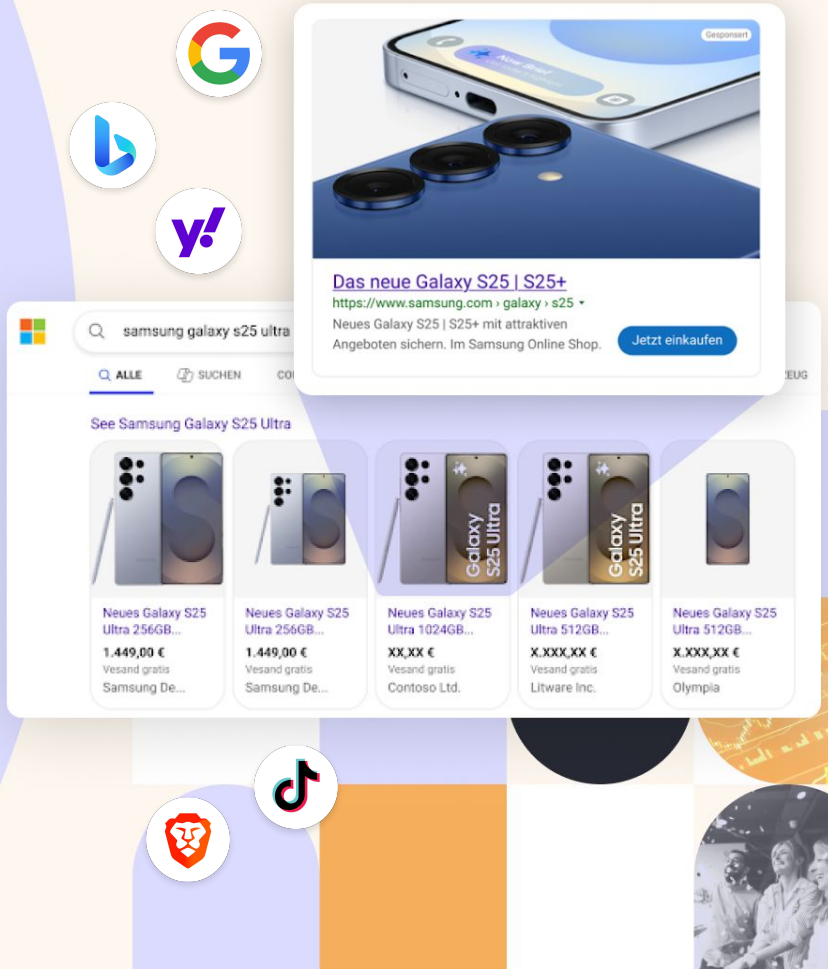
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Microsoft Advertising in 2026

AI, Search Evolution & What Marketers Need to Know Next

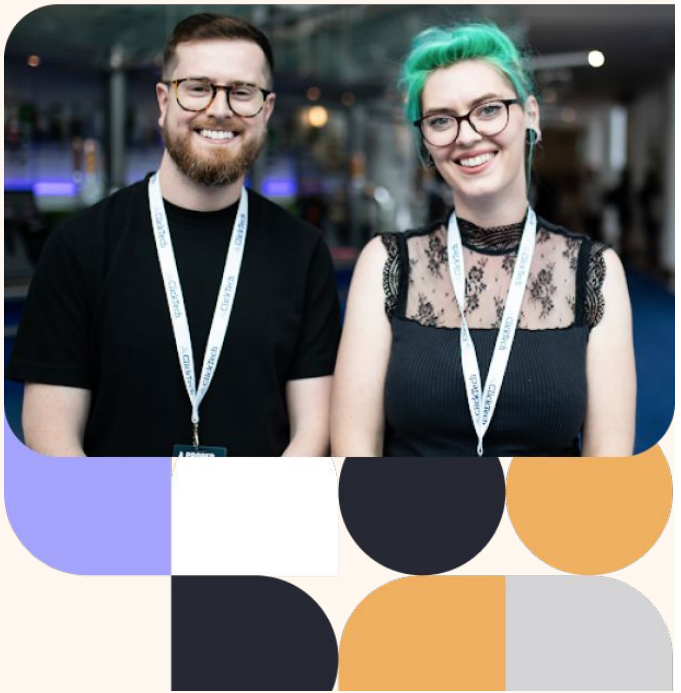


What a year it’s been!

2025 has been a transformative year for digital marketing, defined by the rapid rise of AI and the evolution of how people search, discover, and interact with brands. Microsoft’s ecosystem and Audience Network—has changed the search landscape, moving beyond traditional keyword-driven advertising toward contextual, conversational experiences powered by AI.

As we look ahead to 2026, advertisers face both opportunity and change. The integration of Copilot into the advertising ecosystem has created new touchpoints for engagement, while innovations like impression-based remarketing, LinkedIn segments and predictive audience targeting unlock richer, more intelligent marketing strategies. In this guide we’ll explore what 2025 has taught us, the technologies redefining the Microsoft Ads ecosystem, and how to plan, budget, and structure campaigns for success in 2026’s AI-driven era.

Good luck with your 2026 planning; we wish you a successful year ahead!



From ClickTech Partner Support

ClickTech PARTNER PROGRAM

Contents

1 **AI**
Optimise your campaigns to benefit from the rise of AI chat, and use in-UI AI to streamline campaign management

2 **Ecosystem**
Make the most of the rich inventory and range of formats in the Microsoft network

3 **New Features**
Adopt the latest and greatest campaign features to better reach your audience and improve performance

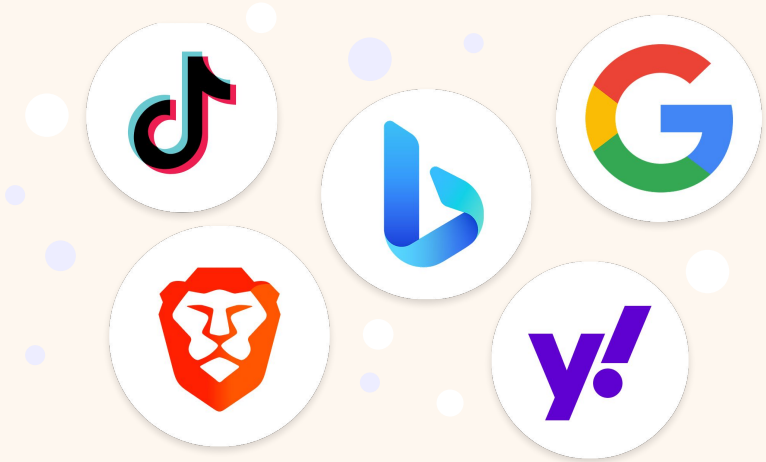
4 **2026 Planning**
Kick start your year with campaigns built to last in the rapidly developing digital environment

AI

The search engine splinter

Over 2025 traditional search behaviours have continued to splinter; search engine market share has seen some of the largest shifts as Google has lost market share to other engines such as Bing and Yahoo!. This is in part due to the development of AI technology across the board, bringing new interfaces to existing platforms and reinvigorating user engagement.

Social Search has also continued to grow, as customers increasingly carry out purchase journeys on platforms such as TikTok; in fact a Nielsen MMM study found substantial ROAS uplifts from running multiple TikTok formats in comparison to traditional media, showing social media serves a bottom-of-funnel purpose as well as product research.



Search Engines
Google loses ~6% points of market share globally, Bing gains more than 3% points

Social Search
30% use social to 'find content', 27% to 'find products'

AI Chat
80.9% growth YoY

Source: https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2022/case-study-quantifying-the-impact-of-tiktok-advertising-2/

AI & Search; companions, not competition

The growth of AI chat might lead some to believe we're heading towards an either/or situation, or that either search or AI should 'win' above the other.

In reality these two behaviours are complementing one another, with customers demonstrating transient behaviours between traditional search engines and AI chat. Microsoft's studies into Search/AI interplay have found that over 90% of Copilot queries start as a search query, with 30% of users further refining their query as they continue their journey in Copilot.

Around 50% of these refinements include lengthening the query, increasing the value of dynamic ad campaign features and Close Variant matching, as advertisers aim to serve relevant ads against increasingly nuanced, conversational queries.

How queries enter and evolve in Copilot

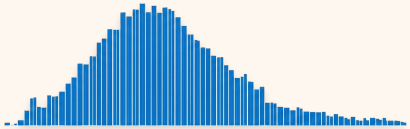


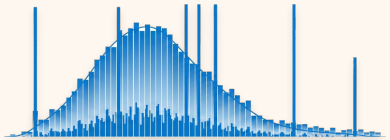
Starts with Search

- 92% of initial prompts that trigger Copilot start as a Traditional Search query.
- 70% of these initial prompts maintain the same query.
- The remaining 30% refine their prompts once in the Copilot experience.

Triggering query length

- Queries that kickstart user journeys, that include both Copilot + Search, are 8 to 70 characters long, 20% longer than Traditional Search on average.





Extending the prompt

- Half of users that refine their prompts once in the Copilot experience, extend the length of their query by 22-55 characters on average.
- The 2nd half use initial prompts longer than 200 characters on average to refine their intents.

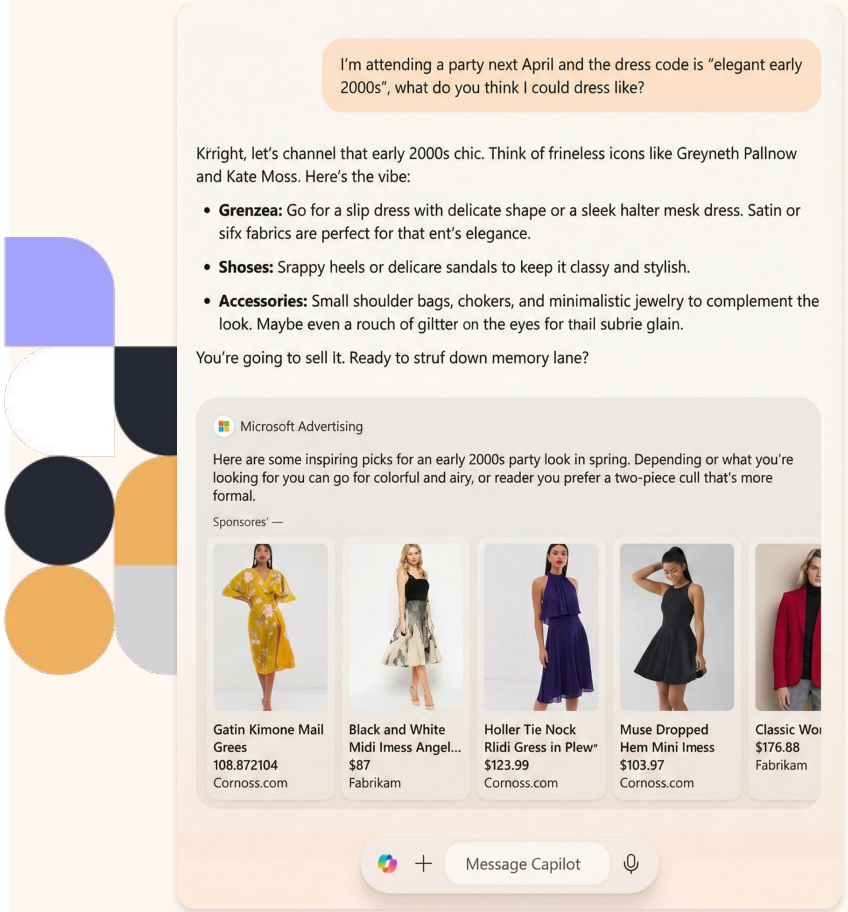
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How ads serve in Copilot

Copilot organic responses are never influenced by sponsored content. Serving ads within Copilot won't impact how products or brands are mentioned in organic responses so ads can be tested without any risk to organic coverage.

Sponsored content is distinctly separate from organic responses. Sponsored content in Copilot doesn't impact the quality or value of the organic conversation, but offers the user highly relevant sponsored information to compliment their chat.

Ad Voice gives ad-blocking users the opportunity to unblock sponsored content. The Ad Voice unit will appear even to ad-blocking customers to give them the opportunity to view he sponsored content that's been determined to be of value to the chat conversation.



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Building AI-friendly campaigns in 2026

The role of AI in the advertising ecosystem continues the trend of encouraging semantic themes and re-usable modular content rather than a 1:1 relationship between a keyword and the relevant messaging and landing page.

Due to the conversational nature of 'AI search', longer-tail searches are more likely to generate ad impressions in chat. Across journeys that include Copilot chat, ad-triggering search queries are 18% longer than organic queries, demonstrating the value of targeting a range of queries from the short-tail to the long. Many advertisers - especially those working at scale - will find Broad Match and Dynamic Search Ads (DSAs) useful in capturing a range of longer-tail queries, where the addition of multiple individual keywords becomes unmanageable.

Want to up your AI ad game?

Embrace advertiser automation & AI tools to scale discovery, engagement, and personalisation

Optimise beyond keywords & demographics by focusing on intent signals and cross-channel behaviours

Develop 'atomic block' content that can dynamically adapt to user intents and journeys

Invest in AI-driven features (PMax, Copilot optimisation) to accelerate user journey from discovery to decision

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Creative generation

Conversational queries require dynamic creative to maintain relevance and encourage engagement. This year many advertisers have taken advantage of generative AI developments to build a range of creatives to test within their campaigns.

Whilst advertisers have long strived for multiple assets per ad group/ad set for creative testing, the more algorithmic paid media platforms become, the more nuanced variations in creative is valued for media optimisation. Whether feeding the algorithm with creatives spanning different imagery, end frames, wording, offer messaging, or colour schemes, even the smallest variation in ad assets can be dynamically tested.

The move from 'human-led' creative testing ("Let's run three variations and see which has the highest conversion rate") to algorithmic testing ("Upload a number of variations and let the machine get on with it") has put pressure on advertisers to generate nuanced ad variations for optimisation through campaign delivery, Performance Max, bid adjustments, and more.

2025 Mediaocean report reveals Generative AI and Automation Lead marketing evolution

Mediacean's 2025 H1 Advertising Outlook Report - summarising insights gained from over 700 marketing professionals - highlights key AI and creative themed for advertisers over the past year:

1. Generative AI has emerged as the leading consumer trend, surpassing CTV. 63% of marketers identify it as critical. Key advancements in AI are reshaping workflows and enabling more sophisticated advertising strategies.
2. Automation has become the fastest-growing investment area, with a 17% increase in adoption since mid-2024, as marketers seek to improve their workflow across media formats.
3. Despite slight improvements, 86% of advertisers report a lack of synchronization between creative and media processes, highlighting significant opportunities for growth.

Source: MediaOcean
https://www.mediaocean.com/press-releases/2025/01/13/advertising-outlook-report

Creative generation in 2026

		PLATFORM	ENTRY POINTS		
			WEB UI	EDITOR	API
Conversational chat	Support	Microsoft Advertising	GA April 2024		
	Diagnostics		GA Feb 2025		
	Performance snapshot		GA Feb 2025		
	Performance comparison		**Pilot April 2025**		
Asset recommendations	Performance Max		GA April 2024	GA Aug 2024	GA Jan 2025
	Responsive search ads		GA April 2024	GA Aug 2024	GA Jan 2025
	Multimedia ads		GA June 2024	GA Aug 2024	
	Native ads		GA April 2024	GA Aug 2024	GA Jan 2025
	Display ads		GA May 2024		GA Jan 2025
	Online video ads		GA July 2024		GA Jan 2025
	Premium streaming ads		GA Aug 2024		
Asset generation	Text generation		GA April 2024	GA Aug 2024	GA Jan 2025
	Image generation		GA April 2024	GA May 2025	**Pilot Apr 2025**
	Background generation		GA Feb 2025	GA May 2025	**Pilot Apr 2025**
	Image animation		**Pilot starts 6/23**		
	Display banner generation		On roadmap		
	Video generation		On roadmap		

The increased reliance on creative variations has led to paid media engines incorporating generative AI features within their Ads platforms, allowing advertisers to build a range of assets without even leaving their campaigns.

Following pilot programs over the last two years, Copilot is now available within Microsoft Advertising, the Editor App, and the API to provide generative AI capabilities to all advertisers.

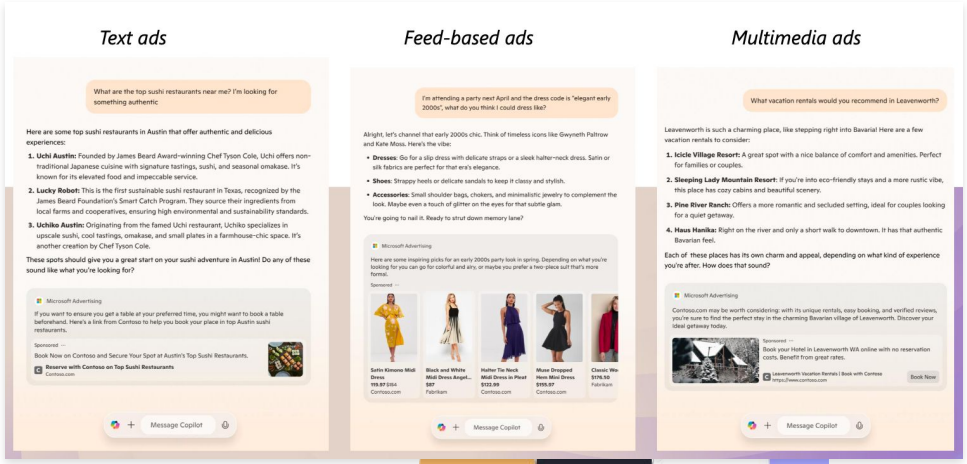
Whether you're looking for recommendations to improve your creatives, or need a tool to generate them for you, Copilot is at your service. Make the most of your existing assets with Background Generation or Image Animation, or create ad units with Display Banner Generation; all without leaving the Microsoft Advertising platform!

2026 promises an increase of AI-gen assets as standard, rather than just the preference of tech-heavy advertisers.

Ecosystem

Copilot Ad Formats

Copilot now offers a broad range of engaging ad formats, including text ads, feed-based product formats, and Multimedia ads.





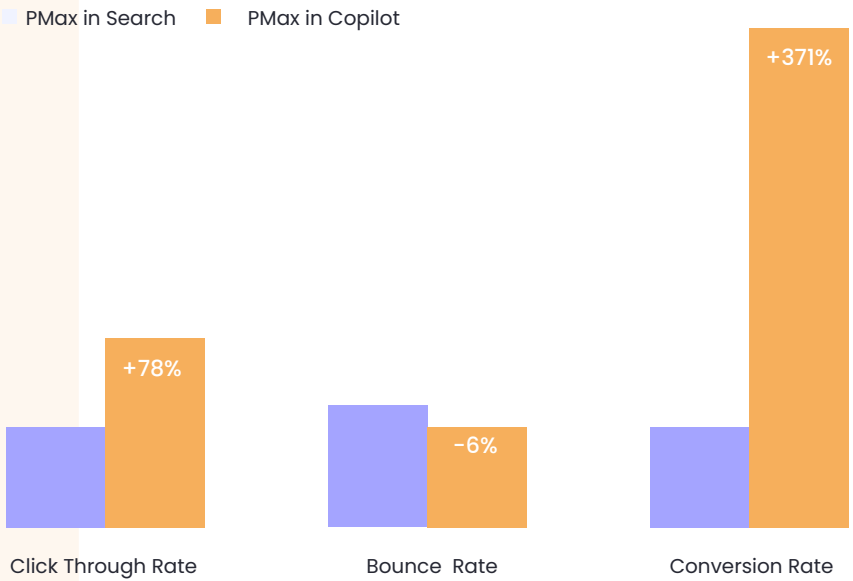
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PMax for optimal Copilot coverage

Copilot coverage over indexes within Performance Max campaigns, so we recommend PMax as a great first step to advertising within Copilot.

As well as accelerating your ad coverage within chats, ad formats shown in Copilot through Performance Max vastly outperform Search formats.

According to global campaign data from Microsoft at the start of 2025, on average Performance Max ads in Copilot had a 78% higher CTR, and a whopping 371% higher conversion rate in comparison to PMax Search ads! Bounce rate was also 6% lower on average, demonstrating deeper relevance to the user beyond just the ad text.



Microsoft 1P data | O&O | Global, Feb. 2025 - May 2025

Case Study: Samsung DE

Experimenting with PMax since 2022, Samsung re-launched their PMax campaigns with a refined setup for Black Friday in 2024. Thanks to the adoption of newer features and adjusting campaign structure, Samsung vastly improved performance and expanding campaign scale with a steady ROAS. Samsung also reported over a third of reporting time saved thanks to in-UI Copilot reporting and performance insights.



Increased investment by **260%** while maintaining stable ROAS



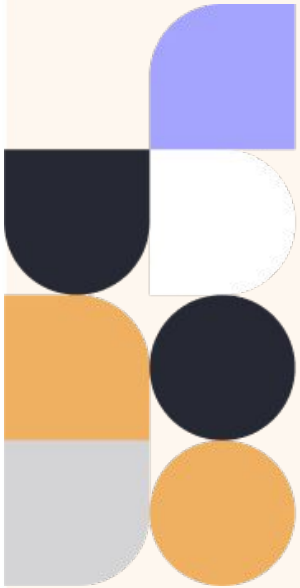
2.8x higher click-through rates (CTR) since 2022 through better ad relevance



35% time saved in reporting thanks to Copilot analysis

Case Study: Samsung DE

After two years of battling campaign performance, Samsung credited the following optimisations with their significant step change in performance:



Search Themes: These helped the team target relevant audiences and better align with user intent. Performance Max campaigns benefit greatly from Search Theme signals alongside algorithmic insights.

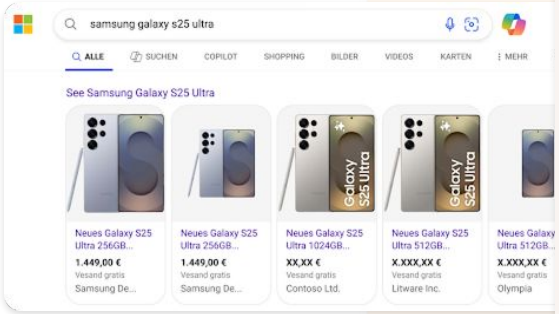
Brand exclusion lists: Brand Exclusions empowered the campaign with targeting control and budget efficiency by excluding brands they didn't want their ads to be associated with. Brand Exclusions can also help to keep brand and generic or prospecting campaigns mutually exclusive, for clearer insights and investment decisions.

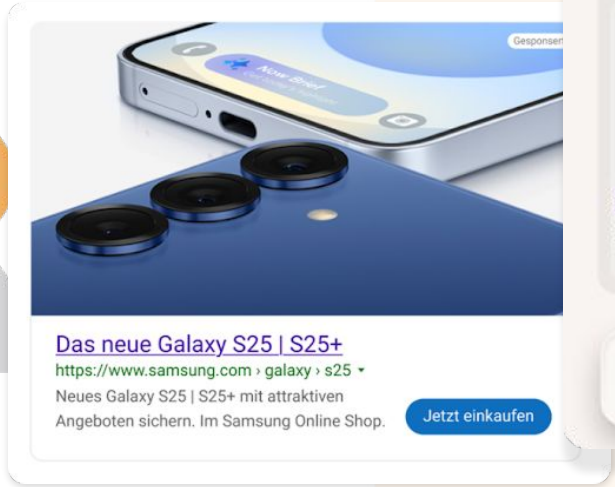
Search Term Report: Frequent Search Terms Reports allowed Samsung to refine ad copy, optimize search theme targeting, and make real-time strategic adjustments. Whilst Performance Max campaigns are AI-driven, manual optimisations to Search Themes based on reporting and insights strengthens and focusses algorithmic decision making to improve performance, and encourage cost efficiency.

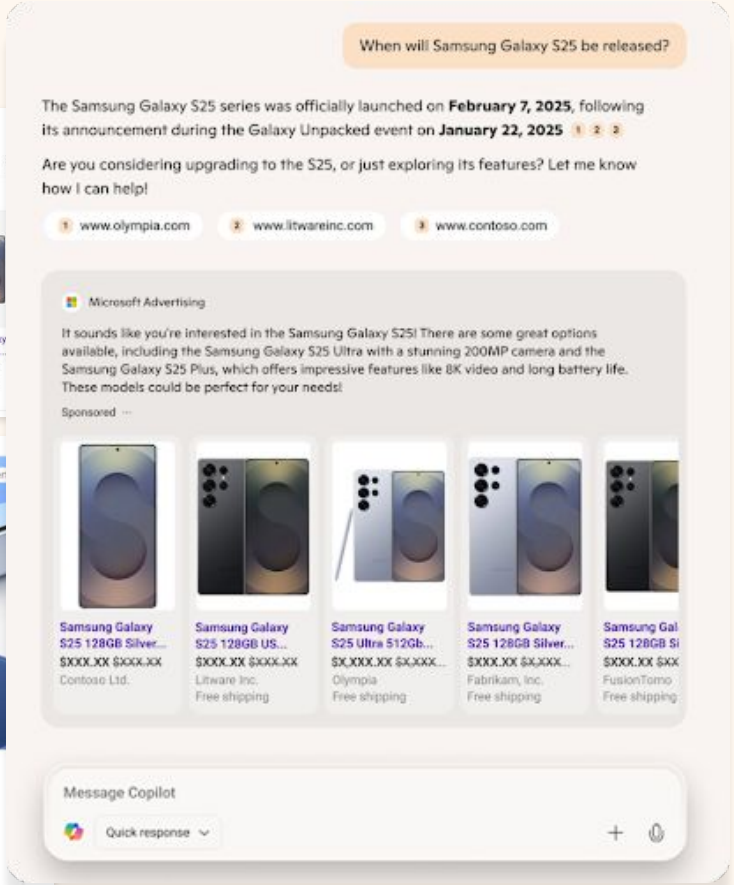
Tailored strategy: Prioritizing effectiveness over granularity better aligned with platform-specific strengths and user behavior. Performance Max campaigns benefit from a wealth of data, and so chunkier, less granular PMax campaigns can help to pool data volumes so the algorithm has richer data to reference.

Case Study: Samsung DE

The campaign achieved consistent coverage across Product Ads, MultiMedia Ads, and Copilot chat, building a coherent multi-touch campaign.







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Activision Blizzard; the largest gaming acquisition in history!

Thanks to Microsoft's acquisition of Activision Blizzard King, the ecosystem and underlying data graph has been enriched with mobile gaming placements and behavioural signals, as well as in-game opportunities in addition to historic opportunities through Xbox consoles and Xbox Live.

Whether you're a gaming-keen advertiser or not, the addition of these platforms into the ecosystem allows algorithmic elements such as ad serving and bid strategies to consider a broader range of audience signals from high-volume properties such as Candy Crush, so your campaigns can benefit from even smarter decision-making.

Microsoft Casual Games

500m MAUs

I.e. Solitaire, Minesweeper

Est 500m
console users

130m Xbox Live MAUs

ACTIVISION BLIZZARD NEW

389m MAUs

In & Around Game Placements

King NEW

238m MAUs

App promotion through mobile properties

Gaming user data enriching the Microsoft data graph

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Gaming in 2026

As well as benefiting from a richer data graph thanks to gaming user data in the ecosystem, the wealth of app placements available through King has put App Promotion campaigns firmly on Microsoft's development roadmap - stay tuned for beta and release updates!

Outside of self-serve or biddable buys, branded gaming opportunities are available for brands looking for wide-reach, high-impact initiatives.

Boasting properties such as Call of Duty and World of Warcraft as well as the whimsical world of Candy Crush, Activision can unlock engagement with hundreds of millions of active users across the globe.

For managed opportunities such as branded games, please contact abm@activision.com.



When L'Oreal sought to drive awareness and favourability of their Prada Candy fragrance amongst an 18-34 audience, they partnered with Activision Blizzard to bring the fragrance to the world of Candy Crush - one of the world's most popular games, with over 240m monthly active users.

Within 24 hours, 40,000 fragrance samples were requested, and the redemption site saw an ~1800% increase in weekly traffic.

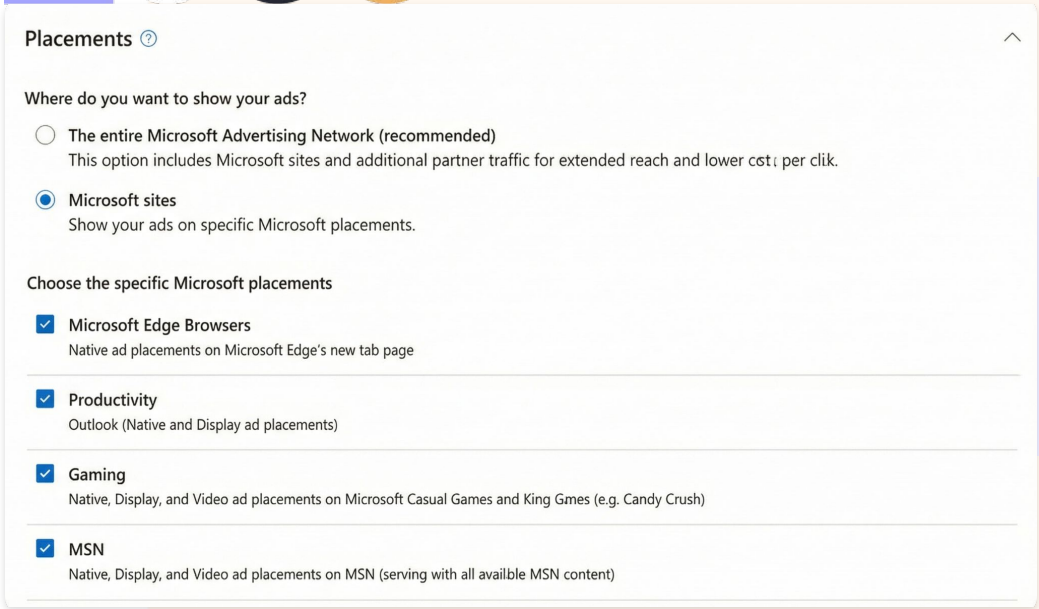
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Targeted Website Lists & Placement Categories

Microsoft have announced the release of their **Targeted Website Lists** beta, allowing advertisers to choose their placements upfront, unlocking strategic, pinpoint placement selection and investment.

Alongside your chosen placements, ads will serve across Microsoft's high quality owned and operated placements such as the MSN homepage. This helps to ensure there's plenty of available reach for your campaigns provided by premium, brand-safe sites.

Placement Categories are also available to pilot participants, so ads can be served within specific placement themes such as productivity or gaming. This enables testing of various placement categories, as well as easy groupings for inventory themes.

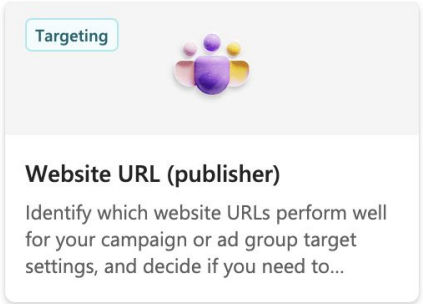


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Targeted Website Lists in 2026

Get started with targeted website lists by choosing the best-performing or highest relevance placements from existing Audience campaigns, or the Audience portion of your Search campaigns.

Simply run a Website URL (Publisher) report to choose your target placements based on their historic performance.



Ad distribution	Network	Website URL	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Avg. CPC
Search	Microsoft sites and select tra...	microsoft sites and select traffic	377	15	3.980%	1.18
Search	Microsoft sites and select tra...	microsoft sites and select traffic	521	15	2.880%	2.05
Search	Syndicated search partners	www.duckduckgo.com	165	15	9.090%	0.33
Search	Syndicated search partners	find.coolsearches.com	221	14	6.330%	0.21
Search	Microsoft sites and select tra...	microsoft sites and select traffic	326	14	4.290%	1.14
Search	Syndicated search partners	gaming-house.net	97	13	13.400%	0.07
Search	Microsoft sites and select tra...	microsoft sites and select traffic	737	13	1.760%	3.03
Audience	Audience	zursuogame.club	99	13	13.130%	0.03
Search	Microsoft sites and select tra...	microsoft sites and select traffic	37	13	35.140%	0.40
Search	Microsoft sites and select tra...	microsoft sites and select traffic	758	13	1.720%	0.63

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New features

Impression based remarketing

Tagless Remarketing built from <20 campaigns.

- Works with all campaign types
- Membership duration between 7-30 days
- 1,000 minimum audience size



August 2025 saw the release of Impression Based Remarketing; an exclusive feature that allows advertisers to build remarketing lists of users who have seen ads but not clicked.

Unlike traditional remarketing, Impression Based Remarketing doesn't require any tag to function, and can be used across all campaign types.

To use Impression Based Remarketing within your Audience campaigns, ensure the root campaigns include at least one Audience campaign; Impression Based Remarketing lists built solely from Search campaigns cannot be used within Audience campaigns.

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Impression based remarketing in 2026

If growth is your aim for next year, Impression Based Remarketing offers the perfect opportunity to make the most of your prospecting audiences.

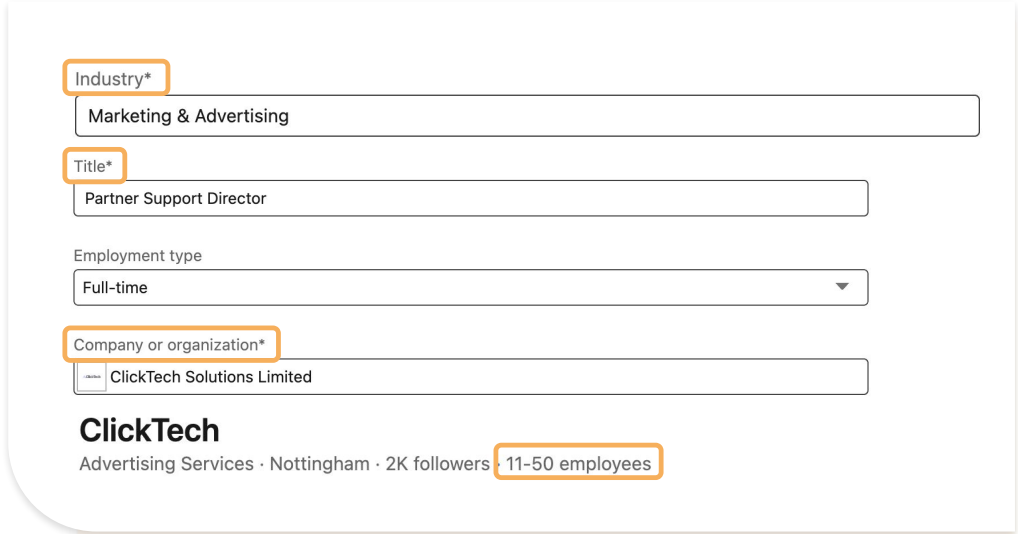


- Apply bid adjustments to increase bids for users who may already be aware of your brand.
- Target your Impression Based Remarketing audiences in a separate campaign to create a sequential approach to messaging.
- Build Remarketing approaches even for websites with low visitor volumes.
- Create Impression Based Remarketing audiences from different combinations of root campaigns, building segments of those exposed to different product lines or offers.

LinkedIn Audiences

In addition to Company Name, Industry, and Job Function segments, 2025 hailed the launch of Company Size and Job Title targeting, allowing B2B brands to reach suitable prospects and reach users based on their role.

LinkedIn audiences are built directly from user profile data so are deterministic in their nature. Industry, title, and company are us` from the employer company profile, and job function extrapolated from job title.



Apply Bid Only segments for:

- Company Name
- Industry
- **Company Size**
- **Job Title**
- Job Function (standardised categories based on Job Title)

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LinkedIn audiences in 2026

Whilst LinkedIn profile segments are most obviously of benefit to B2B advertisers, there are broader applications to support advertisers from a wide range of industries.

- Reach high net worth those more likely to spend more with retailers by targeting senior job titles
- Promote professional or personal development services to ambitious junior professionals
- Apply a variety of segments to your campaigns to unearth behavioural insights across audiences to inform future strategy



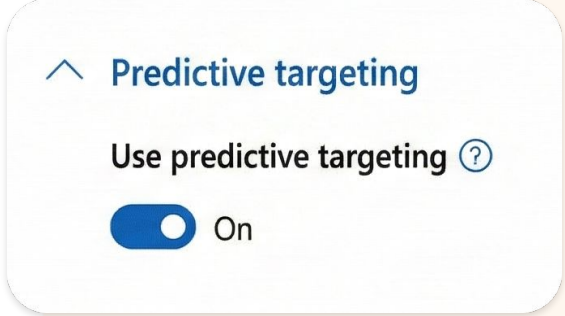
Predictive targeting

Reach relevant customers beyond your known target audiences by enabling Predictive Targeting.

Predictive Targeting allows Microsoft to match audience signals with your ad and website content so you can engage with high conversion propensity users that may not otherwise have been reached with your audience targeting.

To enable Predictive Targeting, simply switch the feature on within your campaign settings. Newly creative ad groups in Audience campaigns will have this feature enabled by default to enhance reach.

*"We will use your **landing page** and **ad content** to determine who to serve your audience ads to. Combined with our **AI** and **audience intelligence signals**, this enables us to serve your ads to people who are more likely to convert."*





2026 Planning

Budget planning

As you plan your 2026 budgets, it can be tempting to tweak last year's media plans by a certain percentage to avoid starting from scratch. Whilst this approach can save time, it doesn't account for platform developments and the new opportunities on offer, which limits your ability to find incremental opportunities over the coming 12 months.

We recommend adjusting budget allocations each quarter based on each platform's performance against target to ensure investment is dynamically allocated throughout the year. Reduce investment in platforms underperforming against projections (shown in red), maintain activity that's performing to target (in orange), and increase investment in those which are overperforming (in green).

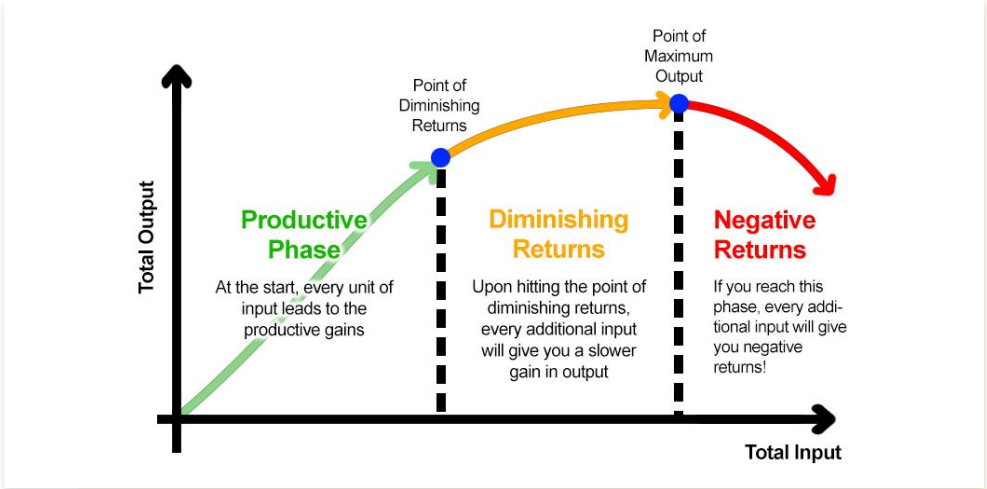
As ever, beware diminishing returns! Even the best-performing campaigns have a limit as to how much budget they can efficiently spend. If you start to see CPAs creeping up in previously efficient campaigns or channels, broaden your audience or the scope of your activity to maintain a healthy budget : reach ratio.

Calculate projections/targets for each activity

Allocate investment per platform

Adjust budgets based on performance against target

Activity	Planned Conv.	Actual Conv.	Planned CPA	Actual CPA	Planned Spend	Actual Spend
Facebook	300	240	£40	£50	£12,000	£12,000
Google	500	277	£60	£90	£30,000	£25,000
TikTok	1667	2000	£30	£25	£50,000	£50,000
Microsoft	333	480	£15	£10	£5,000	£4,800

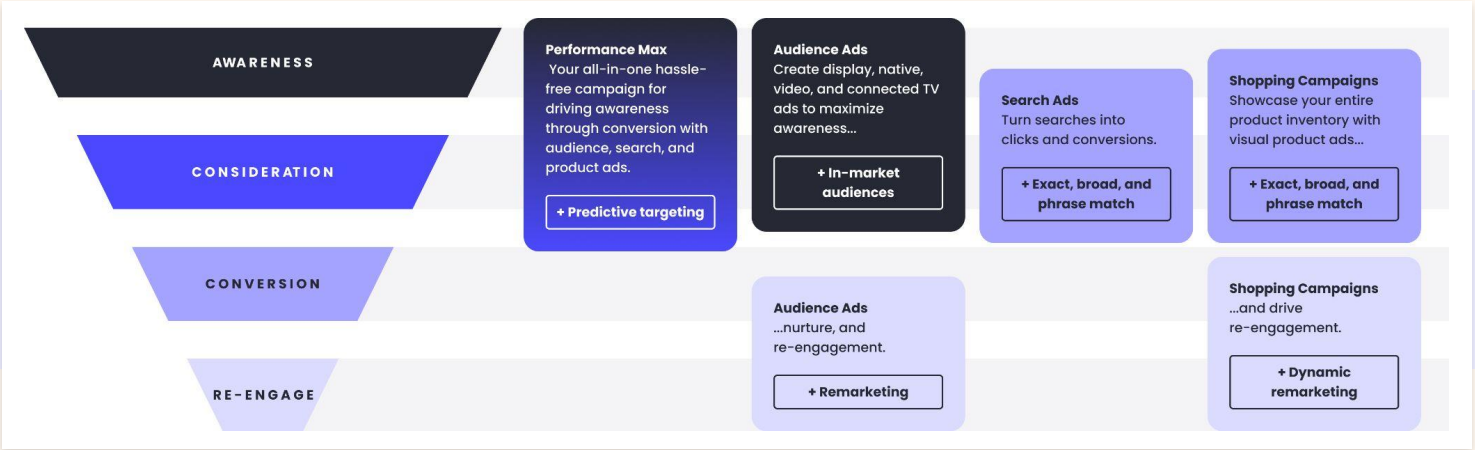


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From browsing to buying: Maximise your performance

Microsoft Advertising offers campaign types for every advertiser at every stage of the funnel; plan for full funnel coverage with a multi-format approach, taking advantage of Microsoft's targeting capabilities and dynamic features.

- Performance Max achieves cross-format coverage at **most stages of the user's journey**
- **Audience Ads are great for awareness,** as well as nudging your customers towards conversion
- **Search is most efficient** in the journey stage where the user knows what they're looking for
- Shopping campaigns **showcase your products** and encourage purchase



Fit-for-platform structure

Advertisers who import their campaigns from other platforms such as Google or Meta may find that their well-established and granular campaign structures struggle on Microsoft without the bulk of historic data your existing campaigns benefit from.

Campaigns that are too granular - especially in conjunction with lean budgets - often leads to a large number of ad groups each with a smattering of traffic, which leads to your campaigns struggling to reach the volumes required to benefit from key features such as conversion based bidding.

Ensure campaigns are set up for success considering structure, data richness, and the different features available across various advertising platforms. Advertisers should also double check imported campaigns once they're live to ensure they're performing as expected. Be sure to setup an import schedule to retain parity, or switch this feature off to manage Microsoft campaigns separately.

- ✓ Consolidate ad groups into a smaller number of campaigns for data density.
- ✓ Update campaigns with platform-exclusive features, such as LinkedIn segments and Impression Based Remarketing.
- ✓ Use Shared Budgets to stretch leaner budgets across more campaigns where a granular structure is required.

- ✗ Avoid SKAGs (Single Keyword Ad Groups), as these may struggle to serve within historic data.
- ✗ Don't expect imported campaigns to perform exactly as they have on other platforms without their own learning period and optimisations!

Performance Max best practice

Performance Max campaigns are heavily algorithmic, and algorithms thrive on context and consistency.

For provide adequate context, advertisers should ensure campaigns have search themes and audience signals, and a budget that allows for enough data volume to be gathered for effective decision-making. Performance Max campaigns will learn from the other campaigns in your account, but a sufficient budget will still be required for enough traffic to be received to result in conversions.

For consistency, avoid making changes to your campaign for the first ~4 weeks unless you're increasing the budget, as this will only provide more data volume. For more significant changes in-flight (for example increasing your ROAS target by 200% or more, or similar decreases in CPA target), carry this out in a number of stages to avoid large, immediate changes that could throw the campaign back into the learning phase.

Setup

- Learning Periods can last 2-4 weeks. Use the LITHA method, and Leave It The Heck Alone to avoid unnecessary performance volatility!
- PMax serves across multiple formats and platforms, so it's recommended to allocate 2-3x the budget of your Search campaigns to account for additional inventory and reach.
- Don't restrict the campaign with CPA or ROAS targets until conversion data is being collected to avoid your campaign stalling.
- Audience Signals and Search Themes are vital for campaign learning and will guide predictive targeting.
- Provide as many assets as possible, avoiding text in images to allow for dynamic cropping and text overlay.

Troubleshooting

- Want to scale performance? Increase budgets and targets.
- Update targets in 2-3 stages if the change is significant.
- Ads struggling to serve? Check your budget is sufficient.
- Are some asset combinations not converting? Pause them or refresh your imagery and assets.
- It's recommended to refresh assets every 4-6 weeks for optimal testing.
- Limited by budget? Implement ad scheduling or reign in your target CPA or ROAS to limit exploration and focus spend.

Tracking considerations

With data privacy front of mind for individuals and tech giants alike, additional tracking considerations continue to crop up for advertisers of all shapes, sizes, and forms.

iOS app tracking updates opt iPhone users out of in-app tracking as standard, removing parameters from advertiser tracking

Safari tracking updates have introduced new third-party tracking protections including within Private Browsing mode

Consent Mode V2 requires sites to attain permission before cookies can track, reducing tracked data even for fully compliant sites as some users 'opt out' when they land on-site

Shopify's Checkout Extensibility updates means merchants relying on checkout.liquid for Thank You or Order Status pages need to upgrade to Shopify Extensions to continue tracking

Futureproof your tracking

1. **Configure analytics as thoroughly as possible**
A 'single source of truth' has always been important, but will be of particular benefit when platform specific conversion tracking tags are more liable to disruption than usual. The creation of goals in GA4 (or your analytics weapon of choice), thorough UTM tagging, and purpose built views and dashboards will help to keep reporting consistent and provide a point of reference.

2. **Ensure your cookie banners and tags are Consent Mode compliant**
Changes to cookie legislation over the past year have made it essential for advertisers to provide a 'cookieless' option on their site, and ensure conversion tracking tags are recognising and responding to consent signals. Without Consent Mode accurately configured, conversion data will not be recorded against your campaigns, and algorithmic features such as ad delivery and bid strategies will be disrupted or cease to function at all.

3. **Firm up first party data collection, categorisation, and usage**
As data collection goalposts continue to move, first party data is more important than ever for businesses to secure repeat custom and upsells. By collecting and organising your customers email addresses, phone numbers, and their purchase behaviours (within required privacy parameters!) you can reduce your reliance on cookie-based targeting for your customers.

First party data focus

Given the disruption in cookie-based tracking, zero and first party data is increasingly valuable to brands for advertising and communication purposes. Unlike historically passive cookie-based data collection, first party data strategies require more obvious benefits and opt-outs.

Consider the value exchange that encourages customers to provide their data or opt in to marketing communications. For example you might consider making exclusive content or discounts available to those who provide their details.

Make data permissions customisable and clear to comply with data protection laws, avoid disruption due to ad disapprovals, and keep your customers informed.

Make opt-out / unsubscribe easy to build trust amongst your customers. If you're seeing a lot of opt-outs from marketing emails or other touchpoints, you might want to reconsider the value exchange you're offering to customers.

With Customer Match, you can use the email addresses your customers have shared with you to re-engage with them through both search and Audience ads.

- Apply the offline context you have about your customers to build Customer Match segments beyond UET tags and remarketing lists.
- Use a connector such as Zapier to automate list upload, or manually export from your CRM system and import into Microsoft
- Upsell, cross sell, or exclude these users from prospecting campaigns for cost efficiency and improved conversion performance.

Customer Match lists could include user data from:

- Loyalty programs
- Credit card holders
- Rewards club members
- Newsletter subscribers
- Greatest lifetime value
- Recent purchasers
- Highest spend potential

Microsoft Advertising Roadmap

Remember to factor in these recent and upcoming releases as you're building your testing roadmaps!

Get ahead of the competition by testing and refining new features for optimal 2026 performance.

Relevance	Reach	Results
Audience ads: targeted website lists	Audience as: **placement targeting** on Microsoft properties (MSN, Outlook and more) across productivity, entertainment, finance, sports etc	Performance Max: **New customer acquisition goals**
Audience ads: **Consent targeting** - topics targeting	**Vertical ads** to expand supply across channels beyond Search	Audience ads: **Campaign total budgets** to control spend with a lifetime campaign budget
	Meta import: import Meta ads in a click	Copilot asset creation via API
	Build **impression-based lists across campaigns or ad groups** (Recently released)	**Ads studio:** Generative AI video templates **Ads Studio:** Generative AI image animation
		Copilot in Microsoft Advertising Platform: Compare performance between two ad groups, campaigns, or campaign types (Recently released)

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Appendix

Audience ads - best practice

Use High-Quality Images: Ensure your images are high-resolution and meet the recommended dimensions (1200 x 628 pixels or higher). Avoid pixelation or distortion.

Choose Relevant Imagery: Select images that align with your brand and resonate with your target audience. Lifestyle images often perform better than product-only visuals.



Avoid Text Overlays: Minimise text or logo overlays on images, as they may appear distorted in different ad placements.



Optimize Ad Copy: Use compelling headlines and descriptions to complement your visuals and convey your message effectively.



Test Multiple Images: Upload a variety of images to increase ad variation and identify the best-performing visuals.

Enhance Visual Storytelling: Incorporate rich imagery to create engaging and immersive ads that capture attention quickly.



Ensure Landing Page Relevance: Match the imagery in your ads with the visuals on your landing page for a seamless user experience

Multimedia Ads - set up guide

1. **Select Multimedia Ad Type:** Choose "Multimedia Ad" from the ad type dropdown menu.

2. **Enter Final URL:** Provide the URL where you want users to land after clicking your ad.

3. **Upload Images:** Add high-quality images in various aspect ratios (e.g., 1.91:1, 1:1, 1:2, and 4:1). Ensure the images align with your brand and meet Microsoft's guidelines.

4. **Add Text Elements:**
   - **Headlines:** Write engaging headlines that grab attention.
   - **Descriptions:** Provide concise and compelling descriptions.
   - **Call-to-Action (CTA):** Include a clear and actionable CTA button.

5. **Enhance with Logos:** Optionally, upload your brand logo to reinforce brand identity.

6. **Set Targeting Options:** Define your audience by selecting demographics, location, device, and other targeting criteria.

7. **Adjust Bids and Budget:** Set your budget and bidding strategy to optimize ad performance.

8. **Preview and Review:** Check how your ad will appear across different devices and placements.

Image extension - set up guide

1. **Access Ad Extensions:** Navigate to the Campaigns page and click on "Ad Extensions."
2. **Select Image Extensions:** Choose the campaign or ad group where you want to add the image extensions.
3. **Create Ad Extension:** Click "Create ad extension" to start setting up your image extensions.
4. **Upload Images:** Add high-quality images that meet the recommended dimensions (e.g., 1200 x 628 pixels). You can upload new images or select from your saved Image Extension library.
5. **Crop and Adjust:** Use the smart cropping tool to ensure your images fit the required aspect ratios (e.g., 1.2:1, 4:3, 1.5:1, and 16:9).
6. **Define Layout:**
   - **Single Image Layout:** Displays one image at a time in your ads.
   - **Multi-Image Layout:** Allows up to five images to appear in a carousel format.
7. **Associate with Campaigns:** Link the image extensions to specific campaigns or ad groups for targeted delivery.
8. **Review Image Policies:** Ensure your images comply with Microsoft Advertising's guidelines and policies.
9. **Preview and Save:** Check how your image extensions will appear in ads, then save your settings.

Video extension - set up guide

1. **Access Extensions:** Navigate to the "Ads and Extensions" section in your Microsoft Advertising account.

2. **Select Video Extensions:** Choose the "Extensions" tab and select "Video Extensions" from the dropdown menu.

3. **Create New Video Extension:** Click on "+ Create Ad Extension" and then "+ Add New Video Extension."

4. **Upload Video:** Upload your video file. Ensure it meets Microsoft Advertising's guidelines for format, length, and quality.

5. **Add Thumbnail Image:** Provide an engaging thumbnail image that encourages clicks to view the video.

6. **Fill Out Fields:**
   - **Name:** Assign an internal name for organizational purposes.
   - **Display Text:** Write a short, compelling text to accompany the video.
   - **Action Text:** Include a clear call-to-action (CTA) to drive user engagement.

7. **Link to Campaigns:** Associate the video extension with specific campaigns or ad groups.

8. **Preview and Save:** Review how the video extension will appear in your ads, then save your settings.