



Williams-Sonoma Inc. Inspires Consumers and Drives Sales With Mobile-Ready Content

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For the iconic lifestyle retailer Williams-Sonoma Inc., its catalog was the cornerstone of its marketing efforts. But, given the shift to mobile, the brand had to rethink how to tell its story. Here's how YouTube and Google Shopping ads helped it reach consumers, driving them in-store and increasing online sales.

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RESULTS

- 70% increase in mobile sales year over year
- 51% overall increase in e-commerce sales year over year
- 20% higher return on ad spend
- 70% increase in click-through rate across Williams-Sonoma Inc. brands

THE CHALLENGE

For Williams-Sonoma Inc., its catalog used to be the cornerstone of its relationship with consumers. People would sit down with the catalog and a coffee on a Sunday morning, dog-ear the pages, and bring it into a Williams-Sonoma store to ask sales assistants for help. "We have a long history of crafting lifestyle imagery through the catalog to share new ideas with our customers, as they look for inspiration to make their home a better reflection of their life," says Chief Marketing Officer Felix Carbullido.

But now that process (except for the coffee) is often replaced by a hand-held, digital experience that shoppers can have anytime on their phones. This is especially true for millennial shoppers, nearly 60% of whom use mobile as a "sous-chef" while cooking in the kitchen. As a result of this shift to mobile, Williams-Sonoma Inc. had to rethink how to tell its brand story to inspire its customers in specific, intent-rich [micro-moments](#)—for example, when the fresh college graduate is hosting her first dinner party in her new apartment and wants to learn how to cook an easy and healthy meal for her friends.

THE APPROACH

Williams-Sonoma Inc. started by looking at how they were valuing mobile so they'd understand how to invest. [Cross-device measurement](#) data from Google helped Williams-Sonoma Inc. measure incremental conversions that resulted from activities starting on one device and converting on another.

"We knew we needed to invest more in mobile, but it has been hard to measure mobile's full impact." said Carbullido. "With the cross-device insights that our Google team gave us, we learned that mobile research heavily influenced sales across all devices."

Williams-Sonoma Inc.'s formula for winning these "I-need-some-ideas" moments was then to focus on customer intent (what is the customer trying to discover?), their context (for example, are they around a Williams Sonoma Inc. store?) and audience (is this customer a high-value customer?). It brought Google tools together to achieve this.

Engaging shoppers with video and mobile

First, as a result of those cross-device conversion insights, Williams-Sonoma Inc. increased bids for [mobile Shopping ads](#) and dramatically increased its mobile Shopping ad spend to reach customers, wherever they were looking for inspiration.

Then, to reach its on-the-go customers during their moments of intent, Williams-Sonoma Inc. focused on video. How-to and recipe videos became key storytelling vehicles on the [brand's YouTube channel](#). It also drove awareness of Williams-Sonoma by shifting its investment to visual formats like Shopping ads on Google Image Search and Showcase Shopping ads. This overall shift to more digital, visual mediums resulted in a 70% increase in mobile sales year over year and a 51% overall increase in e-commerce sales year over year.

But it wasn't just enough to consider consumer intent. Williams-Sonoma Inc. needed to better understand context around where and how its customers were shopping. For example, if a customer was searching for products near its stores, the company wanted to be able to surface local product availability. [Local inventory ads](#) enabled its mobile shoppers to easily find out whether the products they were searching for were in-stock at the closest store. And once in store, shoppers were more likely to extend the experience by signing up for cooking classes, getting knives sharpened, or watching a live demo on how to make the ultimate vegetable salad. Focusing on this online and in-store connection was key, as Williams-Sonoma Inc. has seen a 20% higher return on ad spend when it uses mobile to drive shoppers to its physical stores.

Lastly, by using [Customer Match](#), Williams-Sonoma Inc. made sure to re-engage the audiences who matter most as they shopped across Google properties. It also used Customer Match for Shopping to target loyal customers across other Williams-Sonoma Inc. brands, helping to increase click-through rate by 70%.