

CASE STUDY

GM Holden Finds that Australian Auto Buyers' Paths to Purchase are Increasingly Going Mobile

Australia is home to one of the most competitive automobile markets in the world. And as one of the country's largest OEMs, GM [Holden](#) is constantly on the lookout for ways to better serve its customers.

Knowing that more [Australian auto buyers are turning to mobile in their moments of need](#), GM Holden along with its search agency partner, iProspect, did a deep dive into how its customers use mobile and desktop throughout their purchase journeys. The team's hypothesis was that more mobile searches happen when people are closer to purchase, but awareness and consideration-related searches still largely take place on desktop.

What the team found is that auto buyers actually turn to their smartphones in [-want-to-know micro-moments](#) throughout their purchase journeys.

Omni-channel auto buyers turn to mobile throughout their purchase journeys

By analysing its customer trends and behaviours, the team discovered that mobile searches and conversions have increased at every point in the purchase journey in just the past six months. Here's how it breaks down by stage:

Awareness: At the beginning of the purchase journey, auto buyers conduct 60% of their general research on mobile, up from 40% just six months ago. Car buyers are pulling out their phones to search things like "top 5 SUVs" while in line at the grocery store or on their way home from work.

Consideration: This mobile pattern continues for brand consideration and brand-focused searching as Australians turn to mobile to research things like car specifications and colour options. Right now, 40% of consideration searches happen on mobile, up 20% from six months ago. Importantly, conversions (test drive form fills) are still primarily done on desktop at this point in the journey.



HOLDEN

About Holden

- Holden is one of the largest auto manufacturers in Australia.
- Victoria, Australia
- www.holden.com.au

Goals

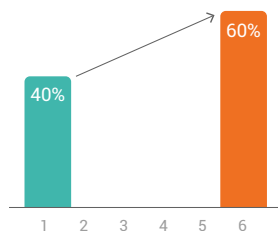
- Understand how auto buyers use desktop and mobile throughout their purchase journeys
- Optimise PPC spend

Approach

- Analyse GM Holden customers' search and conversion behaviour at each stage of the purchase journey
- Increase mobile investment by increasing mobile PPC bid amounts

Results

- 25% increase in mobile clicks
- 42% increase in mobile conversions
- Better understanding of customers' paths to purchase



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Purchase Intent: As buyers get closer to purchase, dealer-related searches and even conversions happen on-the-go. Purchase intent-related searches on mobile are now up to 75% of total searches (which is 3X higher than six months ago), and mobile conversion is now at 40% (up from 23% six months ago). At this point in the process, when car buyers know what model they want, they use their phones to find dealers close to them, look up directions and hours, and even fill out lead forms from their phones.

And when auto buyers see TV or outdoor advertising promoting a sale or specific offer, their first instinct is often to pull out their phones to get more information about the offer.

GM Holden optimises its PPC spend for mobile

As GM Holden's customers shift to mobile, its marketing efforts have followed. GM Holden is now bidding more aggressively on mobile, and mobile is showing the highest growth in conversion rate across devices at all stages of auto buyers' paths to purchase. Because of this investment, GM Holden has seen a 42% increase in total mobile conversions and a 35% increase in mobile clicks.

Geraldine Davys, executive director of marketing at GM Holden, said, "We noticed the significant shift to mobile in the car research process, so we reallocated our investment to have an increased focus on mobile search. This has helped us be top-of-mind in the moments that matter through consumers' car buying journeys."



42% increase in total mobile conversions



David Worrall, digital performance director at iProspect, added, “Cross-device engagement is crucial to how customers interact with brands. Missing one device can completely halt the conversation. Using data provided by Google, we target messaging specifically to consumers in their micro-moments when new car research is top-of-mind.”

Because Australians are turning to mobile at all points in their paths to purchase, it’s important for marketers to keep in mind how car buyers seamlessly jump between mobile and desktop. Consumers expect a frictionless experience, and marketers need to think of both mediums as complementary parts of Australian consumers’ omni-channel journeys.