Nikhil Sharma
BUSINESS GROWTH MAESTRO

AI TIPS & TRICKS · NO. 06

Google Ads benchmarks 2026 and audit guide.

The verified 2026 numbers by industry, ecommerce vertical and campaign type. Plus a breakeven ROAS calculator, a 10-point audit checklist and 8 copy-paste prompts to audit your own account with Claude.



GOOGLE ADS BENCHMARKS 2026

REAL DATA. BETTER DECISIONS.

01 Search ads · by industry — US · medians

industry	ctr	cpc	conv. rate	cost / lead
Animals & pets	7.49%	$4.06	16.22%	$31.50
Apparel, fashion & jewelry	6.64%	$4.44	4.50%	$97.51
Arts & entertainment	12.75%	$1.63	5.91%	$26.84
Attorneys & legal	5.87%	$9.87	5.55%	$131.63
Automotive · for sale	8.28%	$2.27	6.01%	$44.26
Automotive · repair & parts	5.56%	$4.35	15.51%	$29.96
Beauty & personal care	6.75%	$4.62	10.35%	$39.25
Business services	6.10%	$5.87	4.85%	$93.69
Career & employment	5.88%	$5.81	3.05%	$67.36
Dentists	5.66%	$8.00	10.67%	$72.97
Education	7.56%	$4.81	13.14%	$77.48
Finance & insurance	9.83%	$3.39	2.64%	$74.44
Furniture	6.57%	$3.97	2.99%	$106.70
Health & fitness	5.81%	$6.17	6.94%	$67.36
Home improvement	6.47%	$8.33	8.05%	$90.92
Industrial & commercial	6.57%	$5.87	8.20%	$75.19
Personal services	7.16%	$7.17	12.34%	$54.60
Physicians & surgeons	6.61%	$4.76	12.43%	$40.04
Real estate	7.61%	$3.22	3.70%	$102.51
Restaurants & food	6.83%	$2.05	8.05%	$30.57
Shopping, collectibles & gifts	8.28%	$4.14	4.01%	$49.40
Sports & recreation	8.75%	$2.77	7.69%	$44.26
Travel	9.32%	$2.14	5.83%	$44.70
All industries	6.64%	$5.42	8.18%	$66.69

04 Ecommerce · by vertical — medians

vertical	cpa	cpm	roas	conv. rate	aov
Apparel & accessories	$25.40	$12.13	3.99	2.78%	$99
Beauty	$25.39	$18.38	2.81	4.33%	$70
Home & garden	$38.94	$15.76	3.48	2.30%	$130
Food & beverage	$23.65	$15.94	3.18	4.26%	$71
Sports & outdoors	$30.42	$14.53	4.35	2.63%	$132
Health & wellness	$34.76	$22.40	2.06	3.41%	$72
Electronics	$39.72	$15.04	2.91	2.08%	$127
Toys, art & collectibles	$25.12	$12.64	3.22	3.01%	$80
Pets & animals	$25.05	$20.40	2.88	4.40%	$69
Automotive	$38.14	$15.06	4.07	1.90%	$150
Baby	$24.14	$14.30	3.71	3.12%	$88
Lifestyle & boutique	$24.07	$12.77	3.10	3.28%	$76
Travel accessories	$31.78	$14.61	4.07	2.39%	$145
Books & music	$20.97	$14.34	2.79	4.30%	$58
Business supplies	$38.39	$19.95	3.15	2.58%	$121
All ecommerce	$28.14	$15.35	3.27	3.11%	$88

05 By campaign type — year over year

type	volume	ctr	roas	cpc
Demand Gen	+53.2%	−10.7%	+3.0%	+33.3%
Performance Max	+15.7%	+30.2%	−4.5%	+5.7%
Shopping	+14.0%	+16.1%	−1.0%	+10.6%
Local Services	+5.0%	−3.1%	0.0%	+31.1%
Search	−3.8%	+14.7%	+2.5%	+1.4%
Display	−17.3%	+30.4%	−2.0%	−4.4%
Video *	−31.6%	−71.8%	−90.7%	+183.8%

* Video reflects attribution loss from a platform migration, not real performance.

02 Breakeven ROAS = 1 ÷ gross margin — below this you lose money

20%	25%	30%	40%	50%	60%
5.00x	4.00x	3.33x	2.50x	2.00x	1.67x

06 ROAS by monthly spend — all campaign types · Q1 2026

under $10K	$10K–$50K	$50K+
388%	566%	377%

03 What changed in 2026 — year over year

Average search CPC $5.26 → $5.42	+3%
Search cost per lead first drop since 2020 · $70.11 → $66.69	−4.9%
Paid CTR when an AI Overview shows 19.7% → 6.3%	−68%
Industries with higher conversion rates of 23 tracked	87%
Cost per lead · biggest drops Travel −39% · Beauty −35% · Physicians −30%	falling
Cost per lead · biggest rises Auto sales +14% · Health +7% · Career +7%	rising

07 All campaign types · by vertical — blended · Q1 2026

vertical	ctr	conv. rate	cpa	roas
Style & fashion	2.19%	3.44%	$11.74	800%
Travel	3.01%	5.37%	$12.29	670%
Automotive	2.25%	6.83%	$10.93	455%
Home & garden	1.93%	4.43%	$23.07	456%
Real estate	3.01%	7.90%	$15.47	250%
Tech & computing	2.29%	14.26%	$5.57	279%
Health & fitness	1.90%	9.02%	$12.95	296%

Comment ADS for the free audit guide + benchmark sheet

Nikhil Sharma · Founder, Fabulous Media

Sources: WordStream/LocalIQ 2026 (13,474 US search campaigns, Apr 25–Mar 26) · Triple Whale (21,000+ brands, Aug 25–Jul 26) · Optmyzr Q1 2026 (21,425 accounts) · Swer Interactive (Jun 24–Sep 25, US data, USD).

7 benchmark tables

10 point audit

8 prompts

₹0 to start



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READ THIS FIRST

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Reference points not targets

These numbers are US medians in US dollars. Your results depend on your industry, offer, competition, geography, landing page, tracking and campaign mix. Use them to spot gaps, then judge yourself against your own business goals.

Breakeven ROAS = 1 ÷ gross margin

gross margin	20%	25%	30%	40%	50%	60%
breakeven ROAS	5.00x	4.00x	3.33x	2.50x	2.00x	1.67x

Example: at a 40% gross margin every ₹1,000 of ad spend must bring ₹2,500 of revenue just to break even. Below that line you lose money on every sale.

What changed in 2026

metric	detail	change
Average search CPC	$5.26 → $5.42	+3%
Search cost per lead	first drop since 2020 · $70.11 → $66.69	−4.9%
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Sources

WordStream and LocaliQ, 2026 Google Ads Benchmarks: 13,474 US search campaigns, 1 Apr 2025 to 31 Mar 2026, medians. · Triple Whale, Google Ads benchmarks by vertical: 21,000+ brands, 1 Aug 2025 to 31 Jul 2026, medians. · Optmyzr, State of Google Ads Q1 2026: 21,425 accounts. · Seer Interactive, AIO impact on Google CTR, September 2025 update: 3,119 informational queries, June 2024 to September 2025.

TABLE 01

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Search ads by industry

US medians · WordStream/LocaliQ 2026

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Ecommerce and campaign types

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Triple Whale medians.

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* Video reflects attribution loss from a platform migration, not real performance. Optmyzr Q1 2026.

Spend and verticals

ROAS by monthly spend

spend	under $10K	$10K–$50K	$50K+
ROAS	388%	566%	377%

All campaign types by vertical

vertical	ctr	conv. rate	cpa	roas
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Blended across campaign types, Q1 2026, Optmyzr.

The audit checklist

1 Fix tracking first
Check every conversion action fires once, with the right value. Turn on enhanced conversions and import offline sales or qualified leads. Bad tracking makes every benchmark comparison meaningless.

2 Know your breakeven ROAS
Breakeven ROAS = 1 ÷ gross margin. At 40% margin you need 2.5x just to break even. Set targets above it, not at the industry average.

3 Compare like with like
Benchmark Search against Search, Shopping against Shopping, your vertical against your vertical and your country against your country. Blended numbers hide problems.

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The audit checklist

4 — Audit search terms
Read the last 90 days of search terms. Add negatives for irrelevant intent and move winners into their own tight ad groups.

5 — Check match types and bidding
Broad match needs smart bidding and clean conversion data. Without them it spends on noise. Review bid strategy targets against real margins.

6 — Read Performance Max honestly
Check channel and search-term insights and asset group results. Exclude brand terms if PMax is just harvesting people who would buy anyway.

7 — Fix the landing page
Match the ad promise, load fast on mobile and make the next step obvious. A higher conversion rate lowers cost per lead faster than any bid change.

8 — Watch AI Overviews
Paid CTR fell sharply where AI Overviews appear. Track impression share and CTR on informational queries and shift budget towards high-intent terms.

9 — Segment by geography and device
Split performance by city, state and device. In India, metro and tier-2 cities can behave like different markets.

10 — Measure profit, not ROAS alone
A 5x ROAS can lose money and a 3x ROAS can be healthy. Report contribution margin and customer lifetime value alongside ROAS.

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Audit your account with Claude

Export your data from Google Ads, paste it in and replace every [bracket]. Remove customer personal data first.

01 Benchmark my account

```
Here are my last 90 days by campaign: [paste type, spend, clicks, impressions, conversions, revenue]. Compare each against these 2026 benchmarks [paste the relevant rows]. Show where I am above or below and which gaps cost the most money.
```

02 Breakeven and target ROAS

```
My gross margin is [x]% and my average order value is [₹]. Calculate breakeven ROAS and CPA, then a target ROAS that leaves [y]% profit. Show the maths.
```

03 Search term clean-up

```
Here is my search terms report [paste]. Group terms by intent: buying, researching, irrelevant. List negatives to add and new exact-match keywords to split out.
```

04 PMax reality check

```
Here is my Performance Max data with channel and search-term insights [paste]. How much spend goes to brand terms and existing customers? What should I exclude or restructure?
```

05 Landing page review

```
Review this landing page copy and structure [paste or describe] against this ad [paste]. List the five changes most likely to lift conversion rate, in order.
```

06 Wasted spend finder

```
Here is my keyword and placement data [paste]. Find spend with no conversions in 30 days and low-quality placements. Estimate monthly savings.
```

07 AI Overview exposure

```
Here are my top 50 search terms with CTR and impression share [paste]. Flag terms likely to trigger AI Overviews and suggest where to cut, keep or move budget.
```

08 Monthly report for the founder

```
Turn this month's Google Ads data [paste] into a one-page report: spend, leads or revenue, CPA, ROAS versus breakeven, what changed, and three actions for next month.
```

WHAT NEXT

Want your ads audited for you?

Fabulous Media has run digital and performance marketing for brands since 2008. We fix tracking, find wasted spend and set targets from your margins, not from someone else's averages.

NS Transform 2027

Working with founders to scale with AI. Apply at nikhilsharma.com/transform

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