deficit belong to the brand.

Possible causes

- The offer reduces contribution more than acquisition improves.
- Higher spending brings lower-value purchases.

Rule out

- Missing product, shipping, payment, or return costs
- Immature cohorts
- A planned early deficit with a supported later-payback case

What to do next

Test cost, offer, or acquisition changes where the shortfall is concentrated. Don't scale from reported revenue alone.

Limits of this check

Observed contribution doesn't establish lifetime value. Missing costs make the result incomplete, not profitable.

CHECK #18 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Acquisition cost exceeds observed customer contribution

Run a read-only check for: Acquisition cost exceeds observed customer contribution.

First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Cohort customers, net revenue, and included variable costs through the chosen age; Assigned acquisition spend and cost coverage; The brand evaluation age and acquisition policy, if set.

Check: At the brand's chosen evaluation age, the acquired cohort has generated less contribution than its assigned acquisition cost.

Calculate: Acquisition surplus at age D = cohort net revenue through D minus variable costs through D minus assigned acquisition spend. Per-customer surplus divides this by acquired customers. Keep overhead and cash timing separate.

Slice by: Acquisition cohort; Channel and source coverage; Product and offer; Cost coverage and observation age.

Use this comparison rule: Zero surplus is the mathematical breakeven for the defined costs and age. The acceptable payback age and any early deficit belong to the brand.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: Missing product, shipping, payment, or return costs; Immature cohorts; A planned early deficit with a supported later-payback case.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Shopify: profit reports

Product cost and discounts affect reported gross profit. Acquisition contribution also requires explicitly included variable costs.

<https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/reports-and-analytics/shopify-reports/report-types/profit-reports>

Shopify: customer reports

First-purchase history, new versus returning customers, and equal-age cohort comparisons.

<https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/reports-and-analytics/shopify-reports/report-types/default-reports/customers-reports>

CHECK #19 / 20 • CAMPAIGN DECISIONS

Spend is split across campaigns with too few purchases to judge

Compare spend by campaign with the amount and precision of mature purchase evidence.

Equal observed cost doesn't establish a reliable ranking.

Matched spend and mature purchases

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Campaign	Spend	First orders
A	\$600	3
B	\$400	2
C	\$200	1

Each campaign has an observed cost of \$200 per first purchase.

What you see

A material share of spend goes to small campaign units whose purchase results are too uncertain for the planned decision.

Check first

Compare spend by campaign with the amount and precision of mature purchase evidence.

Data needed

- Campaign spend, eligible exposure, and mature purchase results
- Campaign purpose, decision rule, and required precision
- Dated campaign structure and separate platform learning status

Run the check

- #1 State the budget decision and the difference that would change it.
- #2 Report spend in units that can't yet distinguish that difference.
- #3 Check whether similar units need separate delivery or reporting.
- #4 Inspect platform learning status separately from statistical precision.

Calculate

For each decision unit, report spend, eligible exposure, mature purchases, cost, and uncertainty. The required precision comes from the size of the decision; there is no universal purchase-count cutoff.

Compare groups

- Campaign or true optimization unit
- Purpose: scale versus test
- Mature purchase count
- Decision limit and uncertainty

Healthy result

Routine campaign decisions use enough evidence for their economic consequence. Small tests have a stated purpose and decision plan.

Investigate when

Use decision-specific uncertainty or test power. Set the read window and minimum evidence for the planned decision.

Possible causes

- Too many units divide the available purchase volume.
- Similar audiences are separated without a useful economic distinction.

Rule out

- Deliberate bounded experiments
- Required regional or contractual separation
- Late purchase reporting

What to do next

Consolidate only where the units share a goal and can be managed together. Keep necessary tests distinct and use an adequate evaluation plan.

Limits of this check

A platform learning label and statistical uncertainty are different measures. Neither alone proves that merging campaigns will improve results.

CHECK #19 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Spend is split across campaigns with too few purchases to judge

Run a read-only check for: Spend is split across campaigns with too few purchases to judge. First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Campaign spend, eligible exposure, and mature purchase results; Campaign purpose, decision rule, and required precision; Dated campaign structure and separate platform learning status.

Check: A material share of spend goes to small campaign units whose purchase results are too uncertain for the planned decision.

Calculate: For each decision unit, report spend, eligible exposure, mature purchases, cost, and uncertainty. The required precision comes from the size of the decision; there is no universal purchase-count cutoff.

Slice by: Campaign or true optimization unit; Purpose: scale versus test; Mature purchase count; Decision limit and uncertainty.

Use this comparison rule: Use decision-specific uncertainty or test power. Set the read window and minimum evidence for the planned decision.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: Deliberate bounded experiments; Required regional or contractual separation; Late purchase reporting.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: how bidding learns

Learning depends on source conditions. Don't apply a universal event threshold.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/10970825?hl=en-GB>

Google: conversion delay

Late conversions can change a fixed period's apparent acquisition efficiency.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/6239119?hl=en>

CHECK #20 / 20 • CAMPAIGN DECISIONS

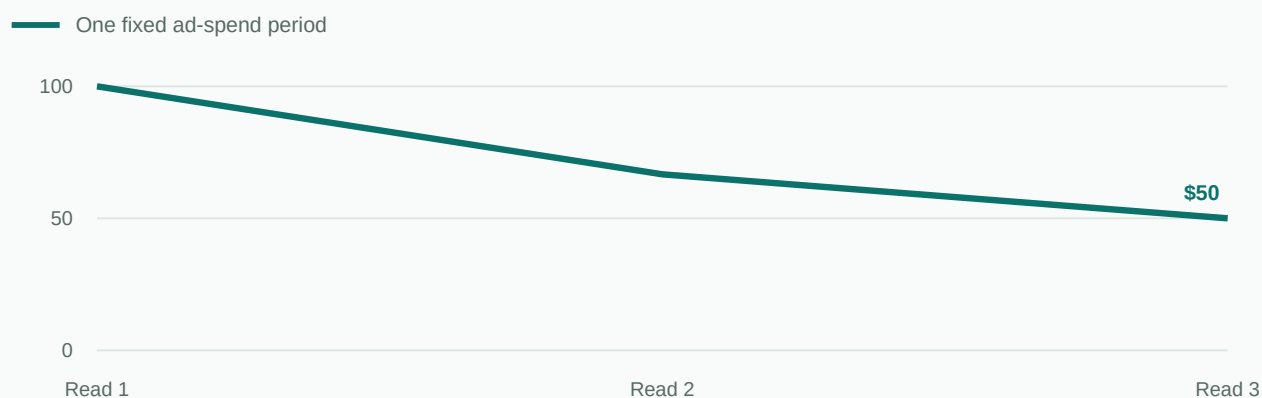
Campaign budgets are cut before purchase results have matured

Compare the result visible when the budget changed with a later read of the same period.

Later purchases lower reported purchase CPA for the same spend

Observed cost per purchase (\$)

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW



Budget cut after Read 1: \$100 to \$50 per day. Illustration: \$1,000 spend; 10, 15, then 20 observed purchases.

What you see

A budget cut follows a poor early purchase read, but later reports for the same exposure period show better economics.

Check first

Compare the result visible when the budget changed with a later read of the same period.

Data needed

- Saved reports for one fixed exposure period at multiple read dates
- Campaign spend, reported purchases, and verified customer status where available
- Dated budget changes, decision reason, and observed purchase delays

Run the check

- #1 Save the report used for the original budget decision.
- #2 Re-read the same exposure period after the account's usual purchase delay.
- #3 Compare the revised result with the original decision rule.
- #4 Check whether stock, cash, or another constraint justified the cut anyway.

Calculate

For one fixed exposure cohort, compute spend / reported purchases at successive read dates. Keep model-estimated late purchases separate from observed later purchases. Join the dated result to the campaign change log. For acquisition decisions, repeat the check with verified first purchases where linkage exists. Otherwise label the result purchase CPA; it doesn't establish new-customer cost.

Compare groups

- Exposure period
- Read date
- Campaign change date
- Purchase delay and customer status

Healthy result

Budget decisions use results with known maturity, or explicitly allow for delayed purchases and uncertainty.

Investigate when

Use the account's observed conversion-delay distribution and the campaign's decision rule. There is no universal waiting period.

Possible causes

- Recent reports omit purchases that arrive later.
- Decisions are made before the stated test threshold.

Rule out

- A deliberate stop for stock, cash, or compliance
- A changed attribution model
- Forecasted conversions presented as observed

What to do next

Set an evaluation schedule from actual delay data. Keep the early result, revised result, and decision reason together.

Limits of this check

A later better result for the same exposure period doesn't prove that keeping the budget higher would have paid off.

CHECK #20 / 20 • READ-ONLY AI PROMPT

Campaign budgets are cut before purchase results have matured

Run a read-only check for: Campaign budgets are cut before purchase results have matured. First confirm the available sources, columns, row grain, date basis, currency, and customer definition. Use only authorized data.

Required inputs: Saved reports for one fixed exposure period at multiple read dates; Campaign spend, reported purchases, and verified customer status where available; Dated budget changes, decision reason, and observed purchase delays.

Check: A budget cut follows a poor early purchase read, but later reports for the same exposure period show better economics.

Calculate: For one fixed exposure cohort, compute spend / reported purchases at successive read dates. Keep model-estimated late purchases separate from observed later purchases. Join the dated result to the campaign change log. For acquisition decisions, repeat the check with verified first purchases where linkage exists. Otherwise label the result purchase CPA; it doesn't establish new-customer cost. Slice by: Exposure period; Read date; Campaign change date; Purchase delay and customer status. Use this comparison rule: Use the account's observed conversion-delay distribution and the campaign's decision rule. There is no universal waiting period.

Show the source totals, calculation, unknown groups, missing inputs, and result. Don't invent fields, thresholds, customer matches, or causal effects.

Rule out: A deliberate stop for stock, cash, or compliance; A changed attribution model; Forecasted conversions presented as observed.

Describe the observed signal separately from possible explanations. If the check is incomplete, state the exact data needed.

Make no account or budget changes.

Sources

Google: conversion delay

Late conversions can change a fixed period's apparent acquisition efficiency.

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/6239119?hl=en>