



Beyond Prime Day:
How to Maximize Year-Round
Returns from Amazon

Introduction

When we think of commerce, Amazon is usually top of mind. Over the last two decades, the online retailer has become a trailblazer for frictionless commerce and customer satisfaction, bringing together audiences, media and storefronts under one roof.



The Emergence of Invisible Commerce

Commerce used to mean driving to a store, browsing aisles, a good memory for family brand preferences, checking out and traveling home. Amazon has replaced all of this with the click of a 'buy again' button.

Why does this matter? Because with that button Amazon is streamlining the path to repeat purchase for consumers, removing friction and saving brands valuable ad dollars on continued retargeting campaigns.

Cascading Costs of Convenience

As consumers we have more convenience than ever – curbside pickup, local delivery, and home delivery are all now commonly available – yet these extra services do not lead to a material growth in sales volumes for most brands.

The costs of shopping have begun to shift from consumer to retailer, with Amazon shopping the aisle and performing the in-store transaction to fulfill the order.

In turn, the cost of managing the digital shelf and advertising has shifted from retailer to brands. Brands are now responsible for Retail Media, the content in Product Pages and Brand Stores, and even responding to reviews.

The Challenge for Brands

Navigating this vast network effectively can be a challenge. Whilst many brands generate healthy commerce returns, it's hard to keep up with the almost constant evolution of Amazon's wider business and the intricacies of their Retail Media Network (RMN).

But to win on Amazon, brands must adopt an 'always on' mentality and think beyond the tentpole events like Prime Day.

Following are five key areas we recommend brands focus on.

Audience Research: Building Audiences with AMC (Amazon Marketing Cloud)

*Audience research is the
bedrock of any successful
commerce campaign.*

The best research will provide rich and textured insights, delving deep into why, how, and where customers shop, exploring motivators, detractors, life moments, media consumption, the types of products they buy, search behaviors, and average spend.

To maximize the potential of the vast audiences available across all of Amazon, we've worked with Amazon to provide brands with bespoke access to Amazon Marketing Cloud (AMC), helping them to target customers with precision and provide personalized content and experiences.

In addition, we can enhance the audience data and reach further by ingesting brands' first-party data into Amazon's clean room – a secure environment where multiple parties can gain insights from sensitive data without compromising its confidentiality or integrity.

The upshot is a greater level of granularity; retail data often includes useful extra context, competitive insight, and a range of attributes that are helpful for planning and strategy.

We combine these Amazon techniques with a tried and tested framework for audience creation:

Get a handle on audience behaviors:

Define audience media consumption and interaction patterns, their buyer behaviors and buying cycles.

Establish KPI clarity:

Be as specific as possible about your KPIs and the commercial rationale that underpins them. This will shape the composition of your audience, which influences channel mix and creative content for engagement.

Establish a strategic baseline:

To build an efficient, agile commerce program that maximizes ROI, it's vital to establish a clear baseline from which to direct engagement strategies. Often when we help brands with their campaigns, we start by asking some basic questions such as what they are buying, what they are planning, which media partners they are working with, what success metrics they have in place, what performance statistics they hold, and the range and composition of their first-party data.

Optimize and re-optimize audiences:

When it comes to building customer audiences for commerce the era of 'set it and forget it' is over. There are too many variables in the customer journey, audience behaviors are changing too often, and there are too many options for adjusting engagement across each channel. If you haven't rebuilt your audiences in the last three months, they may well be out of date, and your competitors may well have done so.

Commerce Content that Delights Customers

Once an audience has been identified and traffic is hitting a brand's retail properties (namely Product Pages and Brand Stores), *the goal shifts to converting that consumer* with compelling commerce content.

Product Pages and Brand Stores provide brands with an opportunity to solve customer problems and tell their unique stories in a high traffic area. Many brands get significantly more traffic on their Amazon Product Pages than on their own brand.com, and therefore need to make sure that they're telling their most compelling story, and keeping ahead of consumer questions, as they design a bite-sized product narrative that will be seen by, and influence the conversion of, millions of consumers. The most successful brands take great care to maximize these areas:

Design best-in-class assets: Clear, high-quality images that give consumers the ability to click 'Buy Now' with confidence. These images should feature lifestyle imagery that inspires usage of the product, and ensures the consumer understands the product completely.

Images as infographics: People rarely read a Product Page in its entirety. Images should include brief text that helps shoppers understand what they're looking at and why the product is particularly good at delivering on the brand proposition. Consumers should walk away from the images knowing exactly why they should want this product over others.

Consistency: Images should be similar in style and design, helping to establish a cohesive brand identity.

A+ Content: One of the most important components of a Product Page is the A+ Content. This is where Amazon

gives brands the most flexibility to tell their story in their way. Brands should be creative, and work to design a compelling, easily digestible A+ Content section that clearly tells the product's why-buys.

Retail SEO: SEO still plays a pivotal part in surfacing products on Amazon, and successful brands incorporate these principles everywhere they can on Product Pages. Even minor changes in what keywords are featured can help a brand move upwards in the critical, and free, organic rankings.

Keep content fresh: Regularly updating images to capture new versions (or alternative uses) of products is a great practice to ensure customers are well informed about what they're buying. Brands should aim for 3 to 4 updates per year, also considering cultural shifts and changing attitudes.

Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO): It's not enough to create content that looks and sounds good – great content is informed by data and technology. Heatmaps and panel testing offer tangible insights about the way people interact with Product Page content, and this enables brands to test, refine and iterate content effectively.

Amazon also offers a tool called 'Manage Your Experiments' in all brand-registered Vendor and Seller Central accounts, which enables brands to perform conversion rate A/B split testing on Product Page content.

The Power of Product Communities

Reviews form part of Amazon's Product Page content, and crucially inform ranking, so they call for special attention from brands and their agencies.

A staggering 43% of US consumers have written a product review in the last 30 days, and more than half (53%) are using reviews to provide brands with constructive advice, from product suggestions to new product uses and product enhancements, or advice to other consumers on how to best use the product.

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It is crucial to actively monitor reviews and keep track of trends, because reviews can be *used to optimize product content and improve future products.*

If a product's ratings are trending down, it serves as an advance warning of a potential issue. Automated solutions can help brands check their average review rating and track progress over time – saving hours of manual collation.

If a brand isn't leveraging these voices for product innovation, they can be assured that their most successful Amazon competitors are; brands not listening to feedback stand to lose out as a result.

Amazon Live and Shop the Show

Keen to replicate the success of live shopping seen in APAC, Amazon has invested heavily in *Amazon Live* (available in the US, India and Japan), where consumers can ‘shop live alongside celebrities, influencers, and experts.’

Livestream commerce is a new kind of content altogether, and while this channel is currently small compared to Amazon's other buying outlets, it will continue to grow, and brands would do well to stay up to date with its benefits:

Drives engagement through exclusivity: Product drops and new releases excel when launched via live shopping events.

Moves metrics throughout the funnel: Monthly shoppable livestreams enhance brand value, increase awareness and affinity, and offer purchase opportunities.

Generates valuable, authentic content: Livestream videos can be repurposed into ads, social posts, and longer YouTube content, boosting brand engagement through authenticity.

Provides customer insights: Livestream interactions and purchases likely come from customers already connected to your brand, which can help to build a picture of your best customers.

Breaks into the social zone: Livestream commerce lets brands use creators and social platforms as marketing channels and virtual shops.



Retail Media: Not Just for Endemic Brands

Amazon Ads has been a trailblazer for Retail Media Networks – and is a leader in providing transparent measurement, accountability and transparency across Amazon's advertising properties.

Amazon's RMN is attracting advertisers that haven't traditionally thought of Amazon as a primary channel.

In fact, one of the fastest growing categories for Amazon Ads is non-endemic brands. These are brands that produce products Amazon doesn't sell, such as auto manufacturers; that sell services instead of goods, such as hotel companies; or sell products through their own channels, such as luxury fashion companies.

There are *many reasons* why brands are finding Amazon Ads to be a *business driver*, all tying back to *the ad products Amazon has been developing*:

The upper-funnel campaign explosion: Amazon now owns an array of content properties, including Prime Video, Twitch, Amazon Music and Amazon Freevee. By gathering data from these users, Amazon can serve highly relevant ads based on their content preferences and purchase behaviors and deliver greater reach for brands conducting upper-funnel campaigns.

Tapping into retail data: Using Amazon's retail data, brands can discover new relevant connections to the products they wish to sell, anticipate a customer's needs, and target those consumers with relevant content. Non-endemic brands can use this data to serve ads which can instead take the customer to the brands' own websites. As an example, a health food company may want to target consumers that have purchased other health foods, workout clothing, weight loss books, and more.

Defeating the cookie: Whilst the diminishing power of third-party cookies is making it harder for brands to target audiences precisely in some areas, utilizing Amazon Ads allows brands to retain the fine-tuned targeting they are used to. Amazon's data is their own first-party data and can be used to ensure targeting across the open web.

Cultural tent-pole events: While this paper focuses on the "always-on" approach, non-endemic brands should consider partnering with Amazon for external tent-pole events like the Super Bowl. Amazon's platform offers a unique opportunity to tap into family togetherness, as viewers increasingly watch on Amazon devices and stock up on products. Non-endemics can leverage this by promoting their products and services in a way that complements the event's theme. For example, a travel company could offer family vacation packages, emphasizing the importance of togetherness beyond just the Super Bowl weekend.

The Year-Round Approach



While Prime Day presents a significant opportunity for brands on Amazon, a comprehensive, *year-round strategy* is essential for sustained success.

By leveraging Amazon's vast network, conducting in-depth audience research, optimizing product content, engaging with product communities, and tapping into Amazon's Retail Media Network, brands stand to maximize their returns beyond marquee events.

The *key to winning* on Amazon lies in maintaining an '*always on*' approach, continuously refining strategies, and staying agile in a space that is continually on the move.



It's critical to treat Amazon with the uniqueness it deserves. We may think of Amazon as a Retailer, but it's also a huge and growing advertising partner for endemic and non-endemic brands, and an increasingly pervasive entertainment destination. It's not just the audience numbers that are vast, it's the audience *types*, making it suitable for year-round campaigns that focus on brand building right through to bottom of funnel sales enablement.



About IPG Commerce

IPG Commerce, part of Interpublic (NYSE: IPG) (www.interpublic.com), is a global team of more than 1,000 visionaries, makers, designers, and unicorns, rewriting the commerce playbook to help leading brands around the world win in commerce and drive sustainable growth and profits. Its universal framework for Total Commerce is designed for the modern brand, and at its core it comprises four elements: Creative Commerce, Unified Commerce, Personal Commerce and Connected Commerce.

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About KINESSO Commerce

KINESSO Commerce is the dedicated Commerce unit that sits within KINESSO of IPG Mediabrands. It specializes in Retail Media, including strategic planning, consultancy and activation both on and off retailer websites and marketplaces. In addition, in our larger markets, we provide supporting services such as retail content creation, forecasting and profitability analysis. Through our parent agency, KINESSO, we also offer a full suite of performance services such as paid search, paid social (including social commerce) and SEO.

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