

GUIDE

Unlock the black box:  
**Four ways agencies  
can get more from  
Performance Max**



## What is Performance Max?

Google Performance Max is a campaign type focused on achieving conversion and optimisation based goals, across all Google inventory, including YouTube, display ads, search results, Discover, Gmail, and Maps.



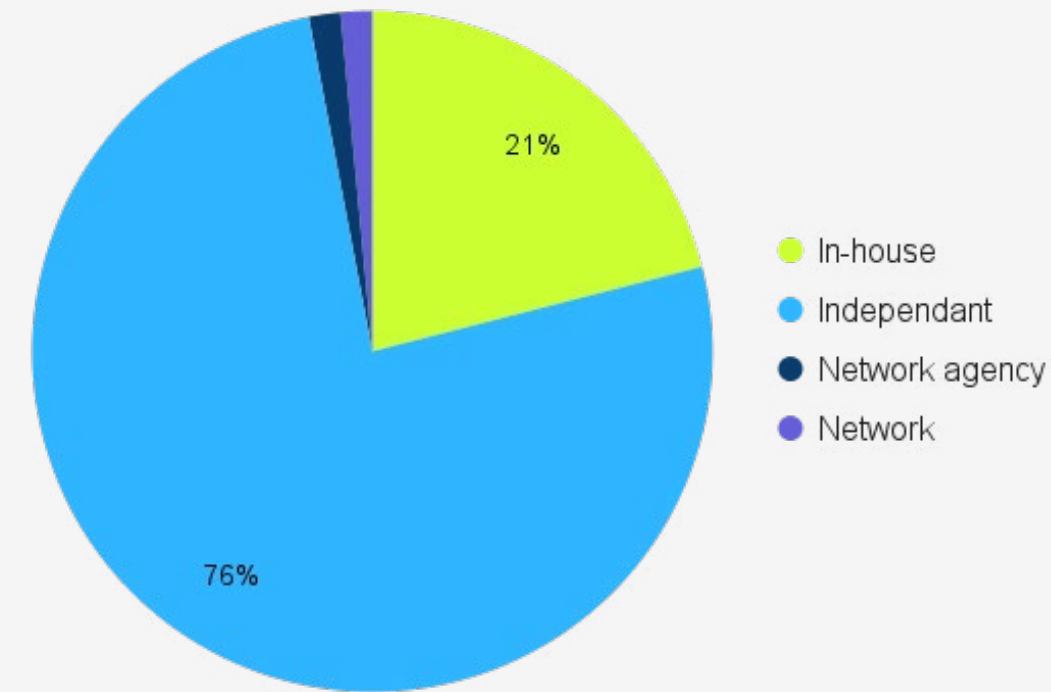
## How are global agencies adopting Performance Max?

Performance Max has been around for a few years now but are advertisers reaping the rewards they expected?

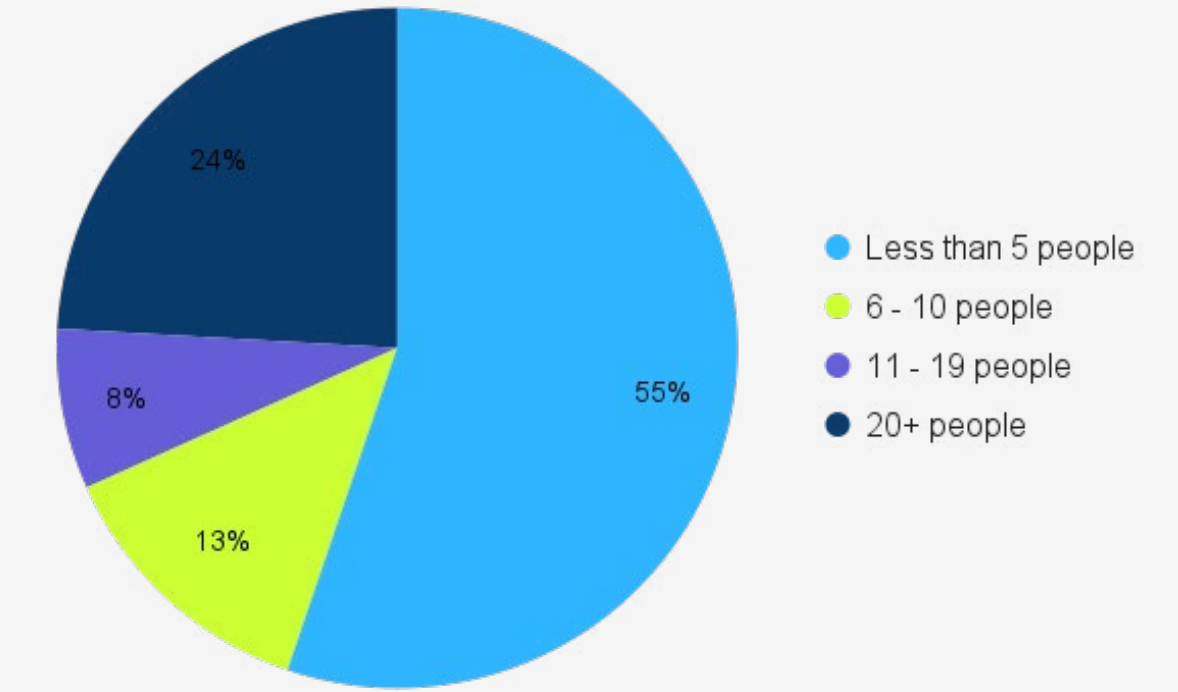
Following a survey of 70 global agencies, we wanted to understand the current rate of adoption, wins and performance weaknesses, and explore the tactics every Performance Max advertiser can deploy to gain precision and visibility into campaigns.

## Our agency survey

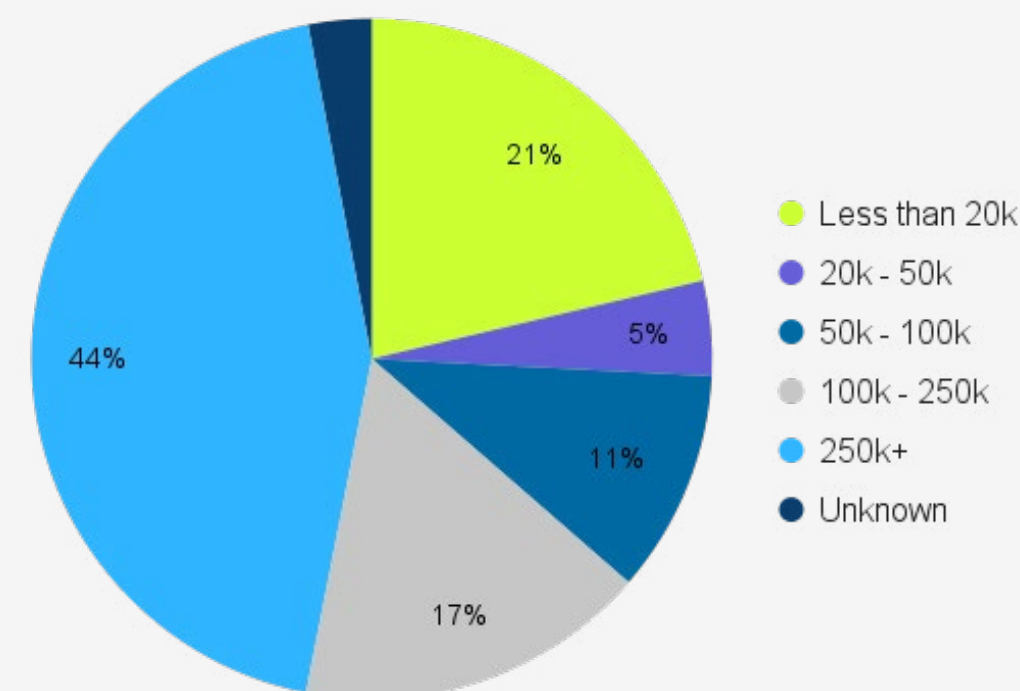
Agency type



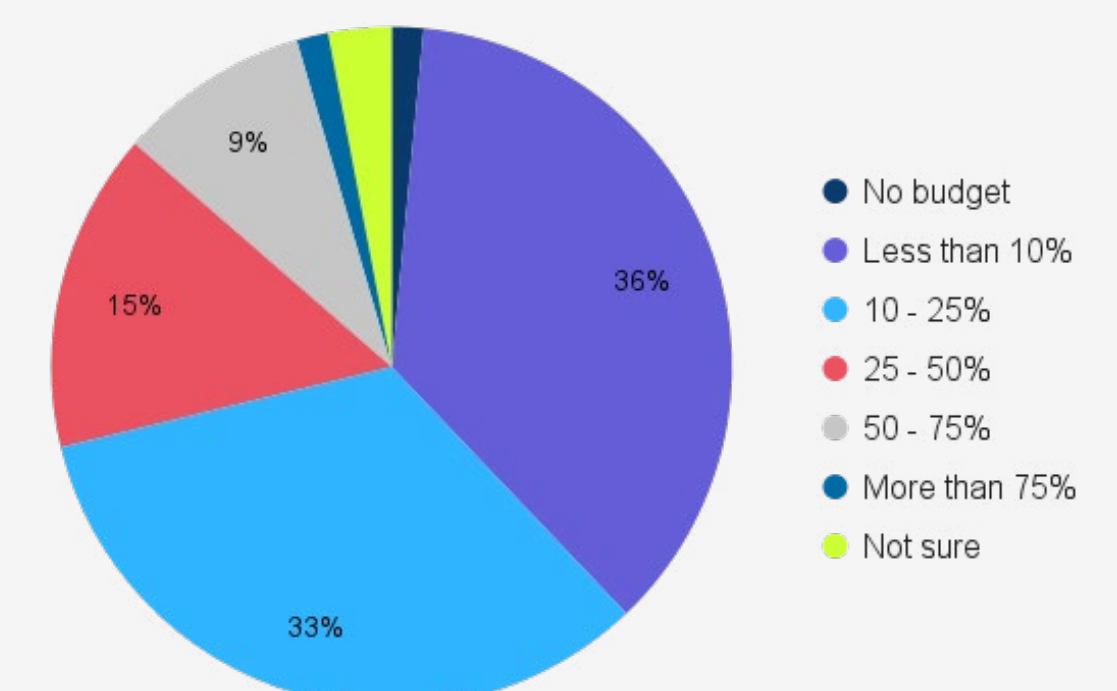
Size of paid search team



Monthly ad spend on Google



Monthly ad spend on Performance Max campaigns



## How is Performance Max complementing other campaign types?

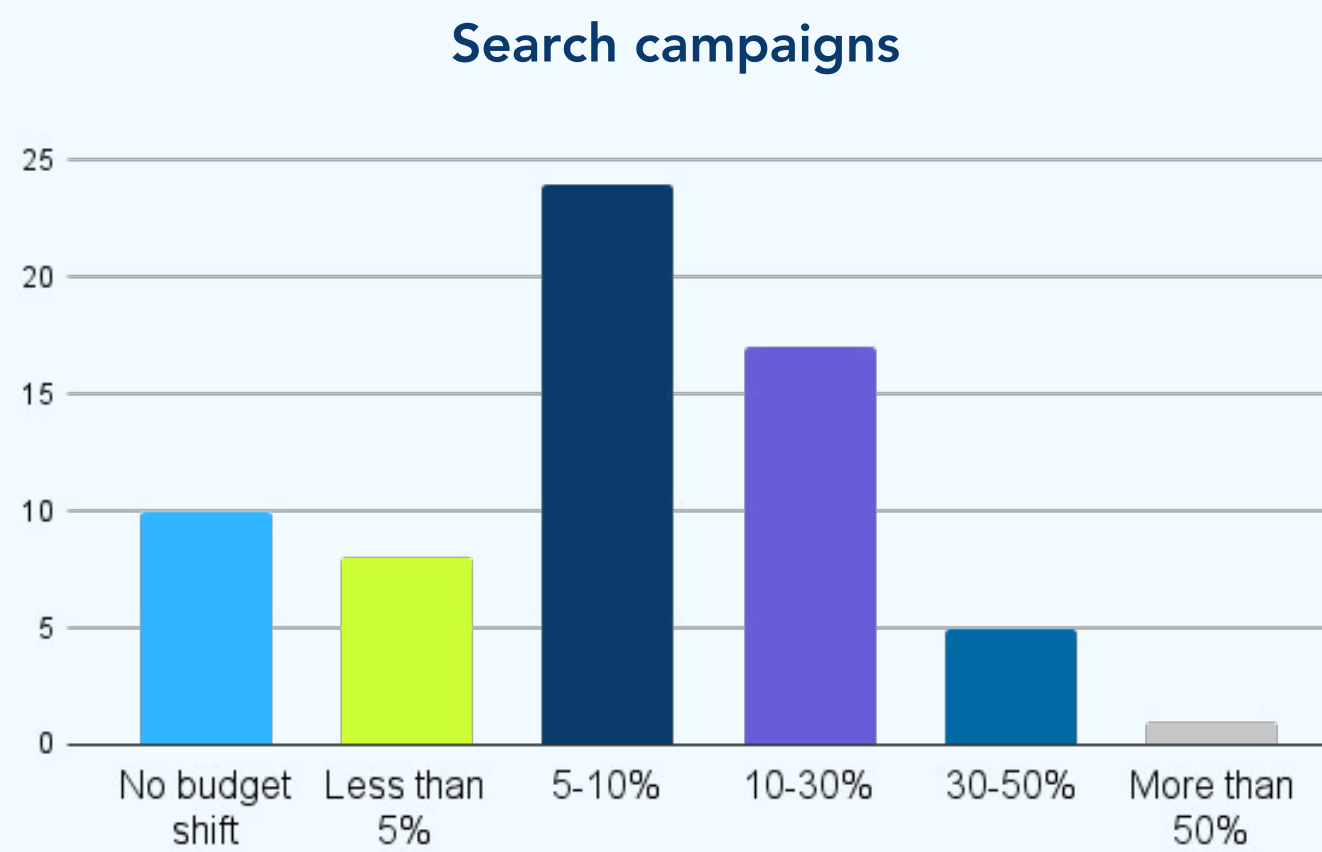
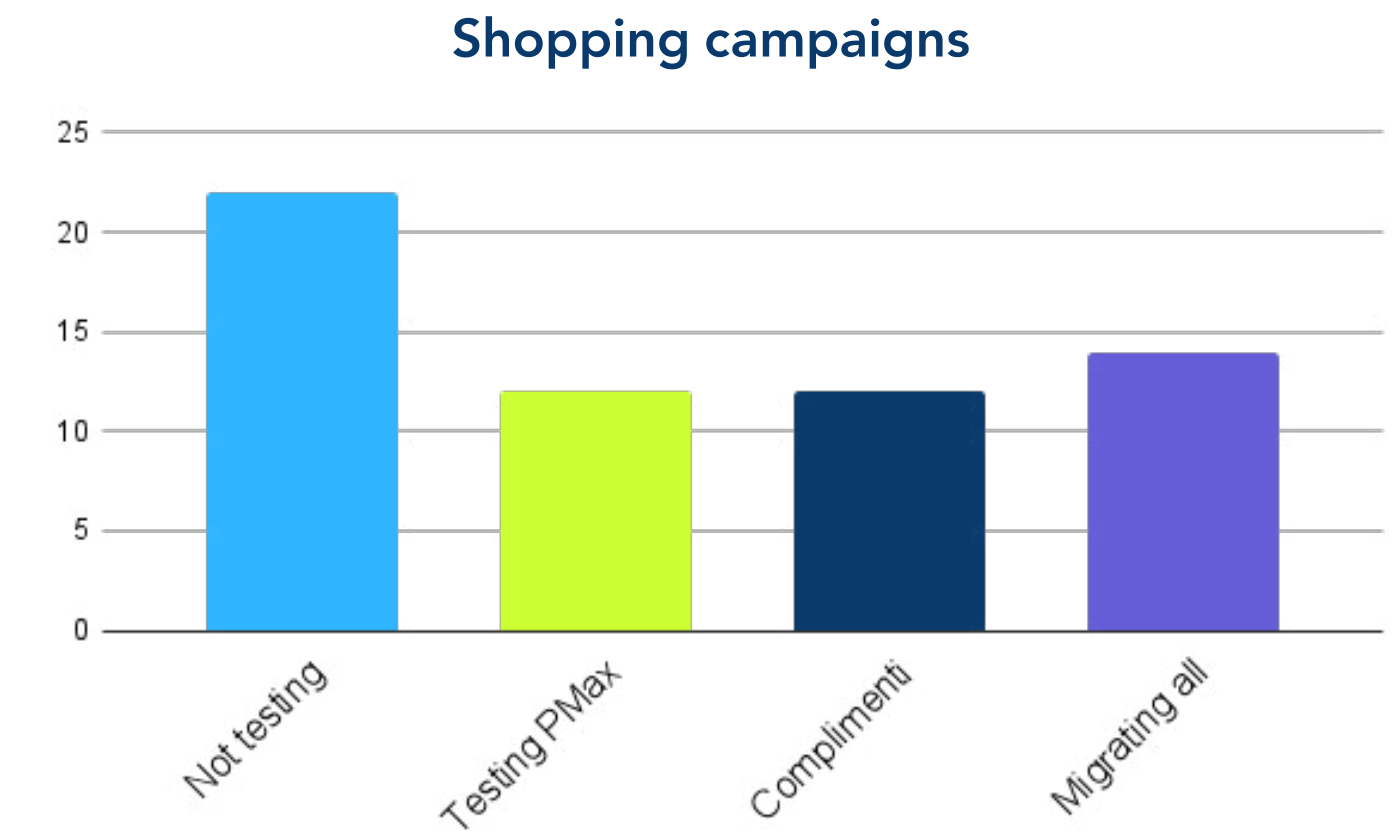
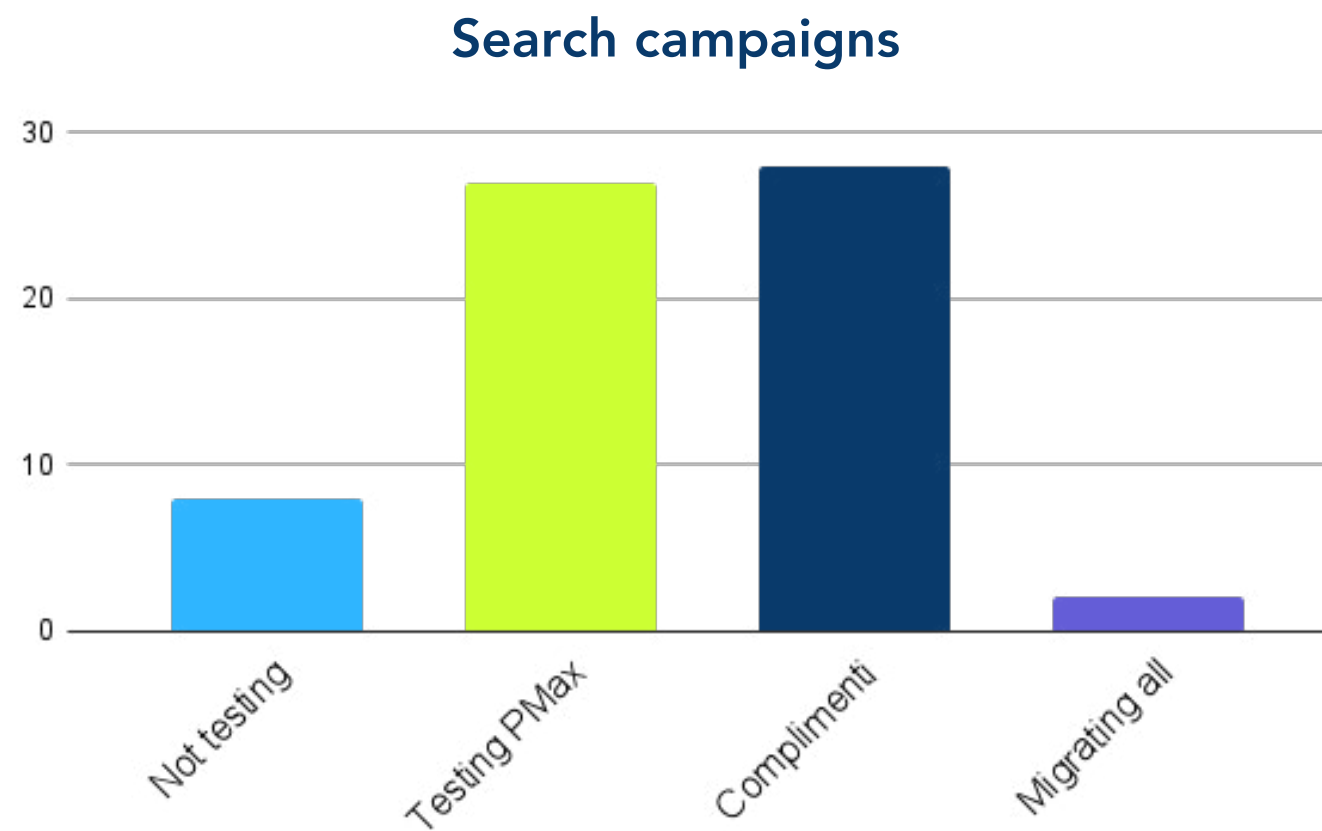
We asked agencies how they would characterize their current use of Performance Max campaigns compared to Shopping and Search campaigns.

37% are not testing Performance Max for shopping campaigns, whereas search campaigns are well complemented with Performance Max, with 85% either testing or running Performance Max alongside their campaigns.

We also wanted to understand what percent of their monthly ad spend has shifted to Performance Max from Shopping and Search campaigns.

The majority of agencies have made no budget shift for Shopping campaigns, yet Search campaigns have seen a significant increase, with 5%+ now being allocated to this campaign type.

**85%** of agencies are testing or running Performance Max alongside their campaigns



Despite its advanced audience targeting, enhanced search performance and creative optimisation features, Performance Max is not without its flaws. Infact, Adthena found that 55% of agencies using Performance Max are not seeing the full benefits and are reporting the same five key challenges, with lack of control taking the top spot.

## 5 key Performance Max challenges for agencies

1

Lack of control where automation controls almost everything

4

Impossibility to add negative keywords

2

Difficult to analyze the source of data

5

Auction Insights only leverages bid adjustments to improve results

3

Unable to see inside the Smart Bidding box

55%

of agencies using Performance Max are not seeing the full benefits

## Learn the proven workarounds

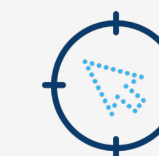
With more than 80% of agencies spending up to 50% of their monthly ad spend on Performance Max and Search campaigns as the primary use case, gaining precision and visibility into campaigns is paramount to delivering ROI and client value. Read on to learn:



How to curate your negative keyword lists to gain control and reduce inefficiency



How to enhance your copy assets for optimal performance



How to close gaps in keyword and channel coverage



How to carve out more precise audiences using search term and competitor data



## The Problem

- ✗ Without search query reports in Performance Max, how do you control what terms trigger client ads?

## The Solution

Use search term reporting in Adthena to curate your negative keyword list.

- ✓ Search term reports from Adthena shows you all the terms you're appearing on in your Performance Max campaigns.
- ✓ You can then identify terms that don't support your strategy or that cannibalize your other accounts and add them to your negative keyword list.

**23%**

lower CPCs for Casio

**Five-figure savings**

for G-Shock and VodafoneZiggo

## How G-SHOCK did it

Powered by Adthena's search term reporting, the Journey Further agency eliminated overlapping terms triggering ads (and double charges) for Casio and its watch brand G-SHOCK.

**CASIO X G-SHOCK**

1. They identified Casio brand terms that were triggering G-SHOCK Performance Max campaigns
2. By adding Casio brand terms to the negative keyword list for G-SHOCK, both brands saved money
3. G-SHOCK reduced wasted spend by five figures
4. Casio saw CPCs drop 23% because it was no longer bidding against its sister brand

Powered by Adthena, The7Stars and Avanti West Coast win Best Use of Search at the 2023 Global Search Awards.

**-32%** **+47%**

saving on brand

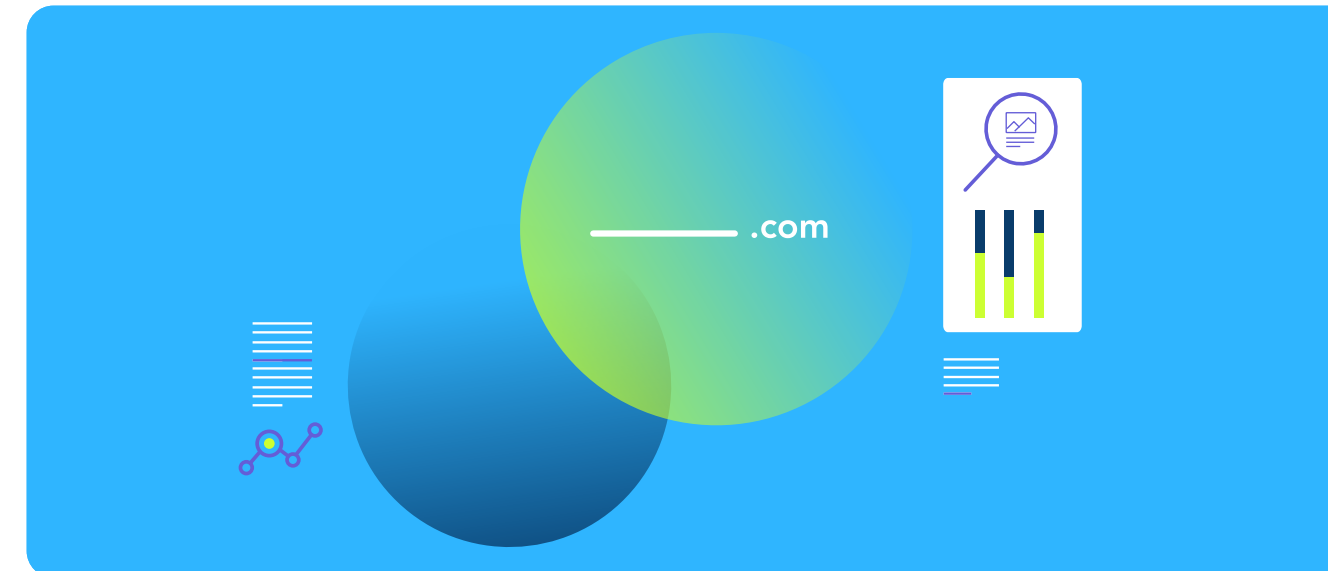
revenue



## The Problem

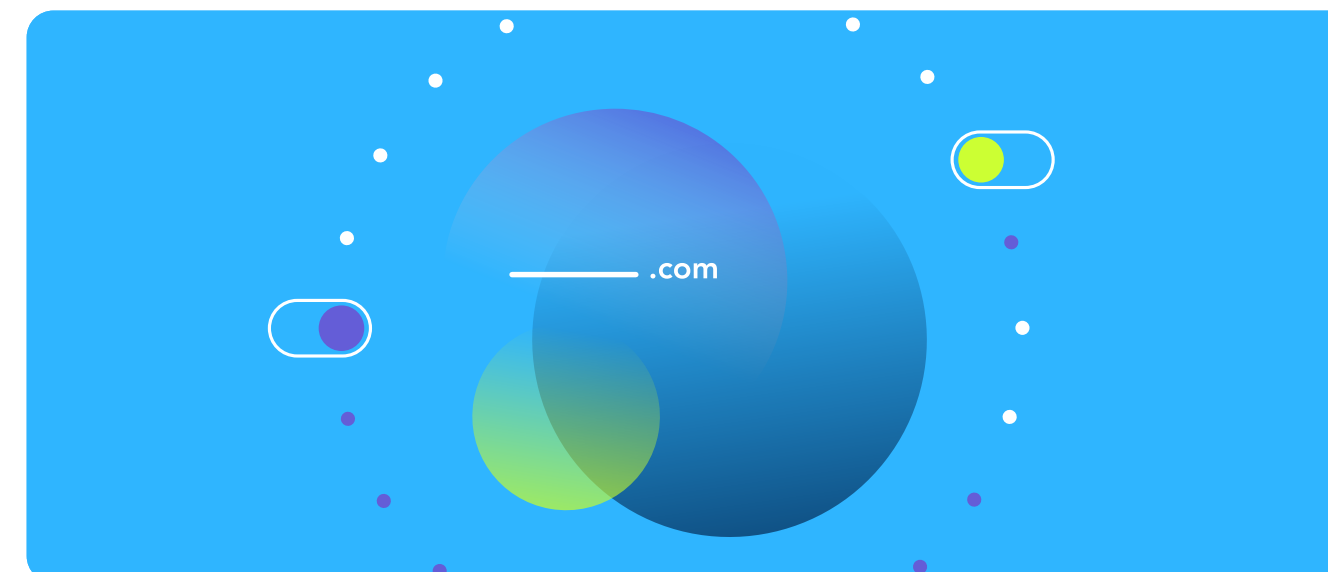
- ✗ Performance Max campaigns offer limited insights on what ad copy assets perform best for click through rate (CTR) or position on the search engine results page (SERP). How do you feed Performance Max with the best possible copy if you don't know how it performs?

## Solutions from Adthena



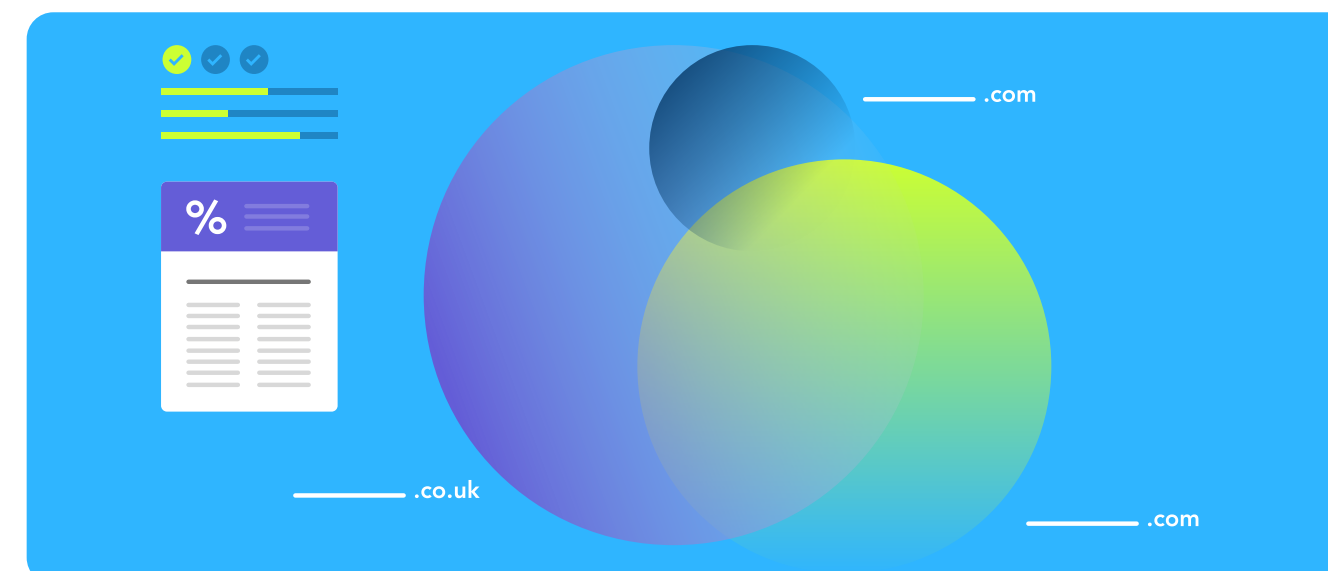
### Enhance and test ad copy variations

Discover and test ad copy variants that perform well for competitors. (Top Phrases reports show you the most popular words or phrases for a category and who are using them). Use Top Ads reports to identify ad copy variants that perform best in your clients markets, then test those in Performance Max.



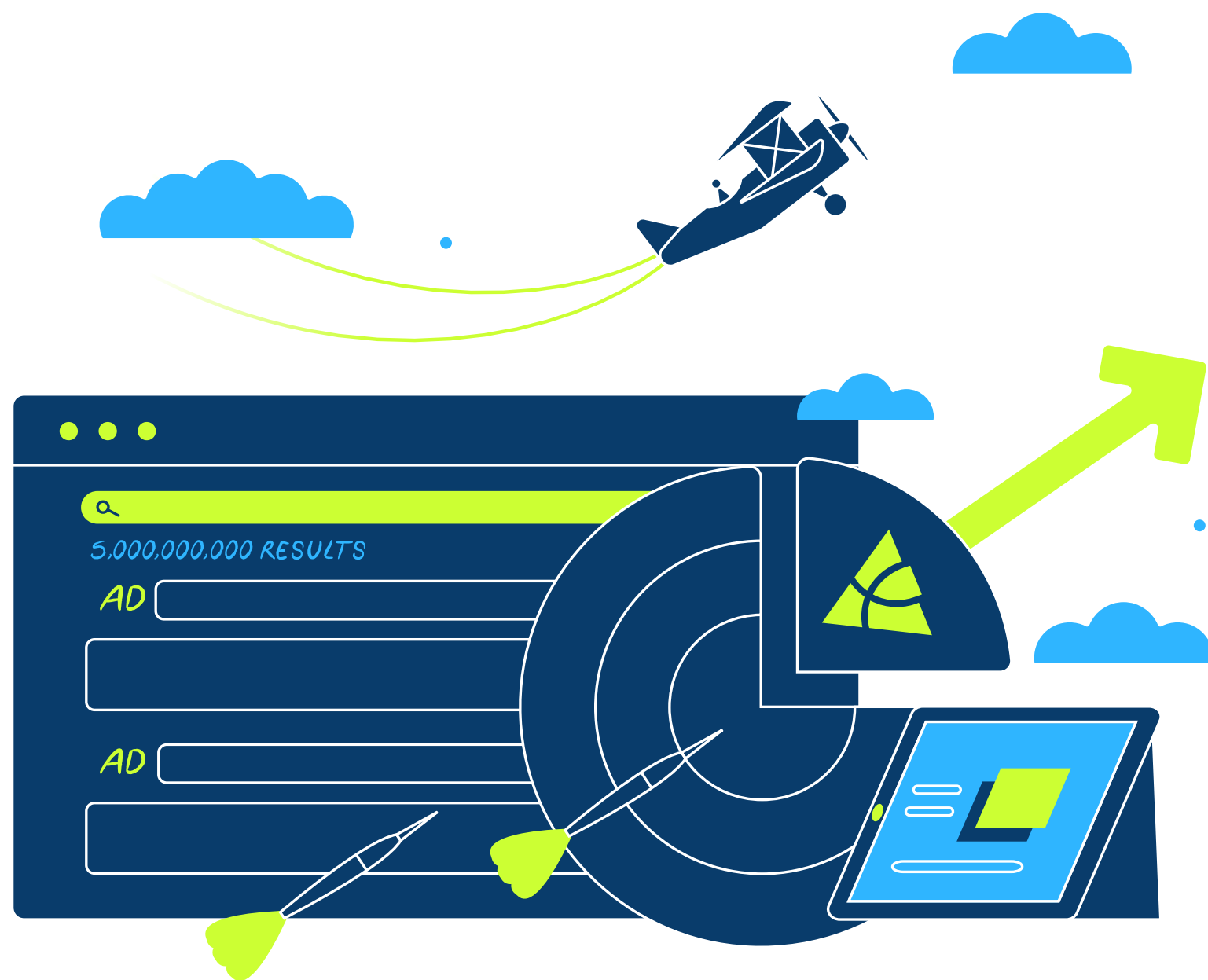
### Monitor rival offers

Use Adthena Ad Text report filters to scan and monitor rival offers (such as % discount) to keep your Performance Max ads competitive.



### Track and monitor ad performance

Add a parameter in the final URL of your Performance Max campaigns to distinguish them from your other ads. Then use Adthena to compare performance.



## Close search term and channel gaps

### The Problem

- ✗ How do you know if you're missing out on search terms or channel opportunities when Performance Max doesn't provide visibility?

### The Solution

- ✓ Use Adthena Search Term Opportunities to identify the search terms you're missing in your Performance Max campaigns, and add them to your non-Performance Max campaigns to ensure full coverage and optimal performance.
- ✓ Use Adthena Head-to-Head comparisons to see terms your competitors are appearing for that you are not, then add those to your non-Performance Max campaigns.
- ✓ Use Adthena to uncover insights into your spend and performance by channel or asset group. For example, if Performance Max shopping or search campaigns are under performing, you can use Adthena data to optimize your feed.

## Capture audience signals to create custom segments in Performance Max

### The Problem

- ✗ You can't select search terms in Performance Max, so how do you target a niche audience or promote a new product or category?

### The Solution

- ✓ Use Adthena's search term and competitor data to discover relevant terms and competitors in a category where you don't have existing insights. Use those insights to amend targeting settings in Performance Max with signals you think will convert well.



Journey  
Further

*Another pain point with Performance Max is the lack of visibility insights at the channel level. We aren't able to see specifically where the money is being spent. Is it shopping? Is it display? Is it video, or search? Adthena gives you that extra insight into what's going on within the campaigns."*

Helen Dooner  
Digital Marketing Lead, Journey Further

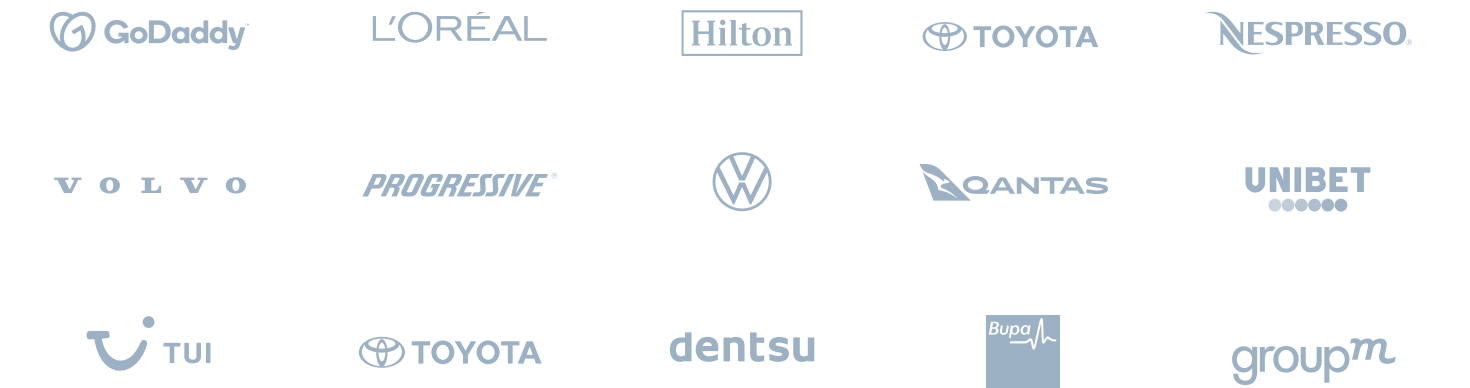


Adthena illuminates the blind-spots of Performance Max:

1. SERP insights
2. All search terms you appear on insights by category, device, ad copy, and more
3. Share of clicks and impressions, average position, average CPC, and more

Performance Max advertisers are using Adthena search intelligence every day to bring transparency, control, and precision to their Performance Max campaigns.

Take a step-by-step guided tour of Adthena to see how simple it can be to can optimize your Performance Max campaigns.

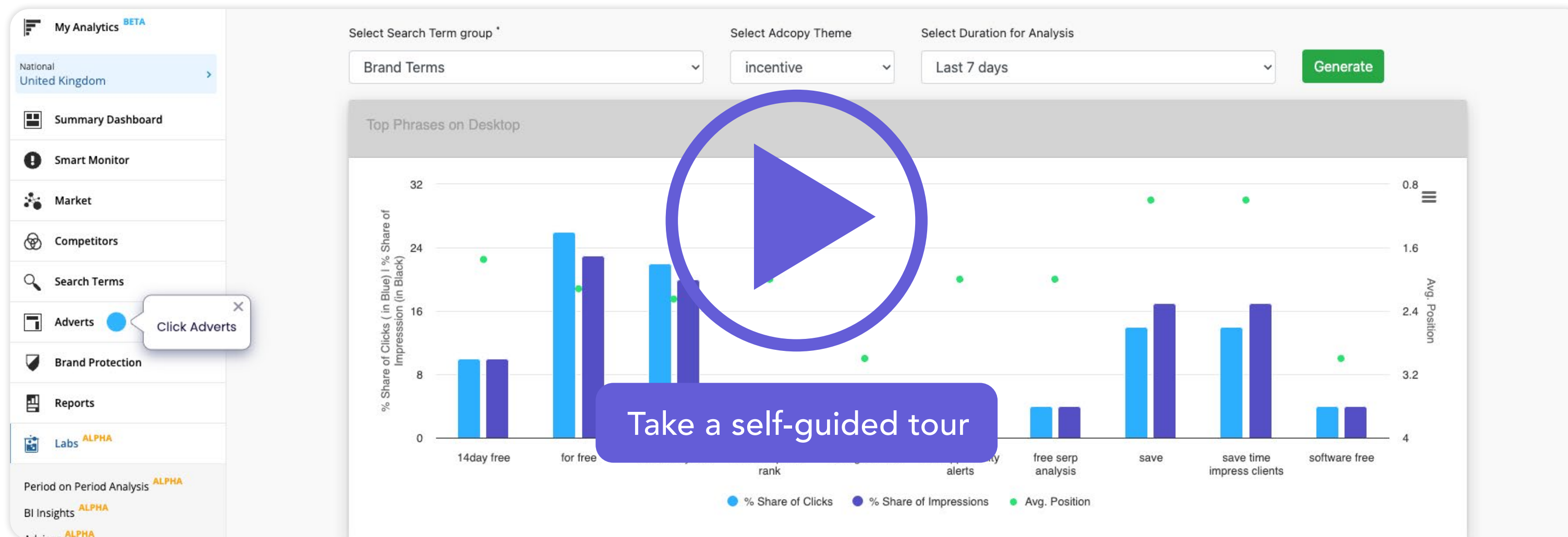


Loved by customers, trusted by agencies

"Great tool for market insights"  
★★★★★

"Best SEM tool I've ever used"  
★★★★★

"Adthena delivers on its promise"  
★★★★★



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