



# NetElixir™ + amika:

## CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

# Driving DTC Sales In A Quickly Changing Landscape

NetElixir and amika launched their partnership at the end of February 2020. A historically popular salon brand, amika was pivoting to a direct-to-consumer e-commerce sales model. Less than four weeks into this new partnership, both teams would need to pivot again — addressing challenges in real-time in a rapidly changing world.

Our teams navigated through these unprecedented times through collaborative communication, the rapid adoption and expansion of new Google solutions, and innovatively adapting to fast-changing consumer behaviors. NetElixir was able to drive amika's business forward with a 222% increase in paid search revenue, a 115% increase in new users, and a 37% improvement in conversion rate.



# Moving Beyond The Salon And Retail Partners To DTC E-Commerce

Before amika could start to address the pandemic's impact on shopper behavior, they needed to finalize building a solid DTC foundation. It was necessary to balance the new e-commerce goals with the importance of their salon and retail partnerships, specifically Sephora. NetElixir focused on using Google search ads to analyze the impact of core-brand terms, limiting potential conflicts while still driving return. We ensured amika can co-exist with these partners while driving profitable revenue. As the year progressed, NetElixir continued to implement a test-learn-grow approach to help amika stay competitive with retail partners. Across Google search ads, NetElixir expanded responsive search ads to include 'free samples,' 'free shipping,' 'free returns,' and the rewards program, allowing Google to display the best ad to consumers.

On the customer side, many shoppers had discovered the brand at one of amika's retail partners or Amazon. NetElixir helped amika curate a full whole brand experience online, incentivizing shoppers to buy directly. NetElixir segmented Google search brand campaigns into two groups, prospecting and retargeting. We then approached each audience differently, adding specific ad copies focused on discounts for new shoppers, launching rewards for returning shoppers, and testing the impact of using 'official amika site' to improve the click-through rate. NetElixir also layered in Google audience targeting solutions, further driving sales for both shoppers discovering the brand via search and shoppers who were deliberating a new purchase.

As a new DTC brand, amika did not yet have the same brand equity as some of their competition. Online sales would naturally grow with the increase in brand awareness. NetElixir identified YouTube as a solution that would increase awareness, helping more people discover amika as a brand. Our YouTube advertising targeted both relevant in-market and affinity audiences. Specifically, we focused on driving traffic to newly launched products to drive both discovery and deliberation. From March 2021 to June 2021, we drove over 800k views and a watch time of over 538k minutes.



# Stuck At Home And Shopping Online

With brick and mortar stores mostly closed and states enforcing quarantine restrictions, shoppers were quickly migrating to online. E-commerce sales exploded, with competition and consumer behavior also shifting day-to-day.

Shopping online vastly increases the number of brands available to shoppers. While a local store may only have 10 brands of haircare, the choices online are endless. Shoppers were more likely to discover and try new products simply due to the fact that they were being exposed to more new products. amika's policies of free shipping, free returns, and free samples, which were all called out in ad copy, encouraged consumers to give the products a try while minimizing any potential feeling of risk.

NetElixir boosted amika's visibility with Shopping campaigns, helping users browsing for new hair care products discover amika during their moments of deliberation. Our team scaled Shopping ads to achieve maximum brand exposure. Between March 2020 and June 2021, Shopping ads accounted for 42% of the ad spend and generated over 70% of the total impressions.

Being stuck at home also required people to take care of their own hair rather than visiting a salon. For many, this meant new products. Some dyed their own hair, even trying out fantasy colors like pink, as mentioned in Allure magazine in May 2020. These home hair dyers needed products to maintain their color, making amika product lines focused on color care suddenly more relevant. NetElixir worked in real-time to assure that new product launches were optimized for budget, visibility, and ad copy.



Others stepped away from long daily styling routines and searched for easy-care products. amika's cult-favorite dry shampoo rapidly became a hero product as everyone working from home looked to minimize haircare routine. NetElixir and amika used this to help remarketing efforts, and expose dry shampoo shoppers to other favorite amika products.

amika was able to capitalize on this by offering "hair care for all." Their site offers a hair quiz that helps users discover the best hair routine for their needs, which the NetElixir team highlighted with Sitelinks. Our team also tested ad copy for different hair types, calling out specific products for blondes, curls, and more. We included the phrase "hair care for all" as a key brand statement in headlines and descriptions to emphasize the breadth of products available.

NetElixir also identified the opportunity for amika to stand out and capitalize on pandemic trends of self-care and treating yourself. As people were looking for ways to make the passing days stuck at home special, they sought out high-end products and little splurges. A bath with a hair repair mask was a mood-boosting visual that connected with consumers. The NetElixir team tested storytelling ad copy with calls-to-action like "treat yourself" and "take time for yourself" to emphasize this facet of the brand.

# Building Brand Transparency And Trust

Like most brands during the early pandemic, amika was dealing with supply issues. Often, products were sold out, had shipping delays, or both. Rather than making false promises to their customers, amika made their issues clear. NetElixir helped make sure this information about shipping delays was included in a Sitelink and on the amika homepage. NetElixir and amika know brand trust is key to DTC relationships. By being transparent about supply chain delays, amika proved themselves to be an open, honest, and trustworthy company.

The NetElixir team worked closely with amika to react quickly to changes. We ensured the Shopping feed was up-to-date at all times, and that we weren't running ads promoting sold-out products. As budget restrictions changed on the amika side, NetElixir made adjustments to bidding to keep driving for growth regardless of day-to-day adjustments.



# Connecting With Consumers Through Corporate Responsibility

The challenging landscape of the past 18 months included not just the pandemic, but also many sociopolitical conversations. As a brand, amika has always been proud to be an authentic 'friend to all.' Using Google search and trend data, NetElixir was able to show amika the continued value in prioritizing authenticity and values, including that DTC brands were more likely to be searched alongside social causes. The teams worked together to make sure consumers were aware of amika's position on issues in real-time.

amika gave 5% back to stylists in need during the height of the pandemic. NetElixir incorporated this into Google site links and expanded text ads as needed, making sure that consumers were aware of the impact of their purchase. During this time, NetElixir also supported amika's sustainability push, testing to see how new-to-brand vs. brand-loyal audiences responded to related messaging.

These tests helped amika establish what role sustainability played in discovery vs. deliberation, ensuring each amika ad was shown to the right customer at the right time. Contextual bidding has been key to amika's growth, and to enable this at scale, Target ROAS and seasonality adjustments were adopted across search campaigns. Assuming the lifetime value of a new customer made up for lost margins on the first sale, NetElixir adopted a higher TROAS goal for returning customers and intentionally aimed for a lower TROAS for a new customer. By using TROAS, NetElixir was able to drive amika's e-commerce growth at scale.



# Driving Sales From Discovery To Deliberation

With the help of Google solutions, NetElixir and amika were able to adapt their e-commerce strategies in a fast-changing world. By connecting with consumers at home, building consumer trust, and highlighting corporate responsibility, NetElixir was able to grow amika's brand awareness. More consumers discovered amika directly through Google search, shopping, and YouTube. NetElixir focused on deliberation through the remarketing expansion and use of TROAS. Ultimately, despite the challenges of the past 18 months, the NetElixir and amika partnership has expanded the brand and driven online sales to new heights.

