Auction-time Bidding (ATB) - Recommended Testing Approach

This document is your guide to successfully rolling out ATB for search. Please ensure you have watched either DQ&A's training video or Google's latest update on ATB bid strategies.

Key Considerations & Recommended Approach

Glossary	Description
One-Time Warm Up (1TWU)	The 1TWU period is the initial learning period of the ATB bid strategy. - See point 2.1 below. Once learning is complete, all future activity added to the ATB bid strategy portfolio will not require a learning period.
Default Conversion Goal (DCG) & Bid Strategy Conversion Goal	DCG is the primary conversion goal set at the Advertiser, under 'Advertiser Settings'. Your bid strategy conversion goal will be the ATB test portfolio's primary conversion goal. - When first activating ATB, both conversion goals get passed into Google Ads as the primary conversion goal across all campaigns. - It's important that these both match one another. - These can only be one of - Floodlight, Google Ads Conversion, Formula Column.

Step	Summary
Minimum Requirements for ATB	Your chosen campaigns for testing will make up the ATB test portfolio. This portfolio needs 30 days' worth of activity to launch, and a minimum of 15 conversions if using tROAS - or - 0 (zero) conversions if using tCPA. *Please note - because of split-testing, the ATB test portfolio must meet double the conversions (i.e. 30 conversions for tROAS).*
1. Pre-Launch (Preparing Setup)	1.0 Decide on the appropriate primary conversion goal & apply as Advertiser DCG. 1.1 Analyse the last 30 days of campaign performance & decide on those to make up the testing portfolio. 1.2 Create Drafts & Experiments of these chosen campaigns in Google Ads. 1.3 In SA360, create a paused 'dummy' campaign to apply the ATB bid strategy against. 1.4 Create ATB bid strategy & apply against dummy campaign - only. 1.5 Apply bid strategy data exclusions where appropriate. 1.6 Ensure Advertiser engines are synced & all test campaigns labelled for easy reporting.
2. Launch (Warm-up Period)	2.0 In launching the ATB test on a dummy campaign, the bid strategy will complete its learning period (a.k.a. 1TWU) without making sub-optimal changes to performance. 2.1 1TWU will be complete after a minimum of 7 days, plus standard conversion delay. 2.2 Optimise Experiments as normal, alongside Original campaigns.
3. Post-Launch (Testing Period)	3.0 Once ATB bid strategy is out of learning, apply ATB strategy to Experiment portfolio and remove the dummy campaign. 3.1 Plan for a test period of 4 - 6 weeks, minimum, to achieve statistical significance. 3.2 Ensure the test can run uninterrupted & doesn't overlap any business critical periods. 3.3 If optimisation is required, make no more than 1 change per week, at ±15% variance. 3.4 Monitor Bid Strategy Health & implement actions where appropriate.
Sanity Checker	A detailed checklist from Google to query your setup: LINK.

Recommended Approach In Greater Detail

1. Pre-launch (Preparing Setup)

1.0 Decide on the appropriate primary conversion goal & apply as Advertiser DCG.

1.1 Analyse the last 30 days of campaign performance & choose similarly performing campaigns to make up the testing portfolio.

1.2 Create [Drafts & Experiments](#) of these chosen campaigns in Google Ads.
- Create Drafts of all campaign(s) to be used in the ATB test portfolio.
- Create Experiments within each of the Drafts with below conditions:
  - Cookie-based test.
  - Traffic split is 50%.
  - Do not apply an end date (to allow the test to extend if required).
  - Follow account-wide naming conventions.

1.3 In SA360, create or choose a paused 'dummy' search campaign to apply the ATB against.
- This will be applied only throughout the learning period; then replaced by Experiments.

1.4 Create ATB bid strategy & apply against dummy campaign - <u>only</u>.
- Set the conversion goal KPI in line with 30 days' performance & appropriate constraints.

1.5 Apply bid strategy [data exclusions](#) where appropriate, to ensure the bid strategy doesn't consider any extraordinary periods of performance.

1.6 Ensure Advertiser engines are [synced](#) & all test campaigns [labelled](#) for easy reporting.

2. Launch (Warm-up Period)

2.0 In launching the ATB test on a dummy campaign, the bid strategy will complete its learning period (a.k.a. 1TWU) without making sub-optimal changes to performance.
- ATB bid strategies cannot be paused, and so require this workaround.

2.1 1TWU will be complete after a minimum of 7 days, plus standard conversion delay.
- You can see ATB status by adding the [Auction-Time Status](#) column at Campaign scope.

2.2 Optimise Experiments and Original campaigns as normal, while the ATB bid strategy is learning.

3. Post-Launch (Testing Period)

3.0 Once ATB bid strategy is out of learning, apply ATB strategy to Experiment portfolio and remove the dummy campaign.

3.1 Plan for a test period of 4 - 6 weeks, minimum, to achieve statistical significance.

Bid Strategies Testing Roadmap Theme	Action	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Test - Preparation	Prepare & plan for test	▨									
	Launch Google Ads Experiment & Run Sync In SA360		▨								
	Create Labels & Bid Strategies		▨								
	Wait 7 Days For ATB Bid Strategy To Calibrate		▨								
Test - Live	Activate Bid Strategy on ATB Test Portfolio			▨							
	Bid Strategy Performance Period (A/B Test)				▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	
Test - Evaluation	Evaluate Results										▨

3.2 Ensure the test can run uninterrupted & doesn't overlap any business critical periods.

3.3 If optimisation is required, make no more than 1 change per week.
- Keep changes to the portfolio KPI within ±10% variance.
- Use a GDS dashboard to easily report on performance of control vs. test campaigns.

3.4 Monitor [Bid Strategy Health](#) & implement actions where appropriate.