



MarkethingsLab

GOOGLE ADS AUDIT · ONLINE STORES

Tracking, attribution, structure and catalog

Example Home Co. — furniture & home décor, United Kingdom

Period reviewed: 1–30 September 2026

Accounts: Google Ads, GA4, Google Merchant Center

Access: read-only · Store orders from an export with no customer data

Sample report. Example Home Co. is a fictional store and every figure in this report is illustrative. It shows the structure and depth of a real audit; no client data has been used.

Executive summary

49

/100

Overall score

1. Conversion tracking

12 / 25

2. Attribution

10 / 25

3. Campaign structure

15 / 25

4. Catalog

12 / 25

£2,600–£3,200 per month

Estimated Google Ads spend lost to problems that can be fixed. It excludes the cost of bidding on inflated conversion data.

Where the money goes	Per month
Search terms that spend without selling (unrelated to the catalog)	£1,100–£1,400
Performance Max paying for brand searches the brand campaign already covers	£900–£1,200
Out-of-stock products still receiving spend	£610
Total	£2,610–£3,210

The three problems that matter most

- The numbers you bid on are inflated.** Google Ads claims 538 purchases in September, but only 331 store orders came from Google.
- Every purchase counts almost twice.** The Google Ads tag and the GA4 import are both set as primary conversions, so Smart Bidding thinks you sell twice as much.
- The money goes where it can't sell.** £1,100–£1,400 a month on search terms unrelated to your catalog, 41% of Performance Max conversions come from people already searching for your brand, and 37 out-of-stock products received £610.

Context and method

September in numbers

Metric	Value
Google Ads spend	£12,400
Store orders · revenue · average order value	1,040 · £166,400 · £160
Conversions claimed by Google Ads	538
Purchases from Google in GA4	412
Store orders from Google (last click, by gclid and UTM)	331

What's already working

- **The brand search campaign is well built.** 94% impression share at £0.31 per click.
- **Basic measurement works.** The Google tag and GA4 are collecting data. The tracking problem is one installation too many, not a broken one.
- **Most of the catalog is healthy.** 92% of products are approved in Merchant Center.

How this audit was done

Period	1–30 September 2026
Accounts	Google Ads, GA4 and Google Merchant Center, with read-only access
Your store	Orders export by day and channel, with no customer data
Scoring	Each area starts at 25 points. Each finding deducts by severity: critical 7, high 4, medium 2, low 1. Red 0–10 · amber 11–17 · green 18–25.
Estimates	Financial figures are approximate ranges based on the period reviewed.

Each finding is detailed in sections 1 to 4. The fixes, ranked by impact and effort, follow after.

1. Conversion tracking

12 / 25

If tracking fails, everything built on top of it fails too: the ROAS you see, Smart Bidding and your audiences.

CRITICAL

GA4

Purchases are recorded twice in GA4

The Google tag is installed twice: in the theme code and in the store's Google app. GA4 recorded **1,388 purchase events** for **1,040 orders** (1.33 per order).

Why it costs money: GA4 inflates sales for every channel, and its import into Google Ads carries the error into bidding.

HIGH

GOOGLE ADS

Consent Mode v2 is incomplete

The cookie banner works, but the `ad_user_data` and `ad_personalization` signals aren't sent, and Google tags load before the default consent state is set. Consent Mode v2 has been required for Google Ads audiences and measurement in the EEA and UK since March 2024.

Why it costs money: remarketing lists and modelled conversions are limited, and conversion data is less complete.

MEDIUM

GOOGLE ADS

Enhanced conversions are off

Google Ads measures conversions with cookies only.

Why it costs money: conversions cookies can't capture (Safari, device switching) are lost, and Smart Bidding works with less data.

2. Attribution

10 / 25

Attribution answers one question: which ads produced which sales. Today Google Ads answers with more sales than the store actually made.

CRITICAL

GOOGLE ADS

Two primary purchase conversions

The Google Ads tag ("Purchase", 301 conversions) and the GA4 import ("purchase", 237 conversions) are both set as primary. Google Ads reports 538 conversions; the real figure is around 301.

Why it costs money: Smart Bidding thinks campaigns convert almost twice as much as they do and bids too high.

HIGH

GOOGLE ADS + GA4

Google Ads claims more sales than the store made

Source	Purchases
Google Ads (two primary conversions)	538
GA4 (purchases from Google, with the duplicate)	412
Store orders from Google (last click)	331

Why it costs money: budget decisions are made on figures that overstate Google Ads performance by 63%.

MEDIUM

GOOGLE ADS

Auto-tagging is off

Shopping campaigns don't add the `gclid` parameter, so their sales show up as organic traffic in GA4 and in the store.

Why it matters: Shopping's real contribution can't be checked outside the Google Ads dashboard.

MEDIUM

GOOGLE ADS

90-day conversion window with view-through conversions

The purchase action counts sales up to 90 days after the click and includes YouTube view-through conversions.

Why it matters: Google Ads takes credit for sales the store would have made anyway.

3. Campaign structure

15 / 25

HIGH

GOOGLE ADS

Search terms that spend without selling

The generic campaign uses broad match with no negative keyword list. In September it spent **£1,270** on search terms with no sales, such as "free furniture", "second hand sofa" or "ikea".

Why it costs money: a fixed share of the budget goes on clicks that can't buy.

HIGH

GOOGLE ADS

Performance Max is buying your own brand

Performance Max has no brand exclusions. 41% of its conversions come from searches for "Example Home", which the brand search campaign already covers at a much lower cost per click.

Why it costs money: you pay Performance Max prices for sales the brand campaign would win cheaply, and Performance Max looks better than it is.

MEDIUM

GOOGLE ADS

Best sellers are limited by budget

A single asset group holds all 812 products. Sofas, the best-selling category, lose 38% of impression share to budget while low-margin accessories keep spending.

Why it costs money: budget isn't going to the products that sell best.

4. Catalog

12 / 25

In an 812-product store, most Shopping and Performance Max ads are built from the product feed. If it's wrong or out of date, so are the ads.

HIGH

MERCHANT CENTER

Out-of-stock products are still advertised

37 out-of-stock products received **£610** of spend in the last 30 days, because the feed takes up to a day to reflect stock.

Why it costs money: people click on products they can't buy.

HIGH

MERCHANT CENTER

64 products disapproved

41 are missing a GTIN and 23 have a price that doesn't match the website. Another 112 products have warnings.

Why it costs money: 8% of the catalog can't appear in Shopping or Performance Max.

MEDIUM

MERCHANT CENTER

The feed updates once a day

Sale prices change during the day, but the feed only updates overnight, and automatic item updates are off.

Why it costs money: it causes the price mismatches and more disapprovals with every promotion.

MEDIUM

MERCHANT CENTER

Titles don't describe the product

70% of titles are just the product name, like "Malaga Sofa", with no type, material or colour.

Why it costs money: Google matches products to searches mainly by title. "Malaga Sofa" won't show for "3 seater green velvet sofa".

LOW

MERCHANT CENTER

Irish shoppers see prices in pounds

Ireland brings 6% of orders, but there's no euro feed, so product ads reach them priced in pounds.

Why it matters: a foreign currency adds friction in a market that already buys.

The fixes, in priority order

Ranked by impact first, then effort. The first five can be done in a day and remove more than half of the estimated loss.

#	Fix	Impact	Effort	Area
1	Keep a single primary purchase conversion	High	Low	Attribution
2	Remove the duplicate Google tag	High	Low	Tracking
3	Exclude your brand from Performance Max	High	Low	Structure
4	Add negatives to the generic campaign	High	Low	Structure
5	Stop advertising out-of-stock products	High	Low	Catalog
6	Complete Consent Mode v2	High	Medium	Tracking
7	Turn on enhanced conversions	Medium	Low	Tracking
8	Turn on auto-tagging	Medium	Low	Attribution
9	Fix disapproved products	Medium	Medium	Catalog
10	Rewrite the titles of the top 100 products	Medium	Medium	Catalog

1 Keep a single primary purchase conversion

Impact high · Effort low

STEPS

1. In Google Ads, go to **Goals** → **Conversions** → **Summary**.
2. Keep the Google Ads tag "Purchase" as **primary** and set the GA4 import "purchase" to **secondary**.
3. Smart Bidding will take 1–2 weeks to readjust. Avoid other big changes during that time.

2 Remove the duplicate Google tag

Impact high · Effort low

STEPS

1. Find where the Google tag is installed: in the theme code and in your store's Google app or plugin.
2. Keep only one. Usually that means keeping the official app or plugin and removing the theme code.
3. Place a test order and check in GA4 → **Reports** → **Realtime** that a single `purchase` event arrives.

3 Exclude your brand from Performance Max

Impact high · Effort low

STEPS

1. In Google Ads, open the Performance Max campaign → **Settings** → **Brand exclusions**.
2. Create a brand list with "Example Home" and apply it.
3. Over the next two weeks, check the brand search campaign keeps its impression share.

4 Add negatives to the generic campaign

Impact high · Effort low

STEPS

1. In Google Ads, open **Insights and reports** → **Search terms** for the last 90 days.
2. Add as negatives the search terms with spend and no sales that don't match your catalog ("free", "second hand", competitor brands you don't sell).
3. Save them in a shared negative keyword list and review it every two weeks.

5 Stop advertising out-of-stock products

Impact high · Effort low

STEPS

1. In Merchant Center, turn on **automatic item updates** for availability.
2. If the feed comes from an app or plugin, schedule it at least hourly.
3. Check on a sample of out-of-stock products that availability matches the website.

6 Complete Consent Mode v2

Impact high · Effort medium

STEPS

1. In your cookie banner settings, enable Google Consent Mode v2.
2. Make sure the default consent state is set **before** any Google tag loads.
3. Check with Google Tag Assistant that `ad_user_data` and `ad_personalization` are sent.

This is a technical check of how Consent Mode is implemented. It is not legal advice on data protection.

7

Turn on enhanced conversions

Impact medium · Effort low

STEPS

1. In Google Ads, go to **Goals** → **Settings** → **Enhanced conversions** and turn them on.
2. Check the conversion diagnostics a few days later to confirm data is arriving.

8

Turn on auto-tagging

Impact medium · Effort low

STEPS

1. In Google Ads, go to **Admin** → **Account settings** → **Auto-tagging** and turn it on.
2. Check with a test click that the landing page URL carries the `gclid` parameter.

9

Fix disapproved products

Impact medium · Effort medium

STEPS

1. In Merchant Center, export the list of products that need attention.
2. Add GTINs from your suppliers. For own-brand products without a GTIN, mark them as having no identifier.
3. Fix the prices that don't match the website and resubmit the feed.

10

Rewrite the titles of the top 100 products

Impact medium · Effort medium

STEPS

1. Start with the 100 products with the most spend or revenue.
2. Use this order: product type + name + material + colour + size. Example: "Malaga 3 Seater Sofa, Velvet, Forest Green".
3. Apply the new titles with a supplemental feed, so the website keeps its current names.

Notes on this audit

Financial estimates are approximate and based on account data for the period reviewed. The audit used read-only access only, and store orders come from an export with no customer data.

Want this for your store?

A fixed-price audit of your Google Ads account: tracking, attribution, campaign structure and catalog. You get your score and the fixes that matter most in 3 working days, for €149.

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