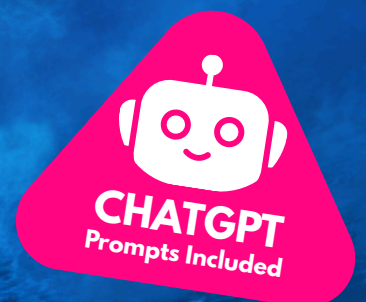


THE SME
MARKETING GUY



THE GOOGLE MASTER

MAKE GOOGLE ADS WORK **HARDER**





Quick Intro...

Google Performance Max is changing the way small businesses advertise. No more juggling dozens of campaigns... just one smart system reaching your customers across Search, YouTube, Maps, and beyond. But success doesn't happen by chance. This Playbook gives UK entrepreneurs and SMEs the clarity, tools, and strategies to make Performance Max work for them. Whether you're looking to drive sales, leads, or awareness, you'll learn how to take control and get real results.

The 3 Things You'll Learn...

01 Build Smarter Campaigns, Not Bigger Budgets



Learn how to create simple, focused campaigns that get better results without wasting money... by setting clear goals, using the right tracking, and letting automation work smarter, not harder, for your business.

02 Create Ads That Actually Convert



Discover how to write headlines, descriptions, and create visuals that grab attention and drive action—making your business stand out on Google Search, YouTube, and across every part of the Google ecosystem.

03 Master Automation Without Losing Control



You'll learn how to let Google's AI do the heavy lifting while still setting smart limits, keeping your budget safe, and fine-tuning your campaigns for long-term growth and consistent results.



Performance Max helps UK
small businesses reach
more customers across
Google with one powerful,
automated campaign

INTRODUCTION – ONE CAMPAIGN, EVERY CUSTOMER

What if you could run one simple ad campaign and reach your customers on Google Search, YouTube, Gmail, Maps, and even the Discover feed... all at the same time? No more juggling a dozen separate campaigns. Just one powerful campaign, working round the clock to find your next customer.

That's exactly what Google's Performance Max (PMax) campaigns do. And this eBook is here to help you master them, step by step.

Whether you're a local coffee shop, a growing eCommerce brand, or a regional service provider, Performance Max can help you do more with less, and this book will show you how.

Here's what makes Performance Max so powerful:

1

It puts your business in front of people wherever they are on Google's platforms.

2

It uses Google's smart automation to find your ideal customers.

3

It helps you get better results from your budget... whether you want more sales, more leads, or more awareness.

But automation alone doesn't guarantee success. Without clear goals, strong creative, and well-planned audience targeting, Performance Max can waste time and budget.

Many businesses switch it on and hope for the best, only to be disappointed when results fall short.

To make automation work, you need to give it the right foundations:

1

A clear campaign structure that supports your business goals.

2

Ad copy and visuals that speak to your audience's needs.

3

Audience signals that help Google find your ideal customers.

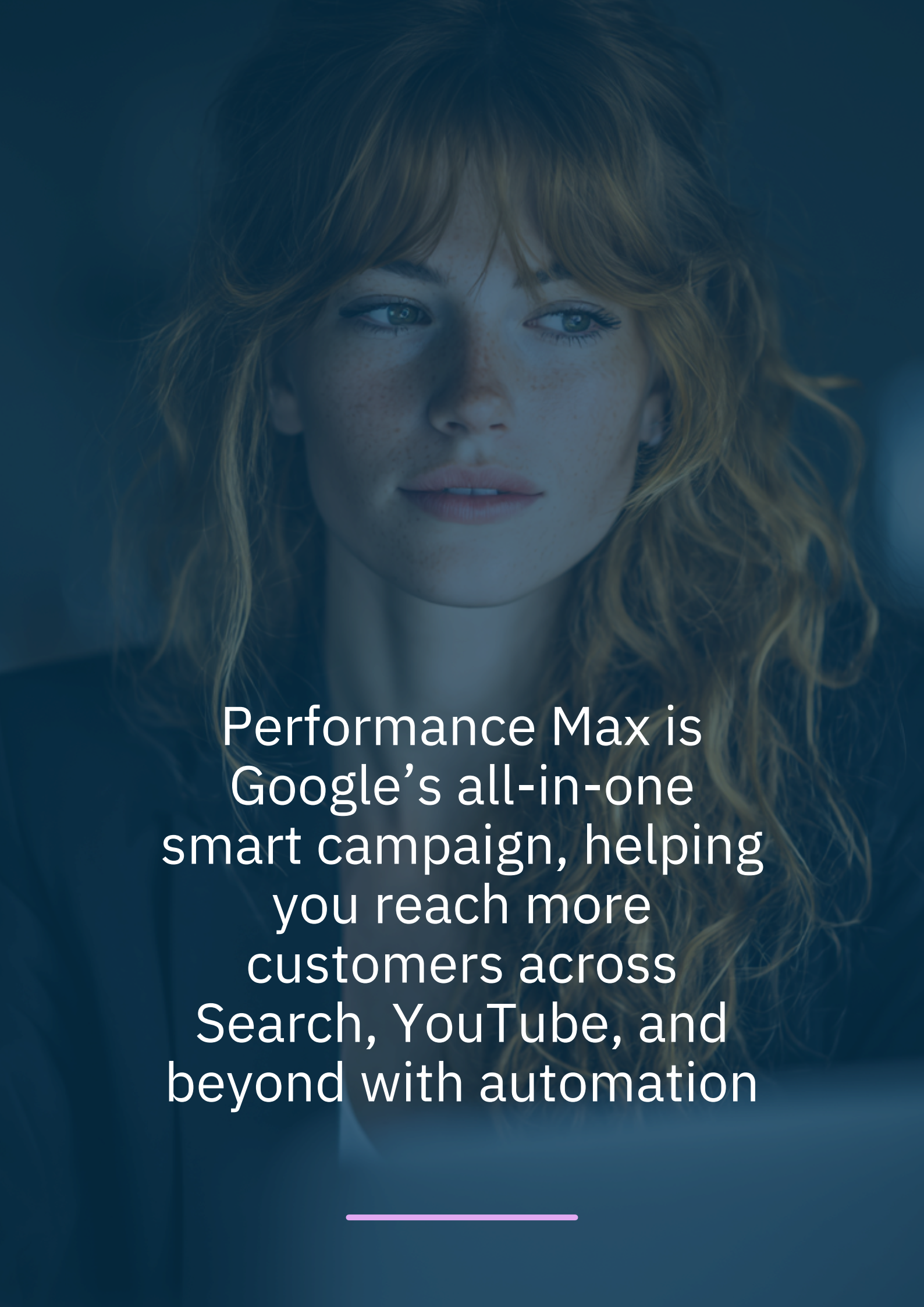
4

Regular reviews and adjustments to keep performance improving.

When used correctly, Performance Max can drive powerful results. Small businesses worldwide are seeing stronger conversion rates and better returns, but only when they combine smart strategy with automation.



Automation amplifies what you put in... if your goals, ads, and audience signals are clear, Performance Max will multiply your results; if they're weak, it will multiply your mistakes.



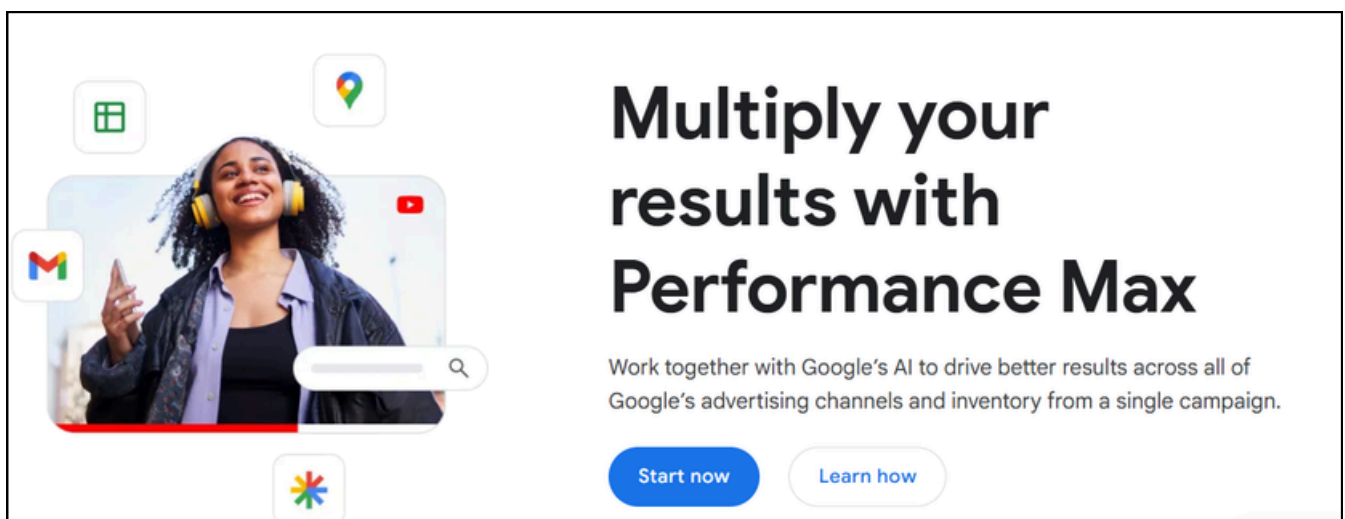
Performance Max is
Google's all-in-one
smart campaign, helping
you reach more
customers across
Search, YouTube, and
beyond with automation

DEMYSTIFYING PERFORMANCE MAX CAMPAIGNS

What is Performance Max and Why Does It Matter?

Performance Max (often called PMax) is Google's all-in-one advertising campaign. Instead of setting up separate ads for Search, YouTube, Display, and Shopping, you run one single campaign that covers them all.

Launched in 2021, PMax was designed to simplify advertising and help businesses reach their customers wherever they are in Google's world, whether browsing Google Maps, scrolling YouTube, reading Gmail, or searching online. The big difference? Automation and reach. PMax uses Google's artificial intelligence to automatically show your ads to the right people, in the right places, at the right time.

A promotional graphic for Performance Max. On the left, a woman with headphones smiles, surrounded by icons for Google Shopping, Maps, Gmail, YouTube, and Search. On the right, the text reads: "Multiply your results with Performance Max". Below this, it says: "Work together with Google's AI to drive better results across all of Google's advertising channels and inventory from a single campaign." At the bottom are two buttons: "Start now" and "Learn how".

Multiply your results with Performance Max

Work together with Google's AI to drive better results across all of Google's advertising channels and inventory from a single campaign.

[Start now](#) [Learn how](#)

For UK small businesses, this means:

Less time juggling separate campaigns.

More places for your ads to appear.

Google's AI working behind the scenes to improve your results.

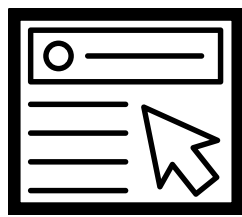


What Makes Performance Max Different?

Most traditional Google campaigns are split into channels:



Search:
Appears when people search on Google.



Display:
Shows banners on partner websites.



YouTube:
Plays video ads across YouTube.



Shopping:
Your products show in Google Shopping.

With PMax, Google combines all these channels into one smart campaign and instead of just bidding on keywords (as you would in a Search campaign), Performance Max focuses on your goals and your customers' behaviours. **Google's AI** uses data about who your ideal customers are, what they're interested in, and what they've done online to decide where and when your ads appear.

You'll work with Asset Groups - collections of headlines, descriptions, images, and videos - that Google mixes and matches across different platforms. This allows the AI to create the best combination of ad elements for each person.



Who Should Use Performance Max?

Performance Max is great for UK businesses who:

- Want to reach people across multiple Google channels.
- Are happy to let automation do some of the optimisation work.
- Have strong visuals and videos, not just text ads.
- Are focused on getting conversions - sales, leads, or bookings.

But it might not be the best choice if:

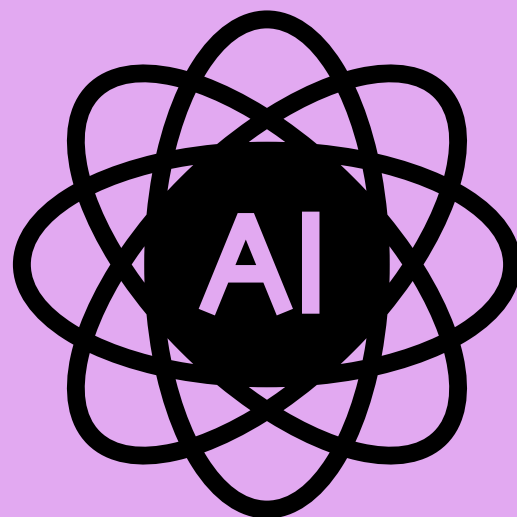
- You need full keyword control (e.g., niche B2B industries).
- Your budget is very limited, making testing difficult.
- You're new to Google Ads and want to learn basics first.


How Performance Max Learns

Give PMax time to learn. It typically takes 2-3 weeks for **Google's AI** to figure out what's working. During this learning phase, you'll see ups and downs in performance... this is normal. Over time, the system will:

- Test your different ads and combinations.
- Find out which audiences respond best.
- Improve your results based on what it learns.

Think of it like giving your ads a training period. Be patient in those first few weeks.



A close-up photograph of a woman with curly hair, wearing a plaid shirt, gently petting a white, fluffy dog. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered in the lower half of the image.

Success with
Performance Max starts
with clear goals, smart
budgets, and strong
creative assets

PLANNING YOUR P-MAX CAMPAIGN

Start With Clear Goals... before you run any Performance Max campaign, you need a clear purpose. Don't just "run ads" - know exactly what you want those ads to achieve. Ask yourself:

1

Do I want more sales on my website?

2

Am I looking to generate leads (enquiries, bookings, sign-ups)?

3

Or do I simply want to build brand awareness in my local area?

Each of these goals needs a different approach. **Google's AI** works best when you give it a single, clear objective... so pick one or two goals and focus your entire campaign on those.

For example:

- For sales, track Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) and revenue.
- For leads, track Cost Per Lead (CPL) and lead quality.
- For awareness, focus on Reach and Impression Share (how often your ads show versus your competitors').



Budget: Give It Room to Breathe

Performance Max needs a proper learning period—typically 6 weeks—to find what works best. That means you’ll need enough budget to let Google test, learn, and improve.

A good starting point:

- Set your daily budget to around 10 times your ideal cost per conversion.
- Add a 20% buffer to allow room for optimisation.

Example: If you want conversions that cost £5 each, aim for a £50/day starting budget.

If your budget is too small, the system won’t learn fast enough—and your results may suffer.

Get Your Creative Assets Ready

PMax campaigns aren’t just about text ads. You’ll need a variety of ad assets ready to go:

Short and long headlines (e.g. 30 and 90 characters)

Clear, engaging descriptions

High-quality images (landscape, square, and portrait formats)

Short videos (ideally 10–30 seconds)

And remember: You don’t need to be a video production company... smartphone videos showing your product or service in action can work brilliantly.



Tracking: Measure What Matters

Before you launch, set up your tracking. Without it, you'll be guessing whether your ads are working.

- **Use Google Tag Manager and set up conversion tracking.**
- **Pick an attribution model... for most small businesses, “Data-Driven” works best if you have enough data, or “Last Click” if you’re just starting out.**
- **Track cross-device activity so you know how people switch between mobiles, tablets, and desktops.**

If you sell products online, keep your product feed up to date with prices, availability, and product details. This ensures your ads always show the correct information.

Be Patient: The First Weeks Are a Learning Phase

Expect some ups and downs in the first month.

- **Weeks 1-2: Google’s AI is learning. Results may be inconsistent.**
- **Weeks 3-4: Performance usually improves and stabilises.**
- **Weeks 5-6: Now you’ll see clearer trends—and can begin refining and scaling your campaign.**

Don’t panic if things seem slow to start. The system gets smarter over time.



Your Campaign Checklist Before Launch

Before you hit launch, make sure these key elements are in place to give your campaign the best possible start.


✓	Clear goals set	✓	Budget planned
✓	Ad assets prepared	✓	Tracking in place
✓	Audience signals ready (coming up...)	✓	Cup of tea in hand

The more care you put into setting clear goals, preparing strong creative, and getting your tracking right, the more your budget will work for you. Remember, Google's automation is powerful, but it's your planning that points it in the right direction.

Get this stage right, and the results will follow.



Start small, learn fast... launch your first PMax campaign with one clear goal and a single set of assets, then build on what works rather than trying to perfect everything from day one.

A woman with long, wavy brown hair is looking down and to the left with a thoughtful expression. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter. The text is centered in the lower half of the image.

Strong headlines, clear
descriptions, and eye-
catching visuals are the
key to making
Performance Max
campaigns work because
great ads are what drive
clicks and sales

CREATING WINNING AD ASSETS

In Performance Max, your ads - called “assets” - are what the system uses to grab your customer’s attention. Google’s AI might decide where and when your ads show, but it’s your words, images, and videos that make someone stop scrolling, click, and buy.

Think of each asset as a building block. Google mixes and matches your headlines, images, and videos to build ads that fit wherever your audience is: a YouTube ad here, a Shopping listing there, and a display banner somewhere else. If your assets are weak, even the smartest AI won’t save your campaign. If your assets are strong, they’ll work across every channel.

How to Build Great Ads for PMax

Great ads start with the basics: clear headlines, engaging descriptions, and visuals that stop people scrolling.

1

Start with headlines. These are often the first thing someone sees. Focus on what your customer gains, not what your product is. Instead of “Award-Winning Gym in York”, try “Feel Fitter in 30 Days.”

2

Write descriptions that expand on your promise: Highlight what makes you different: fast service, local expertise, free delivery. End with a clear call to action: “Book Today” or “Shop Now.”

3

Focus on your visuals: Use clear, high-quality images of your product, your team, your shop etc. Make sure you have a mix of formats: landscape, square, and portrait.

4

Video! Even a simple 15-second phone clip can outperform static images. Keep it short (10–30 seconds), branded (your colours/fonts), and effective without sound (use captions).



Test, Learn, Improve

Don't guess what works... test it. Run different variations of your headlines, descriptions, and images. Give each version at least 2–3 weeks to gather results.

Look at:

- **Click-through rates**
- **Conversion rates**
- **Google's own asset performance ratings ("Low", "Good", "Best")**

Swap out weaker elements and replace them with stronger ideas.

Keep Your Ads Fresh


Refresh your assets regularly, especially for seasonal campaigns like:

- **Christmas sales**
- **Summer holidays**
- **Black Friday offers**
- **Local events**

This keeps your brand feeling current and relevant.



Performance Max ads need strong creative to drive results. Think like a customer: what would make you stop and click?



Audience signals help
Google find your ideal
customers faster, using
your data and interests to
guide its AI in showing your
ads to the right people

NAVIGATING AUDIENCE SIGNALS

Performance Max doesn't target people using keywords alone. Instead, it looks for patterns like who your ideal customers are, what they like, and what they do online. This is where Audience Signals come in.

Think of Audience Signals as clues. You give Google a helpful nudge, saying:

"These are the types of people I think will love my business."

Google's AI takes that information and finds more people just like them across Search, YouTube, Shopping, and beyond. The better your signals, the faster your campaign finds the right audience and the less you waste showing ads to the wrong people.

Start With What You Know

Use your first-party data (the info you already have) to build your audience signals:

Past customers
(from your email lists)

Website visitors
(tracked using Google Tag Manager)

People who started but didn't finish a purchase

You can also layer in Google's built-in audiences:

Interests
(e.g. Fitness, Home Improvement, Business Services)

Life events
(e.g. Moving House, Starting a Business)

In-market activity
(e.g. Shopping for new mobile phone covers etc)

Example: A local florist could target "People moving home" & "In-market for home décor" to reach new homeowners likely to buy flowers.



Segment Your Audience Signals

Rather than lumping everyone together, create separate asset groups for your different customer types. For example:

- **First-time buyers**
- **Repeat customers**
- **People interested in a specific product category**

This helps **Google's AI** learn faster and improves your results.

Example: A home furnishings store ran separate signals for sofa buyers, lighting shoppers, and garden furniture browsers—resulting in a 47% conversion boost.

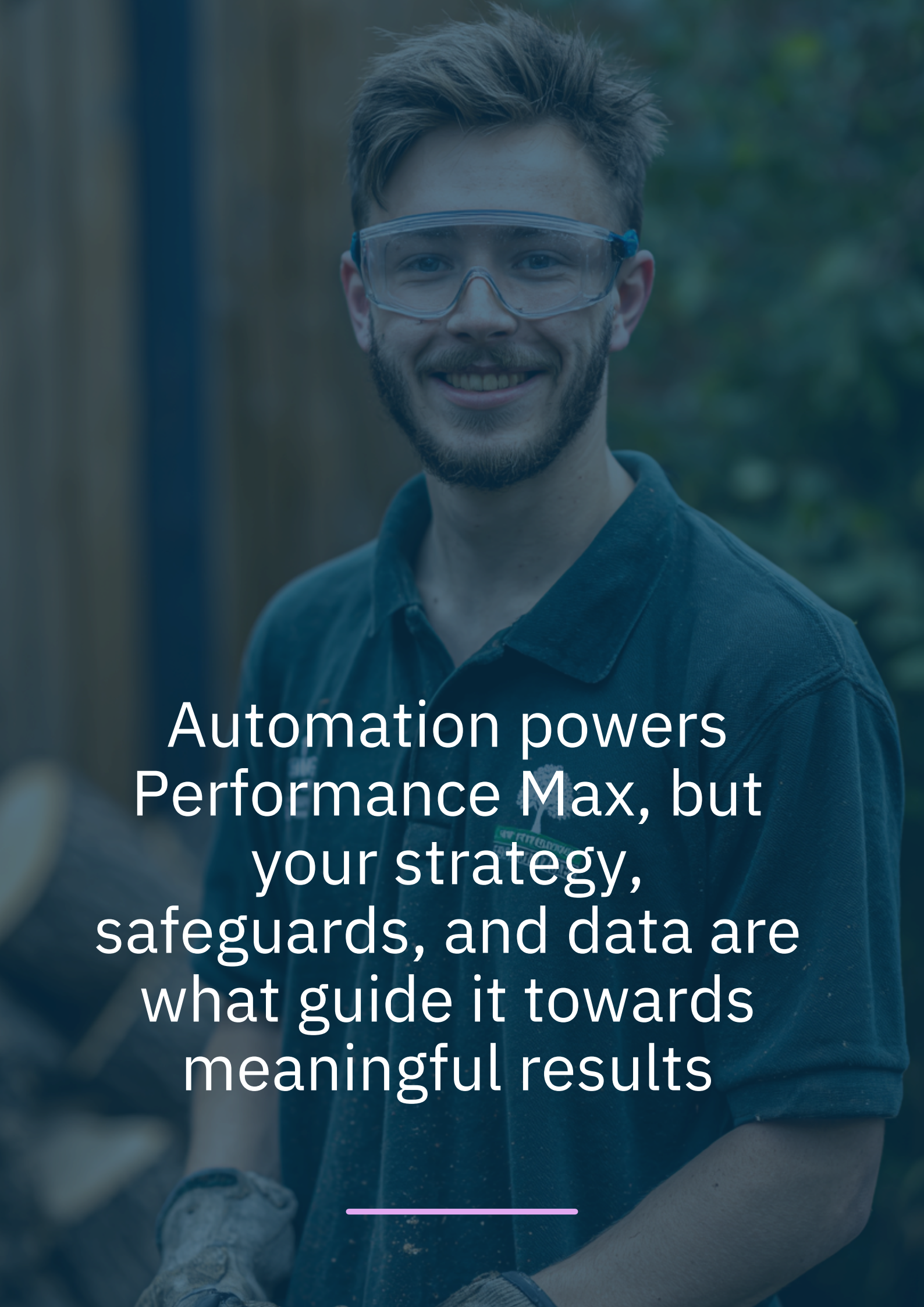
Measure and Refine

Check in regularly to see how your audience signals are performing:

- **Conversion rate: Are the people you're reaching actually buying or enquiring?**
- **Cost per acquisition (CPA): Are you getting new customers at a sustainable cost?**
- **Return on ad spend (ROAS): Is your campaign paying off?**

If something isn't working, adjust it. Test different audience combinations and remove any that aren't performing.

Also, always follow UK data rules by using permission-based, anonymised data, avoiding sensitive targeting, and making opt-outs easy... good targeting should feel helpful, not intrusive.

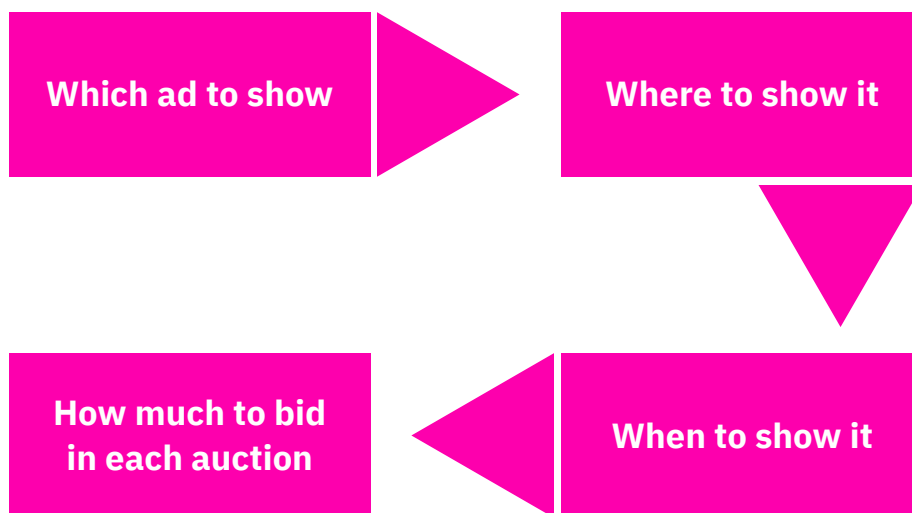


Automation powers
Performance Max, but
your strategy,
safeguards, and data are
what guide it towards
meaningful results

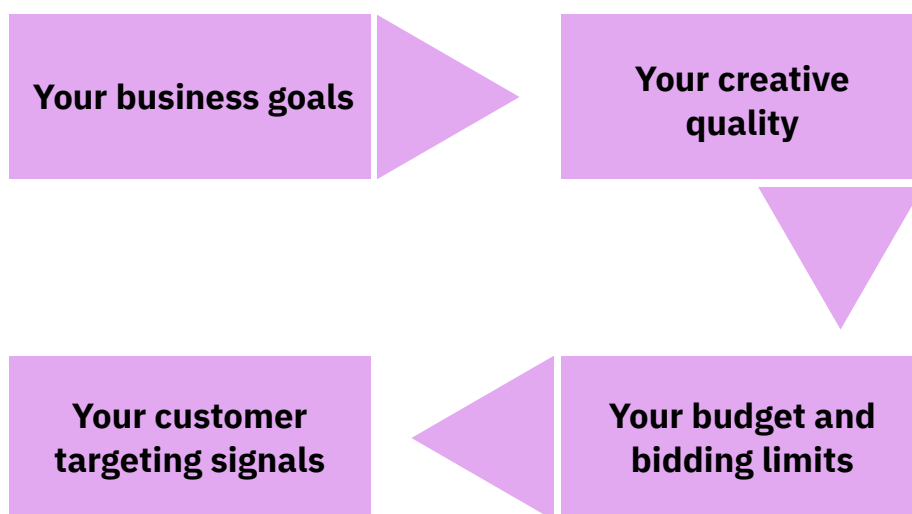
LEVERAGING AUTOMATION TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Automation is your ally, not your replacement! Performance Max is powered by automation, but smart businesses know it's not about setting it and forgetting it.

Instead, it's about using automation alongside your strategy to save time, reach more people, and improve your results. **Google's AI** handles the complex stuff:



But you're still very much in control of the big picture:





Watch for Warning Signs

Automation works most of the time, but keep an eye out for:

- **Sudden drops in conversions or leads**
- **Unexpected spikes in costs**
- **Ads showing in the wrong places or to irrelevant audiences**

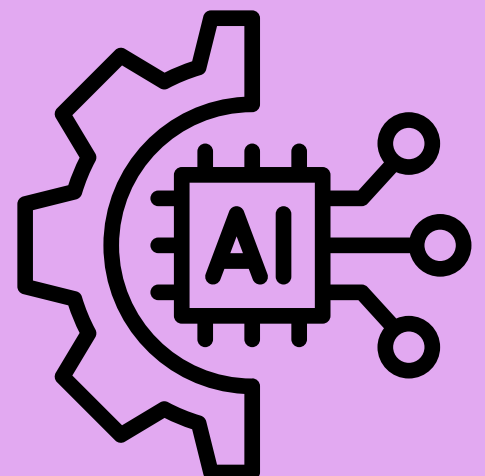
If something looks off, pause, review your settings, and adjust.

Example: A retailer saw their ad costs double during a seasonal surge they hadn't prepared for. By spotting the spike early, they paused the campaign, adjusted their budget, and avoided wasting money.


Make Automation Smarter With Your Data

Backlinks (links from other websites) help Google trust your business. You can build local backlinks by:

- **Joining your local Chamber of Commerce or business networks.**
- **Sponsoring local events or charity fundraisers.**
- **Getting featured in local online magazines or news sites.**
- **Partnering with nearby businesses and exchanging links.**



The more your business is mentioned in local sources, the more trusted your website becomes.

A photograph of two young women with long, wavy hair, wearing brown aprons over dark shirts. They are standing side-by-side, looking towards the camera with slight smiles. The image has a dark blue overlay. The text is centered over the image.

Successful Performance
Max campaigns grow by first
building steady results, then
scaling gradually while
continuously testing and
improving

OPTIMISING AND SCALING CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE

The number one rule is that you should always start with steady results before you scale. Before you try to grow your campaigns, make sure they're working well on a small scale.

Look for steady results over at least 30 days:

- **Your conversion rate is stable or improving.**
- **Your ROAS (return on ad spend) is healthy.**
- **Your cost per acquisition (CPA) is sustainable.**
- **Your best-performing ads and audiences are clear.**

Rushing to scale too early is one of the biggest mistakes small businesses make.

Build a Simple Optimisation Routine

Get into the habit of reviewing your Performance Max campaigns regularly. Start weekly, then move to fortnightly once things settle. Look at:



Which headlines, images, and videos are working best?



Which audience signals are converting?



What days, times, or devices drive the most results?



Your overall costs versus sales or leads.

Example: A UK homeware brand noticed more conversions on Sundays and evenings. By adjusting their ad schedule, they boosted sales by 30% without increasing their spend.



Make Smart Adjustments

As you spot trends, fine-tune your campaigns:

- **Pause or swap out weaker headlines and images.**
- **Increase budget on strong-performing asset groups.**
- **Test higher-value bidding strategies for your best products or services.**
- **Adjust ROAS targets for high-margin items.**

Don't change everything at once... test one adjustment at a time and watch how it affects performance.

How to Scale Without Breaking Your Results


When your campaign is performing well, scale slowly and steadily.

- **Increase your daily budget by no more than 20% at a time.**
- **Wait 7–10 days before making further changes.**
- **If performance holds steady, increase again.**

If results drop, reduce your budget to the previous level and check what changed.

Track your results across all Google channels (Search, YouTube, Shopping, Display) to see where your budget is delivering the best return.





The future of Performance
Max belongs to
businesses that combine
smart automation with
fresh creative, clear goals,
and a mindset of
continuous learning

YOUR PERFORMANCE MAX JOURNEY AHEAD

Performance Max isn't just a new campaign type, it's the future of how Google Ads works. As Google phases out old tracking methods and adds more AI-powered tools, automation will only get smarter.

Soon, you'll see:

- **Better audience targeting without relying on cookies.**
- **Deeper insights from Google Analytics 4.**
- **Smarter bidding and optimisation happening in real time.**
- **More personalised ad experiences that still respect privacy rules.**

For small businesses, this means you can compete on a bigger stage, without needing an in-house marketing team or expensive agency.

How to Keep Your Competitive Edge

Want to stay ahead? Keep improving in three key areas:

1

Keep your ads fresh.

Brands that update their creative every month see stronger engagement and conversion rates.

2

Embrace automation, but stay in control.

Set clear rules and keep checking your results, rather than letting AI run wild.

3

Make decisions based on data, not guesswork.

Look at your numbers regularly. What's working? What's wasting money? Adjust your strategy based on real-world results.



Part 1...

Want to turn this Playbook into practical use? (and ask AI to help cheat)

1) Open ChatGPT and start a new chat.

2) Upload this Playbook by hitting the + button.

4) Copy and paste the below into the dialogue box (editing the relevant part)...

“You are my digital marketing and Google specialist. First and foremost scan my website: [enter url] to understand what I do, my brand and my tone. I’ve attached the playbook “Google Performance Max Campaigns” - please ensure you follow it’s theory, guidance and advice.”

followed by any of the below prompts (editing the relevant parts)...

Prompts To Build A Smarter Campaign

- “Write 5 headline variations (30 characters or less) for my [business type/product/service] that focus on customer benefits, not features.”
- “Create 3 long headlines (up to 90 characters) for my Google Ads that highlight [unique selling point] and encourage action.”
- “Draft 3 descriptions (up to 90 characters) for my [product/service] that end with a clear call to action.”
- “Suggest engaging video ad scripts under 20 seconds for my [business/product].”

Prompts For Audience Signals

- “Help me create 3 audience signal groups for a [business type] targeting [location]. Include past customers, interests, and in-market behaviours.”
- “List possible Google affinity and in-market audiences that would suit a [product/service] business.”
- “Segment my audience into first-time buyers, repeat buyers, and people browsing [product category], and suggest ad angles for each.”



Part 2...

Prompts For Budgeting & Tracking

- “If my goal is leads at £10 each, what daily budget should I start with for a Performance Max campaign?”
- “Help me set up a simple conversion tracking plan for [website URL] using Google Tag Manager.”
- “Write a checklist to review weekly for my Performance Max campaign to spot early warning signs.”

Prompts For Optimisation

- “Suggest 3 tests I can run on my PMax assets to improve click-through rate.”
- “Analyse this list of ad headlines and descriptions [paste text] and recommend which to keep, cut, or rewrite.”
- “Give me seasonal ad ideas for [business type] during [holiday/event].”

Website Audit Prompts

(PMax campaigns only convert well if the landing page is strong. These prompts help entrepreneurs audit their own sites.)

- “Audit my website [insert URL] for speed, mobile-friendliness, and clarity of call-to-action.”
- “Check if my product pages are optimised for conversions: do they have clear CTAs, trust signals, and easy checkout?”
- “Review my homepage copy and suggest 3 ways to make it more benefit-driven and aligned with my ad messaging.”
- “Suggest quick SEO and user experience improvements for my [website URL] to help my Google Ads perform better.”

Become a ChatGPT Prompt Master

In this Playbook, entrepreneurs learn how to create prompts that save time, spark ideas, and sharpen results. From marketing posts to admin tasks, you’ll master practical ways to use AI daily and build a reusable prompt library to streamline their business... Available NOW in the Vault.





The Mindset That Wins

There's no perfect campaign. Even the best marketers constantly test, learn, and improve. Performance Max rewards those who:

- **Stay curious**
- **Keep testing**
- **Don't panic when results dip**
- **Take time to understand what's really working**

Your job isn't to beat the algorithm... it's to work with it and help it learn what makes your business special.

You've got this!

The power to grow your business is already in your hands, but power means nothing without action. Set your goals like you mean it, build ads that stop people in their tracks, and trust your ability to learn, adapt, and win.

Google's AI is ready. Your customers are waiting. Now stop overthinking, start creating, and go claim the results your business deserves. No one's going to do it for you... this is your move. Get up, get focused, and make it happen!



Performance Max multiplies what you put in... set clear goals, create strong ads, and guide automation with smart data. Own your strategy and keep refining to unlock real growth.

WHO IS THE SME MARKETING GUY?

The SME Marketing Guy is built around a simple idea: marketing should be accessible, practical, and actually make a difference to your business.

I'm Ed Carney, a commercially focused marketer with over 25 years' experience working within fast-paced, high-growth businesses, partnering with senior teams to drive real commercial results. I've built and delivered digital marketing, PR, brand propositions and strategic marketing plans, alongside CRM systems and AI-led automation, generating over £1m in annual revenue impact and achieving 400%+ ROI.

Everything here is based on real-world delivery, turning complex ideas into clear, practical marketing that generates enquiries, strengthens your pipeline, and supports growth.

The SME Marketing Guy is my way of making that experience available to small businesses without the cost, complexity, or commitment of a traditional agency. You can take the strategies for free and apply them yourself, or work with me directly to put them into action in a way that fits your business and your budget.



If you'd like help putting any of this into action within your business, The SME Marketing Guy can work with you directly to implement it in a way that's practical, focused, and aligned to your goals.

Whether you need support refining the approach, prioritising what to do first, or getting everything set up and moving, you don't have to figure it out alone.

If that sounds useful, get in touch and we can have a straightforward conversation about how to move things forward.

DISCLAIMER

This playbook has been created by The SME Marketing Guy to provide small businesses with clear, practical marketing guidance. Every effort has been made to ensure the content is accurate, relevant, and useful at the time of publishing.

Marketing is always evolving, and results will vary depending on your business, market, and how the strategies are applied. This guide is designed to offer proven, real-world insights, but should be used as a practical resource rather than a substitute for tailored advice.

The SME Marketing Guy is not liable for any decisions made based on this content or for any outcomes resulting from its use. You are encouraged to adapt the ideas and approaches to suit your specific goals and circumstances.

If you'd like support putting any of this into action, you can get in touch directly to discuss your business and how it can be applied.