

News Business Optimization Playbook

Helping your business and newsroom leaders continue to report on breaking news while optimizing revenue is important. The following playbook was created for small to medium sized news publications by the Google News Initiative. These suggestions include a best practices checklist and optimization strategies that can be implemented during breaking news cycles. Although many of the tips below include Google products, many of these strategies apply to non Google products and services that can help improve performance.

Content & audience best practices to consider

When breaking news happens, people want to find information and access it as quickly as possible. The following tips and tools can help you get your content in front of audiences when the information matters most.

Optimize and grow reader engagement using [News Consumer Insights \(NCI\)](#): Measure the performance of your audience against news industry benchmarks and uncover actionable insights to address performance gaps.

Use your newsletter channel to inform users of breaking news relevant to them: [Email newsletters](#) are an effective way to speak directly to your users and keep them engaged with your content. Make sure you are practicing good [email list hygiene](#) and your [newsletter subscriber acquisition strategy](#) is optimized.

Consider push notifications to help keep users informed of breaking news: [Push notifications](#) send instant notifications from your website to opted-in users directly through their browsers. This opens up a channel for publishers to “push” custom messages that highlight breaking news and other timely content.

Test your Structured Data to make sure there are no errors: [Structured data](#) markups improve search engine discoverability of your content. In Google search results, optimized structured data markups increase the chances of your content being surfaced as [rich results](#) that can highlight your content in a user’s search results. To test your structured data for errors, try Google’s free [Structured Data Testing Tool](#).

- **Add Fact Check markup to your debunking articles:** During breaking news cycles, there’s a thirst for cold hard facts, yet as events unfold, these facts can take time to emerge. If your team debunks any misinformation being circulated about a breaking news event, we recommend adding the [Fact Check markup](#). Implementing the [Fact Check markup](#) will

label and highlight your article on Google properties as "fact check," meaning that particular article is fact checking another article or statement.

Use Realtime Content Insights (RCI) to help inform editorial decision-making: [Realtime Content Insights](#) is a free tool that works with any version of Google Analytics, enabling publishers to identify in real time which articles are resonating and what topics are trending in their regions.

Maximize your potential audience: If you have a paywall, consider your strategy and what is best for your organization and users. It's in these crucial times of need that news media can really show their value to the community they report on, giving publishers the opportunity to turn that casual reader into a loyal subscriber based on the funnel they come from.

Optimize Google News Settings: You can use Google News to help users stay up-to-date on the news that matters to them. With Google News, users can:

- Discover current events, world-wide news, and diverse content from different publishers.
- Subscribe to specific news providers and topics.
- Read content online or offline.
- Bookmark and share articles.
- [Personalize content](#) in the "For you" section.

Sign up for Publisher Center: In 2019, Google launched a new [Publisher Center](#) that combines the features from the former Google News Publisher Center (in limited languages) and the Google News Producer tool to create one single publisher interface. You don't need to sign up through the Publisher Center to be in Google News, but it does provide certain benefits:

- **Content and branding control:** Design, brand, and customize your publication's sections and content in Google News.
- **Monetization opportunity:** Run ads inside your content area in the app. Google News supports ad serving via Google Ad Manager, including premium solution ads. Publishers can use paywalls in Newsstand through Subscribe with Google.
- **Placement eligibility:** Publications with business terms are eligible to be in the Newsstand section of the app (in applicable countries/regions). We do not guarantee placement. Publications are independently selected for Newsstand by our merchandising team based on promotional timing, quality of user experience, and relevance to promotional themes. (**Important:* Submitting a feed or a URL through the Publisher Center does not guarantee surfacing or ranking in Google News)

- **Leverage the speed of AMP:** More than 50% of people abandon a page that takes more than three seconds to load, and mobile pagespeed is even more critical for users during times of crisis. With AMP, your mobile articles are consistently fast, easy-to-read and high-performing across devices and distribution platforms. AMP pages load four times faster—in less than one second when referred from Google Search. [Learn the basics of AMP](#) and [how to implement AMP on your site](#).
- **Expand Video Content:** Upload content quickly on your YouTube channel, provide [strong metadata](#), and create new videos to provide updates on the story. We also recommend that you [create a playlist](#) for the event, so people can more easily discover and browse your event-specific videos.
- **Use Google Trends to understand what your community is looking for:** Search trends data can be really useful to give you a view into what your community is concerned about or focused on. Check out the [Google Trends site](#) for recent search trends data and [sign up to receive newsletters directly](#).

Monetization best practices to consider

When breaking news happens, you may see a large spike in traffic to your site. To help your ads team evaluate what's happening and continue supporting your business, we've created the following tips and a checklist of optimizations you may consider if you use Google Ad Manager to operate your advertising business.

Monitoring your ads business

It's important to understand what you should be monitoring as it relates to your ads business. Not only what you should be looking at, but how often you should be reviewing this data is an important question to ask. Below are quick tips on where you can focus:

Revenue: The primary metric to review first is revenue. Understanding the revenue trend and what sources are driving this trend is something you should do on a daily basis.

Queries: Monitoring the traffic shifts across different content and platforms will allow you to capture an accurate picture of performance changes. Some sections of your site may experience different performance dynamics than others; adjust your strategy accordingly.

Match Rates: As traffic and demand may show rapid shifts, monitor your match rate to make sure you capture as much demand as possible, while adhering to your business rules.

Optimize your CPM and Pricing strategy when traffic patterns change: As you see your traffic increase during the breaking news event, consider the strategy you have in place to monetize the additional impressions. Are there CPM thresholds that need to be met? Consider the changes to to sell more impressions and drive ad revenue from different demand sources by managing your yield. Consider increasing or decreasing these floors in line with your overall strategy for revenue and check your pricing settings daily.

Ad Impression Allocation: Impression allocation to Direct vs. Open Auction vs. House should be monitored regularly. House ads are used for the purpose of promoting your own business. [Monitor the impressions allocated to each type daily](#) and determine if that aligns with your overall business goals.

Unfilled Impressions: Unfilled impressions are just that, they go unfilled and no revenue is gained. Understand how many you have each day and try to minimize this number if driving revenue is your goal during this time. Find out why line items aren't delivering by [troubleshooting unfilled impressions](#).

Ad Technologies: Review and control which ad technologies are being used by partners/buyers and understand how they affect the metrics above. You can control the [use of these technologies](#) and how they impact your inventory.

Find opportunities

Optimize revenue by leveraging [Ad Manager opportunities and experiments insights cards](#) in the homepage of Google Ad Manager. Opportunities are suggested weekly such as changing a pricing rule or unblocking a general Ad Exchange category with estimated impact associated.

Maximize your demand

If you are using Google Ad Manager, there are three strategic areas to consider if you want to maximize your demand and drive additional revenue. Below is a checklist of items you can consider, to help you manage yield effectively during this time.

Step 1: Getting the basics right

- [Review business rules and protections](#)
- [Reduce category blocks](#)
- Reduce advertiser URL blocks
- [Allow for cookies & data use](#)
- [Enable Personalized ads](#)
- [Opt into ad technologies](#)

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- ❑ [Enable both text and image ads](#)
 - ❑ [Allow flexible sizes](#)
 - ❑ [Declare authorized sellers with ads.txt](#)
 - ❑ [Use latest GMA SDK in mobile apps](#)
 - ❑ [Use latest IMA SDK for video inventory](#)
 - ❑ Set up automated daily reports with key metrics

Step 2: Optimizing Ad Manager setup

- ❑ Allow Ad Exchange to compete across all inventory
- ❑ Set appropriate [First Look floors](#) where applicable
- ❑ [Enable Optimized Competition](#)
- ❑ [Enable Open Bidding](#) (***Only available in Google Ad Manager 360**) across all inventory and review implementation best practices
- ❑ Ensure other SSPs/Networks/Header Bidders are booked at Price Priority 12
- ❑ [Increase CPM and Fill with Video](#)
- ❑ [Allow in-article and in-feed video](#)
- ❑ [Implement Mobile App Interstitials and Video Interstitials](#)
- ❑ [Optimize line item booked rates to reflect ad request CPM](#)
- ❑ Determine Private Marketplace Strategy
- ❑ Set up programmatic deals

Step 3: Maximizing monetization revenue

- ❑ Ensure pricing rules setup is optimal by reviewing [bid data insights cards in Home Dashboard](#)
- ❑ [Optimize Unified Pricing floors](#)
- ❑ [Optimize First Look price floors](#)
- ❑ Review and optimize for [non-delivery causes of line items & deals](#)
- ❑ [Enable key video ad durations](#)
- ❑ [Understand and fix VAST errors](#) for video requests
- ❑ [Enable Content URL](#) on App

Optimize your supply

Having a good understanding of your supply is just as important as the demand in the market. Below is a simple checklist to review in order to improve performance during these cycles.

Optimizing page layout & viewability

- Align ad size distribution with market demand, and cohort vertical
- On desktop consider adding ATF ads close to the fold and utilize tall ad units
- Implement 320x50/100 ATF and 300x250 BTF on mobile devices
- Implement Anchor Ads on Mobile Web
- Add [Adaptive banners](#) to App inventory
- [Enable multi-size pricing](#)
- [Implement native ads](#) across screens
- [Allow native & banner to compete](#) for peripheral placements
- [Add fluid](#), fully responsive native slot
- Improve viewability to >50% via optimal ad placement and page speed
- Analyze site with [Pagespeed Insights](#) & implement optimization suggestions
- Maximize traffic to [AMP pages](#), [AMP in Ad Manager](#)
- Increase AMP coverage focusing on top landing pages
- Optimize ads implementation for AMP by ensuring amp:non amp density
- Adopt technical implementation & UX best practices on AMP

Need more revenue training?

Through Google Skill Shop, we have developed a 6 part fundamental course to help you and your staff learn more about [Driving Advertising Revenue with Google Ad Manager](#).