

Think with Google

# Build **better creative** for your performance marketing



# Google Ads

## Creative Best Practices

Drive better results for your performance campaigns using text, image, and video.

**1** Lead with a clear call-to-action (CTA)

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**2** Connect more authentically with a wide variety of assets


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**3** Build for smaller screens

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**4** Give your creatives time to test

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 For Search, Shopping, Discovery, Apps, Display, Local and Video action campaigns in Google Ads. Before you get started, be sure to check out our [guide for setting your campaigns up for success](#).

Consumers report **helpfulness** as their top request of brands, with **78%** saying ads should show how brands can be helpful in everyday life.<sup>1</sup>

Each ad experience offers an opportunity to be both helpful and engaging when connecting with your audience. This makes creative quality one of, if not *the* most important driver of your campaign's success.

Well-structured and compelling assets—a **clear call to action (CTA)**, engaging copy and immersive image or video assets—ensure your campaign can drive optimal results.

To help you get there, we've collected the most useful creative best practices for Google Ads in one cohesive guide. We go in depth on each creative ingredient so you can combine the best assets to drive even better performance for your campaigns. We also sourced insights from our in-house team at Creative Works, who work with some of the world's leading brands to better understand the DNA of effective creative.

Whether you're looking to optimize your existing creative strategies or build impactful assets for your next campaign, this guide has you covered.

**We can't wait to see what you build next.**

**Well-structured and compelling assets ensure your campaign can drive optimal results.**

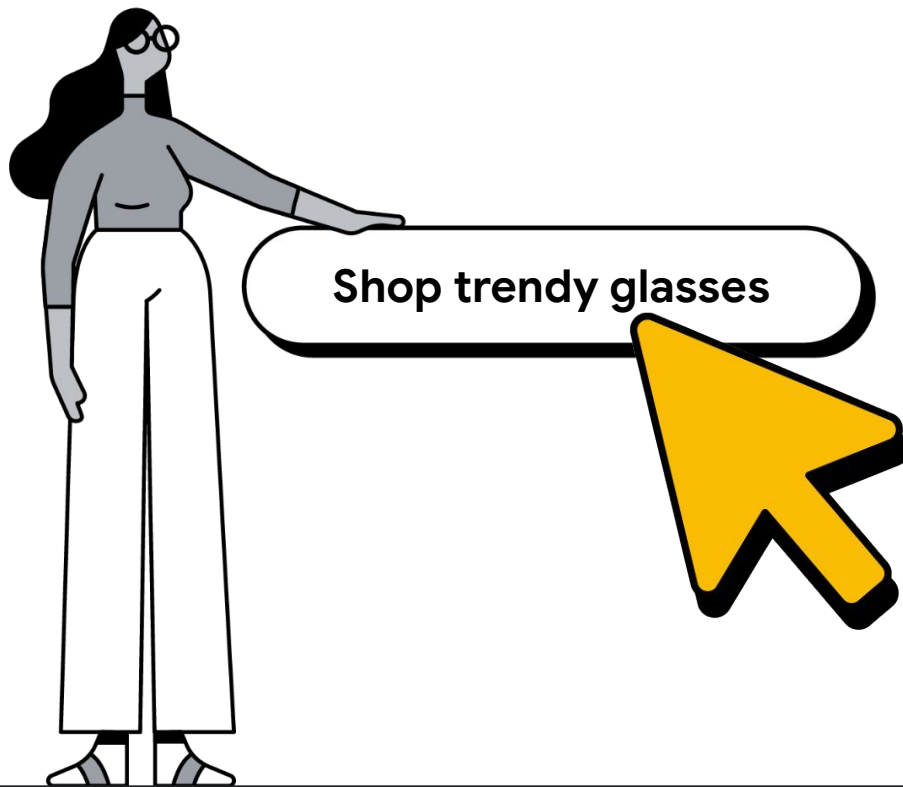
**Suzanne Pellican, VP**  
Google Ads User Experience





1 Lead with a clear  
**call-to-action** (CTA)

Without a strong CTA, your audience **may not realize what you have to offer** and how to take action.



**Provide distinct CTAs** in your headline and descriptions with **clear benefits** related to your audience's interests, search, or the landing page where you're directing them.

1

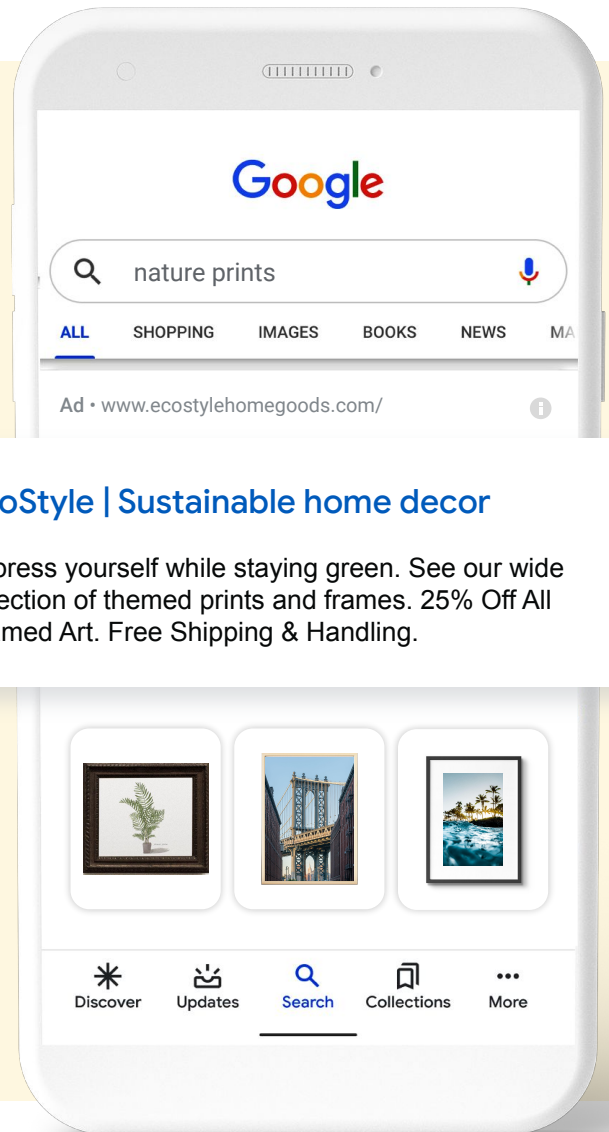
Lead with a clear call-to-action (CTA)

## Feature your brand name prominently

across your assets to help your audience quickly recognize your business and take action.

## Adjust your CTAs according to your conversion goals.

For example, if you're looking to drive sales, include a call-to-action to purchase your product with the product name in description or headline.



## Experiment with personalization

Using words such as 'you' in your ad text can help you drive engagement by connecting more authentically with audiences:

**Personalized headlines perform up to 1.3X better** for their campaign goal vs. non-personalized headlines.<sup>2</sup>

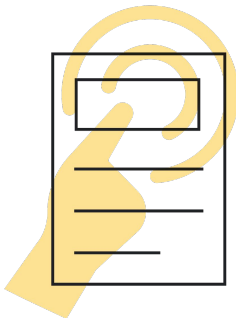
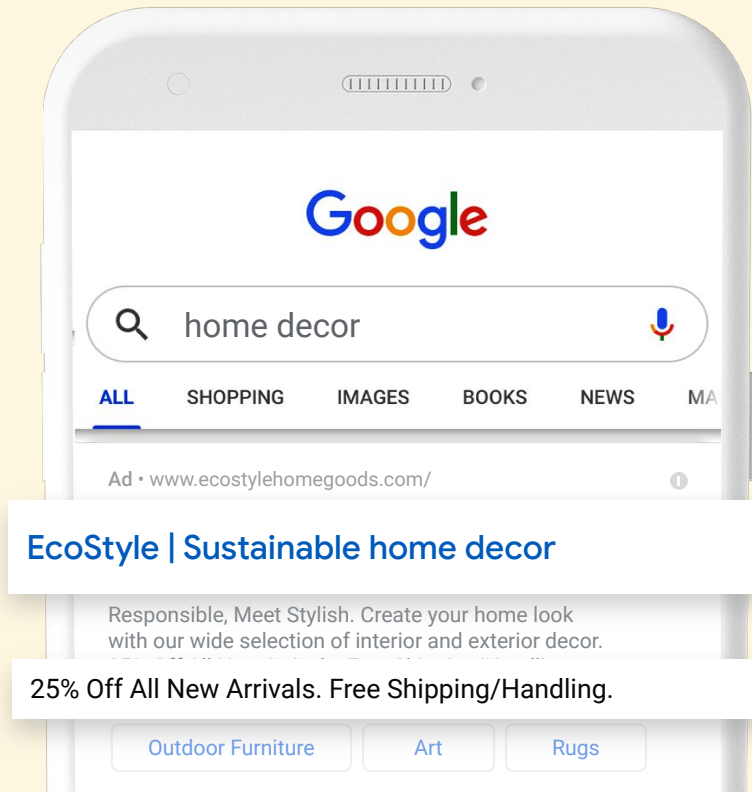
**Personalized descriptions perform up to 2X better** for their campaign goal vs. non-personalized descriptions.<sup>3</sup>

1

Lead with a clear call-to-action (CTA)

## Highlight information about your product and offerings

Include details like variety, pricing and availability along with promotions, shipping details or services within your headlines and descriptions.



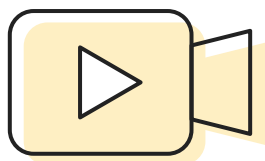
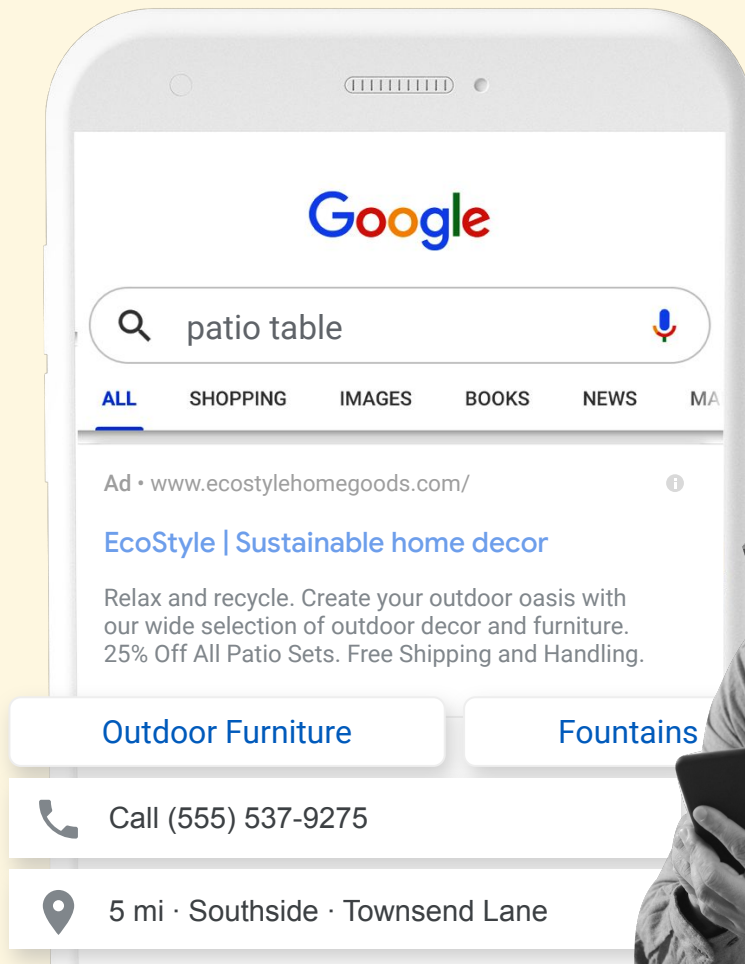
**Headlines with an offer perform up to 38% better** for their campaign goal than headlines without.<sup>4</sup>

**Descriptions with an offer perform up to 27% better** for their campaign goal than descriptions without.<sup>5</sup>

1

Lead with a clear call-to-action (CTA)

Consider adding extensions where available.



For video ads, reiterate your CTA throughout your ad using text, animation or voiceover.





**2** Connect more  
**authentically** with a  
wide variety of assets

The more assets you provide, the more effectively **automation can find combinations** that drive better performance.

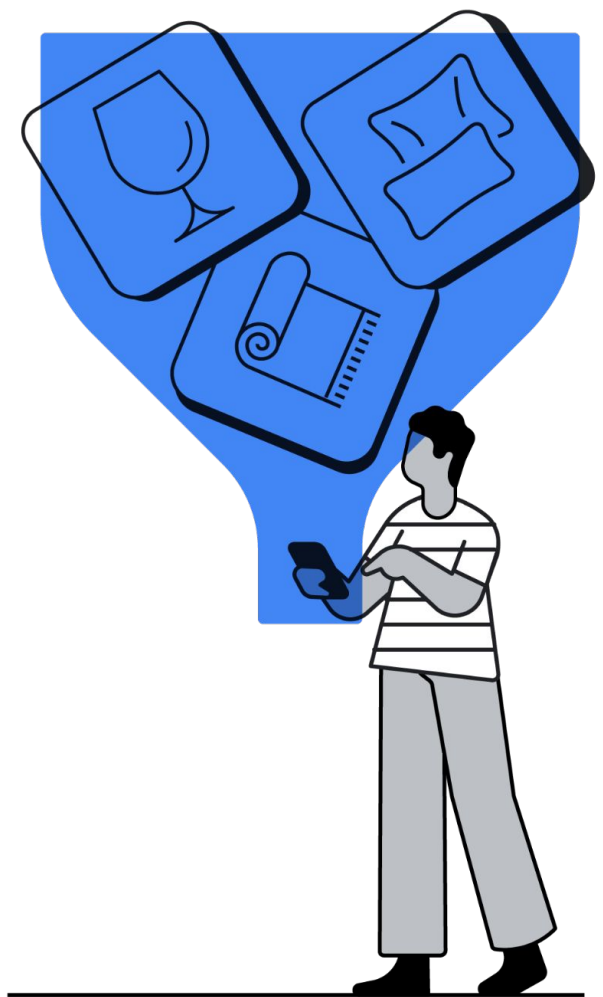
Build your **ad groups around tight themes** and avoid generic ad assets to offer more relevant, relatable experiences that drive consumers to act.

**Ad groups:**

**Glassware**

**Pillows**

**Throws**



Some campaigns may suggest as few as **3 assets**, while others may suggest up to **20**, so be sure to check [specific campaign best practices](#) for more guidance.

# Text

Include a **variety of headlines and descriptions** that differ meaningfully from each other so they make sense when combined together.

**Headlines**

EcoStyle | Living room lamps  
EcoStyle | Modern lighting

Ad • [www.ecostylehomegoods.com/](http://www.ecostylehomegoods.com/)

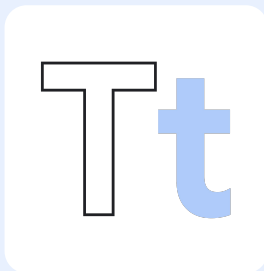
**EcoStyle | Living room lamps**

Bring the Living Room Together With the Perfect Lighting. 15% Off.

**Descriptions**

Dress your home in sustainable style. 25% off all lamps through October 1st.

Bring the Living Room Together With the Perfect Lighting. 15% Off - Free Shipping.



## Experiment with capitalization

**Title case descriptions perform up to 27% better** for their campaign goal than sentence case descriptions.<sup>6</sup>

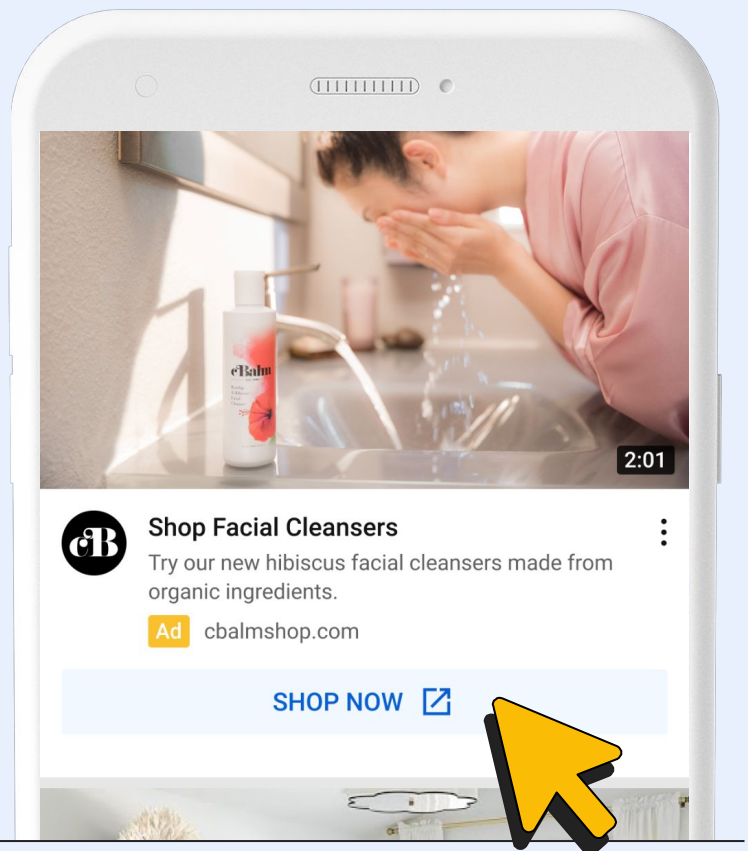
# Image

Upload a **variety of images** with distinct visual differences that support your call to action.



# Video

Create variants by pairing your video with **different CTAs and headlines**, or add **sitelink extensions** to your video ads to make them even more **useful and actionable**.



**Add real-life context and relatability** by showcasing your product in use by one or more people.



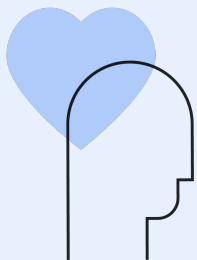
Good



Better

Images that feature people perform over **30% better** for their campaign goal versus images that don't.<sup>7</sup>

Also feature a wide variety of people, since audiences are **more likely to engage** when they see themselves represented.



**64% of consumers** say they took some sort of action after seeing an ad that they considered to be diverse or inclusive.<sup>8</sup>



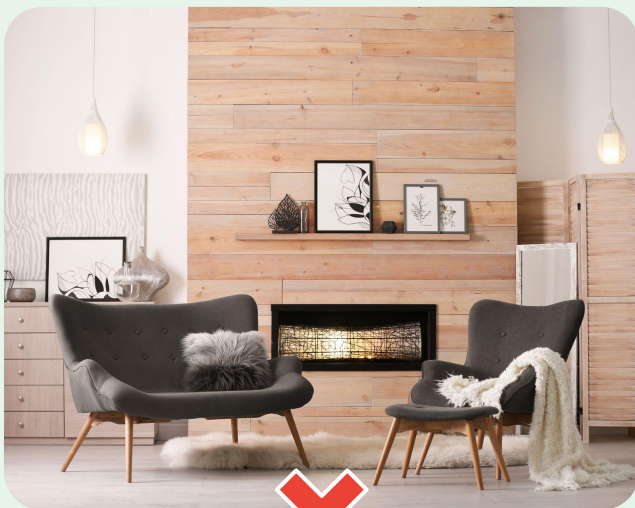
# 3 Build for smaller screens

With more people consuming content on small screens, it's important for your ads to offer a **clear, compelling story at first sight**.

## For images and video ads

Use **tight framing and bright, natural lighting** on specific people or objects to help audiences **connect what they see to your call-to-action immediately**.

CTA: All luxury throws 25% off



## Image

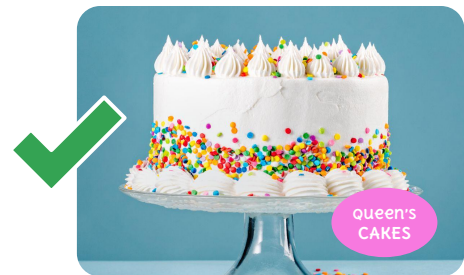
Use high-resolution assets at least 1200x pixels wide.



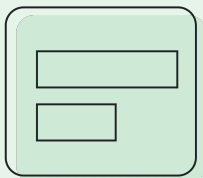
## Avoid

Images that are **blurry, distorted, or use excessive filters**.

**Overlaid logos, text, or buttons on top of your images.** If you use them, keep them to 20% of your image.



Use overlaid elements sparingly



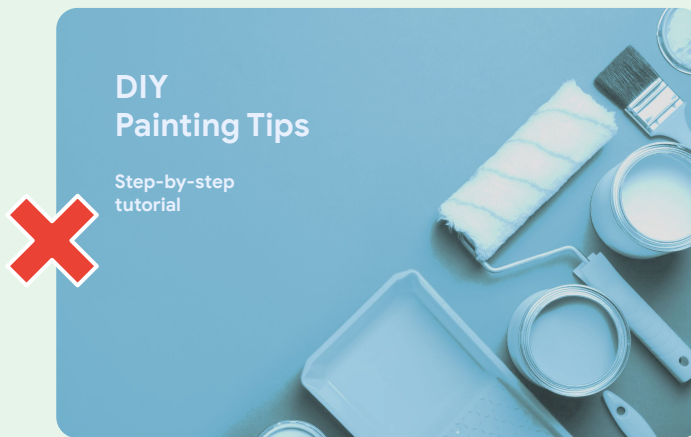
Images with no overlaid text, or overlaid text under 20 characters, perform up to **1.2X better** for their campaign goal versus images with longer overlaid text.<sup>9</sup>



## Video

Superimposed graphics or text should be **big** and **well-positioned in the frame**, if used.

**Apply brightness and contrast** to make sure that your ad is easily visible on a small screen.





4 Give your creatives  
**time to test**

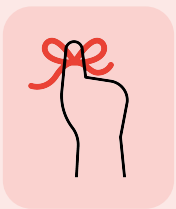
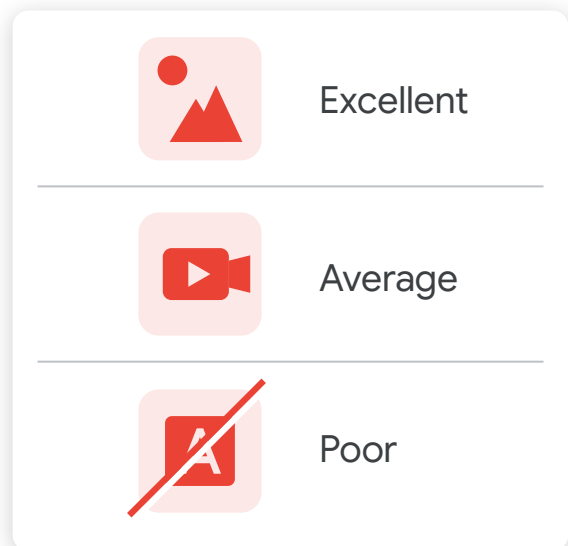
Use [Ad strength](#) and [Asset reporting](#) to track how your creative ingredients are performing and learn what resonates with customers. Consider using campaign [drafts and experiments](#) where available to run head-to-head creative tests for even richer insights.

Allow new campaigns **at least 3 weeks** to gather learnings about which assets work best and to optimize your results.

**Replace assets ranked as “poor.”**

**Update assets gradually** to minimize performance fluctuations. Before removing an asset, be sure to have another ready to replace it.

When adding or removing assets for an existing campaign, **wait 2-3 weeks** to allow the system time to optimize.



### Tips to remember as you make changes...

- Keep [ad groups](#) clearly themed—assets may be combined in a variety of ways, so each one should build on the others to convey a clear call-to-action.
- Avoid headlines that duplicate your description text, and image or video assets that don't relate to your CTA.

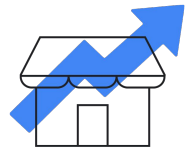
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# More creative tips by marketing objective

Online sales



Offline sales



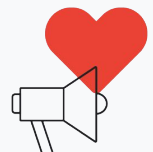
Lead generation



Apps + mobile growth



**Awareness:** Looking to build brand recognition with video? See the [ABCDS](#) of effective creative.



# Turn traffic into online sales

If you're a retailer, add your products to [Google Merchant Center](#) and [connect your account](#) to your campaign to showcase the most relevant products in your ads.

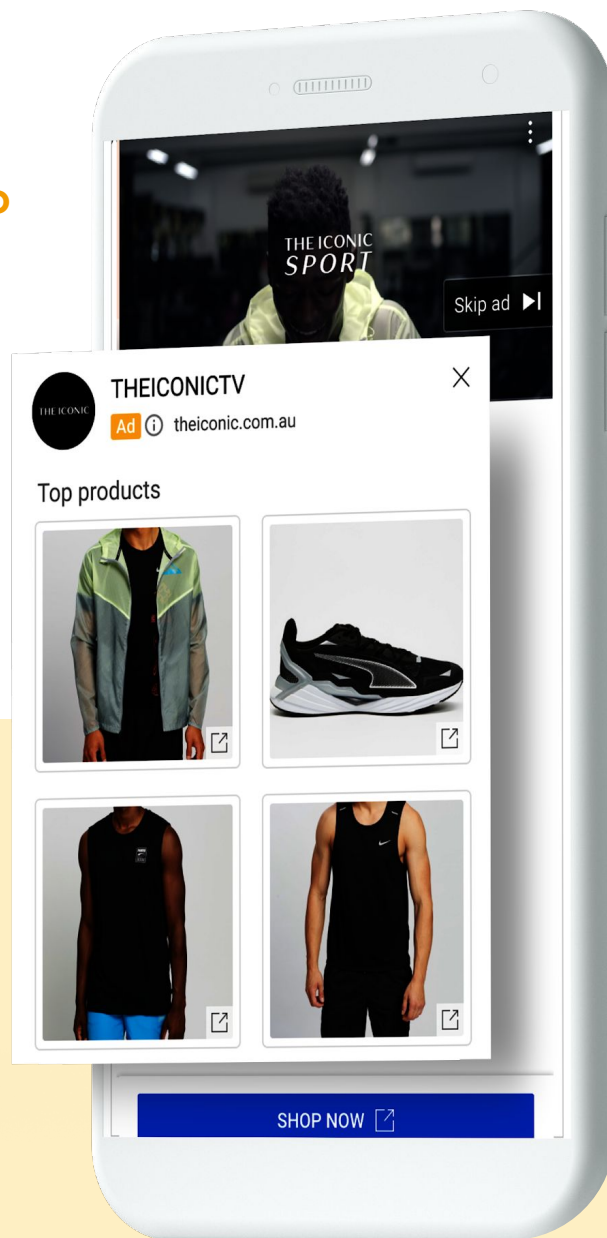
Use [ad extensions](#) where available to provide more actionable details.

## Text

Ensure your **product name** is in your headline and description.

Provide **high-quality data for product feeds** — like descriptive titles, compelling imagery, up-to-date pricing, special offers (e.g. free shipping or discounts), and product-specific landing pages. [Learn more here.](#)

Include **attributes in your product titles** that aren't visible in the image (e.g. brand names and sizes).



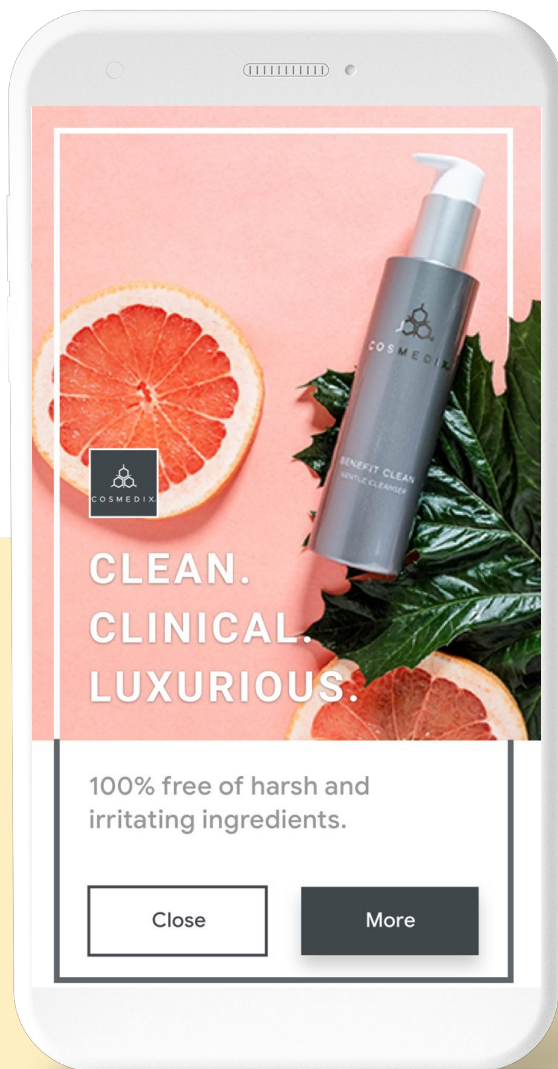
The ICONIC, Australia's online fashion retailer, used product feeds on Video action campaigns

Turn traffic into online sales

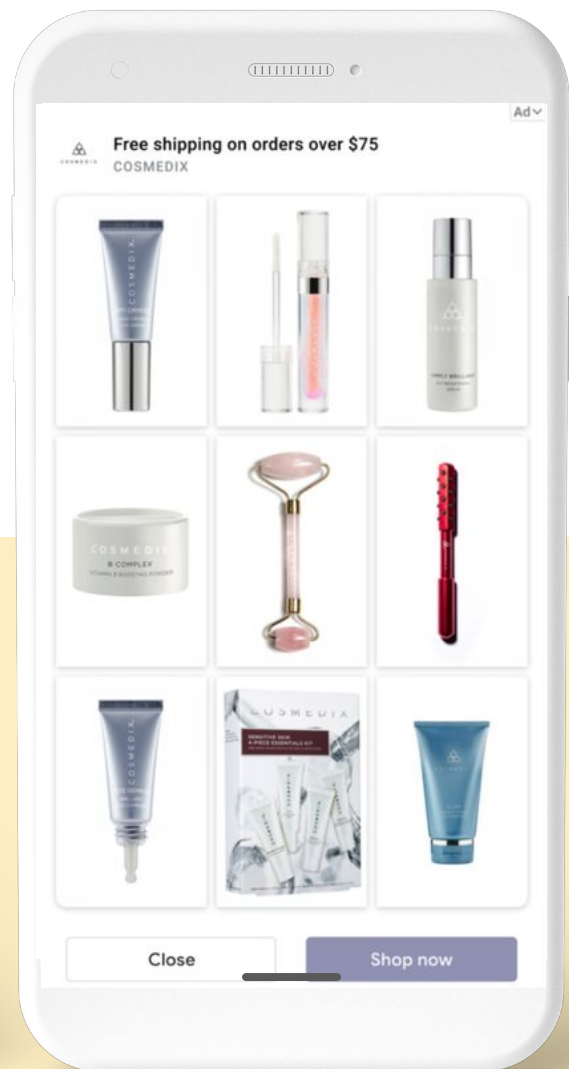
# Image

Focus on **product-first** visuals.

If you're showing a single product, **feature it from meaningfully different angles** to convey more information, and explore using close up shots with bright, high-contrast colors.



A responsive display ad for beauty brand COSMEDIX.



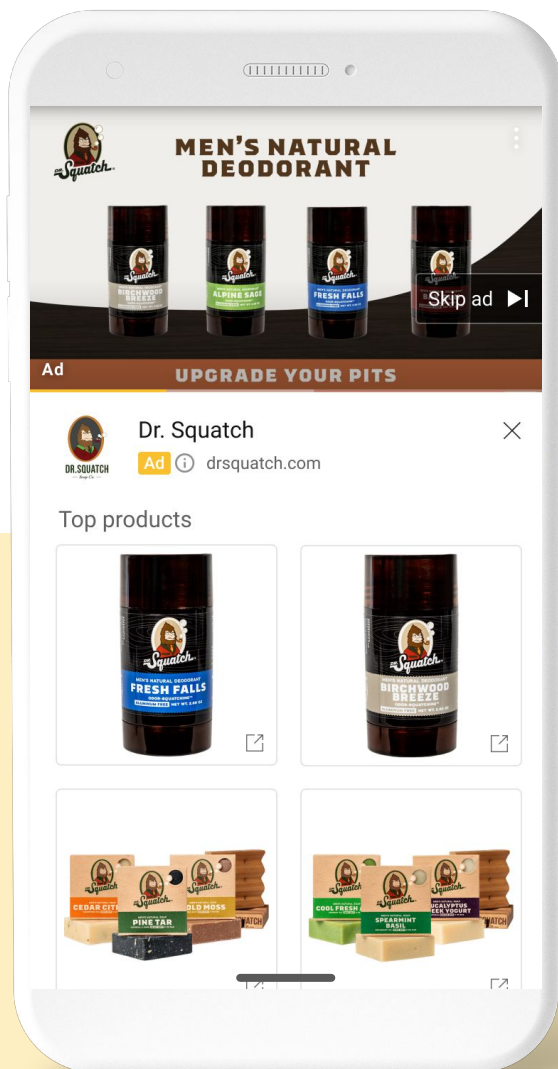
A Shopping ad for COSMEDIX.

Turn traffic into online sales

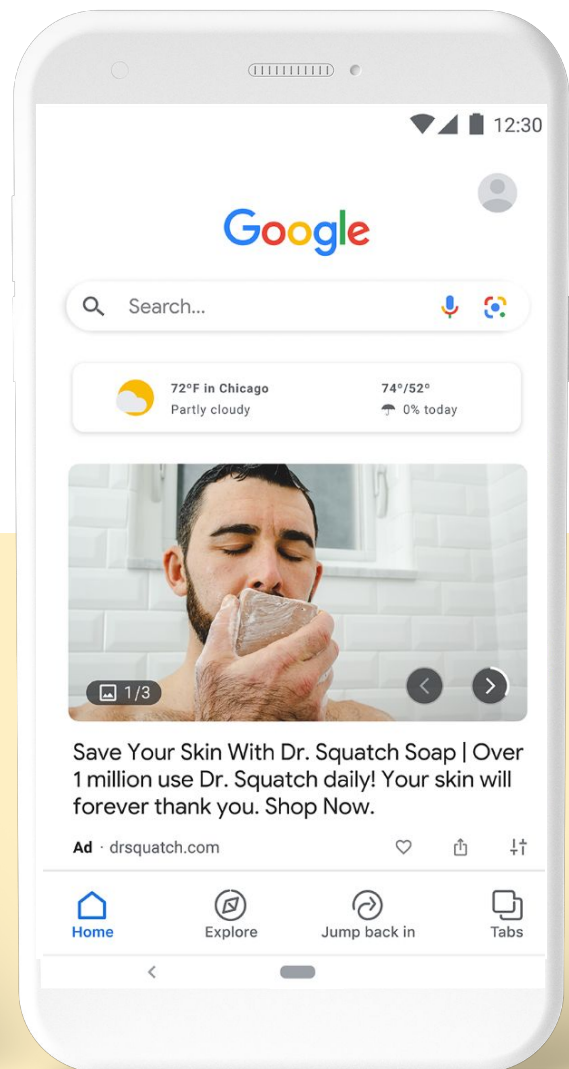
# Video

Introduce your brand or product **in the first 5 seconds**.

Be **clear and specific** with the **ask and offer**: feature your product and your CTA so that your audience understands your full offer.



Personal care brand Dr. Squatch using product feeds on Video action campaigns.

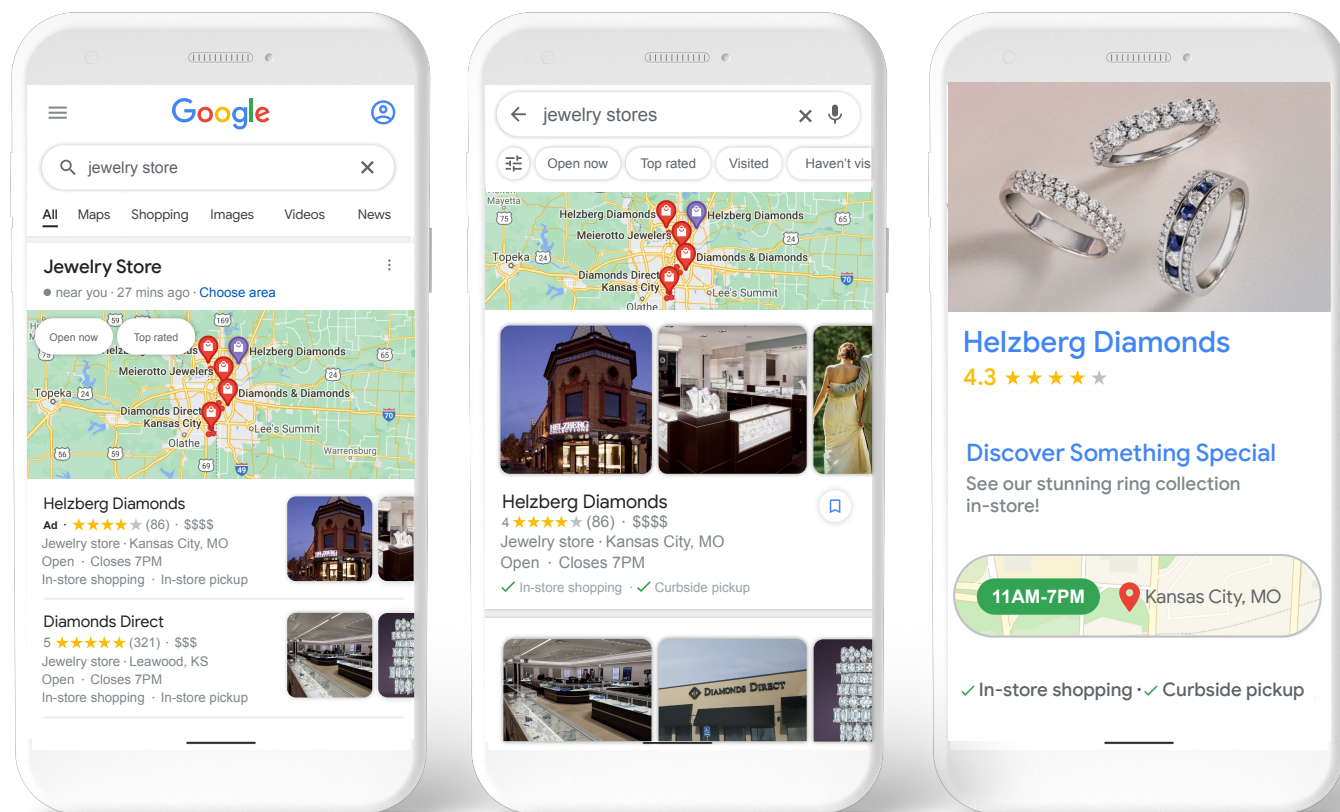


A Discovery ad for Dr. Squatch.

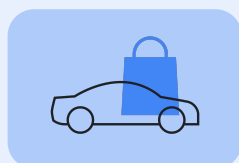
# Grow offline sales

Create messaging that fits a location-based mindset.

Details about finding a store and the nearest location are included automatically for people nearby, so **focus your ad text on the benefits of a visit.**



Local campaigns ad formats for jewelry retailer Helzberg Diamonds.



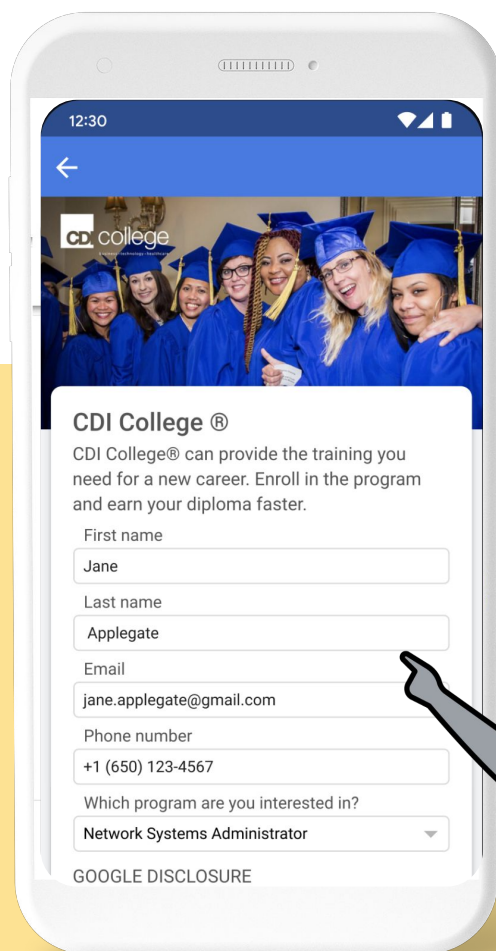
**Promote** the full range of your flexible fulfillment options, like **curbside pickup** and **in-store pickup**.



# Drive qualified leads

Use [lead form extensions](#) to make it easier for customers to **share their information with you** directly from your ad in a privacy-safe way.

Build forms with **fewer questions for higher volume**, and **more questions for higher quality**.



12:30

CDI college

**CDI College ®**

CDI College® can provide the training you need for a new career. Enroll in the program and earn your diploma faster.

First name

Last name

Email

Phone number

Which program are you interested in?

GOOGLE DISCLOSURE

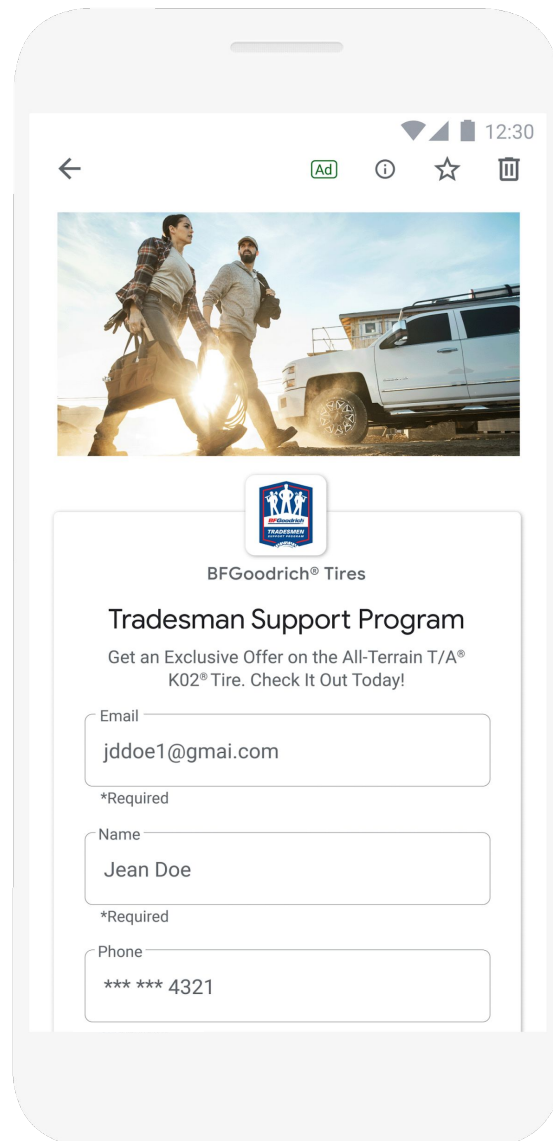
CDI College using lead form extensions with their Search ads



**Be as informative as possible** in your ad text since you're asking users to submit a lead form before visiting your site.

Clearly communicate the value (e.g. a fast response within 24 hours or a free quote).

**Provide a call-to-action** that best represents how users can follow up with your business ("Complete this form", "Call us", "Message us").



BFGoodrich using lead form extensions with their Discovery ads



If you rely on phone calls to drive leads, use [call ads](#) to help people easily reach you from any device that makes phone calls.

# Deliver a great mobile experience

Be sure to **include as many assets for App campaigns as possible** — to show your ads across the wider variety of shapes, sizes, and positioning of native content across Google channels.

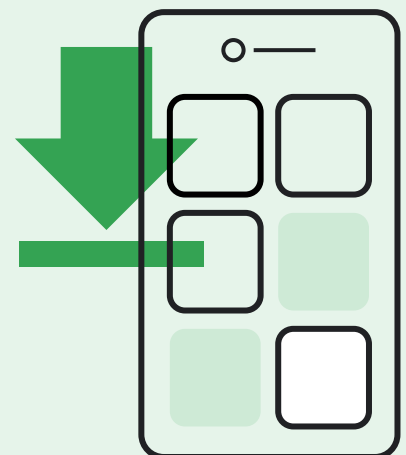
You can include up to **10 text, 20 image, and 20 video assets per ad group** (and 20 [HTML5 playable assets](#) for mobile game marketers).

## Text

Use your text to **highlight your app's key features**.

Focus on **one unique selling point** per asset.

Include **conversational text** in headlines and descriptions to **attract and hold user attention**.

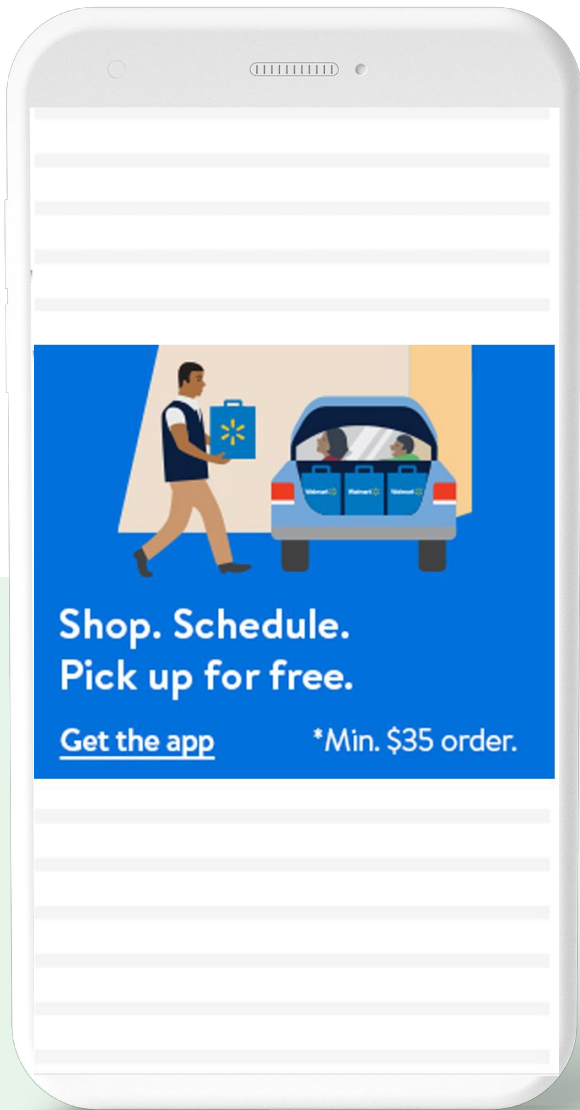


Deliver a great mobile experience

# Image

There should be **no blank space** between the edges of the image asset and its frame.

Blank space should not occupy **more than 80% of any image.**



App install ads for retailer Walmart.



# Video

Assets should be **diverse in length** (from 10-30 seconds) and content.

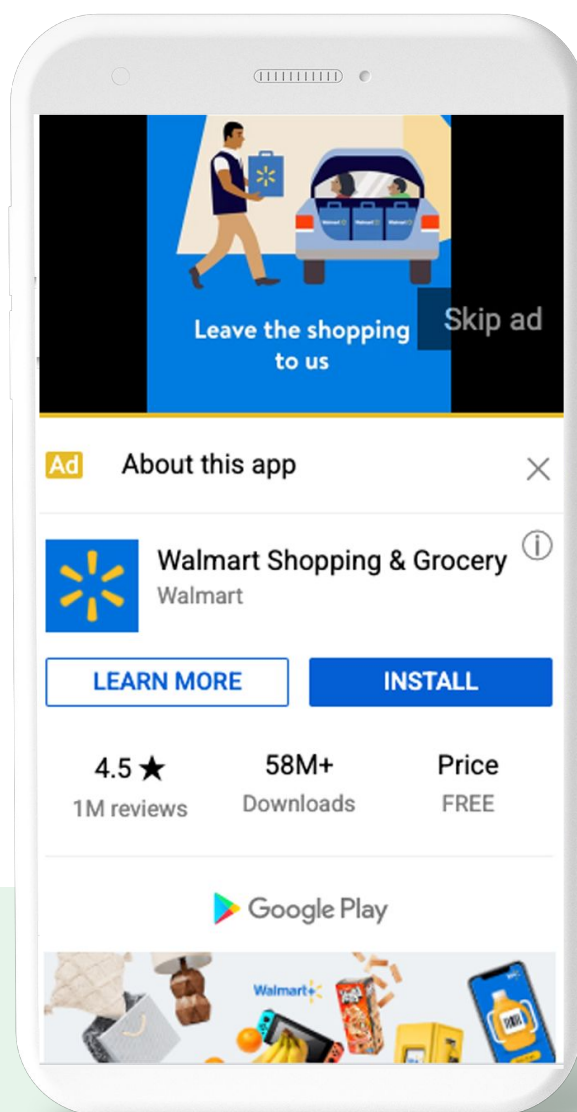
Aim to **grab interest within the first 2-3 seconds.**

To drive more installs, prioritize showcasing your in-app experience and your brand over telling a story.

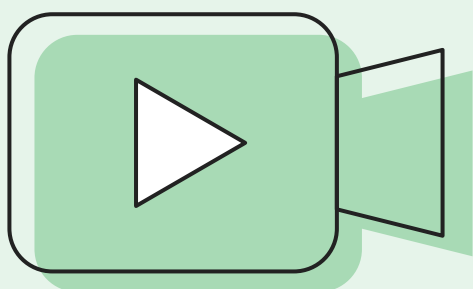
Include **different aspect ratios** —like portrait (4:5), landscape (1.91:1) and square — to account for the different ways people hold their devices.

Use **audio and music** to emphasize branding and calls to action.

Some inventory defaults to audio off, so **include captions** where relevant.



App install ads for retailer Walmart.



# Sources

1. Kantar, COVID-19 Barometer Global Report, Wave2, runs across 50 countries, n=9,815, fielded 27th-30th March 2020.
2. Google internal data based on an aggregate study of median performance of campaign goals for Responsive display ads (CVR), Discovery ads (CTR, CVR), App campaigns for installs (IPM), App campaigns for engagement (EPM) and Video action campaigns (VTR) across 78K assets for Media & Entertainment, Retail, and Finance verticals. Global. January 2020 - June 2021.
3. Google internal data based on an aggregate study of median performance of campaign goals for Responsive display ads (CTR), Discovery ads (CTR, CVR), Video action campaigns (VTR) and Video discovery ads (VTR) across 78K assets for Media & Entertainment, Retail, and Finance verticals. Global. January 2020 - June 2021.
4. Google internal data based on an aggregate study of median performance of campaign goals for Responsive display ads (CVR), Discovery ads (CVR), Video action campaigns (VTR), Video discovery ads (VTR), and App campaigns for engagement (EPM) for Media & Entertainment, Retail, and Finance verticals. Global. January 2020 - June 2021.
5. Google internal data based on an aggregate study of median performance of campaign goals for Responsive display ads (CVR), Discovery ads (CVR), Video discovery ads (VTR) for Media & Entertainment, Retail, and Finance verticals. Global. January 2020 - June 2021.
6. Google Internal Data, Global, Verticals: M&E, Retail, Finance, January 2020 - June 2021
7. Google internal data based on an aggregate study of median performance of campaign goals for Discovery ads (CTR, CVR), Video action campaigns (VTR), Video discovery ads (VTR), App campaigns for installs (IPM), and App campaigns for engagement (EPM) for Media & Entertainment, Retail, and Finance verticals. Global. January 2020 - June 2021.
8. Google/Ipsos, U.S., Inclusive Marketing Study, n of 2,987 U.S. consumers ages 13–54 who access the internet at least monthly, Aug. 2019.
9. Google internal data based on an aggregate study of median performance of campaign goals for Discovery ads (CTR, CVR), and Responsive display ads (CTR) across 78K assets for Media & Entertainment, Retail, and Finance verticals. Global. January 2020 - June 2021.