

Office DEPOT. OfficeMax®

Office Depot Attracts On-the-Go Shoppers With Local Inventory Ads

About Office Depot

- Global retailer of workplace products and solutions
- Headquarters: Boca Raton, Florida
- www.officedepot.com

Goals

- Reach the omni-channel consumer
- Send customers to local stores
- Understand how mobile ads drive sales

Approach

- Emphasized mobile and omni-channel advertising
- Began using local inventory ads from Google
- Added Store Visits reporting to learn more about store foot traffic

Results

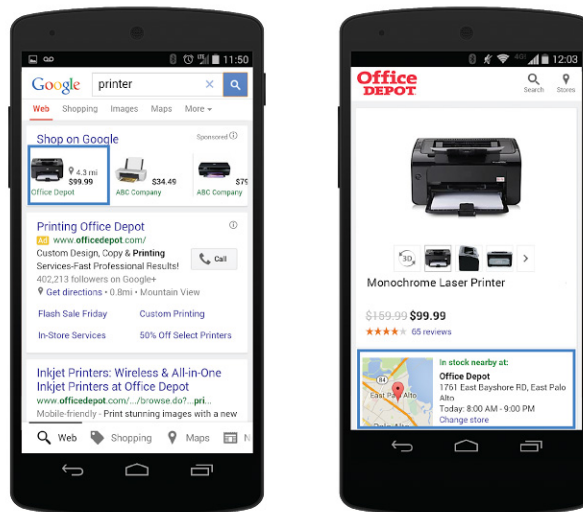
- Generated 3X return on digital spending
- Gained new insights into on-the-go shoppers
- Developed a clear bridge between customer clicks and store visits

Office Depot, Inc., formed as part of the merger of Office Depot and OfficeMax, is a leading global provider of workplace products and solutions—whether your workplace is an office, home, school, or car—in over 57 countries with more than 2,000 retail locations as well as award-winning websites and a dedicated business-to-business sales organization—all delivered through a global network of wholly owned operations, joint ventures, franchisees, licensees, and alliance partners.

In order to reach a customer base of increasingly omni-channel shoppers, Office Depot turned to local inventory ads (LIA) from Google Shopping. These ads display information about inventory in local Office Depot stores, so customers searching on their mobile devices can see products they need that can be found nearby. The results provided a better shopping experience for customers, deeper consumer insights for the Office Depot team, and a 3X return on the company's digital marketing spend.

When Office Depot was founded in 1986, the in-store retail customer shopping experience was revolutionary for the office supply industry. Today, the company is focused on enhancing the omni-channel shopping experience for its customers.

“Today’s consumer wants to shop when and wherever they want,” says Christine Buscarino, vice president of ecommerce marketing for Office Depot, Inc. “People consume while they’re on the go from home to work, and are online throughout their daily journeys. They’re literally always plugged in and turned on.”



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Office Depot has always been successful in traditional advertising media such as TV, radio, and direct mail as well as print catalogs and newspaper inserts, but the company realized it needed to incorporate other methods to better reach its on-the-go digital customers. “With 2,000 retail stores, we were very open to exploring new ways to drive more traffic with the latest mobile innovations,” says Buscarino. That’s when the company decided to conduct a test with LIA.

Local inventory ads

LIA displays information that’s connected to the actual inventory in Office Depot stores. When customers in Los Angeles or Houston use their mobile phone to search for a laptop, printer, or backpack, they may see an ad showing whether or not the item is available in a nearby store, and where the nearest store is located. This makes it simple for customers to discover what products are in stock as they’re researching and shopping online.

“Local inventory ads provide us with a unique opportunity to offer products that customers are searching for and assure them there is inventory in a store nearby,” says Buscarino. It took coordination among the company’s Ecommerce and IT teams who worked together to organize and share Office Depot’s inventory with AdWords in a way that would give customers the very latest product information. “That effort was worth the great results,” Buscarino says.

Now, Office Depot can reach customers who are researching products online and are close to making a purchase. “We can actually expand the reach of our retail footprint into the digital space and give our customers the omni-channel experience they want. This information is extremely valuable as it provides us with information about the products or categories that convert at a higher rate, identifying those which deserve greater attention.”

Measuring digital impact on store foot traffic

Office Depot needed to measure other valuable activities besides clicks such as cross-device conversions, clicks on a store locator button, and store visits. To better understand the full value of its investment and further improve customer experiences online and in-store, Office Depot implemented “Store Visits,” a new metric that is part of Google AdWords estimated total conversions.

“The Store Visits data has helped bridge the gap between customers who clicked, were interested in the product, and actually visited one of our stores,” says Buscarino. “We knew that our online ads were influencing store purchases, but we lacked adequate metrics to accurately calculate it. Once we saw our Store Visits reports, we were able to attribute a 3X return on spend to our digital campaigns.”

—Christine Buscarino, vice president of ecommerce marketing for Office Depot, Inc.

Future plans

“Digital activities that drive traffic to our stores is still a relatively new omni-channel effort for Office Depot, but given the increased customer migration to mobile, it makes sense,” says Buscarino. “LIA provides contextually relevant information, where customers need it, when they need it.

Along with the 3X return on spending for digital campaigns, omni-channel shopping has also given Office Depot unexpected insights into what customers really want. “With some categories, such as technology, we expected to have a high in-store visit rate, but we were surprised to learn that many people search for office supplies before coming to a store. This allows us to plan and promote the right categories and products in LIA to customers during seasonal peaks when it will be most effective.”

In short, omni-channel marketing is working for both Office Depot and its customers. “Now, we are able to reach customers when they search for a product,” says Buscarino. “We are as close to the retail transaction as we can be within the buying funnel.”