



AD COPY CHAMPIONSHIPS:

TESTS, TRICKS, & TACTICS TO
CRAFT THE PERFECT PPC ADS

NetElixir[™]
search marketing solved



ABOUT NETELIXIR

OUR TEAM: 120+ fanatically analytical search marketers, operating in three countries.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS: We are a Premier Partner of both Google and Bing.

OUR VALUE: We combine our expertise and our proprietary technology to generate demand for your digital storefront and convert it into sales





DECODING WHAT MAKES PEOPLE CLICK

- DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY
- PAID SEARCH & SHOPPING
- SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION
- PAID SOCIAL
- AMAZON MARKETING
- LXRGUIDE - PAID SEARCH
RECOMMENDATION ENGINE

2017 FINALISTS

Google



OMMA
AWARDS

- Google Search Innovation Award
- OMMA Award for Search Marketing: SEM Campaign
- US Search Award for Best PPC Management Software Suite



ABOUT ISMAA VIQAR



Content Manager, Editor at NetElixir

- Rowan University alumna.
- Editorial & art background.
- Over 62,000 retail PPC ads written and edited.
- Leader of the Ad Lab Project at NetElixir that aspires to combine the rigor of data analytics and the art of creating compelling ad messages.

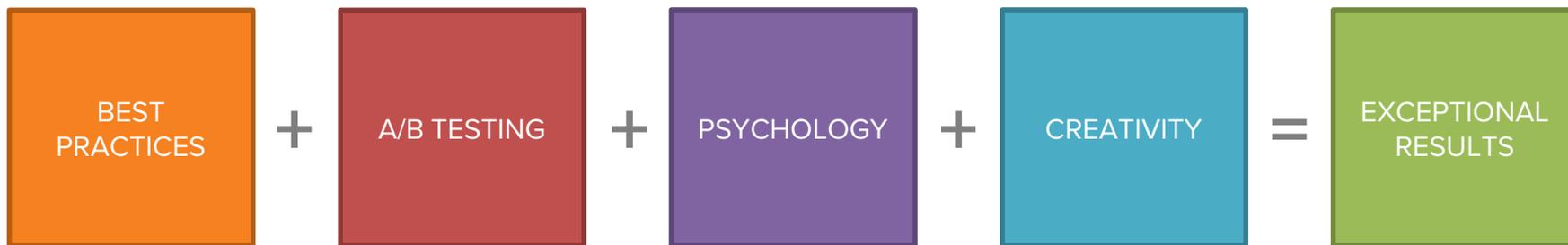


Connect with Ismaa:

www.linkedin.com/in/ismaa-viqar

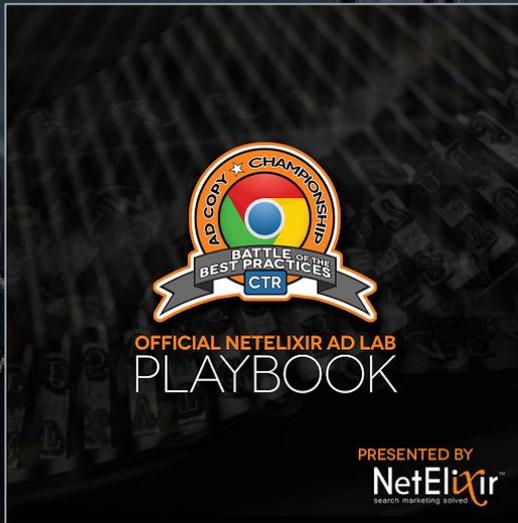
ABOUT THE AD LAB PROJECT

The Ad Lab Project was created to help our clients apply science and math to the art of copywriting.



TWO WAYS TO DO MORE

Read the Follow Up Playbook



Get a Complimentary Holiday Ad Copy Audit



www.netelixir.com/copyaudit

AGENDA

- METHODOLOGY
- SAMPLE ADS
- THE TESTS + INSIGHTS
- Q&A



METHODOLOGY

The Test:

- Which ad copy “best practices” are truly the best?

Timeline:

- February – September 2017

The Data Set:

- Sampled from client ads in Google AdWords across 100+ retail clients
- Removed ad copies with less than 100 clicks.
- Analyzed over 60,000 remaining ads to collect our data.
- Indexed our data using the average CTR in our study.

CTR = Click-through rate (clicks ÷ impressions = CTR)

CVR = Conversion rate (conversions ÷ click = CVR) [for our insights]



SMALL NOTE

NetElixir recommends that you make sure all your standard text ads have been switched over to the new format, Expanded Text Ads (ETAs). All tests follow this protocol.

BEFORE	AFTER
<p>New York Budget Hotel</p> <p>Ad www.example.com/NewYork</p> <p>Book comfortable hotels in New York City. Students Save 20%</p>	<p>New York Budget Hotel - Best NY Hotel Rates in Seconds</p> <p>Ad www.example.com/NewYorkCity/Budget</p> <p>Book stylishly comfortable hotels in New York City today! Students save 20%.</p>

BEFORE	AFTER
<p>New York Budget Hotel</p> <p>Ad www.example.com/NewYork</p> <p>Book comfortable hotels in New York City. Students Save 20%</p>	<p>New York Budget Hotel - Best NY Hotel Rates in Seconds</p> <p>Ad www.example.com/NewYorkCity/Budget</p> <p>Book stylishly comfortable hotels in New York City today! Students save 20%.</p>

H1 - H2

Path 1/Path 2

Description





**LET THE
GAMES BEGIN!**



ROUND 1



ACTION VERBS IN
HEADLINES



Does an action verb in Headline 1 have any effect on CTR?

Example 1: No action verb.

Positive Promotions® - Free Everyday Shipping

 www.positivepromotions.com/Official_Site/Custom-Items ▼ (800) 207-0583
For Promotional, Educational, Health, Safety, Recognition and Reward Activities.

Example 2: “Shop” is the action verb.

Shop Herrschners Official Site - Hassle-Free Returns Everyday.

 www.herrschners.com/Satisfaction/Guaranteed ▼
Yarn, Knit & Crochet Tools, Cross Stitch, Needlework, Crafts And More. Shop Now!

ROUND 1: ACTION VERBS IN HEADLINES



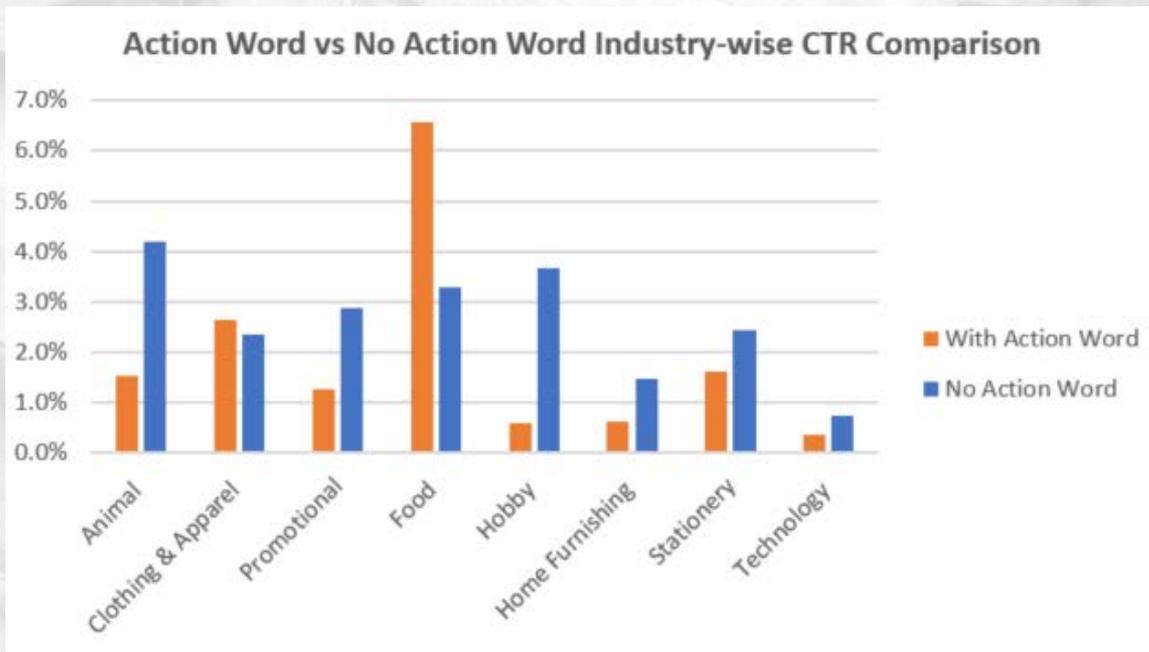
THE WINNER:

NO ACTION
WORD IN H1



No action word in H1 had a higher CTR (2.2%) vs. having an action word in H1 (1.55%).

However, with action word in H1 had a slightly higher CVR (5.71%) vs. having no action word (5.23%).



ROUND 1: THE DATA

- Building **brand credibility** before trying to sell seems work better for many categories.
- For impulse purchase categories, though, an action word in the headline leads to a higher CTR.

ROUND 1: THE INSIGHTS

ROUND 2



SHOP OR BUY?



“Shop Now!” and “Buy Now!” are the most commonly used CTAs. Which one works better?

33% + 10% Off at Blindsgalore® - 100% Custom Made & Ships Free

www.blindsgalore.com/Sale-Ends-Soon/Thanksgiving
Place Your Order By 11/3 & Get It By Thanksgiving Or It's Free **Shop Now!**

kittenish.com - Shop Kittenish Clothing - 50% Off Sitewide Sale

www.kittenish.com/Trends-For/Men-Women (844) 567-2723
We Have The Latest Fashion Trends For Women. Huge Selection. **Buy Now!**

ROUND 2:
SHOP OR BUY?

USER POLL

- What do you think will win out in this category?

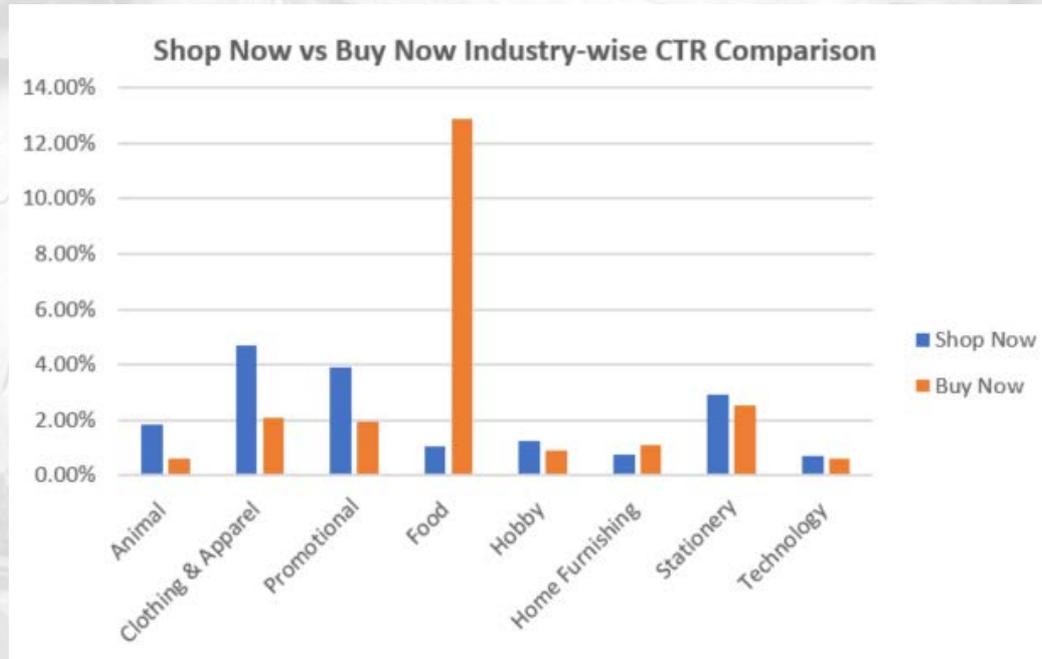




THE WINNER:
SHOP NOW!



- “Shop Now!” had a CTR of 2.55% vs. the CTR of 1.64% for “Buy Now!”
- “Shop Now!” also had a higher CVR (4.46%) versus the CVR of 3.31% for “Buy Now!”



ROUND 2: THE DATA

- In general, customers that are searching for most categories are looking to “shop around” and research their options.
- Interestingly, “Buy Now!” was dominant in the Food Industry. We believe it has to do with predefined preferences people have when purchasing food items online.

ROUND 2: THE INSIGHTS

ROUND 3



DYNAMIC KEYWORD
INSERTION (DKI)



Background: Dynamic Keyword Insertion (DKI) is an advanced feature in AdWords that dynamically changes the ad text to match the search query of the user.

Person searches for:	Your ad could look like:
dark chocolate bar	Buy Dark Chocolate www.example.com Artisan candy from San Francisco Free shipping orders \$50 more
sugar free chocolate	Buy Sugar Free Chocolate www.example.com Artisan candy from San Francisco Free shipping orders \$50 more
gourmet chocolate truffles	Buy Chocolate www.example.com Artisan candy from San Francisco Free shipping orders \$50 more

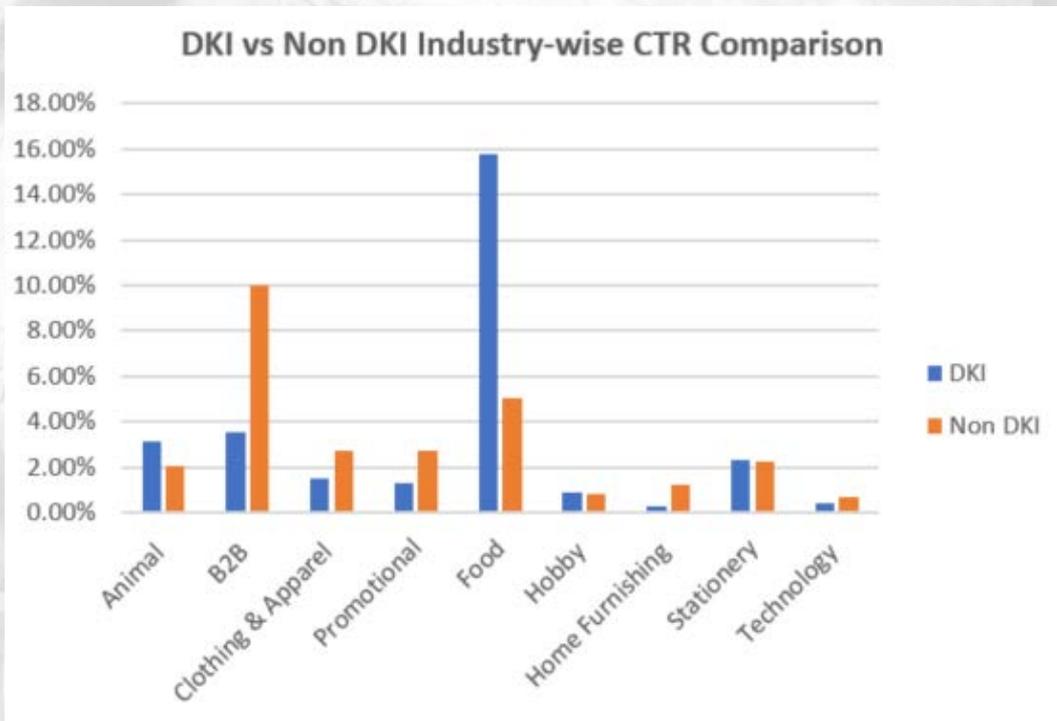
ROUND 3: DYNAMIC KEYWORD INSERTION



THE WINNER:
NO DKI IN HEADLINE 1



- Non-DKI had an average CTR of 2% and DKI had an average CTR of 1.45%.



ROUND 3: THE DATA

- This came as a big surprise to our team!
- We expected DKI ads to win since we believed searched liked seeing the exact words they had searched for appear in the ad copies.
- While for B2B it was understandable that this shouldn't matter, we were surprised to see Non-DKI beat DKI in more personal categories, like Hobbies.
- Again, Food deviates heavily from the rest of the results. We believe this supports our early round findings about user preferences for specific foods.

ROUND 3: THE INSIGHTS

ROUND 4



FAST OR FREE
SHIPPING?



What's more important to someone: Fast Shipping or Free Shipping? We were curious, too.

American® Frame Coupons - Huge Savings Available Daily.

Ad www.americanframe.com/Promotions/Save-Big ▼

4.8 ★★★★★ rating for americanframe.com

Fine Quality Products, Low Prices & **Fast Shipping** No Minimum Required. Buy Now!

Shop Ames Walker Official Site - Get **Free Shipping** Everyday

Ad www.ameswalker.com/Official-Site/Wide-Selection ▼ (877) 525-7224

4.8 ★★★★★ rating for ameswalker.com

Browse Our Wide Selection of Support Hosiery, Maternity Wear, and Accessories.

ROUND 4: FAST VS. FREE SHIPPING

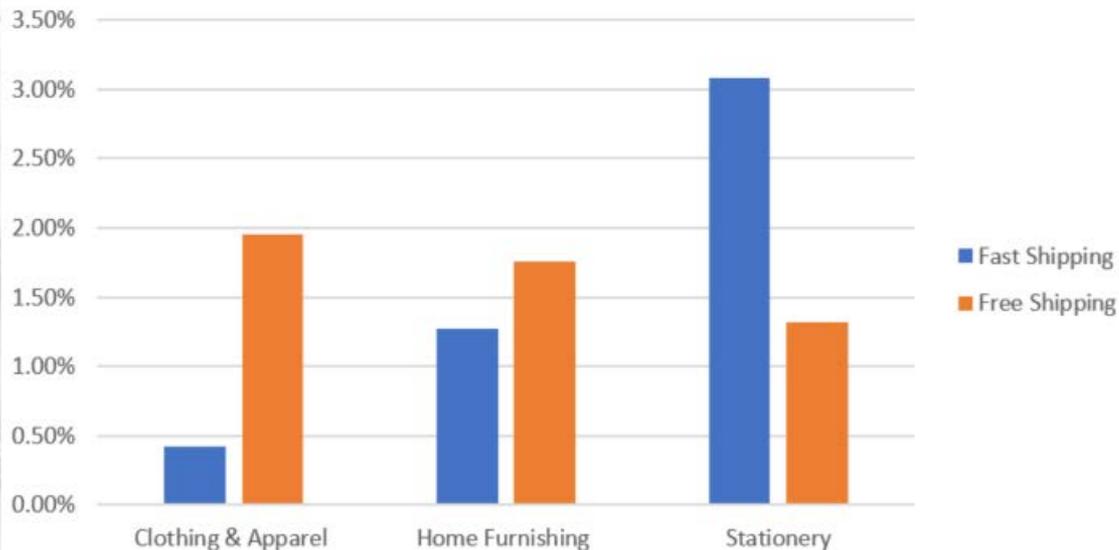


THE WINNER:
FREE SHIPPING



- “Free Shipping” had an avg. CTR of 1.8% vs. “Fast Shipping” which had a 1.03% CTR.
- Interestingly enough, “Fast Shipping” had a better CVR (14.49%) when compared to “Free Shipping” (2.6%).

Fast Shipping vs Free Shipping Industry-wise CTR Comparison



ROUND 4: THE DATA

- **Free Shipping** is commonly accepted to be one of the most powerful retail promotions.
- Interestingly caveat: “Fast Shipping” emerged as a clear winner for stationery. We believe this may have been skewed by a higher percentage of business customers in our data set.

ROUND 4: THE INSIGHTS

ROUND 5



HIGH QUALITY VS.
WIDE VARIETY



- We wanted to find out if there was a preference for copy that advertised the quality of products, versus the breadth of the selection offered by the advertiser.

Shop e.l.f. Cosmetics Online - Professional Yet Affordable

www.elfcosmetics.com/Affordable/Makeup

You'll Love Our **High-Quality** Lineup Of Gorgeous **Makeup**. Free Shipping Over \$25!

Shop At Shiekh.com - Up To 80% Off & Free Shipping

www.shiekh.com/

Dresses, **Shoes**, Handbags, & More at Shiekh® **Wide Variety!**

ROUND 5: HIGH QUALITY VS. WIDE VARIETY

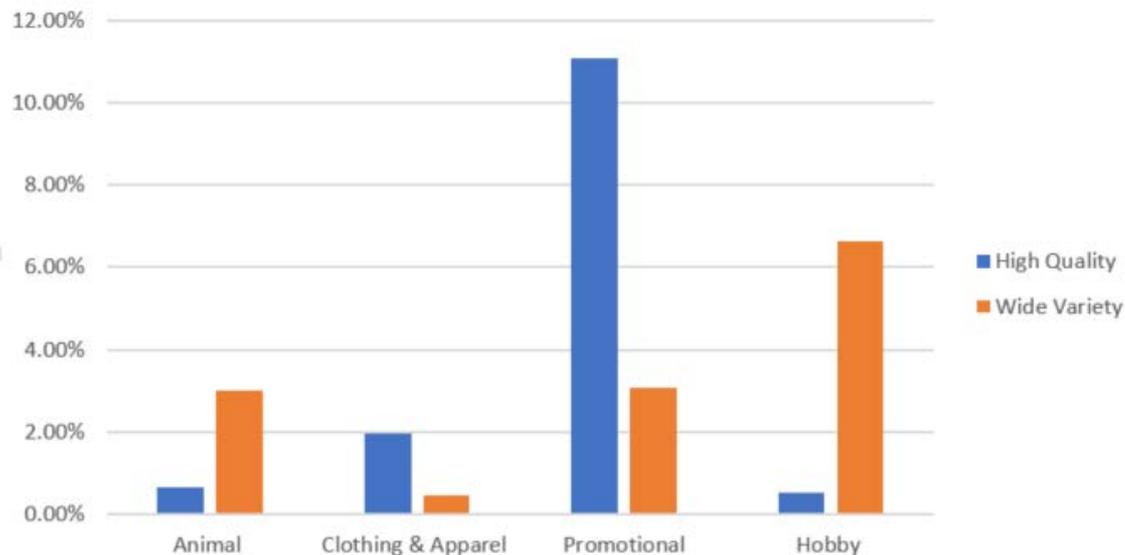


THE WINNER:
HIGH QUALITY
(KIND OF)



- “High Quality” had an avg. CTR of 1.58% vs. “Wide Variety” at 0.71%.
- CVR for “High Quality” (3.76%) was also more than that of “Wide Variety” (2.95%).

High Quality vs Wide Variety Industry-wise CTR Comparison



ROUND 5: THE DATA

- This seems to be a category-specific preference.
- Customers want more choice in certain categories like Hobbies but for others (where they seem to know exactly what they want) such as Promotional Items, quality had greater importance.
- **We recommend** the best-selling book by Prof. Sheena Iyengar – **The Art of Choosing**.
- You'll be able to gain a deeper insight into the categories where choice plays a critical role and at what point the number of choices available become too much.

THE INSIGHTS

ROUND 6



TRADEMARK™
SYMBOLS®



- Does having a trademark or registered trademark symbol in your ad really make a difference to people searching for specific products or services?

thepaperstore.com - **The Paper Store™** - A Unique Shopping Experience

Ad www.thepaperstore.com/ ▼ (844) 480-7100

Find **the** Perfect Gift from Top Brands & Designers. Shop Our Collections Online.

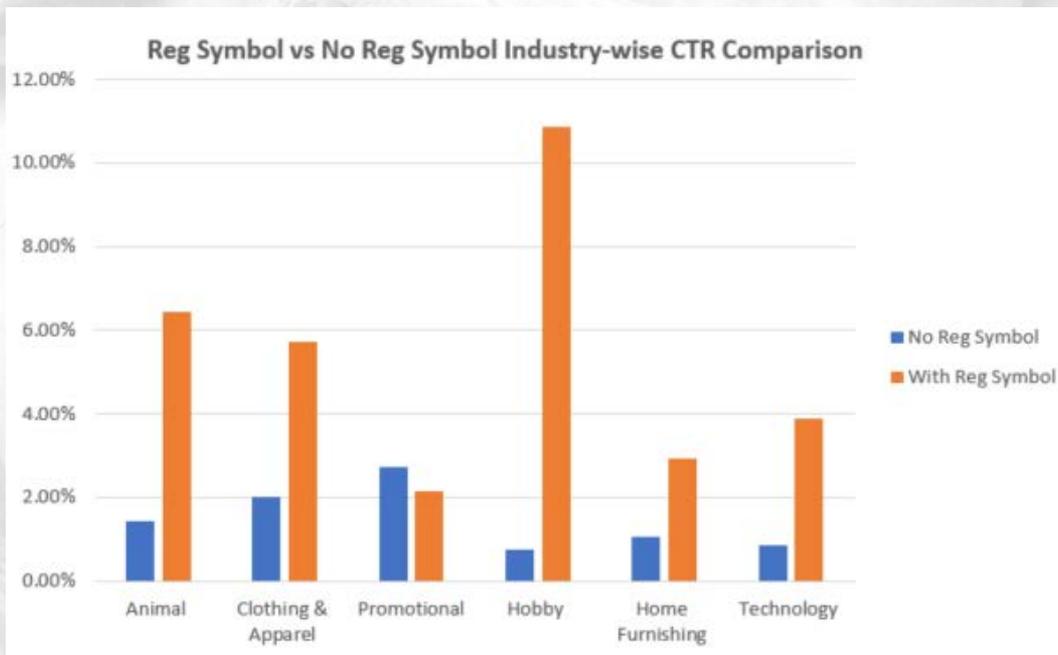
ROUND 6: TRADEMARK™



THE WINNER:
TRADEMARK SYMBOL



- After seeing too small a dataset with the TM symbol, we relied on a more robust dataset that used Registered Trademarks.
- With ® = higher CTR (4.3%) vs no ® (1.6%)



ROUND 6: THE DATA

- Much like user reviews and awards, trademarks act as validation and trust symbols.
- Adding the trademark symbol with your brand in the ad copy may seem to be a trivial thing but for customers, it helps legitimize your brand.
- To understand the impact of symbol on user behavior, check out this powerful article by Psychology Today:

[More Than Words: Five Ways to Unleash the Power of Symbols.](#)

ROUND 6: THE INSIGHTS

ROUND 7



BRANDED HEADLINES



Does branding still matter in a world where commoditization has crept into nearly every facet of business?

Century 21 Apparel - Free Shipping On Orders \$75+ - c21stores.com

Ad www.c21stores.com/ ▼

Huge Selection of Designer Men, **Women** & Kid's **Apparel**. Savings Up To 65%.

Pet Supplies Sale- Get Free Shipping Over \$49

Ad www.jefferspet.com/Official-Site/Pet-Supplies ▼ (800) 533-3377

Browse Thousands Of Quality **Pet Supply** Items. Low Price Guarantee Everyday.

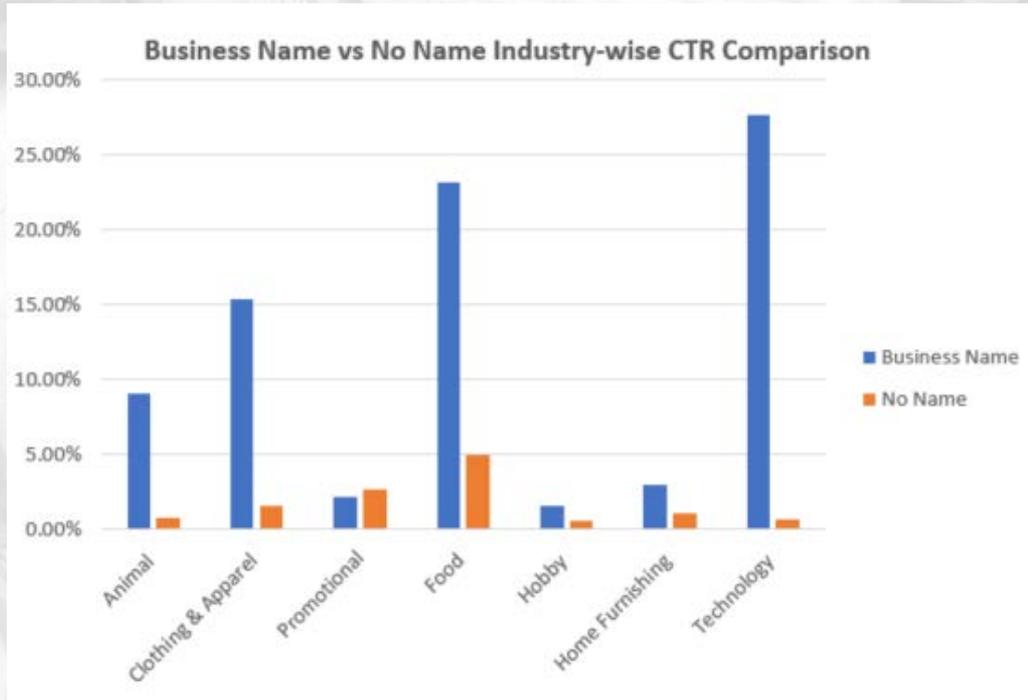
ROUND 7: BRANDED HEADLINES



THE WINNER:
BRANDED ADS



- Business name = avg. CTR of 6% & CVR of 7.8%.
- No business name = avg. CTR of 1.38% & CVR of 4.11%



ROUND 7: THE DATA

- Branding still matters. **BRANDING STILL MATTERS.**
BRANDING STILL MATTERS!
- Like adding the Trademark Symbol, the very mention of your brand name legitimizes your ad messaging.
- We have recognized substantial ad copy performance lift by adding the words – “Official Site” – along with the brand mention in the headline.

ROUND 7: THE INSIGHTS

ROUND 8



NOW OR TODAY?



We know that globalization and the instant economy has made us less patient. But how much less? Is today good enough, or do consumers need validation NOW?

Shop Mignon Faget Jewelry - Derived From Natural Forms.

Ad www.mignonfaget.com/ ▼ (800) 375-7557

Explore Our Unique Collections To Find Your Forever Jewelry. Order Today!

Shop American® Frame - America's Most Trusted Framers

Ad www.americanframe.com/Easy-Upload/Print-And-Frame ▼

Get Fine Art Digital Printing And Custom Frames At Wholesale Prices. Order Now!

ROUND 8:
NOW OR TODAY?

USER POLL

- What do you think will win out in this category?

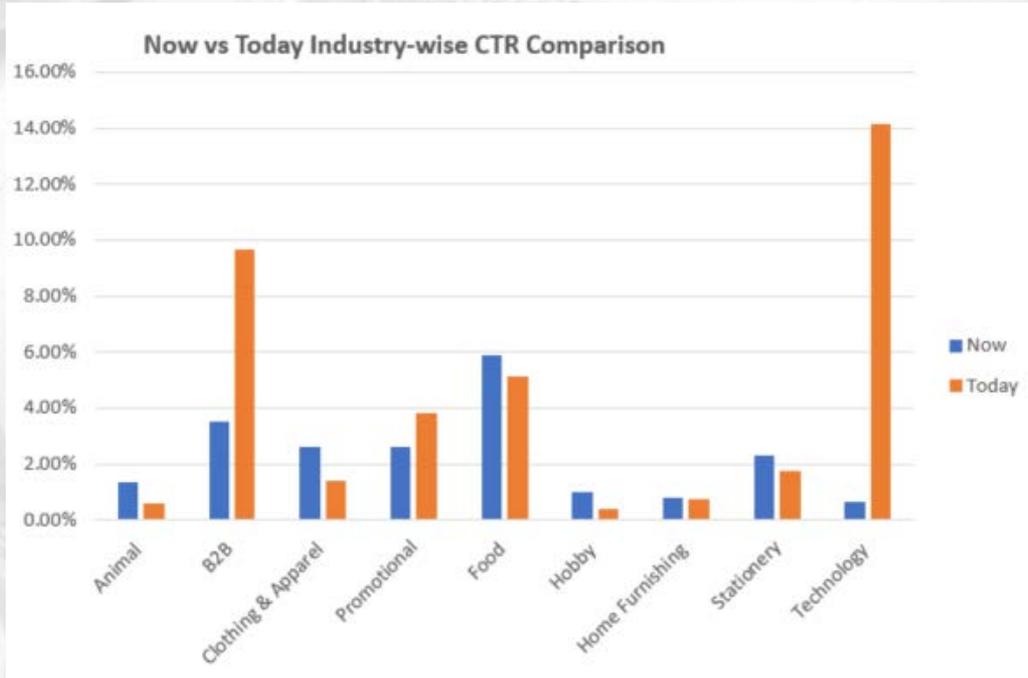




THE WINNER:
NOW

X=

- “Now” had a higher CTR (1.95%) versus “Today” (0.98%)
- Interestingly, “Today” had a CVR of (9.05%) and “Now” had a CVR of 4.38%.
- “Now” = better CTR, “Today” = better CVR



ROUND 8: THE DATA

- There is ample research in the field of psychology that shows why people prefer NOW (immediate rewards/gratification).
- As online shoppers, our desire to prefer NOW (seek immediate gratification) is caused by multiple factors including impulsiveness, tendency to avoid delay, and minimizing uncertainty.
- Interestingly, business customers in our data set tend to prefer “Today”, likely because they play by different rules than standard consumers.
- Here’s a recommended article from Psychology Today:

[10 Reasons We Rush for Immediate Gratification](#)

ROUND 8: THE INSIGHTS

ROUND 9

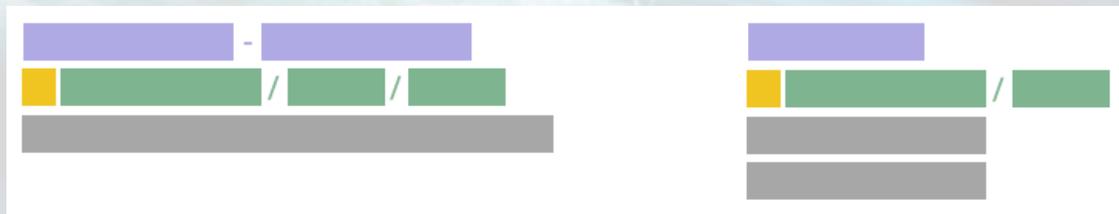


MAXING CHARACTER
LIMITS



With Expanded Text Ads, the number of characters we were able to utilize increased.

Is it better to use the full character limit whenever possible? We tested 3 different pieces of the ad: The primary headline, the secondary headline and the description.



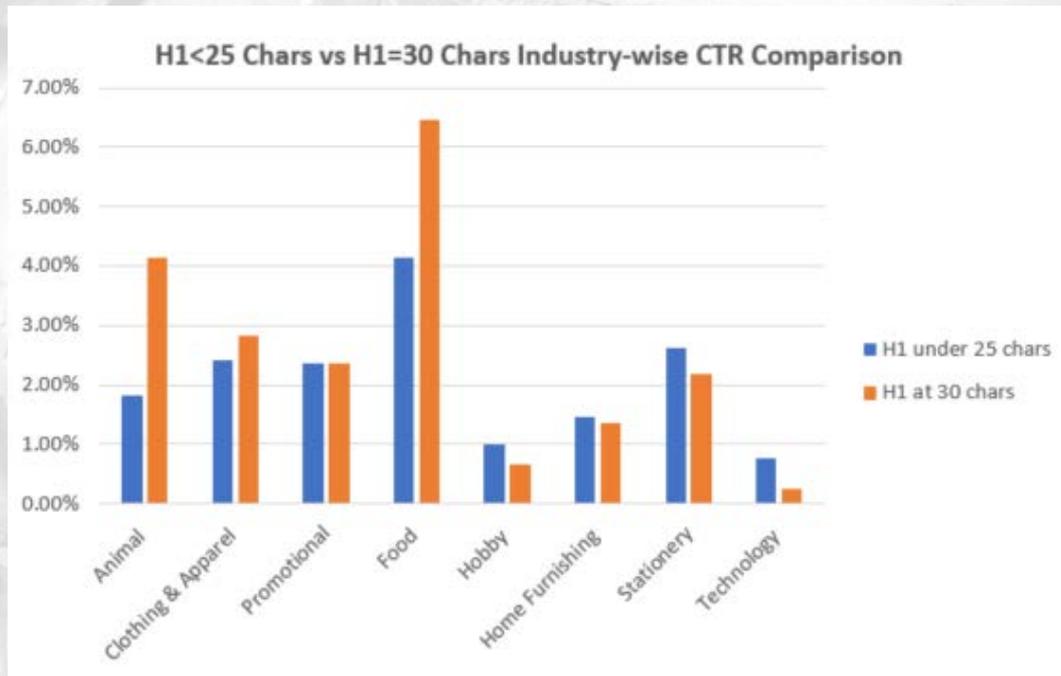
ROUND 9: MAXING CHARACTER LIMITS



H1 WINNER:
A TIE!



- This one was a tie since H1 at 30 characters won by less than 0.20% CTR.
- Surprisingly, H1 at 30 characters had an average CVR of 9.8% whereas H1 under 25 characters had an average CVR of 4.9%.



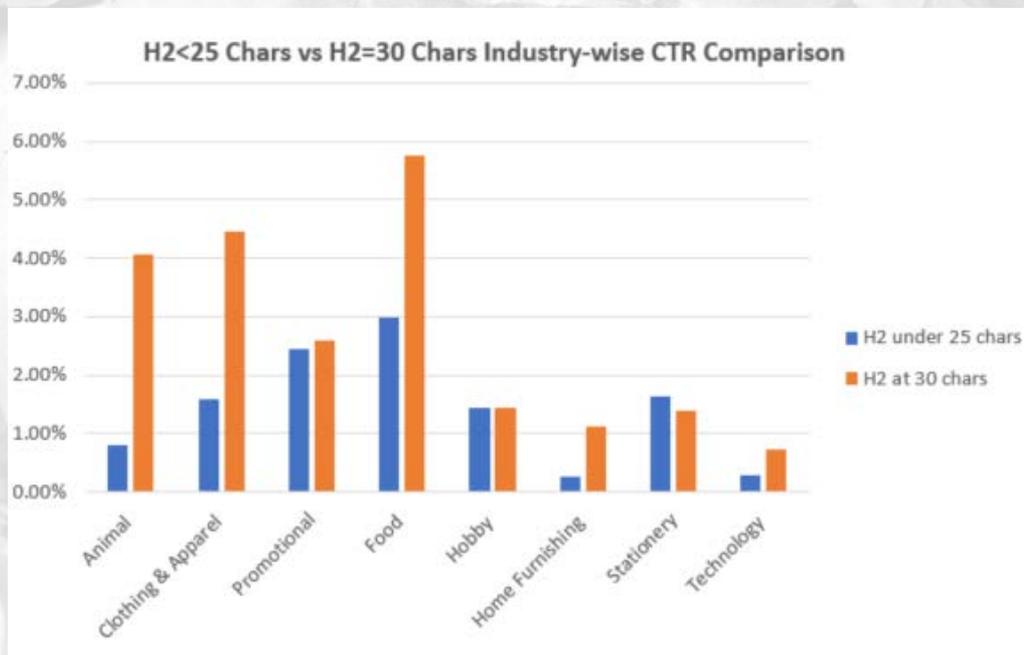
ROUND 9: H1 DATA



H2 WINNER:
MAX CHARACTERS



- H2 at 30 characters had an avg. CTR of 3.77% vs. H2 under 25 characters (1.43%).
- CVR for H2 at 30 characters (4.65%) was also higher than under 25 characters (2.98%).

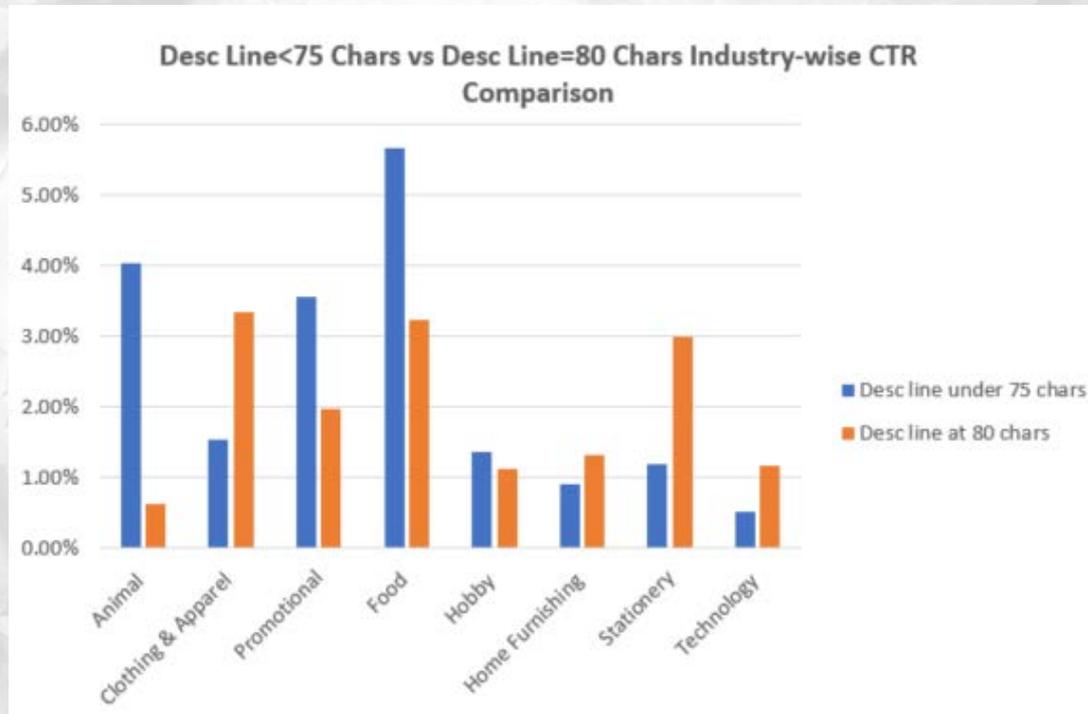


ROUND 9: H2 DATA

DESCRIPTION WINNER:
A TIE!



- Descriptions at 80 characters won by less than 0.5%
- However, Descriptions under 75 characters had a higher CVR (5.85%) vs. Descriptions at 80 characters (4.94%).



ROUND 9: DESCRIPTION DATA

- There wasn't a large "win-margin" between long and "not-so-long" descriptions. There was clearly a category-correlation at play.
- We recommend focusing on the best practices being shared in this presentation to make your characters COUNT!
- Give your ads enough content to get your point across, but don't add "fluff" just to hit character limits.

ROUND 9: THE INSIGHTS

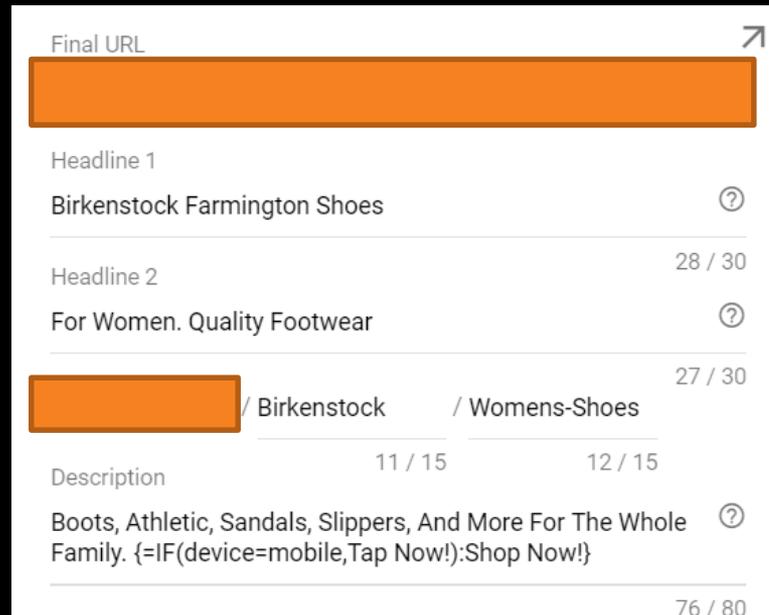


MOBILE
BEST PRACTICES



MOBILE BEST PRACTICES

- IF Function differentiates the message for users on desktop vs. mobile
- Example messaging in Description: “Find Plenty Of Seasonal & All-Year Styles For Everyone. Free Shipping Over \$50. **{=IF(device=mobile, Tap Now!):Buy Now!}**”
- Example of the Ad Preview in AdWords below.



The screenshot shows an AdWords ad preview for Birkenstock shoes. The ad is displayed on a mobile device. The final URL is redacted with a blue bar. The headline 1 is "Birkenstock Farmington Shoes" with a character count of 28 / 30. The headline 2 is "For Women. Quality Footwear" with a character count of 27 / 30. The description is "Boots, Athletic, Sandals, Slippers, And More For The Whole Family. {=IF(device=mobile, Tap Now!):Shop Now!}" with a character count of 76 / 80. The ad is shown in a mobile view with a blue bar at the top and a search bar below it.

Final URL 

Headline 1
Birkenstock Farmington Shoes 

Headline 2 28 / 30
For Women. Quality Footwear 

 / Birkenstock / Womens-Shoes

Description 11 / 15 12 / 15
Boots, Athletic, Sandals, Slippers, And More For The Whole  Family. {=IF(device=mobile, Tap Now!):Shop Now!}

76 / 80



MOBILE BEST PRACTICES

- Example of IF Function dimension options via Google Support on AdWords Help.

Dimension	Attributes	Code	Example
device	mobile	<code>{=IF(device=mobile, text to insert):default text}</code>	<code>{=IF(device=mobile, "Quick, Easy, Mobile Booking"): "Best price guarantee"}</code>
audience	any valid user list name in your account	<code>{=IF(audience IN(<userlist1>, <userlist2>), text to insert):default text}</code>	<code>{=IF(audience IN(returning visitors, cart abandoners), 30%): 25%}</code>



MOBILE BEST PRACTICES

- Use sitelinks, too.
 - CTR versus Mobile Sitelinks of 117% and an 18% uplift in CTR on ads overall when they are used. (Google Inside AdWords, 2016).
 - Sitelinks: Dog Supplies, Cattle Supplies, Equine Supplies, Shop on JeffersPet

JeffersPet.com - JeffersPet Online Store

Ad www.jefferspet.com/Official_Site ▼ (800) 533-3377

Low Price & Satisfaction Guarantee. Free Shipping > \$49. Order Now!

Same Day Shipping · Low Price Guarantee

Rated A+ – Better Business Bureau (BBB)

Dog Supplies

High-Quality Items at Low Prices.

Keep Dogs Happy & Healthy!

Cattle Supplies

Best Selection On Quality Items.

Find Everything For Your Cattle.

Equine Supplies

Everything Your Horse Could Desire.

Find Vaccines, Supplies, & More!

Shop On Jefferspet.

Sign Up For Our Emails -Receive

10% Off On Next Order. Shop Today!



MOBILE BEST PRACTICES

- Use Ad Extensions.
 - Example: Location, Call, App, Review, Callout, Price, Structured Snippets, etc. (Inc. sitelinks)
 - Another Example bel

The image shows a mobile search advertisement for Ashley Stewart. Red arrows point from labels on the left to specific parts of the ad:

- Headline 1 – Headline 2** points to the main title: **Ashley Stewart® Official Store - Latest In Plus Size Fashion**
- Path 1/Path 2** points to the URL: **Ad www.ashleystewart.com/official** and the phone number: **(605) 271-6130**. A red arrow also points from the text **Call Extension** to the phone number.
- Description** points to the text: **Find the Newest Dresses, Jeans, Tops, Bottoms, Lingerie, Plus Size Clothing.**
- Callout Extensions** points to the text: **Learn About Diva Dollars · Join Our Mailing List · Plus Sizes 12-32 · Dresses, Tops, Knits**
- Location Extension w/ Hours** points to the text: **📍 1548 N Olden Ave, Ewing Township, NJ - Open today · 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM**
- Sitelinks** points to two columns of links:
 - Shop Our New Arrivals** (Our New Arrivals For the Season Calling All Trendsetters!)
 - Find A Store** (Find A Location Near You! Come See Our In-Store Specials)
 - Shop Our Dresses** (Head-turning Dresses and More Dresses For Any Occasion!)
 - Web Exclusives** (Show-stopping Picks Only Found Here Shop Our Web Exclusive Collection)



MOBILE BEST PRACTICES

- Use Ad Extensions.
 - Example: Location, Call, App, Review, Callout, Price, Structured Snippets, etc. (Inc. sitelinks)

Buy Premium Steaks Online from - The Kansas City Steaks Company

Ad www.kansascitysteaks.com/Premium-Steaks/Since-1932 ▼

4.7 ★★★★★ rating for kansascitysteaks.com

Taste flavorful **beef** from the premier stockyards in **Kansas**. Order online today!

Steaks to your door · 10 Free Top Sirloins · Satisfaction Guaranteed · Premium Steaks Since 1932

Filet Mignon
from **\$34.95**
Most Popular Steak

Prime Rib Roast
from **\$64.95**
Boneless and Trimmed

100% Grass Fed Beef
from **\$49.95**
Just Incredible Flavor

Review Extension →

Callout Extensions →

Price Extensions →





RECAP

X=

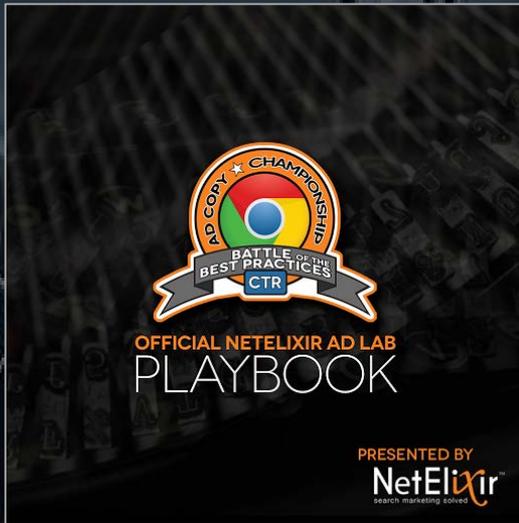
THE WINNERS!

- No Action Word in H1
- Shop Now!
- Non-DKI
- Free Shipping
- High Quality
- Trademark Symbol
- Brand Name
- Now
- Tie: H1s at 30 characters & under 25 characters
- H2s at 30 characters
- Tie: Descriptions at 80 characters & under 75 characters



TWO WAYS TO DO MORE

Read the Follow Up Playbook



Get a Complimentary Holiday Ad Copy Audit



www.netelixir.com/copyaudit



QUESTIONS?



ISMAA VIQAR
Content Manager, Editor
content@netelixir.com