

Comparison Shopping Engines: What You Should Know Now to Sell More in 2010!

According to Forrester Research, 55% of online shoppers are influenced by comparison shopping engines. As an online retailer you can't afford to miss out on this potential opportunity. However, this is sometimes easier said than done! Keeping tabs on all shopping engines, in addition to other channels, can be a full time job. This document will highlight key information you need to be aware of in 2010 in order to sell more on comparison shopping engines.

✓ Constant ROI Management

ROI management of your comparison shopping program should be a focus for all online retailers.

If you haven't done this in the last week or two, you should go and check your cost-per-click (CPC) rates at all of the shopping engines you partner with to confirm that you're not still paying the 2009 holiday rates. Some shopping engines were charging holiday rates well into January. At some sites the onus is on retailers to go back into their account and adjust bids back to normal levels.

In addition to CPC rates, mine your paid search program for non-brand keywords that convert well, and make sure your top products and categories are using the same keywords in your comparison shopping titles/descriptions. This obviously requires manipulating your outgoing data feeds; however, it's one of the better opportunities to increase your visibility to shoppers and thereby increase revenue for your shopping program. Keep in mind that the effects of any change need to be measured. Including more general terms could actually drive down your conversion rate and therefore impact your ROI.

✓ Shopping Engines Improving Shopping Experience

In 2010, you should expect comparison shopping engines (CSEs) to continue efforts toward making the sites more engaging to shoppers. For some engines, this means expanding the product selection so that shoppers will find what they're looking for whenever they visit the site. For others, this will mean completely changing the experience.

Shopping.com did the latter and saw very positive reactions from shoppers as a result. In fact, they measured a 55% increase in conversion rates in some categories, such as shoes. Expect Shopping.com to continue to make changes to improve shoppers' engagement, increase the quality of traffic they're sending to retailers and ultimately reduce the cost-of-sale for retailers. For retailers, this will mean shopping engines will most likely allow you to send more attributes for the categories in which you sell.

✓ Google Enters the Ring

In the second half of 2009, Google clearly showed an increased interest in e-commerce related projects. They launched the Google Merchant Center for managing Product Search data feeds, as well as Product Extensions, Product Listing Ads and Commerce Search. In 2010, we will likely see more along these same lines from Google.

Look for more competition for the Google Product Search OneBox. With the launch of Product Extensions and Product Listing Ads, images on the Google search results pages for product search queries are becoming fairly common. Additionally, the pay-for-placement ads will appear on the parts of the page that get more "eyeball" attention.

To offset potential fluctuations in traffic and revenue from your Google Product Search feed, it's important to continually try new shopping engines. Sites that may not have performed well 12 to 24 months ago could be worth trying again.

✓ Are Shopping Engines the Conduit to Mobile Shoppers?

According to ABI Research, Mobile commerce could potentially be worth as much as £76bn over the next five years.

Whilst Comparison Shopping Engines in the UK have been slower than their US counterparts to adopt mobile friendly websites or apps for the iPhone/iPod and Android phones, this is clearly a growth area and the following CSE's all offer mobile enabled shopping sites.



✓ BONUS: Conversion Rates by Categories by Engine

In an effort to add to the survey/industry information that is currently available, ChannelAdvisor took a sample of the most common retail categories and highlighted which shopping engines, on average, perform the best for our customers.* If your program doesn't include some of the engines listed below, this could be a lower-risk growth opportunity you should consider.

Shopping Engines	All Categories	Apparel	Consumer Electronics	Health & Beauty	Home & Garden	Sports & Outdoors	Tools & Hardware	Toys, Baby & Hobby
Nextag	1.7%	1.9%	2.1%	3.5%	1.3%	1.4%	1.0%	2.2%
Google Product Search	1.6%	2.4%	1.5%	0.9%	1.7%	1.3%	0.8%	1.9%
PriceGrabber	1.0%	0.7%	1.5%	1.9%	0.9%	0.4%	1.1%	1.7%
Shopzilla	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%	2.4%	0.8%	0.3%	0.9%	2.2%
Shopping.com	0.5%	0.6%	0.9%	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.7%	2.0%

* International figures taken from a snapshot of ChannelAdvisor clients.

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ABOUT CHANNELADVISOR ChannelAdvisor helps the world sell online with applications that enable retailers to efficiently distribute their products across multiple online channels, drive shoppers to those products and then convert those shoppers into customers. The ChannelAdvisor platform empowers retailers to distribute their products across multiple online marketplaces, comparison shopping sites and search engines. With application features such as keyword generation, to in-depth reporting, to our merchandising engine, retailers gain the tools they need to easily fine tune and analyse their marketing efforts to drive more shoppers to their products. Rich media offerings and storefront applications enable retailers to provide an engaging online shopping experience that represents their brand and is optimised to convert shoppers into customers. In 2008, ChannelAdvisor managed over \$2.6 billion in gross merchandise value (GMV) on behalf of leading retailers around the world including Vodafone, Brother, HP, B&Q, and Schuh. www.channeladvisor.co.uk