Optimizing AI Max for Search With the Help of Scripts

SMX Advanced Berlin 2026



Nils Rooijmans

Google Ads Automater

AI Max maximizes... what?



Today’s agenda

1) What is AI Max and it’s features?
2) What I like about AI Max
3) What I do NOT like about AI Max
4) Tasks involved in testing and optimizing AI Max
5) How I use scripts to reduce task load
6) Should you test it?
7) How to test it



What AI Max is

"A suite of targeting and creative features inside Search campaigns"



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15910187?hl=en

Google's promise

"automatically refining your targeting and creative delivery to drive more value for your business"





More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15910187?hl=en

AI Overviews and AI Mode

Traditional keywords don't reach this new demand

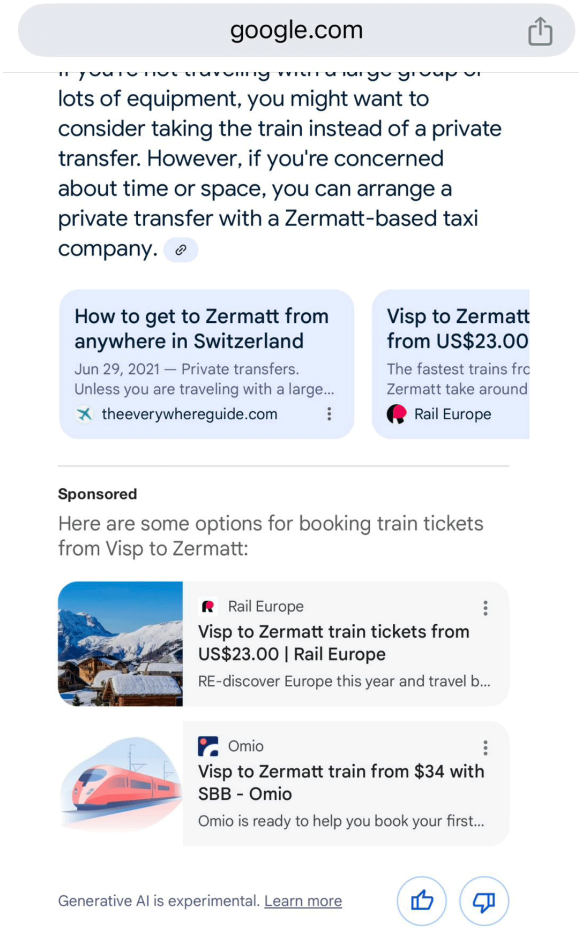
AI Max is *one* route into new Search Experiences

Other eligible targeting options also exist:

- Broad match keywords
- Shopping
- Performance Max

NOTE: AI Max reporting does not identify clicks from AI Overviews / AI Mode

"How do I quickly get from Visp to Zermatt?"



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/16297775?hl=en

Synthetic keyword, anyone?

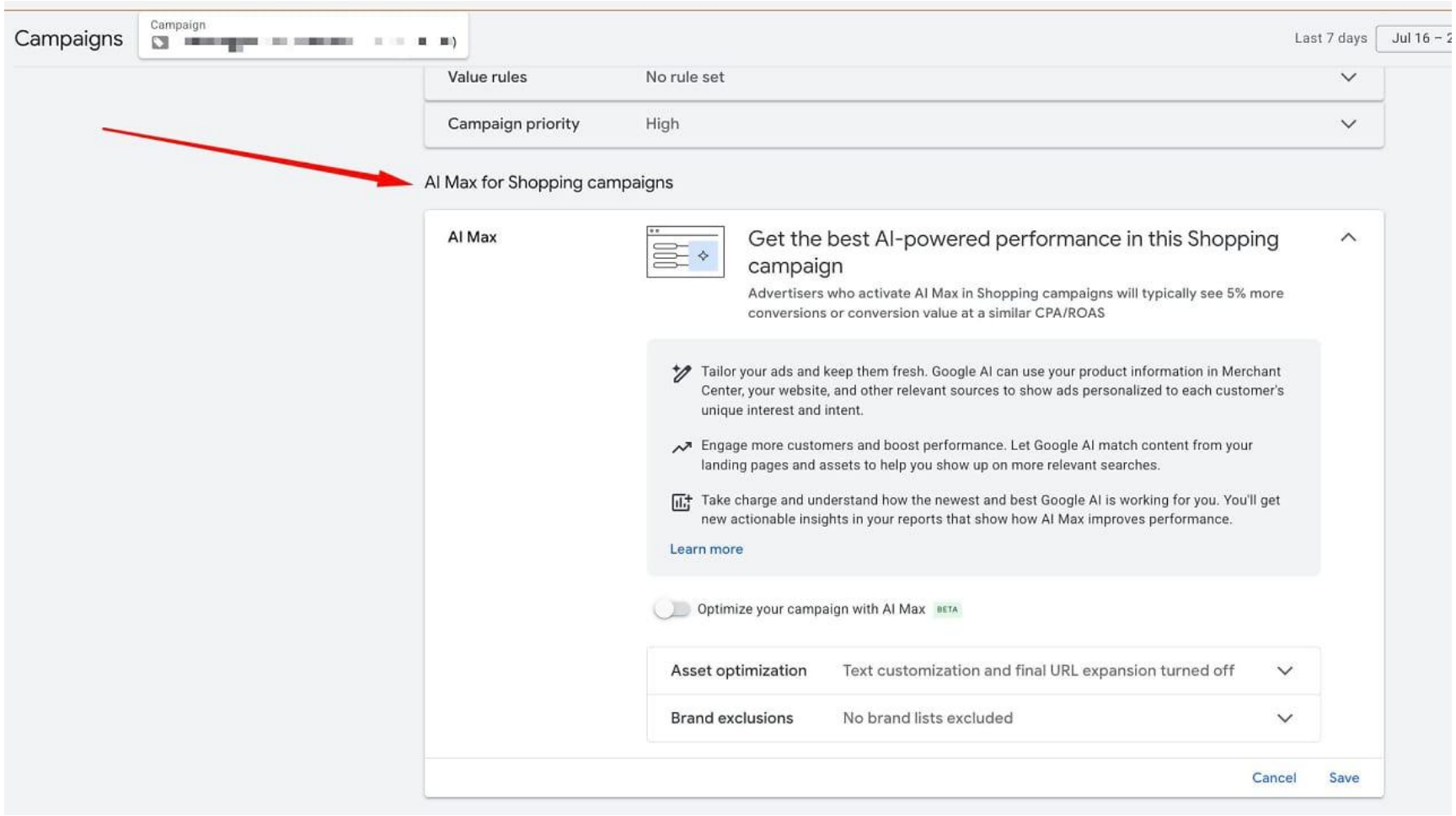
Was there, now gone. Will be back?

{synthetic_keyword}	For eligible campaigns (those using AI Max for Search Ads), the returned value will be similar to a keyword that could match the query. For example: "extra large mens hats" could be the value when a user searches for "find good hats for men with large heads". You can define a default value, using the syntax "{synthetic_keyword:default-value}". If it's impossible to generate a synthetic keyword, either because the query is too ambiguous or the campaign is not eligible, {synthetic_keyword} will return the "default-value", or, if "default-value" is not specified, {synthetic_keyword} will return the same as {keyword} would return, which could be a blank value.

More details: link to archived versin on Wayback machine

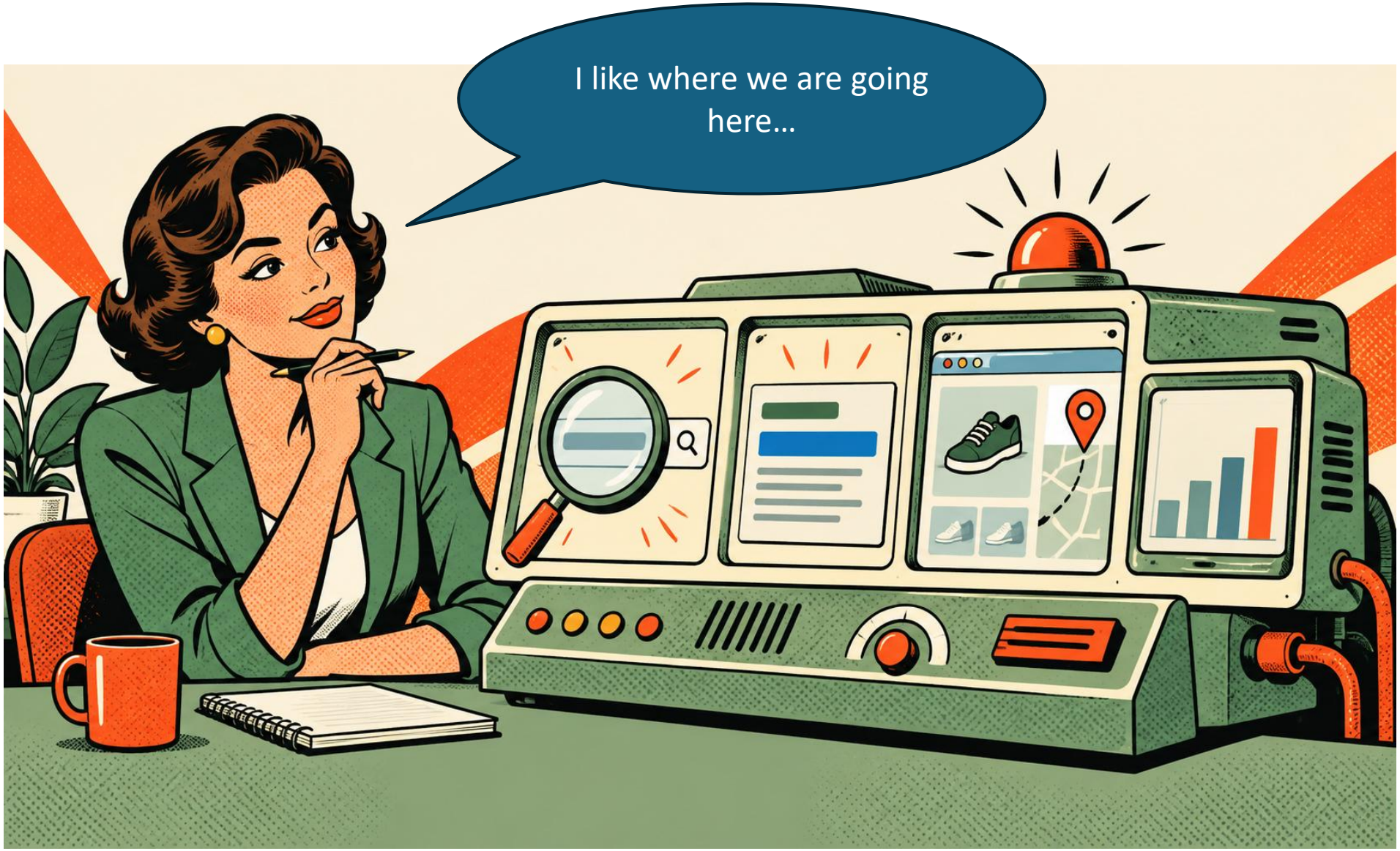
AI Max is expanding to Shopping

The automation story is getting broader



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/17091277?hl=en

Current AI Max features in Search



Text customization

Google can auto-generate headlines and descriptions

Asset optimization



Text customization

Match your ad copy to what people are searching for with new headlines and descriptions using your website and assets. Learn more about text customization

Add text guidelines | View asset examples

Blue wall paint delivery

Sponsored result

Beahm's
https://www.beahms.com/
Blue Paint Colors | Expert Picks
Make your house a home with our range of painting and decorating essentials.

Blue wall paint delivery

Sponsored result

Beahm's
https://www.beahms.com/
Blue Wall Paint, Next-Day Delivery | Expert Picks
Make your house a home with our range of painting and decorating essentials.

Example of text customization

More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15910187?hl=en

Text guidelines

Term exclusions and instructions for the copy



× Add text guidelines

Text guidelines BETA

Tell Google AI the rules it needs to follow when it creates relevant, on-brand headlines and descriptions for you. Learn more about text guidelines

Copy guidelines from existing campaign

Term exclusions (0/25)

Add word or phrase

For example: Cheap, free shipping, etc. Press Enter after each word or phrase.

Messaging restrictions (0/40)

Example: Don't mention competitor names, such as Acme Corp or Plants 4 You

0 / 300

Example: Don't use specific prices, such as $550 per night or $99 intro offer

0 / 300

Example: Don't use "only" or "just for" language, such as "for high-performance athletes only"

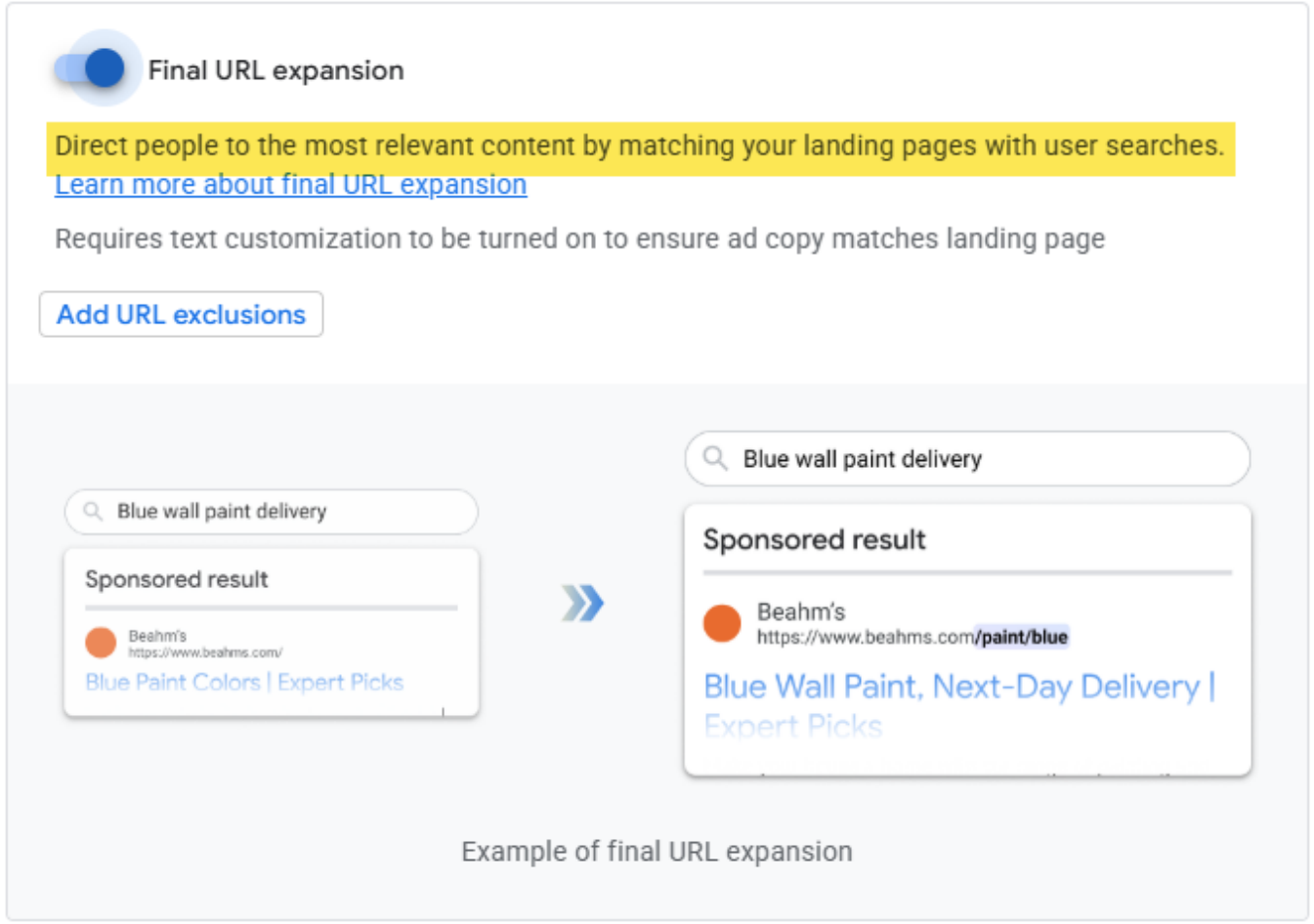
0 / 300

+ Add another restriction

More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

Keywordless matching and Final URL expansion

The query, the ad, and the landing page can all change



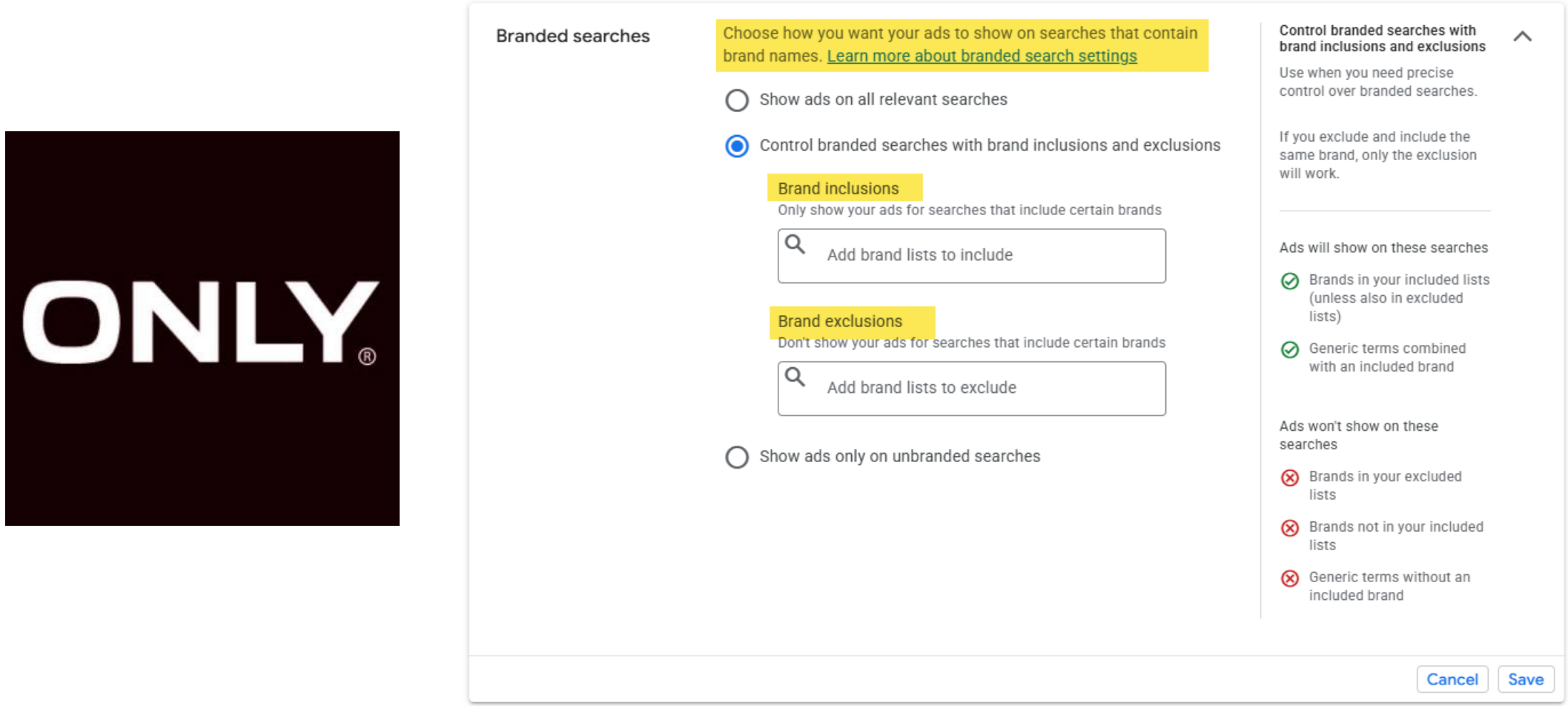
Example of final URL expansion



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15910187?hl=en

Branded search settings

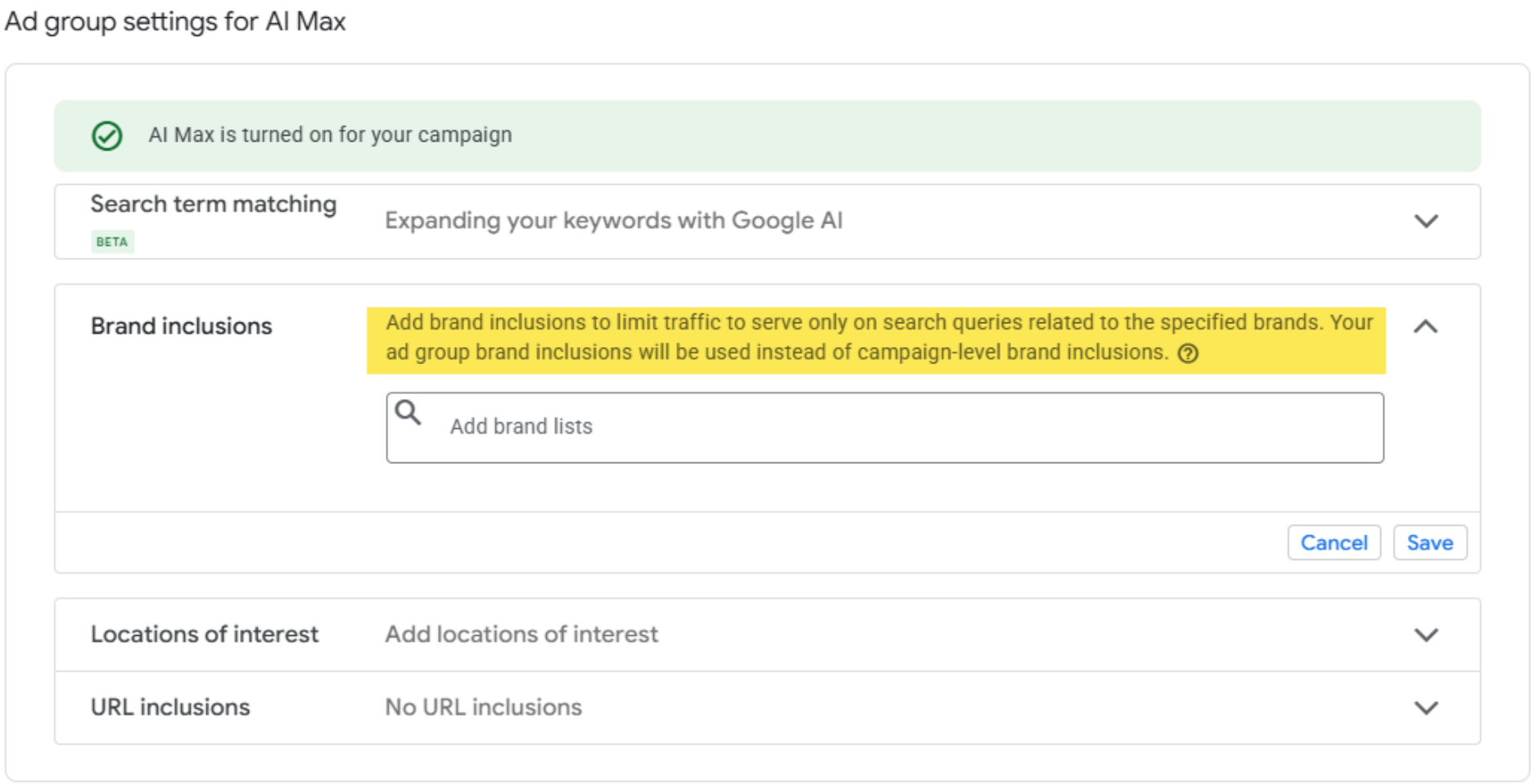
Which brands should your searches include or exclude?



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

Brand inclusions at ad group level

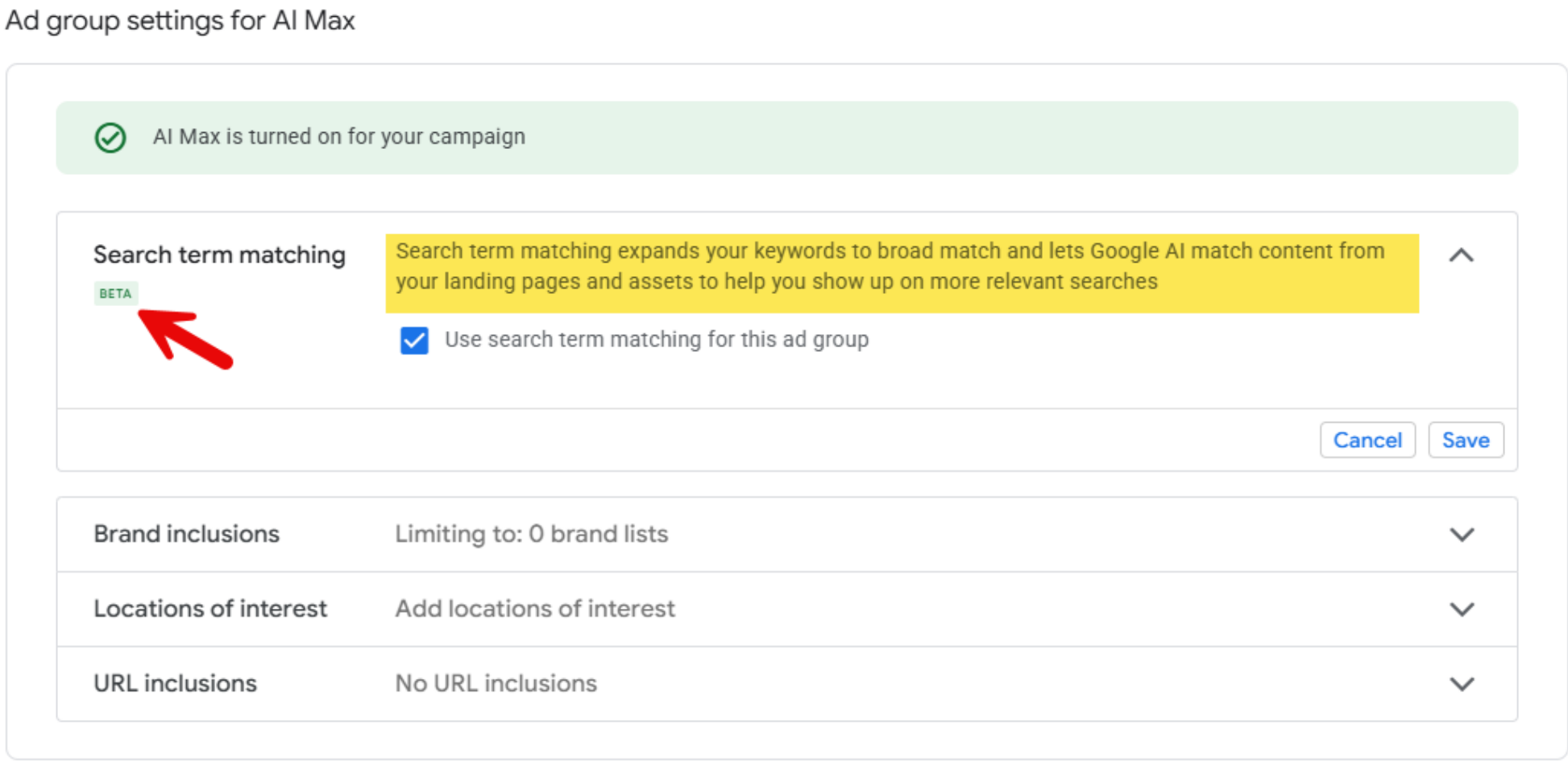
Ad group inclusions take priority over campaign inclusions



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

Search term matching

Broad match expansion plus landing-page and asset signals



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15910187?hl=en

Locations of interest

An ad group control for geographical intent



Ad group settings for AI Max

AI Max is turned on for your campaign

Search term matching BETA	Expanding your keywords with Google AI
Brand inclusions	Limiting to: 0 brand lists
Locations of interest	Use locations of interest to reach customers searching for or interested in specific geographic areas. The locations you selected in your campaign settings still apply. For best results, use locations of interest with phrase and broad match keywords.
URL inclusions	No URL inclusions

Add locations of interest

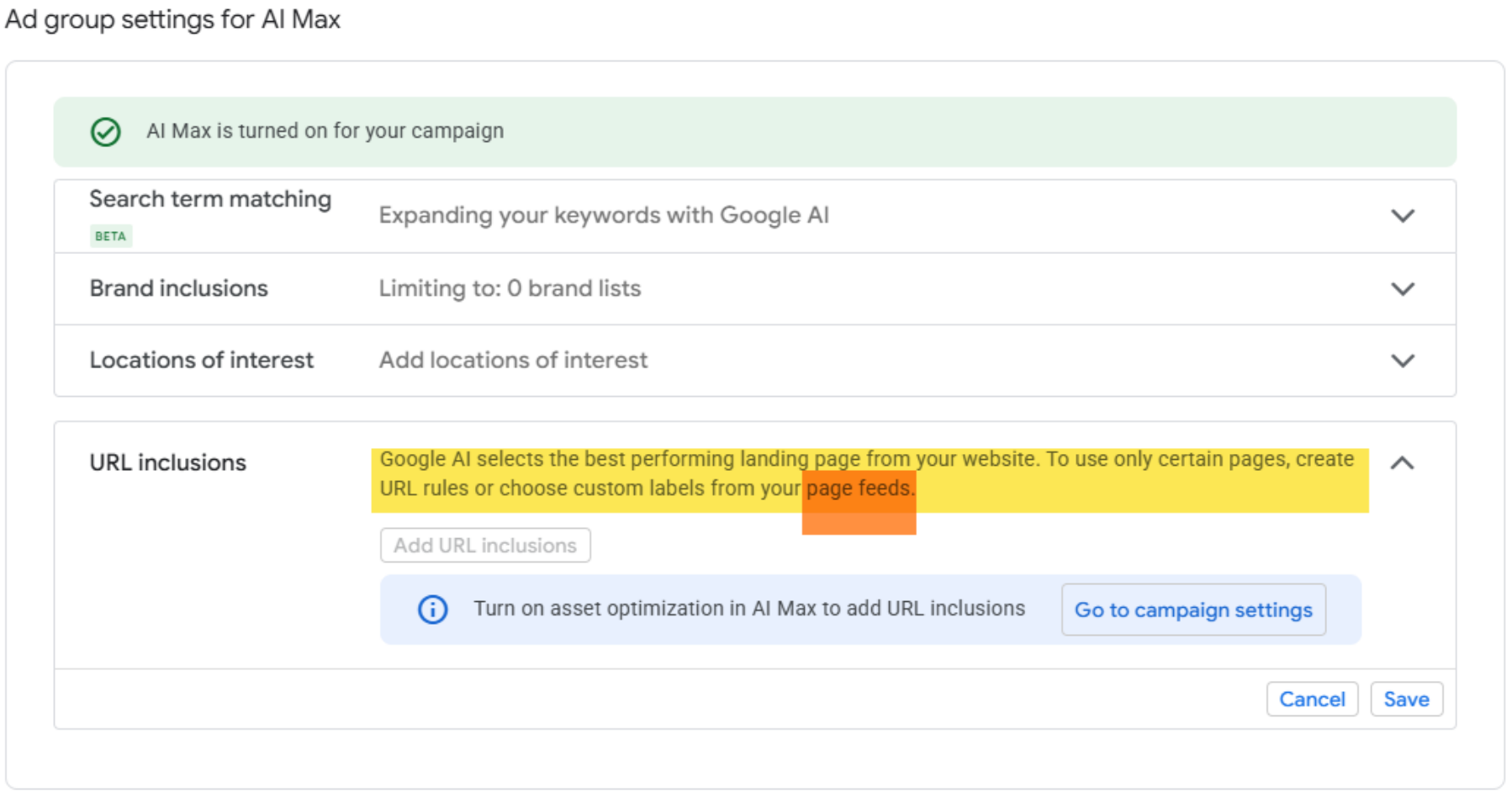
For example, a country, city, region, or postal code

Cancel Save

More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15910187?hl=en

URL inclusions

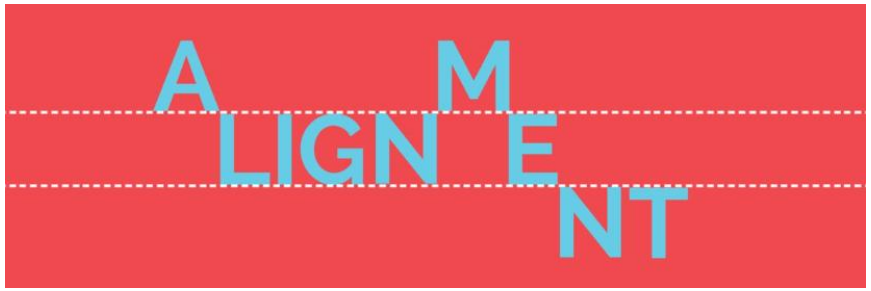
A useful control whose meaning depends on the other settings



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

Search terms and ad combinations

Headlines, descriptions and landing pages – are they aligned with search intent?



Search terms

Last 30 days | Aug 24 – Sep 22, 2026 | Show last 30 days

Search term equals (case sensitive) von dutch | Add filter | Search terms and ad combinations | Columns | Download | Expand

Search term	Headline	Landing page	Ad group	Description	Search term match source	Landing page source	Headline source	Description source
Total: Filtered search terms								
[redacted]	Von Dutch Caps & Hats	[redacted]	von dutch	Order Online. Von Dutch Caps & Hats - Online Store | Caphunters.co.uk. Von Dutch is an American fashion brand specializing in caps	Landing pages and URL inclusions	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided
[redacted]	Von Dutch Caps & Hats | Order Online	[redacted]	von dutch	Von Dutch Caps & Hats - Online Store | Caphunters.co.uk. Von Dutch is an American fashion brand specializing in caps	Landing pages and URL inclusions	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided
[redacted]	Von Dutch Caps & Hats | Unbeatable Prices | Best Prices	[redacted]	von dutch	Von Dutch Caps & Hats - Online Store | Caphunters.co.uk. Von Dutch is an American fashion brand specializing in caps	Landing pages and URL inclusions	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided
[redacted]	Von Dutch Caps & Hats	[redacted]	von dutch	American fashion brand. Von Dutch Caps & Hats - Online Store | Caphunters.co.uk. Von Dutch is an American fashion brand specializing in caps	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided
[redacted]	Von Dutch Caps & Hats	[redacted]	von dutch	Black Von Dutch Hats. Online cap shop with the best catalogue to buy caps, hats, beanies. Von Dutch Caps & Hats - Online Store | Caphunters.co.uk	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided
[redacted]	Von Dutch Caps & Hats	[redacted]	von dutch	Black Von Dutch Hats. Von Dutch Caps & Hats - Online Store | Caphunters.co.uk. Von Dutch is an American fashion brand specializing in caps	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided	Google AI	Advertiser provided
[redacted]	Von Dutch Caps & Hats	[redacted]	von dutch	Buy caps and hats online. Online cap shop with the best catalogue to buy caps, hats, beanies. Von Dutch Caps & Hats - Online Store | Caphunters.co.uk	Advertiser provided	Advertiser provided	Google AI	Advertiser provided



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/16470459?hl=en

What AI Max is not

A standalone campaign type

A replacement for Performance Max

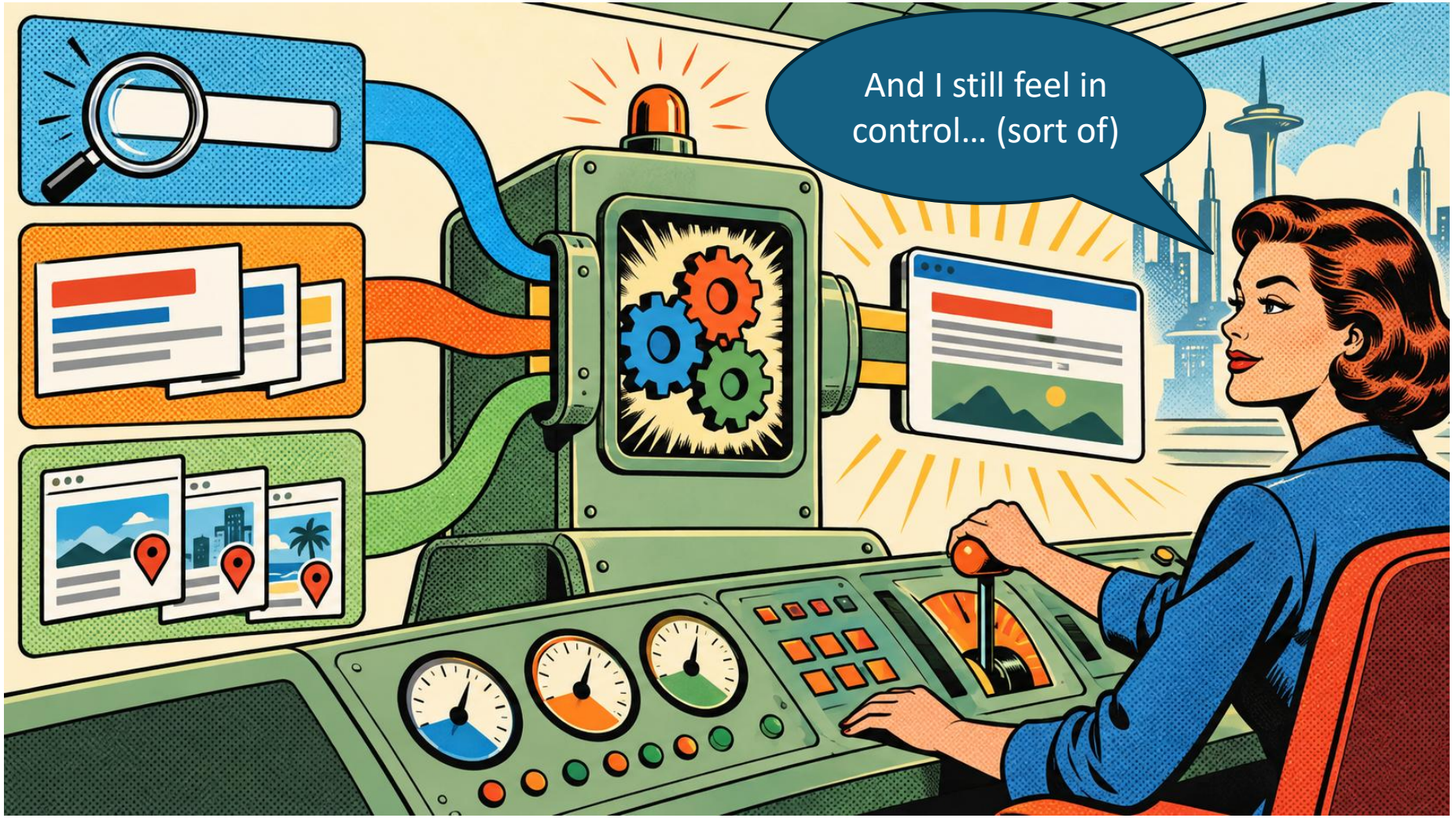
A campaign without any visibility



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15910187?hl=en

What I like

Fully automated user query matching, creative, and landing pages selection in one system



Guidelines are a useful addition

Better instructions give Google AI a clearer starting point

Brad Geddes' Post



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

Brand inclusions: Product names can match without the brand

Useful reach (with a false-positive risk)

Ad group settings for AI Max

AI Max is turned on for your campaign

Search term matching
BETA
Expanding your keywords with Google AI

Brand inclusions
Add brand inclusions to limit traffic to serve only on search queries related to the specified brands. Your ad group brand inclusions will be used instead of campaign-level brand inclusions.

Goorin Bros
Add brand lists

Cancel Save

Search terms

Search term does not contain goorin
Add filter

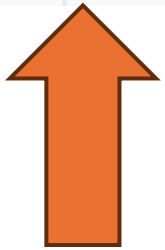
Search term	Match type	Added/Excluded	Ad group	Source	Keyword
Total: Filtered search terms					
goat hat	Phrase match (close variant)	None	Goorin Bros	Keyword	goorin bros cap
cock hat	Phrase match (close variant)	None	Goorin Bros	Keyword	goorin bros casquette
black sheep hat	Phrase match (close variant)	None	Goorin Bros	Keyword	goorin bros casquette
lone wolf hat	Phrase match (close variant)	None	Goorin Bros	Keyword	goorin bros casquette
goat cap	Phrase match (close variant)	None	Goorin Bros	Keyword	goorin bros hat
black sheep hat	Phrase match (close variant)	None	Goorin Bros	Keyword	goorin bros cap
cock hat	Broad match	None	Goorin Bros	Keyword	goorin bros lids



AI Max gets its own reporting rows

Expanded keyword matches and landing-page matches

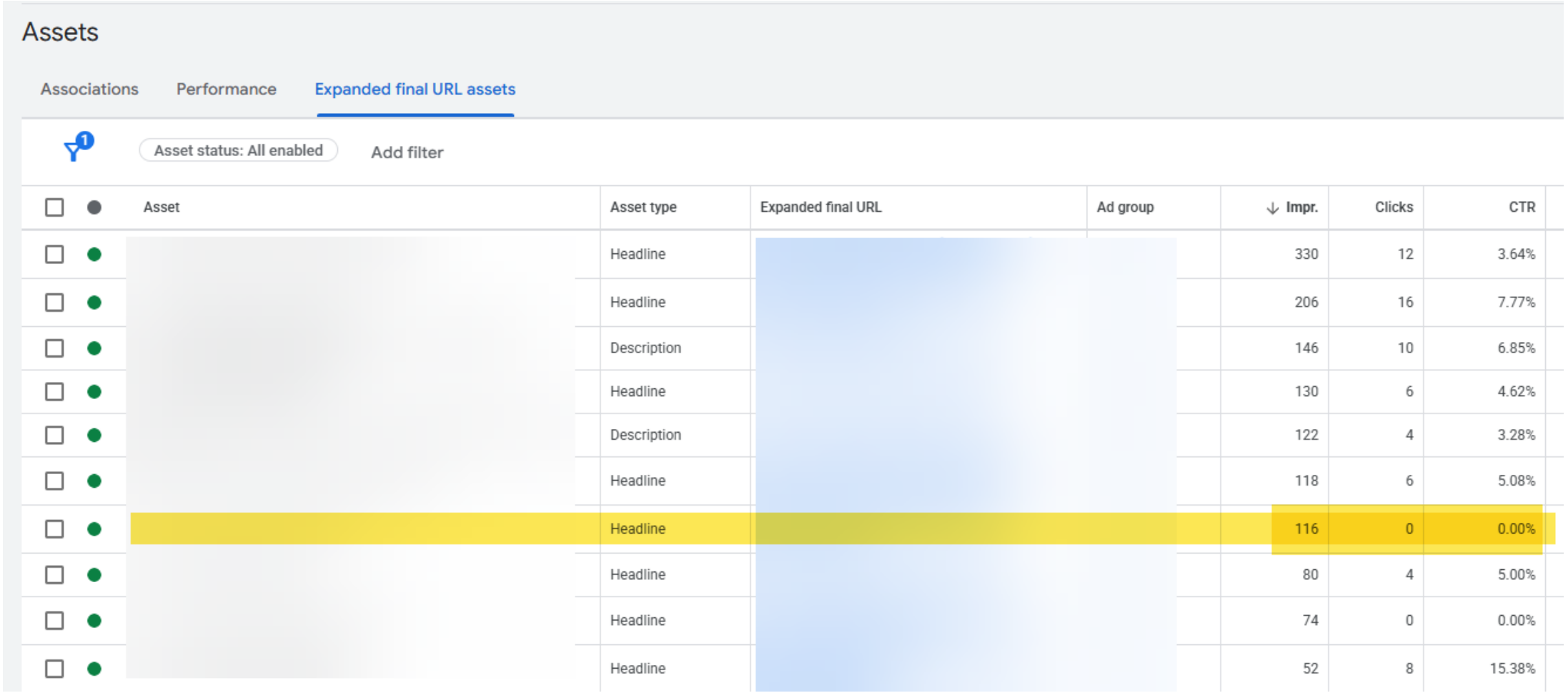
Keyword	Match type	Ad group	Status	Conv. value	Conv. value / cost	Impr.	Click
caps new era	match	New Era	Eligible	0.00	0.00	869	90
new era czapka z daszkiem	Broad match	New Era	Eligible	68.72	5.99	1,016	82
Total: Keywords in your current view				143.28	0.97	14,107	1,029
Total: Keywords in your campaign				143.28	0.97	14,107	1,029
Total: Your keywords				143.28	0.97	14,107	1,029
Total: AI Max expanded matches				0.00	0.00	0	0
Total: AI Max landing page matches				0.00	0.00	50	6
Total: URL inclusions in your campaign				0.00	0.00	0	0



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/16470459?hl=en

Expanded final URL assets

Inspect the assets that served with expanded URLs



Asset	Asset type	Expanded final URL	Ad group	Impr.	Clicks	CTR
	Headline			330	12	3.64%
	Headline			206	16	7.77%
	Description			146	10	6.85%
	Headline			130	6	4.62%
	Description			122	4	3.28%
	Headline			118	6	5.08%
	Headline			116	0	0.00%
	Headline			80	4	5.00%
	Headline			74	0	0.00%
	Headline			52	8	15.38%

More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/16470459?hl=en

More reporting to work with

A good starting point for verification of real business value



Reporting for all AI Max features

Search term matching	• **Keywords report**: Find aggregate performance in the "Total: AI Max expanded matches" and "Total: AI Max landing page matches" rows at the bottom. • **Search terms report**: 1. Add the "Source" column to the default view. 2. Filter the "Match type" column for "AI Max". 3. Use the dedicated "Search terms and ad combinations (formerly known as Search terms and landing pages from AI Max)" view from the dropdown to review search terms, headlines, and landing pages.
Text customization	• **Campaign level Asset report**: Navigate to the "Expanded final URL assets" tab. Assets created by this feature are marked as "Google AI" in the "Added by" column. • **Ad level Asset report**: Assets created by this feature will be marked as "Google AI" in the "Added by" column. • **Search terms report**: The "Search terms and ad combinations (formerly known as Search terms and landing pages from AI Max)" view will display the headlines used.
Final URL Expansion	• **Landing pages report**: This report includes URLs from Final URL expansion. The "Selected by" column will indicate if the URL was selected by AI Max. • **Campaign level Asset report**: The "Expanded final URL assets" tab shows the asset and URL combinations. • **Keywords report**: Traffic from these expanded URLs contributes to the "Total: AI Max landing page matches" aggregate row.
Brand settings	• **Settings**: Brand lists are managed under "Tools" > "Shared library" > "Brand lists". The settings to apply these lists (inclusions or exclusions) are found within the "AI Max settings panel" at the Campaign or Ad Group level.
URL inclusions	• **Keywords page**: Managed within the "URL Inclusions" tab. This is where you set up URL rules, for example, URL contains, custom labels, to guide AI Max on which pages to use.
URL exclusions	• **Keywords page**: Managed within the "URL Exclusions" tab. • **Landing pages report**: You can also add exclusions directly from this report based on performance or relevance.

More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/16470459?hl=en

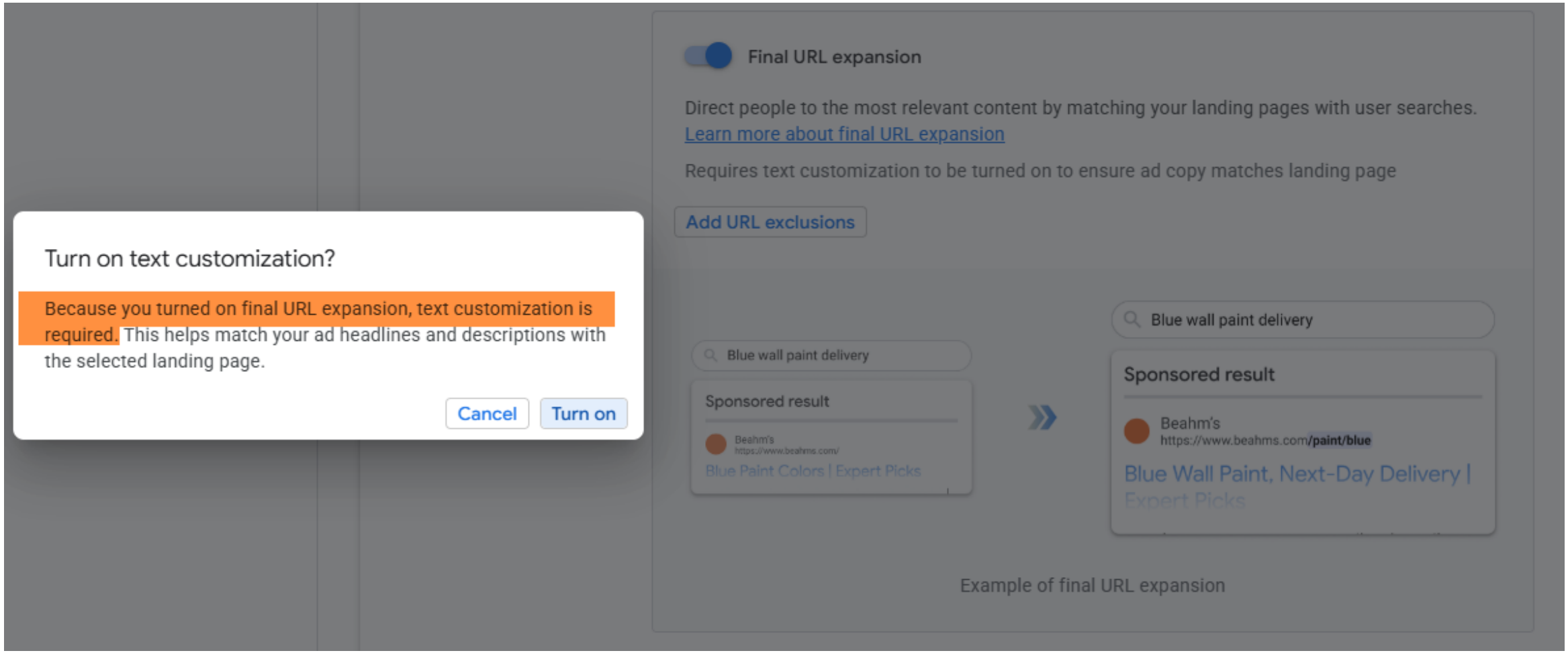
What I do not like: confusing controls

A sensible-looking setup can still produce an unexpected result



Final URL expansion requires text customization

The dependency applies at campaign level



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

Campaign expansion widens the URL choices

Your included URLs plus other URLs Google selects

URL inclusions and Final URL expansion

To limit your ad delivery to only serve on the URLs you choose, you can leverage URL inclusions. If you enable both URL inclusions and Final URL expansion, the URLs you choose as well as the URLs that Google thinks will provide the best performance can be used.

URL inclusions	Final URL expansion	Search term matching (ad group level)	Serving
✓	✗	✓ or ✗	Google Ads uses only your specified URLs as dynamic landing pages for that ad group. This includes advertiser-provided landing pages in Responsive Search Ads.
✓	✓	✓	URL rules or any other relevant URL will be used for both dynamic landing page and targeting expansion.

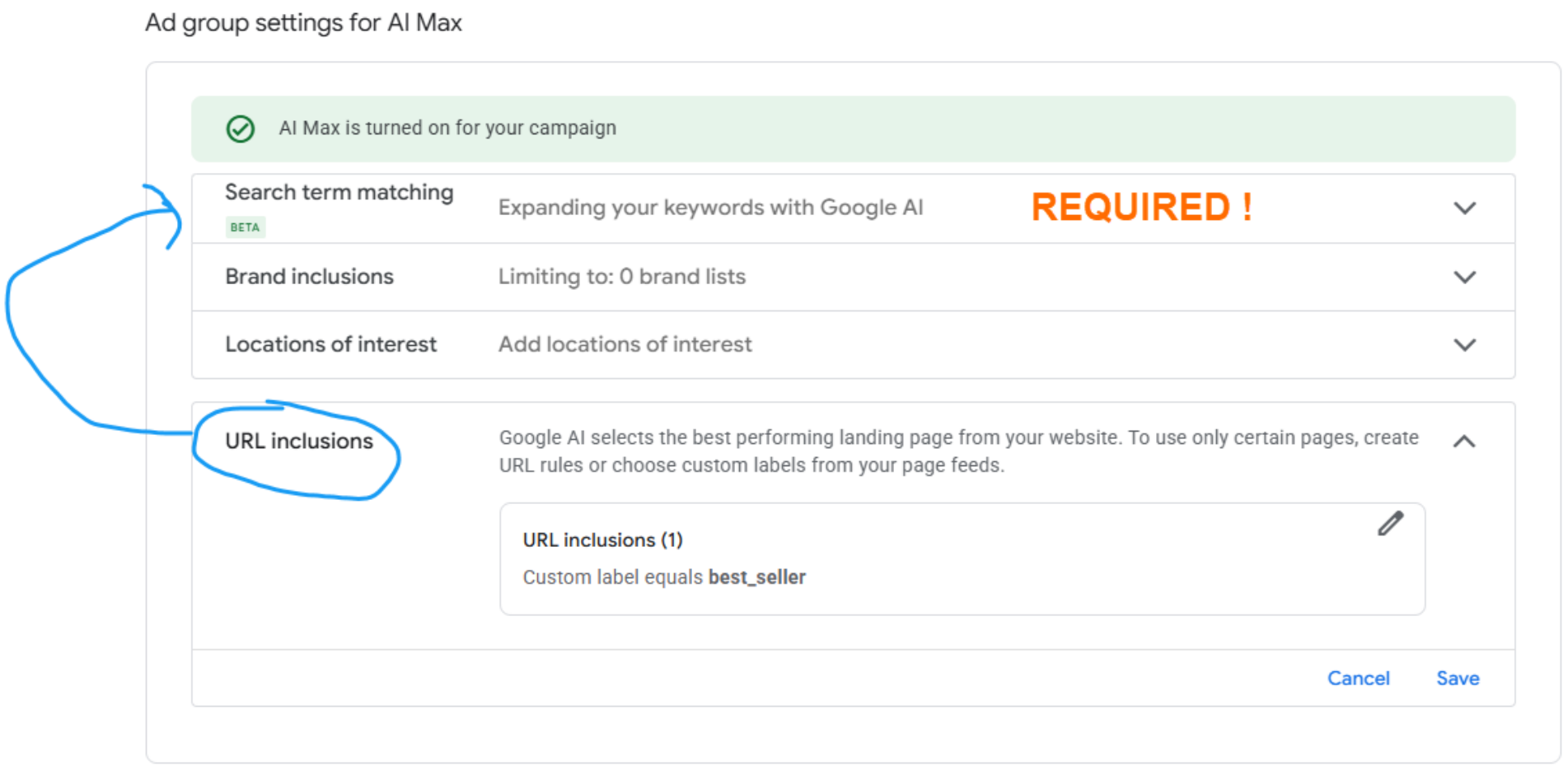
When Final URL expansion is turned on for your campaign, pinned Responsive search ad assets aren't used if a more relevant URL is chosen, because they may not match the customer's intent. Similarly, when URL inclusions are enabled, pinned assets aren't used. To always use pinned assets, turn off Final URL expansion and URL inclusions.

URL inclusions	Final URL expansion	Responsive Search Ad (RSA) pinned asset serving
✗	✗	Pinned RSA assets will serve as expected
✓	✓ or ✗	Pinned RSA assets won't be respected

More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

URL inclusions and search term matching

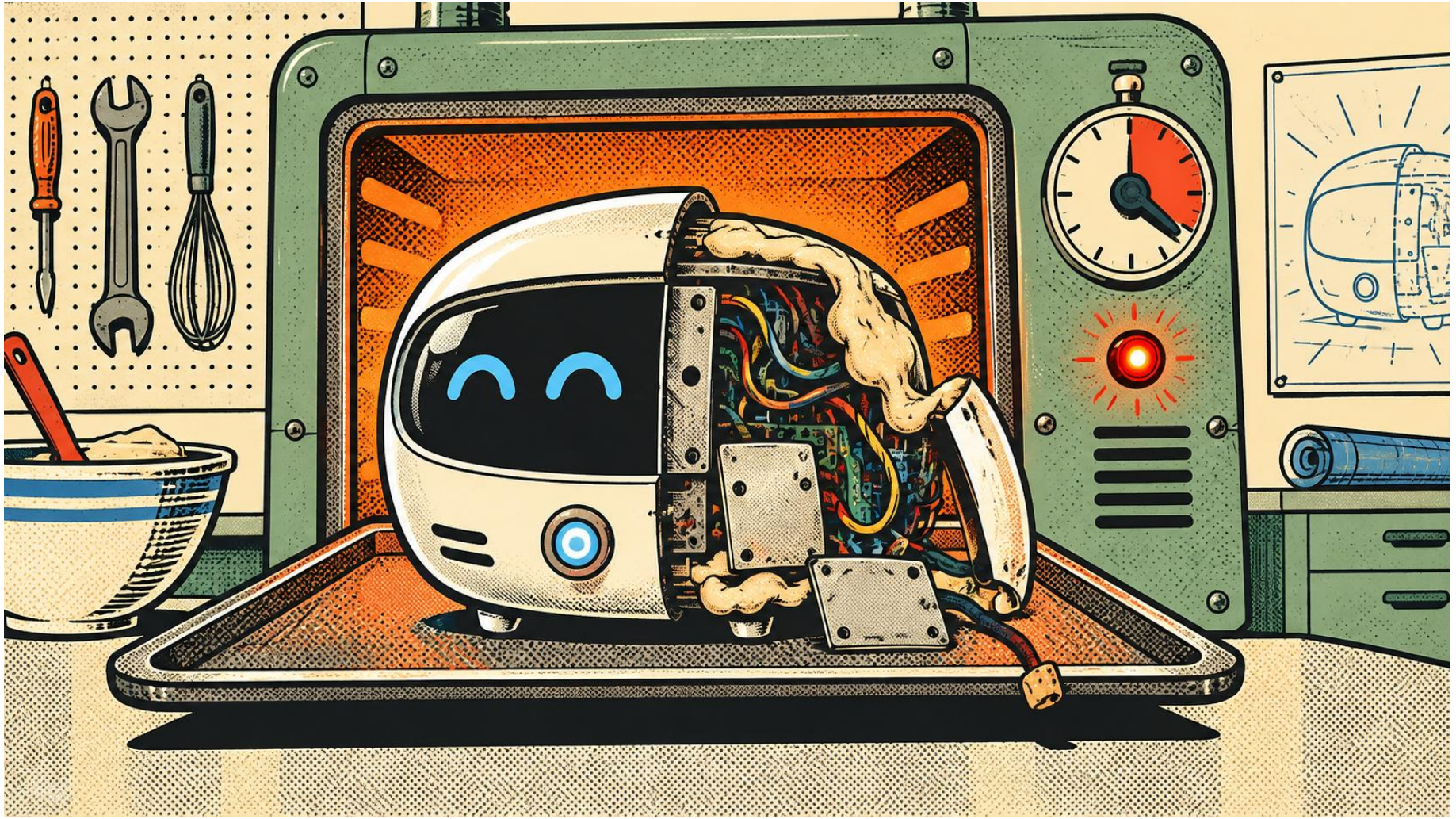
Turning matching off stops keywordless targeting



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

What I do not like: buggy behaviour

Partly in Beta, partly non-functioning, mostly still in development?



Page-feed control did not behave as expected

Granular product queries reached generic category pages

Ad group settings for AI Max

AI Max is turned on for your campaign

Search term matching BETA	Expanding your keywords with Google AI
Brand inclusions	Limiting to: 0 brand lists
Locations of interest	Add locations of interest

URL inclusions

Google AI selects the best performing landing page from your website. To use only certain pages, create URL rules or choose custom labels from your page feeds.

URL inclusions (1)

Custom label equals **best_seller**

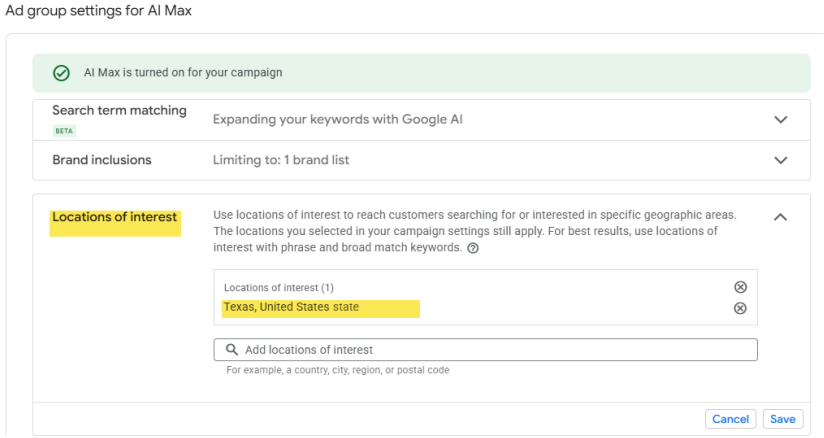
Cancel Save

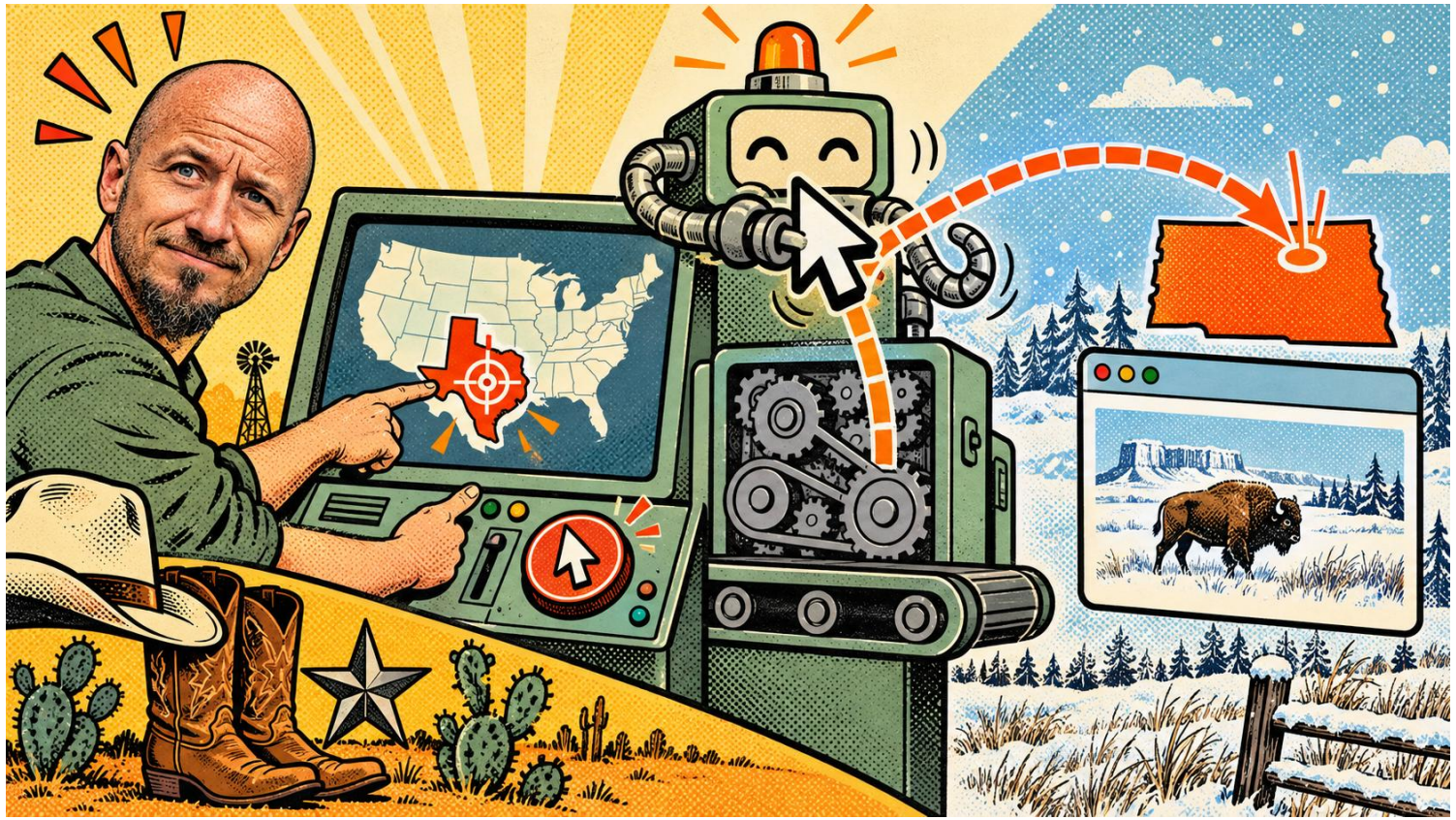


More details: https://www.reddit.com/r/PPC/comments/1w9qshk/google_ai_max_campaign_is_ignoring_my_page_feed/

Texas intent. North Dakota page.

A location setting does not replace destination verification





“Unbranded” can block a generic query

Reported example: “roofers” treated as theroofers.com

AI Max for Search campaigns

Get the best AI-powered performance on Google Search

Advertisers that activate AI Max in Search Campaigns will typically see 14% more conversions or conversion value at a similar CPA / ROAS

Engage more customers and boost performance. Easily expand your keywords with broad match technology and let Google AI match content from your landing pages and assets to help you show up on more relevant searches. New ad group settings help you guide which customers you reach.

Tailor your ads and keep them fresh. Use Google AI to serve the most relevant ad copy and landing pages to each customer based on their unique interest and intent.

Take charge and understand how the newest and best Google AI is working for you. You'll get new actionable insights in search term reports that show how AI Max improves performance.

Learn more

Optimize your campaign with AI Max

Asset optimization — Text customization turned on

Branded searches

Choose how you want your ads to show on searches that contain brand names. Learn more about branded search settings

- Show ads on all relevant searches
- Control branded searches with brand inclusions and exclusions
- Show ads only on unbranded searches

This choice is highly restrictive. If you want to prevent showing ads for your brand only, add a brand exclusion instead.

Hide for now

Buggy !!

Show ads only on unbranded searches

Use when you only want ads to show on generic searches, avoiding all brand names known to Google.

Ads will show on these searches

- Generic terms related to your products or keywords

Ads won't show on these searches

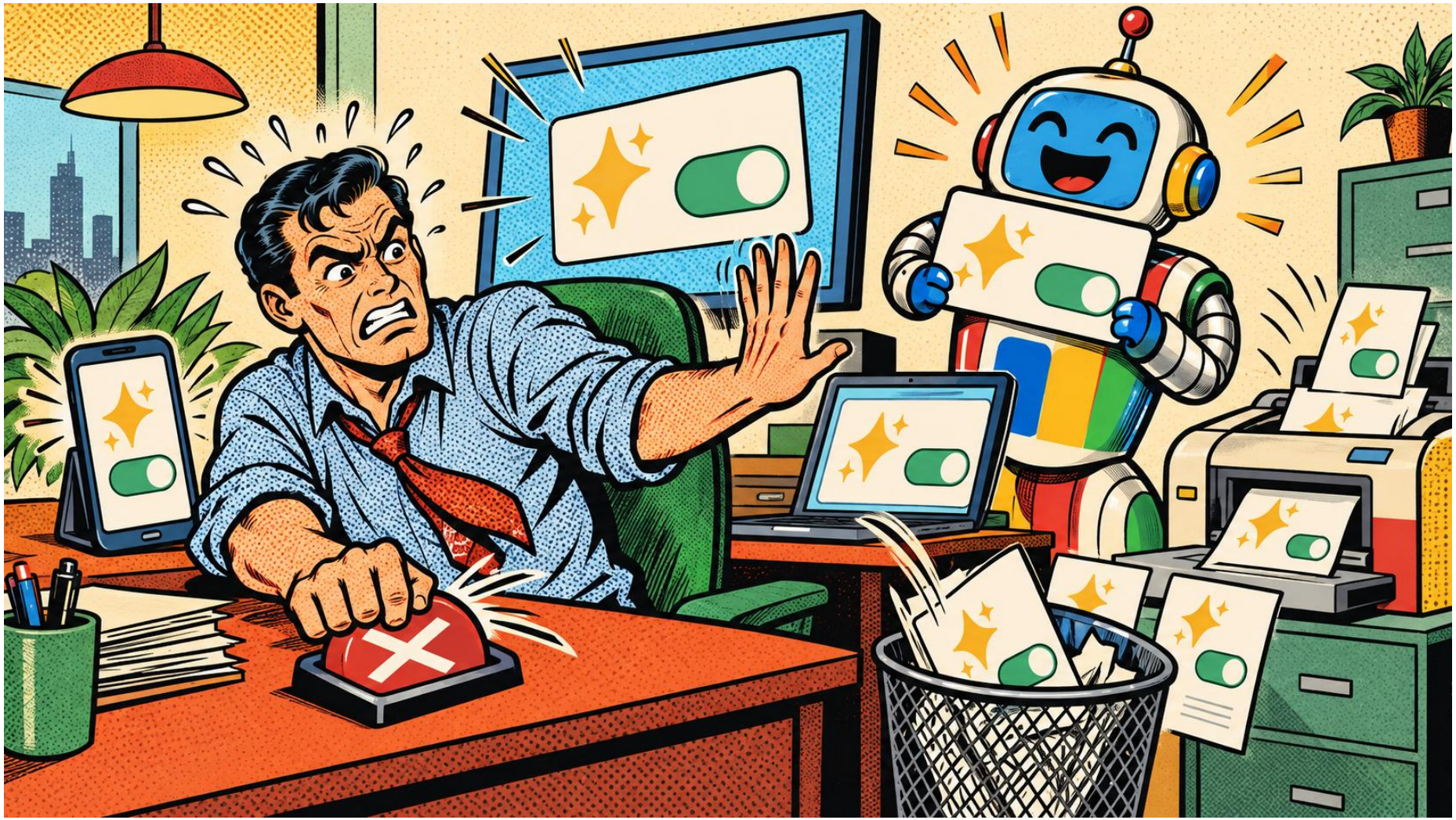
- Your brand
- Competitor or supplier brands
- Any other brands known to Google

Cancel Save



What I do not like: the push to switch

Reps, recommendations, and migration prompts



Another helpful recommendation

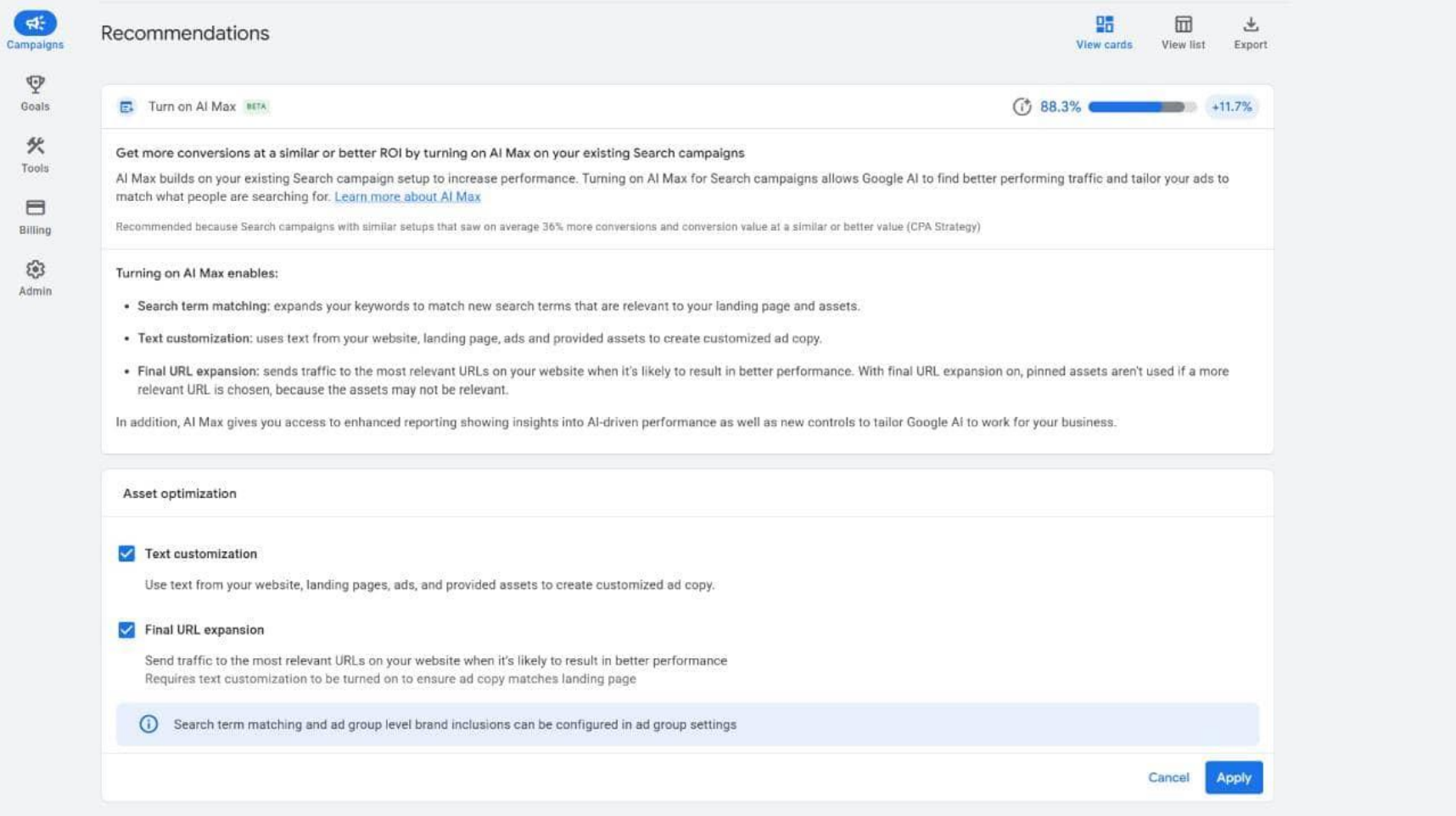


Google Rep says:

“we have some ideas of how we can lean into AI to help you show up more and drive additional profitability.
43-48% of all searches are showing AI Overviews as well, and we want to make sure you'e showing up when it matters most. ”

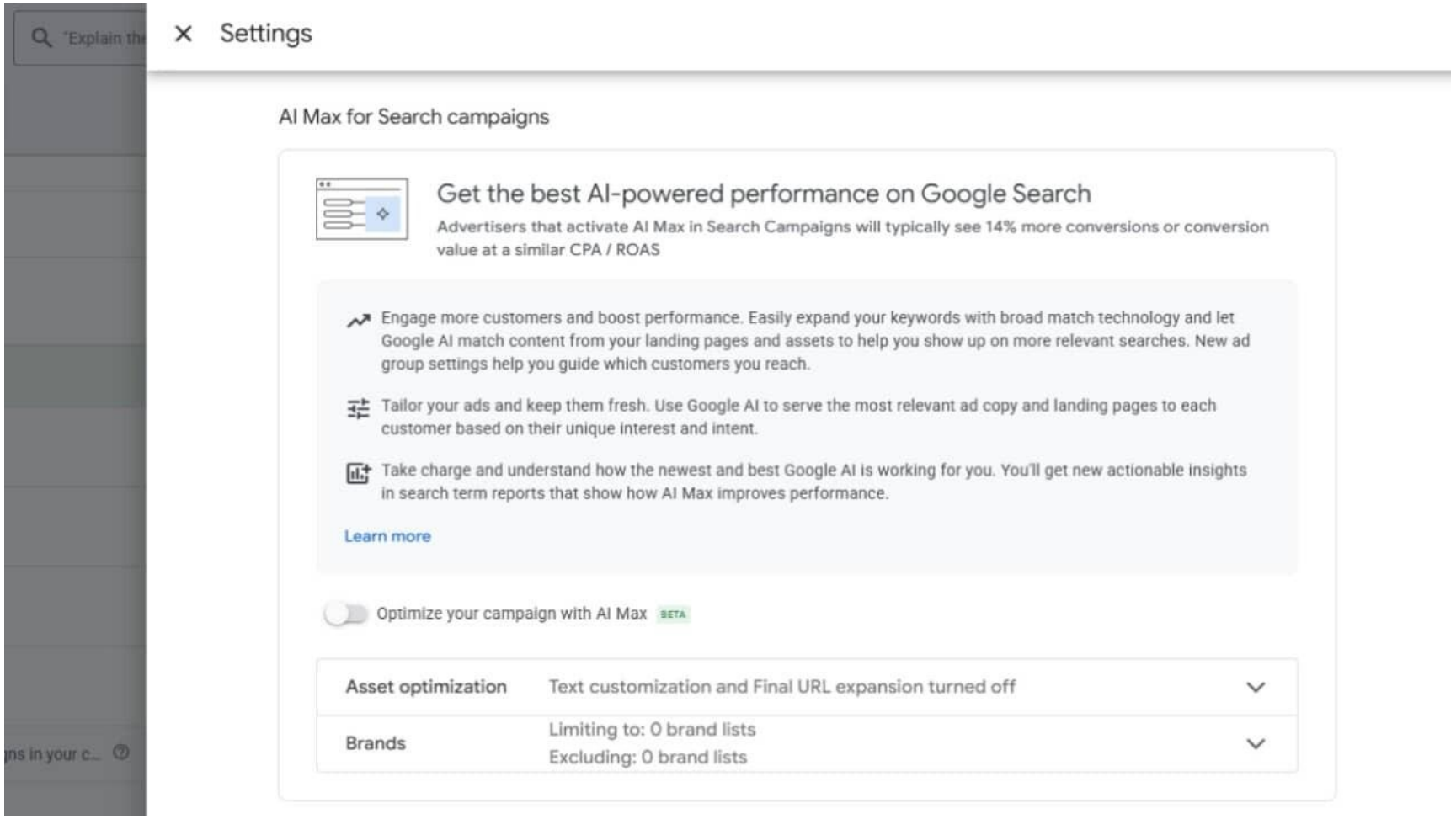
The recommendation card

The easy button contains several decisions



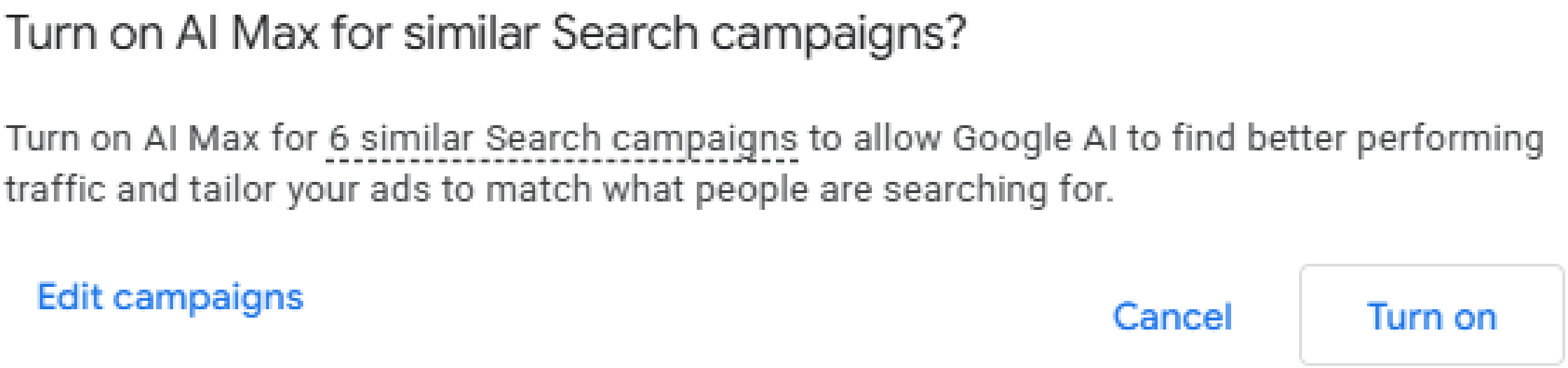
The campaign settings promotion

A performance promise beside a switch



“Turn on for similar campaigns?”

Similarity is not evidence of suitability



DSA migration has a deadline

Automatic migration is scheduled from February 2027

We're upgrading Dynamic Search Ads to AI Max

Apr 15, 2026
4 min read

AI Max for Search campaigns is moving out of beta. Starting in September, legacy features like Dynamic Search Ads will automatically upgrade to AI Max, offering a smarter way to scale performance in the new era of Search.

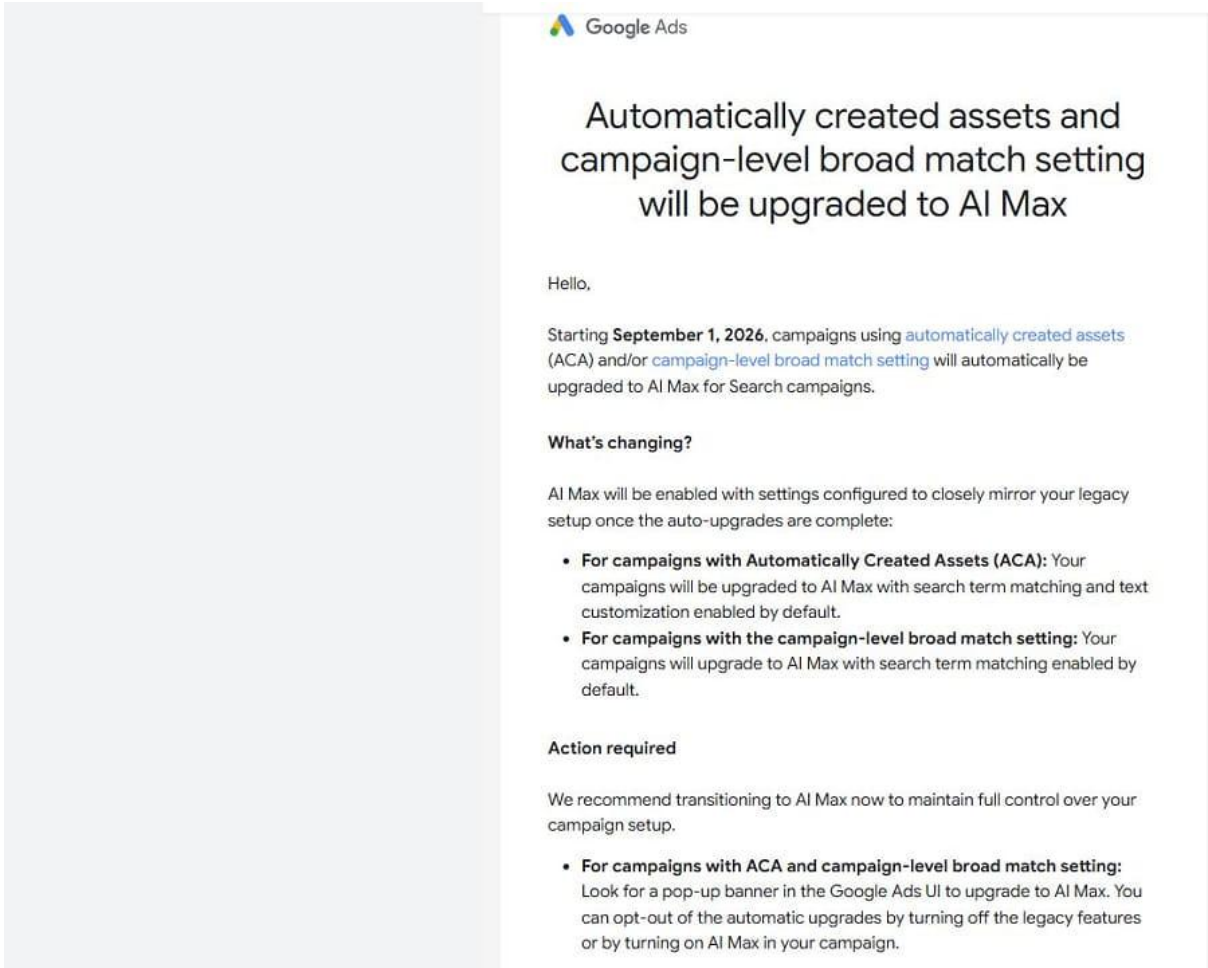
Updated June 11, 2026

We heard your feedback: you need more time to complete the transition from Dynamic Search Ads (DSA) to AI Max. To protect your business results and the performance of your campaigns, we are extending the timeline for Dynamic Search Ads sunset and auto-upgrade, which will begin in ***February 2027.***

More details: https://ads-developers.googleblog.com/2026/06/dynamic-search-ads-dsa-automigration.html

ACA and campaign broad match are also moving

Legacy settings are being folded into AI Max already



Google Ads

Automatically created assets and campaign-level broad match setting will be upgraded to AI Max

Hello,

Starting **September 1, 2026**, campaigns using automatically created assets (ACA) and/or campaign-level broad match setting will automatically be upgraded to AI Max for Search campaigns.

What's changing?

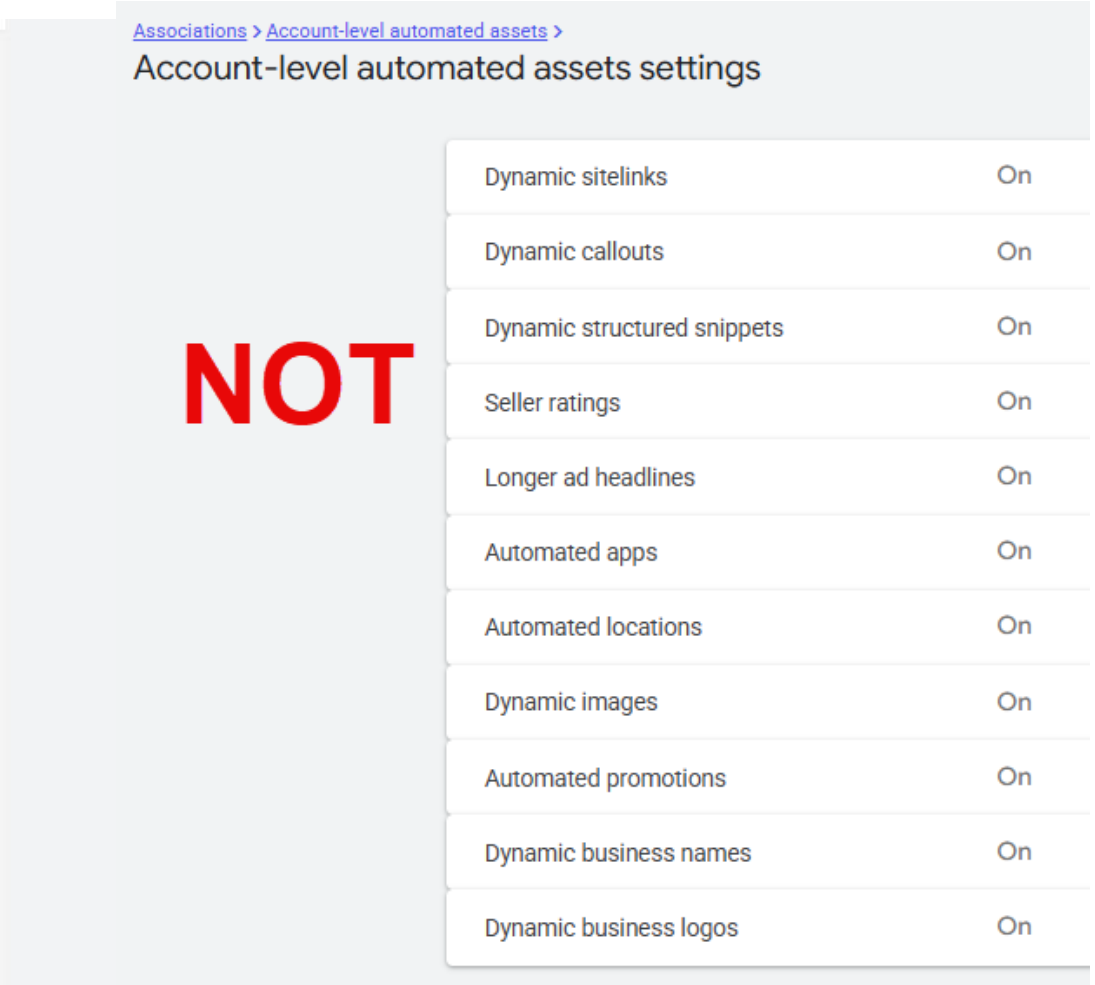
AI Max will be enabled with settings configured to closely mirror your legacy setup once the auto-upgrades are complete:

- **For campaigns with Automatically Created Assets (ACA):** Your campaigns will be upgraded to AI Max with search term matching and text customization enabled by default.
- **For campaigns with the campaign-level broad match setting:** Your campaigns will upgrade to AI Max with search term matching enabled by default.

Action required

We recommend transitioning to AI Max now to maintain full control over your campaign setup.

- **For campaigns with ACA and campaign-level broad match setting:** Look for a pop-up banner in the Google Ads UI to upgrade to AI Max. You can opt-out of the automatic upgrades by turning off the legacy features or by turning on AI Max in your campaign.



Associations > Account-level automated assets >

Account-level automated assets settings

NOT

Dynamic sitelinks	On
Dynamic callouts	On
Dynamic structured snippets	On
Seller ratings	On
Longer ad headlines	On
Automated apps	On
Automated locations	On
Dynamic images	On
Automated promotions	On
Dynamic business names	On
Dynamic business logos	On

More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15910187?hl=en

Easy to enable. Dificult to evaluate.

Single click of a button

No new campaign required

BUT:
A business case still required, No?



I asked myself: Does AI Max add value beyond broad match?

More traffic is easy.
Additional profitable demand is the test.





Before and after cannot isolate the effect

Seasonality changes

Competitors change

The business changes
(website, offering, other channel marketing, …)



A Search term matching-only experiment

CONTROL	TREATMENT
Broad-match keywords	The same broad-match keywords
AI Max off	Only Search term matching on

Same goals, bids, budgets, ads, and negatives. Text customization and FUE stay off.

NOTE: use custom campaign experiments for this, NOT the AI Max experiment Google promotes. Otherwise, comparing search terms not possible.

Business results first. Search term audit second.

Wait for conversions to mature

Compare business outcomes between the arms

Then inspect discovery, overlap, relevance, and cost of search terms

Six accounts. Six experiments. Six weeks.

6

experiments

3 + 3

lead gen + ecommerce

6

weeks of data



SCRIPT: Query Novelty Report

WHAT IT CHECKS

AI Max queries against the control and account history

WHAT YOU GET

A list of observed new queries, existing coverage, and spend

Query Novelty Report

period: 1–28 September 2026. Account history: 3 June–31 August 2026. Control: same period.

Coverage	Queries	Clicks	Cost (EUR)	Spend share	Qualified value (EUR)
Observed new	6	360	€1,080.00	24.5%	€2,100
Existing coverage	12	1110	€3,330.00	75.5%	€9,300
Total	**18**	**1470**	**€4,410.00**	**100.0%**	**€11,400**

Observed new = absent from available account history AND the control. Withheld queries are outside this report.

Newly observed queries do not prove causal incrementality. Compare the experiment's business results separately.

Query	Coverage	Match source	Previous campaign	Seen in control?	Clicks	Cost (EUR)
ergonomic chair for tall people	Observed new	Broad expansion	None observed	No	84	€252.00
office chair for lower back pain	Observed new	Keywordless	None observed	No	76	€228.00
best chair for home working	Observed new	Keywordless	None observed	No	65	€195.00
office chair rental	Observed new	Broad expansion	None observed	No	58	€174.00
free office chairs near me	Observed new	Keywordless	None observed	No	42	€126.00
chair for standing desk	Observed new	Source unavailable	None observed	No	35	€105.00

Very little new queries with potential

Newly discovered search terms generated...many search terms, but...

<3%

of impressions

<1%

of clicks via AI Max



Where the traffic came from

AI_MAX_BROAD_MATCH

Largest share of treatment spend

Mainly previously covered traffic

AI_MAX_KEYWORDLESS

Very small spend share

Some novelty, plus junk

```
SELECT
  campaign.name,
  ad_group.name,
  search_term_view.search_term,
  segments.search_term_match_type,
  segments.search_term_match_source,
  metrics.impressions,
  metrics.clicks,
  metrics.cost_micros,
  metrics.conversions
FROM search_term_view
WHERE
  segments.search_term_match_source IN (
    'AI_MAX_BROAD_MATCH',
    'AI_MAX_KEYWORDLESS'
  )
```

More details: https://developers.google.com/google-ads/api/docs/campaigns/ai-max-for-search-campaigns/ai-max-reporting

What if we enable the full suite?



Your favorite Google Rep with very powerful convincing capabilities

YES! More clicks…Some useful discoveries. A lot to reject.

Adjacent-category searches

Competitor searches

Low-intent searches



Challenge: negating irrelevant searches is....work

Search terms

Conversions < 1.00 | Match type: AI Max | Add filter

Search term	Match type	Added/Excluded	Ad group	Source	Impr. (Abs. Top) %	Impr. (Top) %	↓ Impr.
Total: Filtered search terms					34.75%	69.52%	11,739
[redacted]	AI Max	None	[redacted]	Landing pages and URL inclusions	5.31%	64.60%	279
[redacted]	AI Max	None	[redacted]	Landing pages and URL inclusions	21.30%	65.74%	152
[redacted]	AI Max	None	[redacted]	Landing pages and URL inclusions	55.42%	81.93%	119
[redacted]	AI Max	None	[redacted]	Landing pages and URL inclusions	87.93%	94.83%	99
[redacted]	AI Max	None	[redacted]	Landing pages and URL inclusions	0.00%	78.87%	87
[redacted]				Landing pages			



SCRIPT: N-gram Waste Finder

WHAT IT CHECKS

Recurring words and phrases with spend and weak outcomes

WHAT YOU GET

Ranked negative-keyword suggestions for review

Phrase	Query Coun	Clicks	Impressions	Cost	Conversions	Conversion\	CTR	CPC	Conv. Rate
[redacted]	1,343	2,869	12,940	€2,171.72	70	€4,429.51	22.17%	€0.76	2.43%
[redacted]	647	1,474	7,740	€1,121.21	25	€1,678.92	19.04%	€0.76	1.71%
[redacted]	274	483	1,406	€357.28	7	€408.54	34.35%	€0.74	1.48%
[redacted]	166	362	1,092	€286.54	31	€2,055.03	33.15%	€0.79	8.49%
[redacted]	124	185	382	€136.85	2	€101.94	48.43%	€0.74	1.08%
[redacted]	33	169	476	€126.71	15	€1,067.51	35.50%	€0.75	9.07%
[redacted]	58	145	502	€109.26	8	€463.96	28.88%	€0.75	5.52%
[redacted]	24	144	969	€105.73	1	€39.85	14.86%	€0.73	0.56%
[redacted]	25	130	930	€102.92	0	€0.00	13.98%	€0.79	0.00%
[redacted]	28	126	1,220	€102.22	5	€391.46	10.33%	€0.81	3.97%
[redacted]	23	128	921	€101.50	0	€0.00	13.90%	€0.79	0.00%
[redacted]	18	113	873	€87.63	2	€139.00	12.94%	€0.78	1.77%
[redacted]	18	122	670	€82.41	0	€0.00	18.21%	€0.68	0.00%
[redacted]	18	99	730	€79.00	0	€0.00	13.56%	€0.80	0.00%
[redacted]	11	93	569	€71.10	8	€475.10	16.34%	€0.76	8.75%
[redacted]	51	95	322	€69.00	2	€121.49	29.50%	€0.73	2.11%
[redacted]	6	81	508	€60.27	7	€415.11	15.94%	€0.74	8.81%
[redacted]	24	64	252	€46.40	3	€254.98	25.40%	€0.73	5.20%

SCRIPT: https://nilsrooijmans.com/updated-google-ads-script-brainlabs-search-query-mining-for-n-gram-analysis/

Scripts + AI (agents) for negative keyword management

Negative keyword suggestions

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Gemini Extensions Help

	A	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1												Add as negative?			
2	searchTerm	impressions	clicks	ctr	avg CPC	cost	conversions	isNEGATED	AIJudge	Confidence	ampaign	adGroup	list	ignore	FEEDBACK
3	car insurance near me	317	16	0.05	78.12	1249.92	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: We operate exclusively online and do not have local offices for in-person service.	0.68					add "near me" as a negative at the account level
4	kia k3 insurance	789	26	0.03	39.28	1021.28	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: As a premium service provider, we exclusively insure high-end cars rather then cheaper cars at the low end of the spectrum.	0.62				1	we do also offer insurance for inexpensive cars at the lower end of the spectrum
5	cheap auto insurance	293	15	0.05	48.12	721.8	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: As a premium service provider, we focus on high-quality coverage and excellent service rather than competing on the lowest price.	0.89					correct, price is not our USP, but note that we do have very competitive prices for sports car insuracne
6	geico	512	10	0.02	24.56	245.6	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: This is a direct competitor brand name and does not align with our specific service offerings.	0.92			p		
7	chopper insurance	261	4	0.02	55.65	222.6	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: Our insurance products are strictly limited to cars; we do not insure motorcycles or choppers.	0.83			p		



Want it? -> https://nilsrooijmans.com/paid-scripts-support-call/



Could this query be relevant?

SEARCH

‘boyfriend birthday gift'

KEYWORD

cocktail shaker set



Plausible intent is a hypothesis. Real business outcomes decide whether it is useful.
My tests tell me: Google is not there yet.

Challenge: competitor traffic

AI Max expanded heavily into competitor terms

37%

of total Search impressions in one account



SCRIPT + LLM : Competitor Query Negatives

WHAT IT CHECKS

Searches containing competitor names and aliases

WHAT YOU GET

A review queue, easily add competitors via Google Sheet

	A	B	C	D
1	**Campaign**	**Search term**	**Impressions**	**Add to competitor list (y/n)?**
2	US / SEARCH / AI MAX	h&s near me	1,860	y
3	US / SEARCH / AI MAX	stephenson rental	1,425	y
4	US / SEARCH / AI MAX	marks work warehouse	1,284	y
5	US / SEARCH / AI MAX	mccarthy near me	1,131	y
6	US / SEARCH / AI MAX	metro supply chain	942	
7	US / SEARCH / AI MAX	mark's near me	735	
8	US / SEARCH / AI MAX	surewerx	512	
9	US / SEARCH / AI MAX	tenaquip	489	

Challenge: query overlap and cannibalization

The same demand can reappear under a different campaign label

Search term	Match type	Campaign	Ad group
goorin bros	Exact match		
goorin bros	Phrase match (close variant)	UK / SEARCH / AI MAX	
goorin bros	Exact match		
goorin bros	AI Max	UK / SEARCH / AI MAX	
goorin bros	Exact match (close variant)	UK / SEARCH / AI MAX	
goorin bros	Broad match	UK / SEARCH / AI MAX	



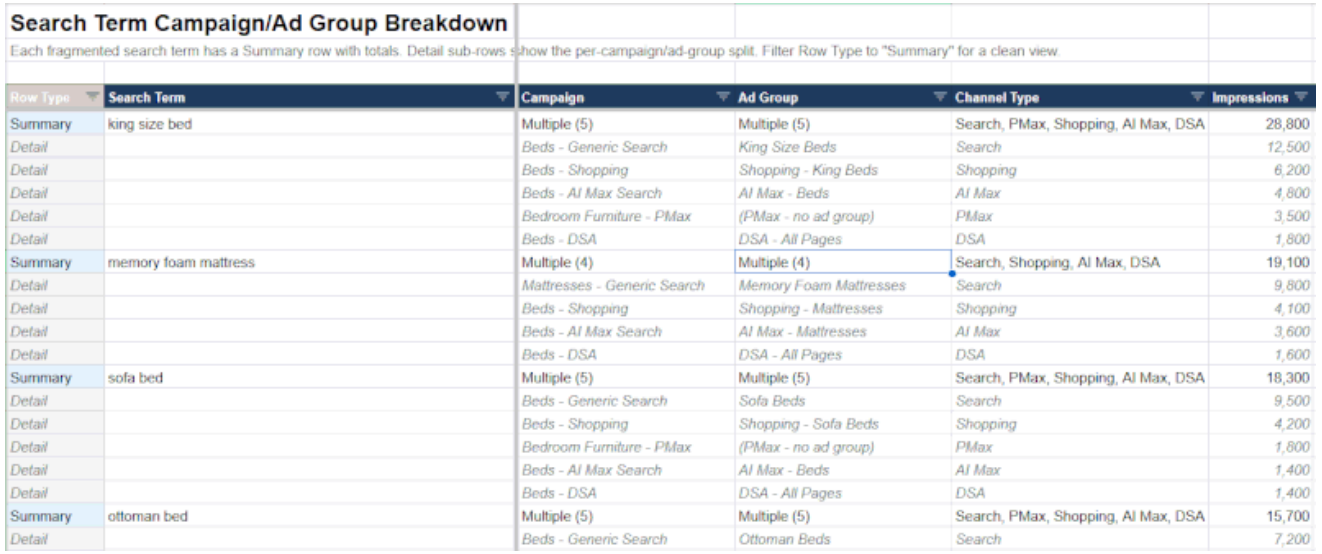
SCRIPT: Query Overlap Alert

WHAT IT CHECKS

The same query appearing across ad groups or campaigns

WHAT YOU GET

An overlap report with destinations and performance context



Search Term Campaign/Ad Group Breakdown

Each fragmented search term has a Summary row with totals. Detail sub-rows show the per-campaign/ad-group split. Filter Row Type to "Summary" for a clean view.

Row Type	Search Term	Campaign	Ad Group	Channel Type	Impressions
Summary	king size bed	Multiple (5)	Multiple (5)	Search, PMax, Shopping, AI Max, DSA	28,800
Detail		*Beds - Generic Search*	*King Size Beds*	*Search*	*12,500*
Detail		*Beds - Shopping*	*Shopping - King Beds*	*Shopping*	*6,200*
Detail		*Beds - AI Max Search*	*AI Max - Beds*	*AI Max*	*4,800*
Detail		*Bedroom Furniture - PMax*	*(PMax - no ad group)*	*PMax*	*3,500*
Detail		*Beds - DSA*	*DSA - All Pages*	*DSA*	*1,800*
Summary	memory foam mattress	Multiple (4)	Multiple (4)	Search, Shopping, AI Max, DSA	19,100
Detail		*Mattresses - Generic Search*	*Memory Foam Mattresses*	*Search*	*9,800*
Detail		*Beds - Shopping*	*Shopping - Mattresses*	*Shopping*	*4,100*
Detail		*Beds - AI Max Search*	*AI Max - Mattresses*	*AI Max*	*3,600*
Detail		*Beds - DSA*	*DSA - All Pages*	*DSA*	*1,600*
Summary	sofa bed	Multiple (5)	Multiple (5)	Search, PMax, Shopping, AI Max, DSA	18,300
Detail		*Beds - Generic Search*	*Sofa Beds*	*Search*	*9,500*
Detail		*Beds - Shopping*	*Shopping - Sofa Beds*	*Shopping*	*4,200*
Detail		*Bedroom Furniture - PMax*	*(PMax - no ad group)*	*PMax*	*1,800*
Detail		*Beds - AI Max Search*	*AI Max - Beds*	*AI Max*	*1,400*
Detail		*Beds - DSA*	*DSA - All Pages*	*DSA*	*1,400*
Summary	ottoman bed	Multiple (5)	Multiple (5)	Search, PMax, Shopping, AI Max, DSA	15,700
Detail		*Beds - Generic Search*	*Ottoman Beds*	*Search*	*7,200*

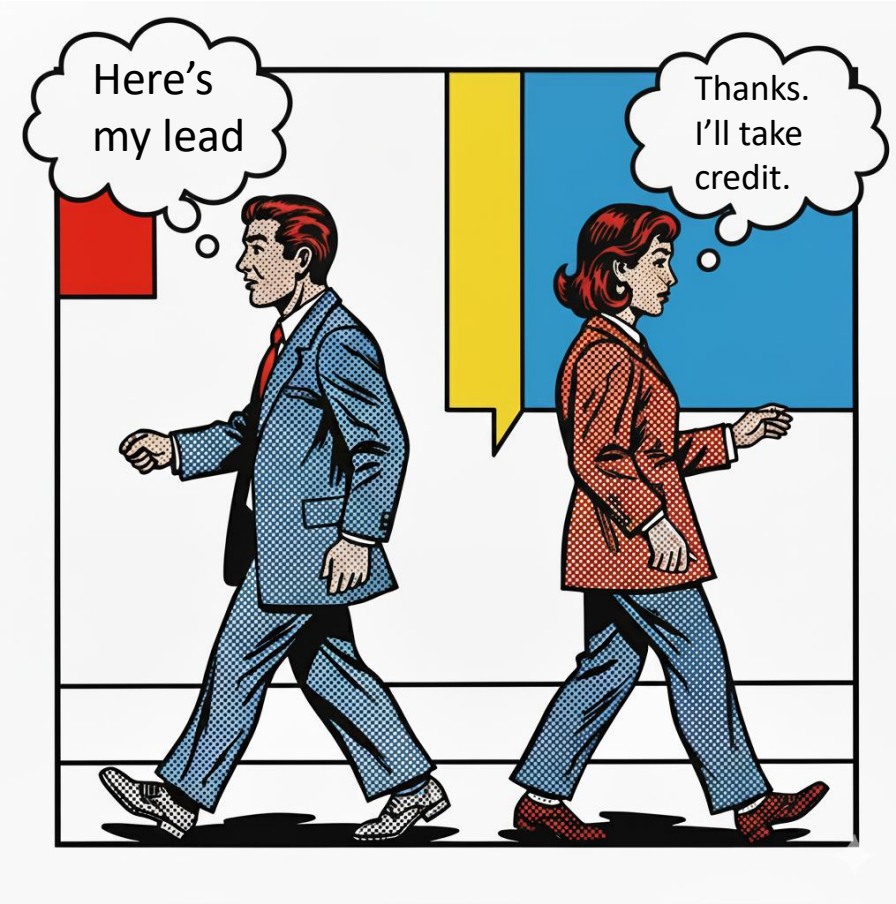
SCRIPT: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/robbsmit_free-google-ads-script-search-term-duplicates-activity-7427612678988152833-dVrc

Challenge: who gets to take credit?

AI Max can claim results for demand the account already served via cannabilization

BUT, it can also take (partial) credit via black box Attribution Modeling

Total business outcomes remain the test



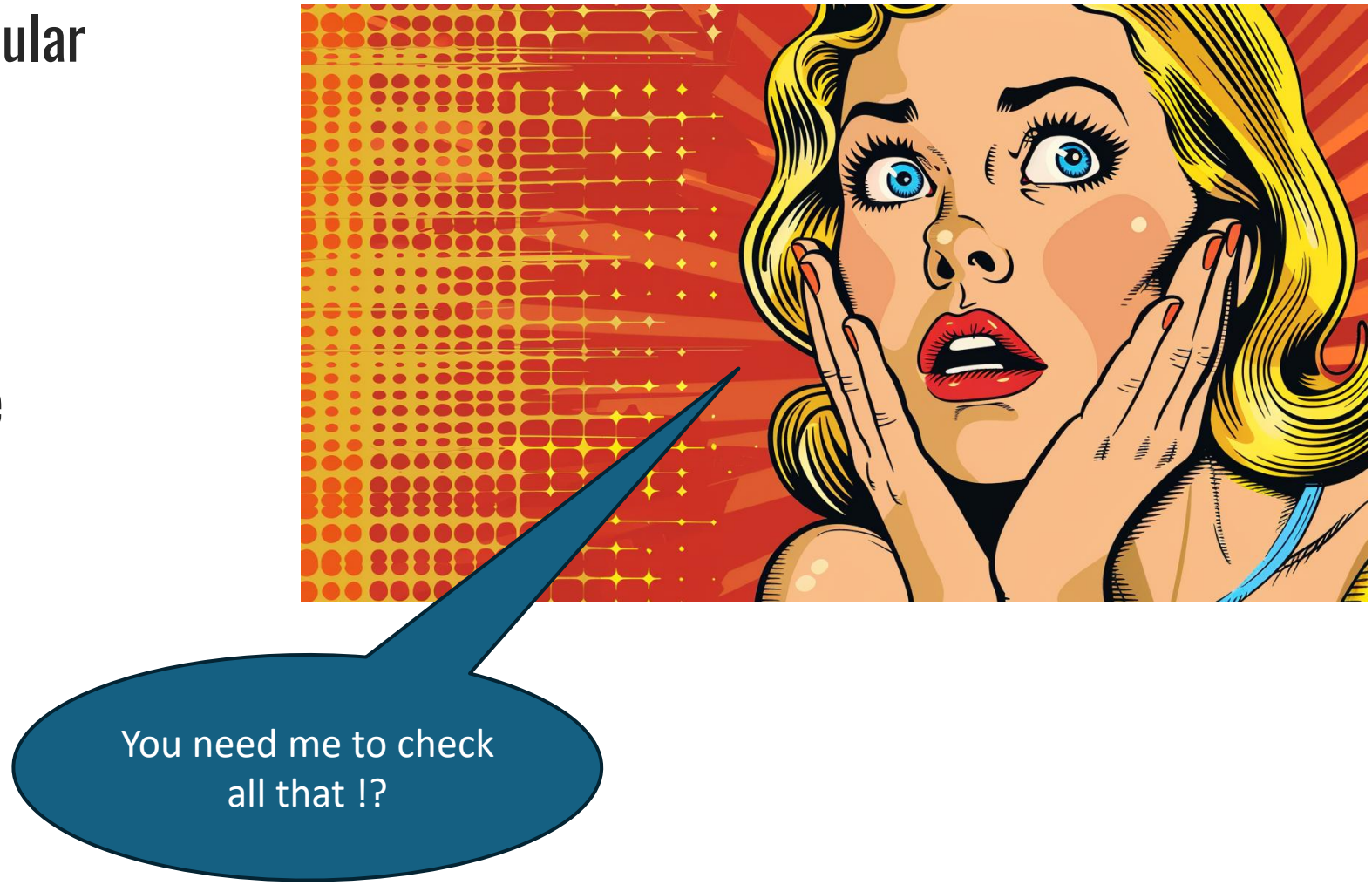
More details: https://adalysis.com/blog/ai-max-search-term-reporting/

Challenge: replacing DSA

Will granular queries reach granular pages?

Will the feed boundaries hold?

Will the generated ad match the destination?



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

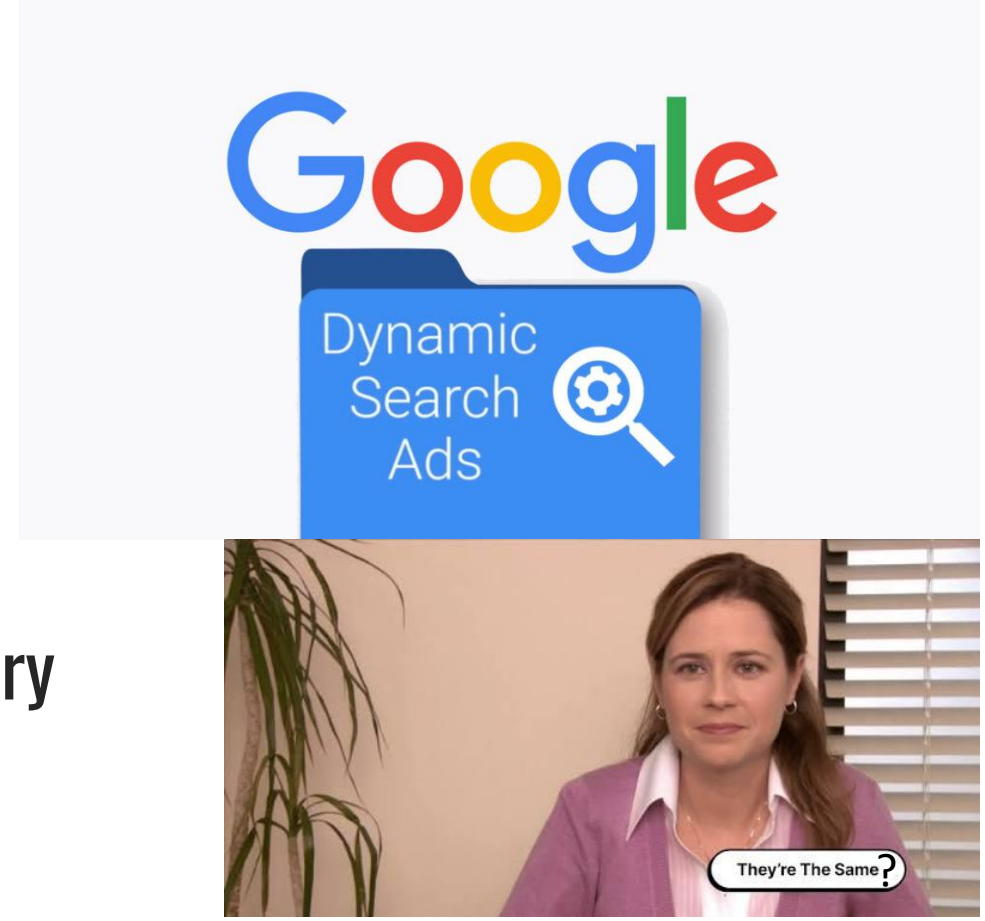
A DSA-like setup to test

AI Max and text customization on

Final URL expansion off

ZERO-keyword ad group with a URL inclusion

Search term matching on for keywordless discovery



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

“I set URL inclusions. Done, right?”

I chose the URL inclusions via page feed (label) at ad group level.

Final URL expansion OFF at campaign level.

Google still sent clicks to loads of other URLs.



More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15909989?hl=en

SCRIPT: Landing Page Policy Check

WHAT IT CHECKS

Served landing pages against an allowlist, feed, and location policy

WHAT YOU GET

A list of unexpected URLs and the traffic they received, exclude via sheet

	A	B	C
1	**Landing pages outside of your feed**	**Clicks**	**Exclude?**
2	[redacted]eeth.com/blog/	53	y
3	[redacted]onials/	41	y
4	[redacted]t-us/	32	y
5	[redacted]s/	18	y
6	[redacted]s/Lactona.html	9	n
7	[redacted]s/FreeB.html	8	y

More details: https://developers.google.com/google-ads/scripts/docs/campaigns/search/reporting

SCRIPT: Landing Page Health Check

WHAT IT CHECKS

Served URLs for errors, redirects, and
Out-of-stock destinations

WHAT YOU GET

A repair queue for pages receiving paid
Traffic, for you to fix or exclude

	A	B	C	D
1	**Landing pages**	**ISSUE**	**Clicks**	**Exclude?**
2	[redacted]que-deep-clean-ultra-soft-compact-too	404	62	y
3	[redacted]flossmate-floss-holder-ergonomic-den	404	45	y
4	[redacted]pack-interdental-brushes-multiple-size	302	36	n
5	[redacted]hreaders/	out-of-stock	25	y
6	[redacted]-double-ended-605-handle-go-betwee	404	12	y
7	[redacted]pack-interdental-brushes-multiple-size	out-of-stock	8	y

More details: https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/15910187?hl=en

Challenge: generated copy without approval

Wrong locations and obsolete offers

Prohibited phrases and unsupported promises

NB: Pinned assets can lose their protection with Final URL expansion / URL inclusions



More details: https://www.reddit.com/r/PPC/comments/1rrmggx/ai_max_ad_guiderails_anyone_using/

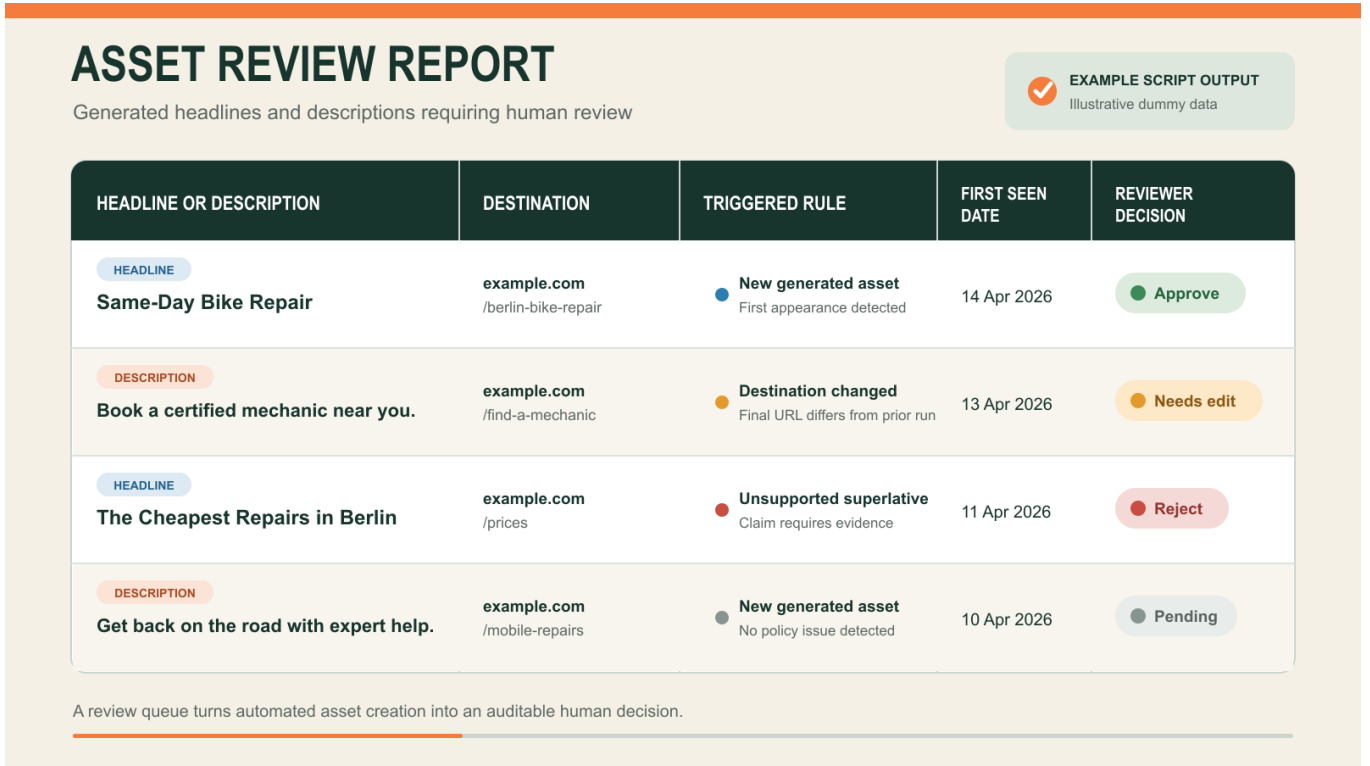
SCRIPT IDEA: Generated Copy Review

WHAT IT CHECKS

Reported assets for restricted wording, stale offers, and location errors

WHAT YOU GET

An evidence-backed review queue linked to the served asset



ASSET REVIEW REPORT

Generated headlines and descriptions requiring human review

EXAMPLE SCRIPT OUTPUT
Illustrative dummy data

HEADLINE OR DESCRIPTION	DESTINATION	TRIGGERED RULE	FIRST SEEN DATE	REVIEWER DECISION
HEADLINE Same-Day Bike Repair	example.com /berlin-bike-repair	New generated asset First appearance detected	14 Apr 2026	Approve
DESCRIPTION Book a certified mechanic near you.	example.com /find-a-mechanic	Destination changed Final URL differs from prior run	13 Apr 2026	Needs edit
HEADLINE The Cheapest Repairs in Berlin	example.com /prices	Unsupported superlative Claim requires evidence	11 Apr 2026	Reject
DESCRIPTION Get back on the road with expert help.	example.com /mobile-repairs	New generated asset No policy issue detected	10 Apr 2026	Pending

A review queue turns automated asset creation into an auditable human decision.

Challenge: cheap forms, poor leads

Form submissions are not the final business outcome

Quality can deteriorate while reported CPA improves

Qualified leads and sales need to feed the decision



A warning from retail traffic research

Lunio’s retail comparison by Q2 2026

+72%

higher invalid-traffic rate with AI Max



More details: https://www.lunio.ai/blog/invalid-traffic-retail-report

SCRIPT: Qualified Lead Monitor

WHAT IT CHECKS

Form-fill and qualified-lead outcomes for comparable cohorts

WHAT YOU GET

An alert when acquisition looks cheaper but lead quality deteriorates

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1			Period A			Period B		Significant Difference?
2	**Campaign**	**Form fills**	**Qualifed leads**	**Ratio**	**Form fills**	**Qualifed leads**	**Ratio**	
3	US / SEARCH / B2B (FORM FILLS)	97	61	63%	155	76	49%	Yes



My Sep 2026 eval of AI Max

THE GOOD

- The vision
- The control
- The transparency
- The future potential

THE BAD

- The incentive? and push
- The confusion
- The buggy beta
- The performance (so far)



AI Max maximizes... what?



AI Max maximizes... what?

CANNIBALIZATION

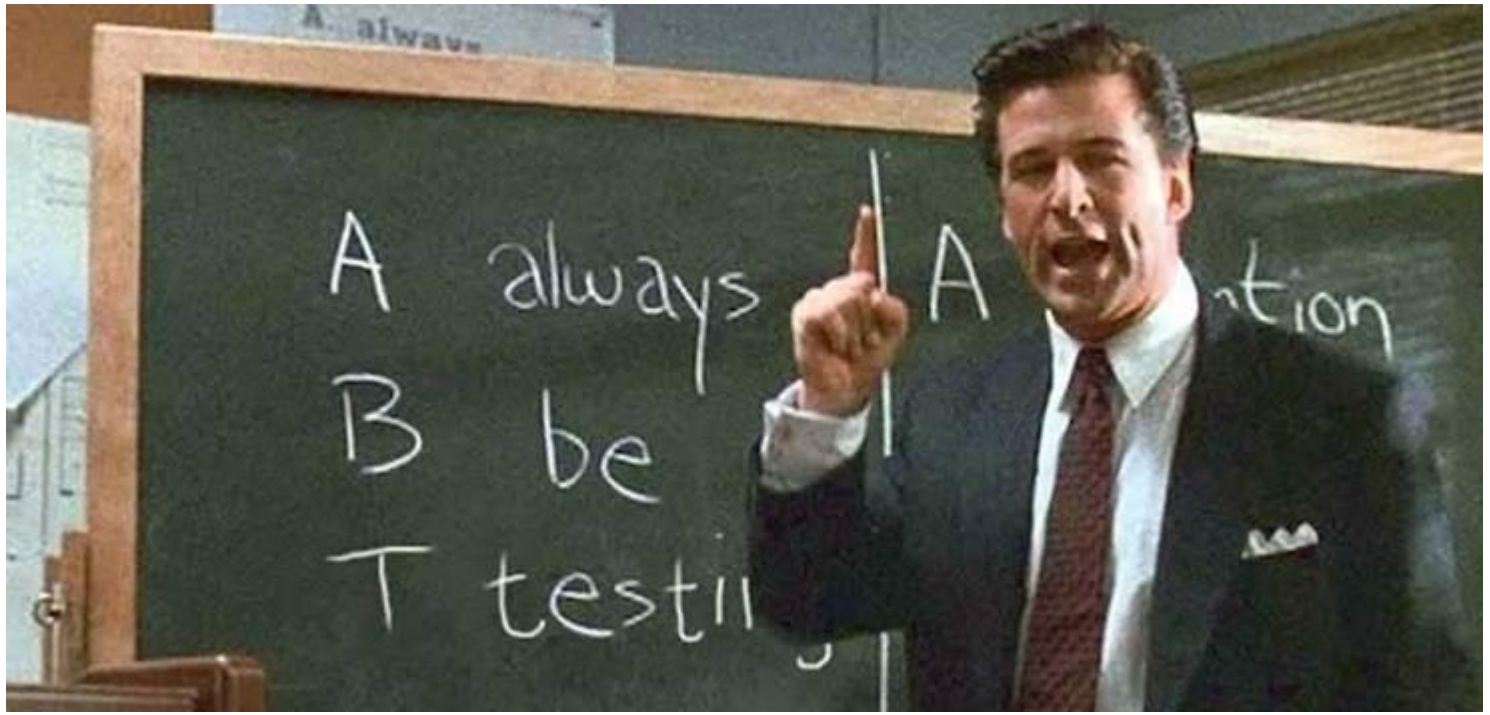


Should you test AI Max?

Test it? Yes.

Migrate? No.

It's not ready.



Redittor: *"Google gave us $10k to test AI Max. That's the only success story I've seen so far."*

Six things to check before testing AI Max

1) **Reliable conversion tracking**
   Track real business value (qualified leads, net results)

2) **Conversion-focused bidding**
   Use a strategy tied to the outcome the business values

3) **Enough non-brand volume**
   At least 30 monthly conversions for lead gen, 60 for ecommerce, in the test area as a starting point

4) **Room in the budget**
   Avoid a test that simply diverts spend from proven demand

5) **Broad match already works**
   Establish a credible baseline before adding more expansion

6) **Landing pages ready**
   Clear content, accurate offers, and suitable structured data

My current approach to testing

A limited test in non-brand,
high-conversion ad groups

A mature baseline setup and clear success criteria

Build the negative-keyword foundation first
Exclude brand (incl misspellings)

Close review of queries, generated copy, and destinations



Three takeaways

1 Test the business contribution

New traffic does not prove incremental profit.

2 Verify claims via incoming data

Inspect the queries, the copy, and the pages that actually served.

3 Use scripts (and AI) to make the work manageable

Turn recurring problems into review queues and useful alerts.



Thank you

Don’t trust. Verify.

nilsrooijmans.com/smx-advanced-berlin-2026/



Nils Rooijmans

Questions and discussion

IDEA: What if we use the new AI Max controls for competitor targeting?



A contained competitor test

Dedicated campaign with competitor brand inclusions

Text customization, FUE, off
STM on

No URL inclusions

Broad match keywords, your assets and landing pages supply the targeting