



DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS

Performance Max With Vehicle Feeds

Case Study



THE CHALLENGE

High Popularity, Low Visibility

Performance Max with feeds campaigns remain among the most popular campaigns for dealerships.

The performance varies drastically between dealerships, and Google provides limited Performance Max campaign insights, so it can be challenging to determine what is working and what's not.



OUR SOLUTION

Comprehensive Performance Study

We conducted a study to analyze multiple factors that could affect performance.

We searched for trends, similarities, and actionable insights in accounts across our portfolio.

Case Study Scope



56

Dealerships Analyzed



6 Months

Time Period

Jan 1 – Jun 30, 2026



Dealership Size

Combination of big, medium, and small dealerships.



Location Scope

Across the US with a larger concentration in the Midwest.



METHODOLOGY

We collected detailed performance data across key operational and marketing parameters:

- Budgets & Performance KPIs
- Targeted locations & Inventory size
- Display / Search distribution
- Click-to-Call button optimization on landing pages

Then, conducted analysis to determine trends and actionable insights.

KEY DRIVERS

Factors Affecting the Campaign Performance



Budget Size



**Search / Display Network
Distribution**



Location Targeting



Inventory Size



**New Car vs. Used Car Campaign
Performance**



CTA Buttons & VDP Quality



**Competitive Pricing & Inventory Feed
Quality***

While these factors play an important role in campaign performance and conversion rates, they were not evaluated within this study and therefore excluded from the analysis.



1. Budget Size

Cost Per Lead vs. Cost Per Store Visit across monthly spend tiers

< \$500 / mo

Low Spend Tier

\$78.33

\$30.31

High lead cost volatility due to limited budget depth.

\$500 – \$1,000 / mo

Moderate Tier

\$70.35

\$41.61

Strong showroom visit volume with healthy Cost Per Lead reduction.

SWEET SPOT

\$1,001 – \$2,000 / mo

\$67.22

\$71.21

Lowest Cost Per Lead (\$67.22) and optimal efficiency tier.

> \$2,000 / mo

High Scale Tier

\$73.57

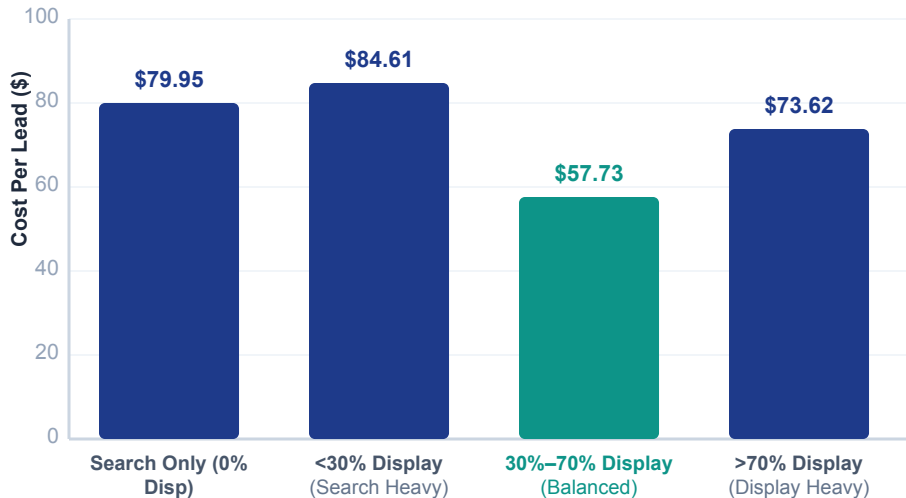
\$68.61

Diminishing marginal returns as display reach saturates.

2. Search & Display Network Distribution

Cost Per Lead Efficiency

Optimal Allocation: Balanced Network Split Yields Lowest CPL (\$57.73)



OPTIMAL EFFICIENCY PEAK

\$57.73 Cost Per Lead

Achieved with 30%–70% Balanced Display Split

Allocation Impact Breakdown

Balanced Split (30%–70%)

Lowest cost per lead (\$57.73) with optimal network synergy.

Search-Heavy (<30%)

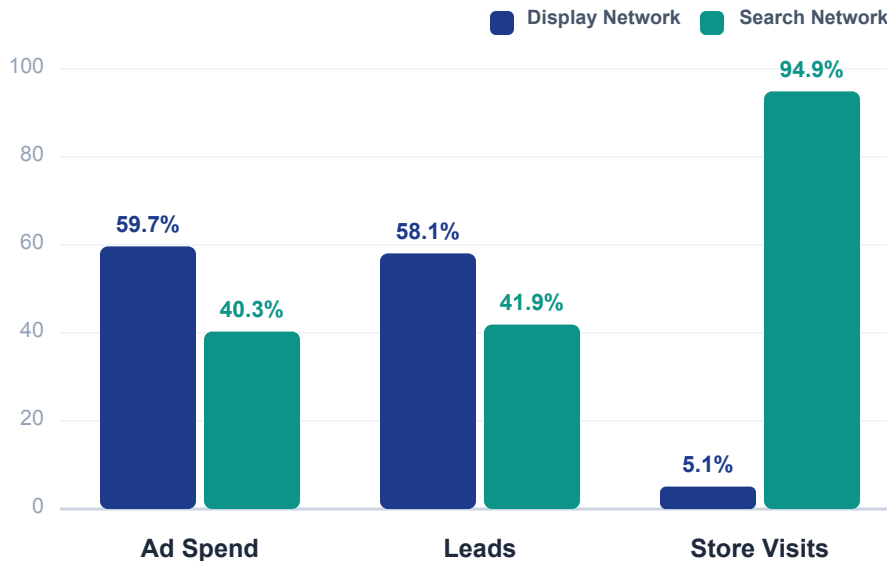
Higher CPL (\$84.61) due to missed low-cost top-funnel display reach.

Display-Heavy (>70%)

Cost Per Lead increases to \$73.62 as ad spend dilutes past conversion threshold.

2. Search & Display Network Distribution - continued

Network Disconnect: Display Consumes Budget, Search Drives Showroom Visits



PRIMARY STORE VISIT DRIVER

94.9% Store Visits

Search drives vast majority of foot traffic despite 40.3% spend share.

Channel Metric Breakdown

Ad Spend Split

Display: 59.7% | Search: 40.3%

Lead Generation Share

Display: 58.1% | Search: 41.9%

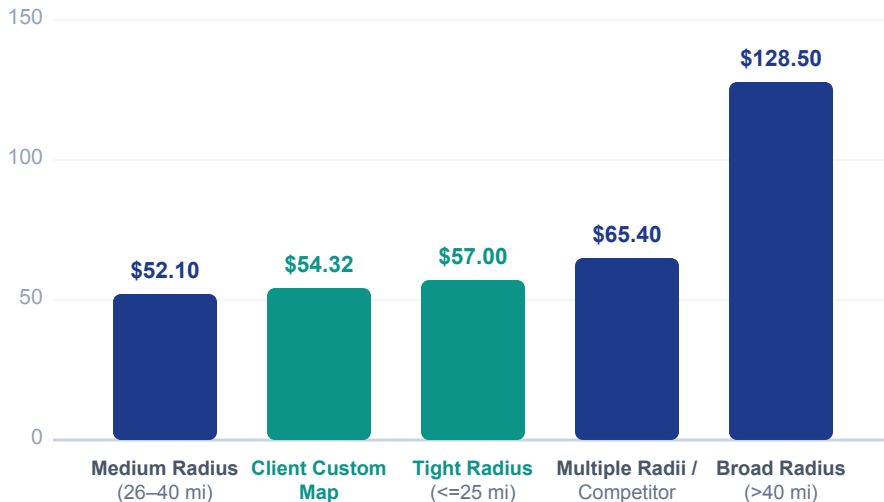
Store Visit Conversion

Display: 5.1% | Search: 94.9%

3. Location Targeting Strategy

Broad targeting radius (>40 mi) double Cost per Lead, while tight radius and custom AOR mapping drive peak efficiency.

Cost Per Lead by Targeting Strategy



LOWEST CPL SWEET SPOT

\$54.32 Custom Map CPL

Customized area maps and tight 15-25 mile radius yield maximum lead and foot traffic efficiency.

KEY GEOGRAPHIC INSIGHT

57% Lead Cost Reduction

Radius over 40 miles suffer severe cost decay. Transitioning campaigns from broad radius targeting to 15-25 mile caps or custom dealer trade maps cuts lead generation costs by over **57%**.

Location Targeting Strategy - continued

Broad targeting radius (>40 mi) doubles Cost per Lead, while tight radius and custom area mapping drive peak efficiency.

Broad Radius Penalty

>40 Miles Radius

\$128.61 CPL

22 Campaigns Analyzed

Campaigns targeting broad radius produced an average Cost per Lead that is **more than double** the cost of tighter geographic strategies due to severe ad spend dispersion.

Tight Radius Sweet Spot

15–25 Miles Radius

\$58.08 CPL

\$52.43 Cost / Store Visit

Restricting targeting to 15–25 miles (28 campaigns) significantly optimizes conversion density and local dealership visit efficiency.

Custom Map Efficiency

AOR Area Mapping

\$54.32 **Lowest CPL**

\$45.70 Cost / Store Visit

Custom area mapping (16 campaigns) delivered top lead efficiency, yielding the lowest overall CPL and lowest store visit costs.

STRATEGIC TAKEAWAY & ACTION ITEM

Cap targeting radius at 20–25 miles or utilize custom area maps

Eliminate broad targeting (>40 miles) immediately to prevent budget waste. Base geographic parameters strictly on the dealership's Area of Responsibility (AOR) or historical sales location data for maximum lead ROI.

4. Inventory Size

Robust inventory feeds significantly expand AI matching opportunities, cutting Cost per Lead by 42% compared to low stock counts.

Large Inventory Sweet Spot

>150 Units in Feed

\$53.08 CPL

\$0.35 Cost / VDP

Campaigns backed by robust inventory feeds achieve optimal efficiency. Broad inventory feeds give the Google AI algorithm significantly more matching opportunities between user queries and vehicle specifications.

Small Inventory Penalty

<75 Units in Feed

\$91.03 CPL

+71.5% CPL Inflation

Low stock counts sharply reduce efficiency, pushing CPL up to \$91.03. Restricted inventory limits signal data, creating fewer AI matching pathways for active shoppers.

STRATEGIC TAKEAWAY & ACTION ITEM

Maintain 150+ active inventory units in Performance Max feeds

Maximizing stock availability, unlocks full Google AI intent-matching capability to deliver sub-\$55 lead costs.

5. New Cars vs. Used Cars Performance

Used car campaigns maintain a balanced 50/50 Search/Display split, driving 10.8% lower CPL and 38.9% lower CPV.

Used Cars Efficiency

42 Campaigns Analyzed • Balanced 50/50 Split

\$64.96 Cost per Lead (-10.8%)

\$44.76 Cost per Store Visit (-38.9%)

Delivered lower CPL and Store Visit costs, driven by higher active shopper search intent and balanced channel mix between Display and Search.

New Cars Display Tilt

52 Campaigns Analyzed • 66.9% Display Spend

\$72.83 Cost per Lead

\$73.32 Cost per Store Visit (+63.8%)

Required higher acquisition costs due to heavy reliance on Display inventory (66.9% of spend), though effectively built model-specific consideration.

STRATEGIC TAKEAWAY & ACTION ITEM

Monitor the performance and rebalance Network allocation if that option becomes available.

Used car campaigns achieve optimal cost-per-visit (\$44.76) with a balanced 50/50 spend split. Since it's not possible to set specific Network allocations on Google, it is recommended to focus on other factors to improve the new car campaigns efficiency.

6. CTAs Strategically Placed on VDPs

Analysis of VDP CTAs categorized into Good, OK, and Bad shows optimized CTAs dramatically reduce CPL and CPV.

Good CTAs = Efficiency

25 Campaigns Analyzed • Actionable, Visible & Clean Layout

\$58.06 Cost per Lead (47% Lower)

\$44.04 Cost per Store Visit

Campaigns with prominent, actionable CTAs achieved optimal conversion rates, driving down both lead acquisition and physical store visit costs significantly.

Bad CTAs = Cost Penalty

17 Campaigns Analyzed • Missing, Broken or Untrackable

\$109.39 Cost per Lead (+88% Penalty)

\$129.25 Cost per Store Visit (193% Cost Penalty)

Essential CTAs missing, broken, or hard to follow create huge friction, resulting in nearly 3x higher cost per store visit compared to good CTAs.

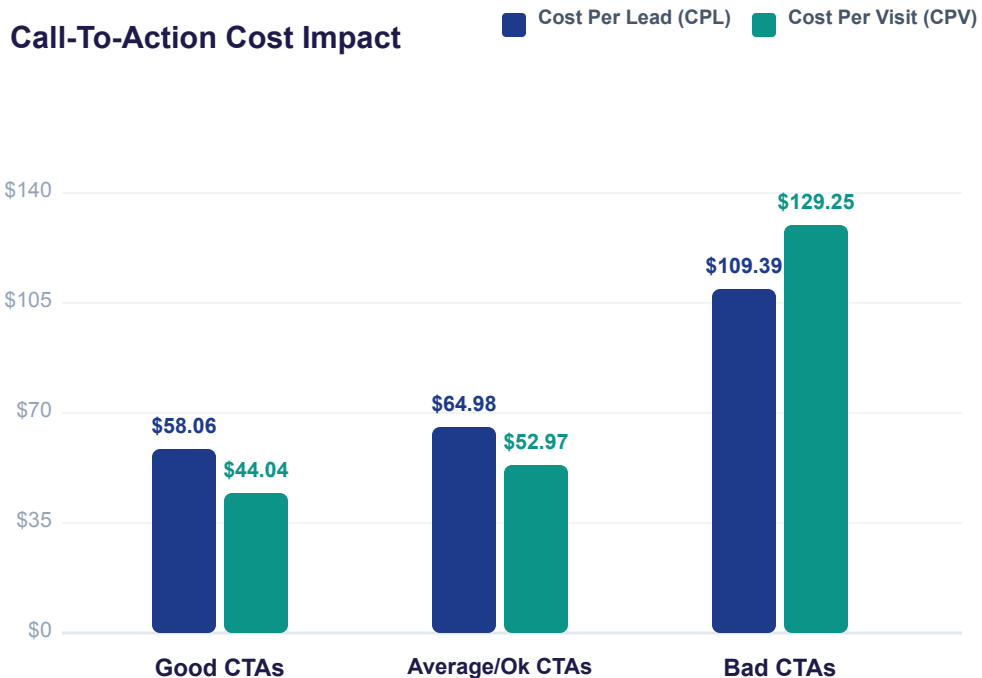
STRATEGIC TAKEAWAY & ACTION ITEM

Audit VDP CTAs & Replace Generic Buttons with Direct Actions

Replace generic CTAs ("Learn More") with direct dealership actions ("Claim Offer", "Contact Us", "Click To Call", "Get Trade-In Value", "Get E-Price"). Ensure all CTAs are fully trackable to optimize conversion paths.

6. CTAs Strategically Placed on VDPs - continued

Poor CTAs increase lead acquisition costs by 1.88x and heavily penalize store visit conversions.



STRATEGIC TAKEAWAY

Optimize VDP CTAs to Cut Lead & Visit Costs

Clear Call-to-Action messaging significantly impacts lead generation and physical store visit conversions.

Good CTAs (\$58.06 CPL)

Prominent, direct actions drive optimal conversion efficiency.

Bad CTAs (\$109.39 CPL)

Weak or untrackable CTAs were associated with an 88% higher cost per lead and nearly 3x the cost per store visit.

What's NOT Working

Key factors driving underperformance across campaign setups, targeting, and landing pages.

Location & Targeting

Broad Targeting Radius

Broad radius (greater than 35 miles).*

Inventory Selection

Small Inventory Size

Small inventory (below 75 units).

Budget Allocation

Sub-Optimal Budgets

Campaign budgets below \$500 and above \$1,500.

Landing Page Optimization

Unoptimized VDP Action Buttons

VDPs not optimized by strategically placing CTA buttons to drive action.

Network Distribution

Display Network Heavy

Campaigns with predominantly Display Network Distribution if the goal is driving leads and store visits.

* Targeting Exception

Rural Dealerships

Dealerships in rural areas might be an exception to the radius threshold due to broader market geographic coverage.

What's Working

Key factors driving strong performance and optimal ROI across campaigns.

Location & Targeting

Optimized Radius & Custom Maps

Small radius or a custom map based on the dealership's AOI or sales.

Budget Allocation

Optimal Budget Tier

Campaign budgets between \$750 and \$1500.

Network Distribution

Balanced Network Mix

Campaigns with a predominantly balanced Search (60%) / Display (40%) distribution to achieve best ROI while keeping cost/VDP low.

Inventory Selection

Healthy Inventory Size

Larger inventory (above 75 units and ideally above 150 units).

Landing Page Optimization

Strategic Call-To-Action Placement

VDPs optimized by strategically placing CTA buttons to drive action.



Thank You

Reach out to **Aronson Advertising** to launch successful
Performance Max With Feeds campaigns.