

FREE AUDIT CHECKLIST

Google Ads Audit Checklist 2026

40 checkpoints to find where your ad spend is leaking and the exact fixes to improve ROAS without increasing budget.

DIGITAL ESTATE MEDIA

Prepared by **Digital Estate Media** — digitalestatemedia.com

1 – ACCOUNT STRUCTURE

- One campaign per major service or product line**
Mixing unrelated services prevents proper budget control and quality score optimization.
- Ad groups contain tightly themed keyword clusters – 10 keywords max per ad group**
Broad ad groups kill Quality Score. Tight theming means ads match intent more precisely: lower CPC, higher CTR.
- Separate campaigns for branded vs. non-branded keywords**
Branded searches convert at 3-5x the rate of non-branded. Mixing them distorts ROAS data.
- Remarketing audiences attached to all campaigns with bid adjustments**
Past website visitors convert at 2-4x the rate of cold traffic. Attach RLSA audiences to Search campaigns.

2 – KEYWORDS AND MATCH TYPES

- Negative keyword list has 50+ terms and is updated weekly**

Run the Search Terms report weekly. Irrelevant traffic burning budget is the fastest fix for ROAS.

Broad Match keywords only used with Smart Bidding + sufficient conversion data

Broad Match without Target CPA/ROAS bidding and 30+ conversions/month is a budget fire.

Exact and Phrase Match used for high-intent, high-CPC terms

Protect your highest-value commercial terms with Exact Match to maintain control.

Search Term reports reviewed weekly — irrelevant terms added as negatives

This single 15-minute habit typically recovers 15-30% of wasted ad spend within 60 days.

3 – AD CREATIVE AND EXTENSIONS

RSAs have 15 headlines and 4 descriptions with strategic pinning only on position 1

Leave most headlines unpinned so Google can test combinations. Pin only your core offer/brand in position 1.

Ad strength rating "Good" or "Excellent" on all active RSAs

Poor-rated ads get lower impression share at the same bid. Improve with more unique headlines.

All extension types active: Sitelinks (6+), Callouts (4+), Call, Location, Structured Snippets

Extensions increase ad real estate and CTR at no extra cost. Missing extensions = 15-30% lower CTR.

Headlines cover all 5 themes: keyword, offer/USP, social proof, CTA, urgency

Google serves the combination that matches user intent best. Cover all themes across 15 headlines.

4 – LANDING PAGES AND CONVERSION

- Each ad group links to a dedicated landing page – not the homepage**

Homepage bounce rates on paid traffic are 65%+. Dedicated pages convert at 2-4x the homepage rate.
- Landing page H1 mirrors the ad headline exactly (message match)**

Message match between ad and landing page is the #1 driver of Quality Score and conversion rate.
- Conversion tracking verified in both Google Ads AND GA4**

Run a test conversion and verify it appears in both platforms. Broken tracking = Smart Bidding optimizing against noise.
- Landing page speed: LCP under 2.5s on mobile**

Each second of load time reduces conversion rate ~7% and raises your CPC via Quality Score.
- Trust signals above the fold: star rating, review count, certifications**

Paid traffic is cold traffic. A star rating near the CTA button lifts conversion 15-25%.

5 – BIDDING AND BUDGET

- Smart Bidding activated only after 30+ conversions/month of data**

Activating with fewer conversions results in erratic bidding. Use manual CPC or Maximize Clicks while building data.
- Budget limited less than 20% of the time (check Recommendations tab)**

Budget-limited campaigns miss impressions during peak hours. Pause lowest-ROAS keywords before cutting budget.
- Dayparting: bid adjustments for peak conversion hours**

Analyse conversions by hour/day. Reduce bids 30-50% in low-conversion windows to reallocate to peak times.
- Geographic bid adjustments applied at city level**

Apply positive bid adjustments for your highest-converting cities or postal codes.

6 – MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

- ROAS or CPA target established and tracked monthly against benchmark**

Without a defined target, there is no optimization direction. Set your target CPA or ROAS before launch.



Impression Share (IS) and IS Lost to Rank tracked

IS shows how much of your target traffic you are actually capturing. IS Lost to Rank reveals bid/quality issues.



Monthly ad performance review with creative refresh for underperforming ads

Ad fatigue is real. Any RSA running for 90+ days with declining CTR needs new headlines and descriptions.