

2026 BENCHMARK REPORT

PAID MEDIA BENCHMARKS

Google, Meta, LinkedIn, TikTok, Microsoft & Amazon

\$836B

Global Digital Ad Spend

91.5%

of Display via Programmatic

78%

Google Spend on AI Bidding

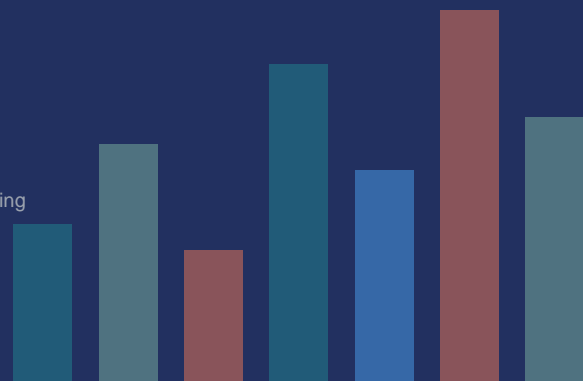


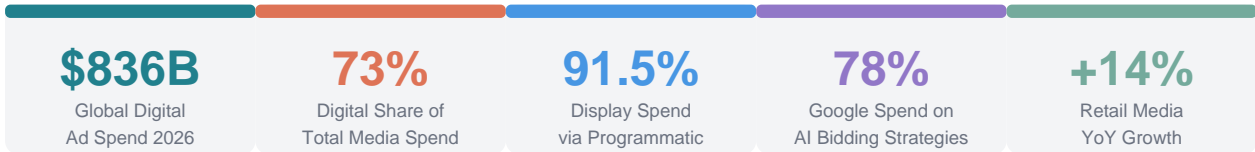
Table of Contents

01	Executive Summary	3
02	Global Digital Ad Spend Overview	4
03	Google Ads Benchmarks	5
04	Meta Ads Benchmarks (Facebook + Instagram)	8
05	Microsoft Ads Benchmarks	10
06	LinkedIn Ads Benchmarks	11
07	TikTok Ads Benchmarks	13
08	Amazon Ads Benchmarks	14
09	ROAS Benchmarks by Platform and Industry	16
10	Quality Score and Wasted Spend	17
11	AI and Automation in Paid Media	18
12	Key Recommendations for 2026	19

01 Executive Summary

Paid media in 2026 looks fundamentally different from what it looked like three years ago. AI-powered bidding now controls the majority of spend across every major platform. Third-party cookie deprecation has accelerated the shift to first-party data strategies. Retail media has become the fastest-growing ad channel. And the global digital advertising market has crossed \$836 billion, with digital now accounting for 73% of total worldwide media spending.

This report compiles current performance benchmarks across Google Ads, Meta, Microsoft, LinkedIn, TikTok, and Amazon into a single reference built for practitioners who need to know how their accounts compare, where the industry is moving, and which platform efficiencies to pursue next.



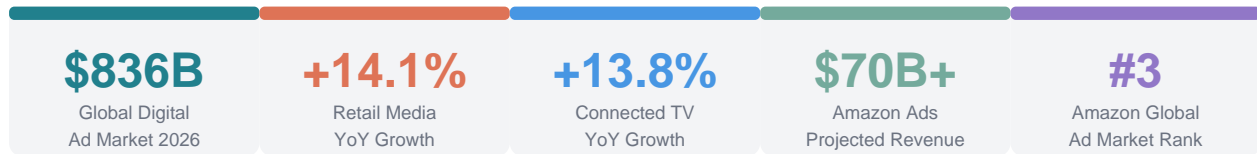
Key finding: Average CPCs rose 12% year over year on Google Search in Q1 2026, the steepest annual increase since 2021. Advertisers who have not reviewed their bid strategies and Quality Scores in the last 90 days are almost certainly paying more per click than they should be.

Platform	Avg CPC	Avg CTR	Avg CVR	Avg CPA
Google Search	\$2.96–\$4.22	3.52%	4.40%	\$53.52
Google Shopping	\$0.86	0.86%	1.91%	\$38.87
Performance Max	Blended	Blended	Blended	\$43.91
Meta (Facebook/IG)	\$0.70–\$1.92	2.19%	1.57%	\$38.17
Microsoft/Bing	\$1.54	3.10%	2.94%	\$41.44
LinkedIn (Sponsored)	\$5.74	0.50%	3.50%*	\$60–\$115
TikTok In-Feed	\$1.02	0.61%	1.92%	\$42.60
Amazon Sponsored Products	\$1.20–\$2.50	0.38%	9.55%	\$28.00

*LinkedIn CVR shown for Lead Gen Forms; external LP average is 3.5%.

02 Global Digital Ad Spend Overview

Total global advertising spend surpassed \$1 trillion for the first time in 2026, with digital channels accounting for approximately \$836 billion of that total. Search advertising continues to command the largest share of digital budgets at roughly 40%, followed by social media at 32%, display at 18%, and video at 10%. The mix is shifting toward retail media and connected TV faster than most forecasters predicted even two years ago.



Channel Budget Allocation

Channel	2024 Share	2026 Share	YoY Growth	Key Driver
Search	41%	40%	+8.2%	AI bidding expansion
Social Media	31%	32%	+14.6%	Reels, TikTok, Stories
Display / Programmatic	19%	18%	+10.4%	Audience precision
Video / CTV	9%	10%	+13.8%	Streaming ad inventory
Retail Media	n/a	Fastest growing	+14.1%	Amazon, Walmart, Instacart

Market Concentration

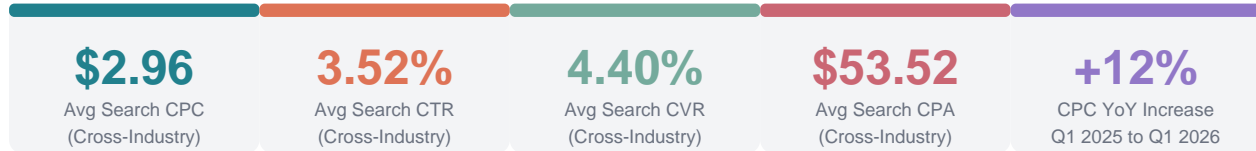
The paid media market remains highly concentrated. Google holds approximately 39% of global digital ad revenue, Meta commands roughly 20%, and Amazon has grown to 13%, positioning itself firmly as the third-largest digital advertising platform worldwide. These three platforms collectively account for more than 70% of all digital ad spend, leaving the remaining 30% distributed across Microsoft, LinkedIn, TikTok, Pinterest, Snapchat, and thousands of programmatic channels.

Platform	Est. Global Digital Ad Revenue Share	Key Strength
Google	~39%	Search intent, Shopping, YouTube
Meta	~20%	Social targeting, Reels, Lead Gen
Amazon	~13%	Purchase intent, Retail data
Microsoft	~4%	B2B audience, Bing search
TikTok	~4%	Gen Z reach, video engagement
Others	~20%	Programmatic, CTV, niche platforms

Programmatic note: 91.5% of all digital display advertising is now bought programmatically. The global programmatic market reached \$725 billion in 2026, up 18% year over year. If you are still buying display direct, you are paying a premium for inventory that can be acquired more efficiently through DSP channels.

03 Google Ads Benchmarks

Google Ads remains the largest paid search platform by a wide margin and the baseline against which all other channels are measured. Cross-industry average CPC on Search reached \$2.96 in Q1 2026, up 12% year over year from \$2.64 in Q1 2025, making it the steepest annual increase since 2021. AI bidding strategies now drive 78% of all Google Ads spend, and Performance Max campaigns absorb 34% of total Google budgets.



Google Search Benchmarks by Industry

Performance varies dramatically by vertical. Automotive repair leads all industries in conversion rate at 14.67%, a figure driven by high local intent and low comparison shopping behavior. Technology and e-commerce sit well below average in conversion rate because their sales cycles are longer and their buyers conduct more research before converting.

Industry	Avg CPC	CTR	CVR	Avg CPA	Benchmark
Automotive (Repair/Service)	\$2.42	3.81%	14.67%	\$28.50	Excellent CVR
Restaurants & Food	\$1.89	4.01%	5.29%	\$30.27	Low CPA
Arts & Entertainment	\$1.43	4.12%	4.10%	\$30.27	Low CPA
Home Services	\$3.24	3.54%	6.82%	\$43.82	Strong CVR
Education	\$2.94	3.76%	4.28%	\$44.98	Balanced
E-commerce (Retail)	\$1.16	3.71%	2.81%	\$45.27	High volume
Travel & Hospitality	\$1.96	4.68%	3.42%	\$62.18	High CTR
Health & Medical	\$3.64	3.61%	4.82%	\$59.68	Above avg CVR
Finance & Insurance	\$5.18	3.44%	5.10%	\$72.44	High value leads
Real Estate	\$2.87	3.38%	2.47%	\$87.92	Long cycle
Technology (B2B/SaaS)	\$4.82	2.09%	2.04%	\$133.52	Highest CPA
Legal Services	\$6.75	3.22%	6.98%	\$131.63	Highest CPC

Performance Max Benchmarks

Performance Max has become the dominant campaign type in Google Ads, now absorbing 34% of total Google Ads budgets. Its blended CPA of \$43.91 positions it favorably against pure Search CPA averages, though much of the efficiency gain comes from Display and Shopping inventory that carries lower conversion intent. In B2B SaaS accounts specifically, Performance Max underperforms standard Search, delivering 436% ROAS versus Search campaigns delivering 553% ROAS in the same accounts, because PMax inventory skews toward Display when conversion signals are thin.

Metric	Performance Max	Search Only	Shopping Only	Notes
Avg CPA	\$43.91	\$53.52	\$38.87	PMax blended across inventory
ROAS (E-commerce)	3.5x–5.0x	4.5x	6.2x	PMax attribution caution
ROAS (B2B SaaS)	4.36x	5.53x	N/A	PMax underperforms in B2B
Budget Share (2026)	34% of budgets	Declining	Stable	Driven by Google defaults
Best for	E-commerce, lead gen	High-intent B2B	Retail/product	

Quality Score impact: A Quality Score of 10 saves 50% on CPC versus the baseline. Improving from QS 5 to QS 8 reduces cost per click by 37%. Keywords stuck at QS 1-3 can cost up to 400% more per click than the QS 5 baseline. Most accounts we audit have 20-40% wasted spend that can be reallocated simply by fixing search term hygiene and improving landing page relevance.

04 Meta Ads Benchmarks (Facebook + Instagram)

Meta remains the dominant social advertising platform for both B2C and direct-to-consumer brands, with Facebook and Instagram combined now delivering a median CTR of 2.19% and an average CPA of \$38.17 across all industries. CPM climbed to \$13.48 on average in 2026, a reflection of the increasingly competitive Meta auction as more advertisers shifted budgets toward Reels inventory and AI-optimized Advantage+ campaigns.



Meta Ads by Industry

Industry	Avg CPC	CTR	CVR	Avg CPA	Trend
Apparel & Fashion	\$0.45	2.84%	1.87%	\$22.45	Lowest CPC
Food & Beverage	\$0.52	2.47%	1.54%	\$32.07	High volume
Art & Home Decor	\$0.63	2.92%	1.42%	\$28.18	Highest CTR
Education	\$0.98	2.11%	4.82%	\$7.85	Lowest CPA
Health & Wellness	\$1.42	2.38%	1.26%	\$43.21	Growing +22.8%
Real Estate	\$1.76	1.58%	1.12%	\$58.44	Long cycle
Finance & Insurance	\$2.12	1.64%	0.94%	\$72.36	High LTV
Technology (B2B)	\$2.18	1.48%	0.68%	\$74.12	Low CVR
Legal	\$2.44	1.32%	0.72%	\$88.14	Highest CPC

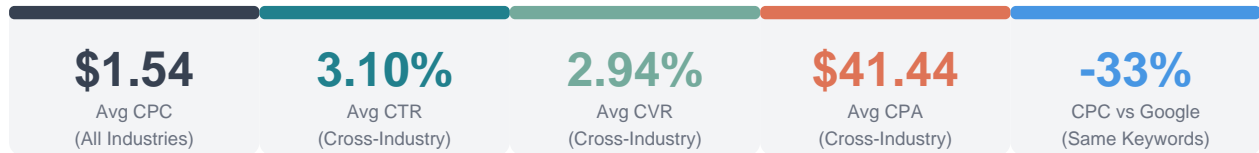
Ad Format Benchmarks

Format	CTR Benchmark	Best Use Case	Notes
Feed Single Image	1.5%–2.5%	Brand awareness, DTC	Workhorse format
Reels Video	2.0%–4.0%	UGC, product demo	Fastest growing
Carousel	1.8%–3.2%	E-commerce, multi-product	Higher engagement
Collection / Instant Exp.	3.0%–5.0%	DTC shopping	Mobile-first
Lead Gen (native form)	2.5%–4.5%	B2B, services	High CVR vs LP
Stories	0.8%–1.4%	Retargeting, offers	Short-lived content

Reels inventory is growing faster than any other Meta placement in 2026. Books and Music saw a 25.45% year-over-year CTR increase, Media and Publishing grew 24.17%, and Health and Wellness climbed 22.80%. The advertisers capturing this growth are the ones who shifted creative strategy toward short-form video with captions before their competitors did. Native lead gen forms consistently outperform external landing pages on Meta, producing roughly 2x to 3x higher conversion rates for most B2B offer types.

05 Microsoft Ads Benchmarks

Microsoft Ads continues to be one of the most underutilized channels in most paid media programs, primarily because it is smaller and takes more effort to manage alongside Google. That is exactly why the efficiency is there. Average CPC on Microsoft is \$1.54, roughly 33% lower than Google Search, and average CPA is \$41.44, approximately 30% below what Google delivers for comparable queries. The audience skews older, more educated, and higher-income, which makes it disproportionately valuable for financial services, B2B, healthcare, and legal verticals.



Industry	Avg CPC	CTR	CVR	Avg CPA	vs. Google CPA
Automotive	\$1.64	5.10%	5.20%	\$28.42	-33%
Finance & Insurance	\$3.12	3.51%	4.18%	\$52.76	-27%
Apparel & Accessories	\$0.98	3.33%	2.64%	\$37.12	-18%
Retail	\$1.22	3.06%	3.21%	\$38.16	-15%
Technology	\$2.84	2.41%	2.08%	\$88.74	-34%
Legal	\$4.18	2.86%	4.92%	\$84.96	-35%
Health & Medical	\$2.06	2.94%	3.64%	\$46.21	-23%
Travel	\$1.14	4.22%	2.86%	\$42.84	-31%

Microsoft Ads delivers an average ROI 26% stronger than Google Ads for comparable keyword sets. The Automotive industry posts the highest CTR on Microsoft at 5.1% and one of the highest conversion rates at 5.2%, a combination that makes it the highest-ROI Microsoft vertical for most campaign types. The most common reason advertisers underallocate to Microsoft is the assumed complexity of maintaining two platforms, which the Microsoft import tool from Google largely eliminates.

06 LinkedIn Ads Benchmarks

LinkedIn is the highest-cost and lowest-volume paid media channel most B2B advertisers use, and it is frequently mismanaged because practitioners apply social media creative and bidding logic to what is fundamentally a direct response channel for enterprise and mid-market buyers. Average Sponsored Content CPC reached \$5.74 in 2026, up from \$5.26 in 2024. The cost is justified when the offer is right, the audience is surgical, and the format is chosen based on where the buyer is in the consideration cycle.



CPC by Industry

Industry	Avg CPC	Avg CPL	CTR	Best Performing Offer
Technology (SaaS)	\$7.84	\$70	0.48%	Free trial, demo request
Financial Services	\$6.84	\$100	0.51%	ROI calculator, whitepaper
Legal Services	\$7.95	\$120+	0.46%	Case study, consultation
Healthcare	\$6.24	\$80	0.45%	Webinar, research report
Professional Services	\$5.62	\$60	0.54%	Guide, checklist
Manufacturing	\$4.91	\$50	0.52%	Product spec, demo video
Education	\$4.18	\$47	0.58%	Course preview, webinar
Nonprofit	\$3.12	\$38	0.61%	Impact report, event invite

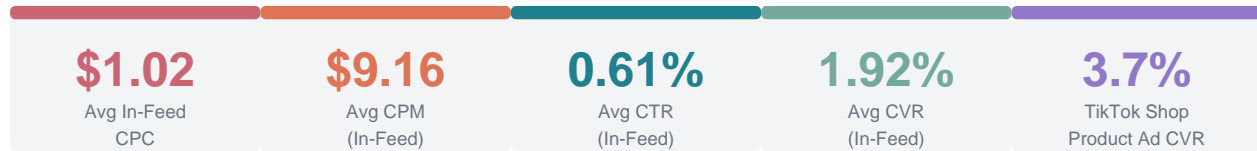
Ad Format Performance

Format	CTR Benchmark	Conversion Rate	Best For
Single Image Ad	0.50%	2%–5% (LP)	Brand, awareness, lead gen
Video Ad	0.44%	1%–3% (LP)	Demo, product story, thought leadership
Carousel Ad	0.55%	2%–6% (LP)	Multi-product, step-by-step content
Document Ad	0.62%	4%–9% (LP)	Research reports, playbooks, guides
Lead Gen Form	0.58%	10%–18% (native)	Demo requests, event registration
Conversation Ad	0.35%	30%–60% (native)	Hyper-personalized outreach
Thought Leader Ad	0.70%	3%–8% (LP)	Executive visibility, brand trust

Lead Gen Forms are the single highest-impact format change available to most LinkedIn advertisers. They achieve a median conversion rate of 13%, compared to 3.5% for the same offers sent to external landing pages. For gated content, the CPL from native forms averages \$45 vs. \$90+ when the same creative drives to a landing page with a form, because the friction removal more than compensates for the lower intent signal.

07 TikTok Ads Benchmarks

TikTok has matured from an experimental awareness channel into a full-funnel performance platform. Average CPC on in-feed ads is \$1.02, making it one of the most affordable cost-per-click channels available for consumer brands. Average CPM sits at \$9.16, significantly below Meta Facebook CPM of \$13.48, which means reach is cheaper for brands with the creative to take advantage of it. The caveat is that TikTok creative requirements are unforgiving: content that does not look native to the platform performs dramatically below these benchmarks.



TikTok Ads by Industry and Format

Industry / Format	Avg CPC	CTR	CVR	CPM	Notes
Retail / E-commerce	\$0.79	0.82%	2.14%	\$8.44	Strongest performer
Beauty & Personal Care	\$0.74	0.94%	2.38%	\$7.92	High UGC ROI
Food & Beverage	\$0.82	0.88%	1.96%	\$8.76	Viral potential
Fashion & Apparel	\$0.86	0.91%	1.82%	\$9.14	Reels-style creative
Technology / Apps	\$1.24	0.54%	1.44%	\$11.28	Lower CTR
Finance	\$1.71	0.42%	1.12%	\$13.88	High CPC vertical
Spark Ads (any vertical)	+29% CPM	2.4x CTR	+44% CVR	Premium	Native creator boost
TikTok Shop Ads	\$0.68	1.24%	3.70%	\$7.14	Highest CVR format
In-Feed Standard	\$1.02	0.61%	1.92%	\$9.16	Baseline

Spark Ads are the highest-leverage format change available to TikTok advertisers. They boost organic creator content that already has engagement, resulting in 2.4x higher CTR and 44% higher conversion rates compared to standard in-feed creative, despite a CPM premium of approximately 29%. For brands without a strong creator partnership program, TikTok Shop product ads offer a path to 3.7% CVR with significantly lower creative production costs.

08 Amazon Ads Benchmarks

Amazon Advertising generated over \$54.5 billion in revenue in 2024 and is projected to surpass \$70 billion in 2026, cementing its position as the third-largest digital ad platform globally. What distinguishes Amazon from every other platform in this report is purchase intent: people searching on Amazon have already decided they want to buy something, which is why average conversion rates for Sponsored Products (9.55%) are dramatically higher than comparable search intent on Google (4.40%). The trade-off is that Amazon ACoS averages 22-35% across most categories, meaning ad costs are a substantial portion of revenue and margin management is critical.



Amazon Ad Type Comparison

Ad Type	Avg CTR	Avg CPC	Avg CVR	Avg ACoS	Best For
Sponsored Products	0.38%	\$1.20–\$2.50	9.55%	22%–35%	Core ASIN sales
Sponsored Brands	0.20%–0.30%	\$1.50–\$3.00	5%–8%	25%–40%	Brand awareness
Sponsored Display	0.08%–0.12%	\$0.60–\$1.20	2%–4%	35%–55%	Retargeting
Amazon DSP (CPM)	n/a	\$6–\$12 CPM	1%–3%	Variable	Programmatic reach
Video Ads	0.35%–0.55%	\$0.40–\$0.80 CPV	3%–6%	Variable	Brand storytelling

ACoS by Product Category

Category	Avg ACoS	Avg CPC	Competition Level	Notes
Electronics	22%	\$1.72	Very High	Review volume critical
Beauty & Personal Care	24%	\$1.24	High	UGC content drives CVR
Home & Kitchen	26%	\$1.08	Medium-High	Seasonal fluctuation
Sports & Outdoors	28%	\$0.96	Medium	Strong Q4 spikes
Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry	30%	\$0.82	Medium	Size/variant complexity
Books & Media	32%	\$0.48	Medium	Low CPC, margin challenge
Grocery & Gourmet Food	24%	\$0.72	Low-Medium	Subscribe & Save impact
Toys & Games	28%	\$1.14	High	Extreme Q4 seasonality

Break-even ACoS is the single most important metric Amazon advertisers should know before setting any campaign target. Break-even ACoS equals your gross margin percentage. A product with 35% margins means any ACoS below 35% is profitable. The average Amazon account runs at 32% ACoS, which means accounts with margins above 35% are generating profit from advertising, while those with margins below 35% are paying to acquire customers at a net loss. Know your number.

09 ROAS Benchmarks by Platform and Industry

Return on ad spend is the most commonly cited performance metric in paid media and also the most commonly misinterpreted. A ROAS of 3.0x sounds good in isolation. Whether it is actually profitable depends entirely on your gross margin. For a brand with 25% margins, a 3.0x ROAS means spending \$1 to make \$3, with \$0.75 in costs of goods, leaving \$0.25 after ad spend and before any other operating expense. For a brand with 50% margins, the same 3.0x ROAS is highly profitable. Always compare ROAS against your break-even ROAS, not an industry average.

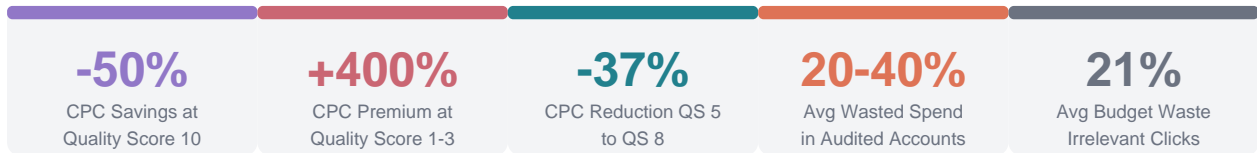
Platform / Campaign Type	Avg ROAS	Median ROAS	Break-Even Target	Notes
Google Search	4.5x	3.2x	3.3x (30% margin)	Highest intent
Google Shopping	6.2x	4.8x	3.3x (30% margin)	Product feed quality critical
Performance Max	3.5x–5.0x	3.8x	3.3x (30% margin)	Attribution inflated
Meta Facebook/Instagram	2.9x	1.93x	3.3x (30% margin)	Attribution window 7dc/1vi
Microsoft Bing Search	3.1x	2.4x	3.3x (30% margin)	Lower CPC improves ROAS
TikTok In-Feed	2.4x	1.8x	3.3x (30% margin)	Creative quality dependent
Amazon Sponsored Products	3.5x	3.0x	Break-even = 1/ACoS%	Purchase-intent channel
Amazon Shopping	5.8x	4.2x	Break-even = 1/ACoS%	Competitive categories
LinkedIn (B2B pipeline)	3.0x–7.0x	Varies	Revenue-based model	Long attribution

ROAS Benchmarks by Vertical

Industry	Target ROAS (Google)	Target ROAS (Meta)	Notes
Apparel & Fashion	4.0x–6.0x	3.5x–5.0x	High return rate risk
Beauty & Personal Care	4.5x–7.0x	3.8x–5.5x	Repeat purchase model
Home & Garden	3.5x–5.5x	3.0x–4.5x	Seasonal peaks
Electronics	5.0x–8.0x	4.0x–6.0x	High AOV, lower margin %
Sporting Goods	4.0x–6.5x	3.5x–5.0x	Q4 critical
Health & Wellness	3.5x–5.5x	3.0x–4.5x	Subscription opportunity
Food & Beverage (DTC)	2.5x–4.0x	2.0x–3.5x	Low margin category
Luxury / High AOV	2.0x–3.5x	1.8x–3.0x	LTV justifies lower ROAS
SaaS / Technology	2.0x–4.0x (LTV)	Pipeline ROAS	MRR-based accounting

10 Quality Score and Wasted Spend Analysis

Quality Score is one of the most impactful and least-actively-managed variables in Google Ads. It determines how much you pay per click relative to competitors who hold the same position and how often your ads are eligible to show at all. A QS of 10 saves 50% on CPC versus the baseline QS 5. A QS of 1-3 costs up to 400% more than the baseline. Most accounts contain a mix of high and low Quality Score keywords, meaning money is being wasted in specific corners of the account while other parts perform well. The audit process is to identify and fix the low-scoring keywords, not to optimize account-wide averages.



Quality Score	CPC Adjustment	Bid Required for Same Position	Recommended Action
10	-50%	Half of QS 5 advertiser	Maintain; monitor components
9	-44%	Significantly below avg	Maintain; expand
8	-33%	Below average	Good; refine landing pages
7	-22%	Slightly below avg	Optimize ad copy and LP
6	-11%	Near average	Review all three components
5	0%	Baseline (average)	Action required
4	+11%	Above average	Audit search terms and landing page
3	+22%	Significantly above avg	Restructure; new ad groups
2	+33%	Well above average	Consider pausing; redesign
1	+400%+	Maximum premium	Pause; fix root causes first

The three Quality Score components and what actually drives them: Expected CTR is primarily a function of historical keyword CTR and ad copy relevance to the search term. Ad Relevance is the match between keyword, ad headline, and user intent. Landing Page Experience covers page load speed, mobile usability, content relevance, and the absence of navigation friction between the ad promise and the conversion action. Most accounts have the biggest QS gap in Landing Page Experience, because it is the hardest to fix and requires cross-team coordination with web development.

11 AI and Automation in Paid Media

The shift toward AI-powered paid media is no longer a trend; it is the default state of the industry. Smart Bidding and Performance Max campaigns now account for 78% of all Google Ads spend. Meta Advantage+ campaigns have overtaken manual targeting in adoption across large-budget accounts. LinkedIn is expanding Accelerate campaign types. TikTok Smart Performance Campaigns are the default for new advertisers. The question is no longer whether to use AI-powered tools. It is how to feed them quality inputs and maintain the strategic control that maximizes their output.

Platform	AI Campaign Type	Adoption Rate	Avg Impact vs Manual	Key Requirement
Google	Performance Max	34% of budgets	-18% CPA avg	50+ conversions/month
Google	Smart Bidding	78% of spend	-22% CPA avg	30+ conversions/month
Google	AI Max for Search	Expanding	+13% revenue, +16% CPA	Robust negative lists
Meta	Advantage+ Shopping	Dominant in DTC	+15%–30% ROAS	Strong product catalog
Meta	Advantage+ Audience	Growing rapidly	+10% CVR on avg	First-party data input
TikTok	Smart Performance	Default for new	Varies by creative	UGC creative library
LinkedIn	Accelerate	Early adoption	+25% CVR (LinkedIn)	ICP definition required
Amazon	Dynamic Bidding	Standard default	+12% ROAS avg	Conversion history

What AI Campaigns Need to Perform

Every AI bidding and automation system on every platform performs better when it has three things: sufficient conversion volume (30 conversions per month per campaign is the minimum threshold on Google, 50 is where the system starts to thrive), accurate conversion data that reflects real business outcomes rather than proxy metrics, and high-quality creative variation that gives the system material to optimize.

The most common AI underperformance root causes are not the algorithm itself but rather thin conversion history from accounts that were previously manually bid, imprecise conversion actions that count form fills on a low-quality traffic page as equivalent to a demo request, and a lack of negative keyword governance that allows Performance Max to acquire irrelevant branded and competitor traffic and credit it as incremental.

12 Key Recommendations for 2026

01 Audit Your Conversion Tracking First

Before any optimization, validate that every conversion action records a genuine business outcome exactly once. Compare Google Ads reported conversions against CRM intake for the same period. A discrepancy above 15% is a signal of a tracking problem. Platforms cannot optimize toward outcomes they cannot see.

02 Separate Brand From Non-Brand Everywhere

Brand keywords convert at 5-10x the rate of non-brand. Commingling them produces a blended metric that looks great and hides the fact that non-brand traffic is frequently unprofitable. Every platform covered in this report benefits from this structural separation.

03 Add Microsoft Ads If You Have Not Already

Microsoft search delivers an average CPC 33% below Google and a CPA 30% lower for comparable queries. The import tool removes most of the setup friction. For accounts over \$10K/month in Google Search spend, Microsoft typically delivers 15-25% incremental leads at a lower cost per lead.

04 Fix Quality Scores Before Raising Bids

Accounts with QS 1-3 keywords are paying up to 400% more per click than necessary. Before increasing bids to compete for volume, audit the three components (expected CTR, ad relevance, landing page experience) and fix the lowest-scoring keywords. The cost reduction from QS improvement funds additional volume.

05 Build First-Party Audience Infrastructure

Third-party cookie deprecation is accelerating. Customer Match lists, offline conversion imports, and CRM-synced audiences are the foundation of targeting quality in 2026. Accounts with strong first-party data consistently outperform those relying on platform-modeled audiences by 20-40% on CPA.

06 Treat LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms as a Default

Native LinkedIn forms convert at a median of 13% versus 3.5% for the same offer sent to an external landing page. For any LinkedIn campaign with a gated content or demo request offer, the form-to-landing-page CVR differential alone typically reduces CPL by 40-60%.

07 Match Creative Format to Platform Native Behavior

TikTok content that looks like a produced ad underperforms Spark Ads or UGC by more than 2x on CTR. LinkedIn Document Ads outperform single-image ads by 24% on CTR because they match how LinkedIn users consume professional content. Repurposing creative across platforms without adapting it to platform context is one of the most common and most avoidable efficiency losses.

08 Know Your Break-Even ROAS Before Setting Targets

Platform-reported ROAS averages are irrelevant to your business without knowing your gross margin. Break-even ROAS equals 1 divided by gross margin percentage. A 30% margin business needs a minimum 3.3x ROAS to cover ad costs before any other expense. Set targets from your financials, not from platform benchmarks.

About Silverback Marketing

Silverback Marketing is a performance-focused digital agency specializing in paid media, SEO, GEO, and conversion optimization. This benchmark report is compiled from publicly available industry data and platform studies updated through Q1 2026. Benchmarks represent cross-industry and cross-account averages. Individual account performance will vary based on vertical, budget, creative quality, account structure, and competitive landscape.

silverbackmarketing.com