

Walmart Connect Mastery Guide

The Complete Advertising Playbook for
Walmart Marketplace Sellers

BLUESTACK CONSULTING

Your Walmart Marketplace Growth Partner

2025 Edition

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Walmart Connect

Walmart Connect is Walmart's retail media platform, offering advertisers access to exclusive inventory across Walmart's digital properties, physical stores, and partner networks. For marketplace sellers, Walmart Connect represents the most powerful tool available for driving product visibility, accelerating sales velocity, and building brand presence on the platform.

Why Walmart Connect Matters in 2025

The retail media landscape has exploded, with Walmart Connect emerging as the second-largest retail media network in the United States. Several trends make Walmart Connect increasingly important for sellers:

Growing Audience: Over 240 million weekly visitors across Walmart's stores and digital properties provide a massive audience for advertisers.

Lower Competition: Compared to Amazon Advertising, Walmart Connect has less advertiser competition, resulting in lower CPCs and higher ROAS for many categories.

First-Party Data: Walmart's rich first-party data from both online and in-store purchases enables precise targeting that other platforms cannot match.

Closed-Loop Measurement: Walmart Connect tracks sales attribution across both digital and physical stores, providing a complete picture of advertising impact.

Organic Rank Flywheel: Advertising-driven sales contribute to organic ranking improvements, creating a compounding return on ad spend.

Advertising Solutions Overview

Solution	Format	Pricing	Best For
Sponsored Products	Search & browse ads	CPC	Direct sales, visibility
Sponsored Brands	Banner with logo + products	CPC	Brand awareness
Sponsored Videos	Shoppable video in search	CPC	Product storytelling
Onsite Display	Banner ads across site	eCPM	Awareness, retargeting
Brand Shop & Shelf	Branded storefront	Free	Brand experience
SEM (Off-site)	Google search ads	CPC	External traffic

Getting Started

To begin advertising on Walmart Connect, you need an active Walmart Marketplace seller account with published, in-stock products. Access the Walmart Connect Ad Center through Seller Center's Advertising section. No minimum spend is required to get started with Sponsored Products, though Walmart recommends a minimum monthly budget of \$1,000 for meaningful results.

Chapter 2

Sponsored Products Deep Dive

Sponsored Products are the foundation of most successful Walmart advertising strategies. These native CPC ads appear in search results, browse pages, product carousels, and Buy Box placements, putting your products in front of shoppers at the moment they are actively looking to purchase.

Ad Placements

Search In-Grid: Your product appears in slots 3, 5, 6, or 12 within organic search results. This is the highest-intent placement as customers are actively searching.

Product Carousel: Your product appears in a 'Sponsored Products' carousel on category pages, search results, and product detail pages.

Buy Box: Your ad appears in the 'Customers also considered' section on competitor product pages, allowing you to capture comparison shoppers.

Eligibility Requirements

- Product must be published and in stock on Walmart.com
- Product must win the Buy Box (for Search In-Grid placement)
- Product must be in an eligible category (most categories are eligible)
- Seller account must be in good standing with no policy violations

Campaign Types Explained

Automatic Campaigns

In automatic campaigns, Walmart's algorithm selects keywords and placements based on your product listing content. This is the recommended starting point for new advertisers because it requires minimal setup and generates valuable keyword data. Automatic campaigns typically have higher impression volume but lower ROAS compared to well-optimized manual campaigns.

Manual Campaigns

Manual campaigns give you full control over which keywords trigger your ads and how much you bid on each keyword. There are three match types available:

Match Type	How It Works	When to Use
Exact Match	Ad shows only for the exact keyword phrase	Proven high-converting keywords. Maximum control and ROAS.
Phrase Match	Ad shows when search contains your keyword phrase in order	Expanding reach while maintaining relevance. Good for long-tail discovery.
Broad Match	Ad shows for related searches and variations	Discovery and reach expansion. Requires negative keyword management.

Setting Up Your First Campaign

1. Navigate to Walmart Connect Ad Center in Seller Center
2. Select 'Create Campaign' and choose Sponsored Products
3. Name your campaign descriptively (e.g., 'SP-Auto-KitchenBlender-Discovery')
4. Set your daily budget (recommend \$50-100/day for starting)
5. Choose campaign type (start with Automatic for data collection)
6. Select products to advertise (focus on your best-converting items)
7. Set your default bid (start at \$0.50-1.00 for most categories)
8. Set campaign start and end dates (or leave open-ended)
9. Review and launch

■ **Pro Tip:** Run automatic campaigns for at least 2 weeks before launching manual campaigns. Use the search term report from your automatic campaigns to identify your best-performing keywords, then migrate those to manual exact-match campaigns for better control and ROAS.

Chapter 3

Sponsored Brands Strategy

Sponsored Brands ads are premium placements that showcase your brand logo, a custom headline, and up to four products at the top of search results. They are exclusively available to brand-registered sellers through the Walmart Brand Portal.

Why Sponsored Brands Matter

- They appear above all organic results, capturing shoppers at the start of their search journey
- Brands using Sponsored Brands alongside Sponsored Products see an average 30% higher conversion rate
- They drive traffic to your Brand Shop page, encouraging multi-product discovery
- They build long-term brand recognition with repeated impressions

Creative Best Practices

Headline: Keep it concise, benefit-focused, and keyword-relevant. Maximum 50 characters.

Example: 'Premium Kitchen Tools for Every Home'

Logo: Use a high-resolution brand logo that is recognizable at small sizes. Follow Walmart's brand guidelines.

Product Selection: Feature your 3-4 best-selling or highest-rated products. Include variety to appeal to different customer needs.

Landing Page: Link to your Brand Shop page for maximum impact, or to a curated product collection.

Budget Recommendations

Sponsored Brands campaigns typically require a higher investment to achieve meaningful brand lift. We recommend allocating 15-20% of your total Walmart Connect budget to Sponsored Brands, with a minimum daily budget of \$75-100 per campaign. Expect a lower direct ROAS compared to Sponsored Products, but factor in the halo effect on organic sales and brand awareness.

Chapter 4

Sponsored Videos

Sponsored Videos are one of Walmart Connect's most engaging ad formats. Short, shoppable videos appear directly in search results with an add-to-cart button, capturing attention in a way that static ads cannot.

Video Ad Specifications

Specification	Requirement
Length	6-60 seconds (15-30 seconds recommended)
Format	MP4 or MOV
Resolution	1920x1080 minimum (16:9 aspect ratio)
File Size	Under 500MB
Audio	Optional but recommended
Content	Must feature the advertised product

Creating Effective Video Ads

Hook in First 3 Seconds: Capture attention immediately with a compelling visual or statement. Most viewers decide within 3 seconds whether to watch.

Show the Product in Use: Demonstrate the product solving a real problem. Lifestyle usage resonates more than product beauty shots.

Keep It Simple: Focus on one key message or benefit. Avoid trying to communicate everything in one video.

Include Text Overlays: Many shoppers browse with sound off. Use text overlays to communicate key messages visually.

End with Product Shot: Close with a clear product image that matches your listing's main image for visual consistency.

Chapter 5

Onsite Display Advertising

Walmart Onsite Display ads are visual banner ads that appear in high-traffic areas across Walmart's digital properties. Unlike Sponsored Search ads (which target customers actively searching), Display ads help you reach shoppers throughout their browsing journey.

How Onsite Display Works

- Available only to brand-registered sellers through Walmart Brand Portal
- Pricing is based on eCPM (effective cost per thousand impressions)
- Uses a first-price auction model—the highest bidder pays their bid price
- Dynamic bidding adjusts your bids based on campaign pacing
- Ads appear on homepage banners, category pages, and within the Walmart app

Targeting Options

Demographic Targeting: Age, gender, and household income segments

Behavioral Targeting: Based on actual purchase history and browsing behavior from Walmart's first-party data

Contextual Targeting: Target specific category pages or content types

Retargeting: Re-engage shoppers who have viewed your products or similar products

Chapter 6

Campaign Structure & Architecture

A well-organized campaign structure is the backbone of a successful advertising strategy. Without proper architecture, campaign management becomes chaotic and optimization becomes nearly impossible.

The Bluestack Campaign Architecture

We recommend organizing campaigns in a three-tier structure that separates discovery from optimization:

Tier	Campaign Type	Purpose	Budget Share
Tier 1: Discovery	Automatic SP Broad Match Manual	Find new keywords. Expand reach.	25%
Tier 2: Optimization	Phrase Match Manual Exact Match Manual	Scale proven keywords. Maximize ROAS.	50%
Tier 3: Brand	Sponsored Brands Sponsored Videos	Build awareness. Differentiate brand.	25%

Naming Conventions

Use a consistent naming convention that makes campaigns easy to identify and manage at scale. We recommend: [AdType]-[MatchType]-[ProductGroup]-[Goal]

Example: SP-Auto-KitchenBlenders-Discovery

Example: SP-Exact-KitchenBlenders-Performance

Example: SP-Broad-KitchenBlenders-Expansion

Example: SB-Brand-Kitchen-Awareness

Example: SV-Video-BlenderPro-Conversion

Chapter 7

Keyword Strategy for Advertising

Keyword strategy for advertising differs from organic keyword optimization. While organic SEO aims to rank for as many relevant terms as possible, advertising keyword strategy focuses on profitability—finding keywords where the revenue generated exceeds the cost of the clicks.

The Keyword Funnel Approach

Top of Funnel (Broad/Discovery): Cast a wide net with broad match and automatic campaigns. Accept lower ROAS in exchange for data and reach. Budget: 25% of total ad spend.

Mid Funnel (Phrase Match): Target proven keyword phrases that show consistent conversion. Balance reach with relevance. Budget: 25% of total ad spend.

Bottom of Funnel (Exact Match): Bid aggressively on your highest-converting exact match keywords. Maximize ROAS on proven winners. Budget: 50% of total ad spend.

Negative Keyword Strategy

Negative keywords are just as important as target keywords. They prevent your ads from showing for irrelevant searches, reducing wasted spend and improving ROAS. Review your search term report weekly and add any irrelevant terms as negative keywords.

- Add competitor brand names as negatives (unless you intentionally target them)
- Negate terms that generate clicks but zero conversions over 2+ weeks
- Negate terms related to products you don't sell (e.g., 'commercial' if you sell consumer products)
- Create a master negative keyword list and apply it across all campaigns

Chapter 8

Bid Management & Optimization

Effective bid management is the difference between profitable advertising and wasted budget. Walmart's auction system determines ad placement based on a combination of bid price and product relevance.

Bid Strategy Framework

Strategy	When to Use	Starting Bid	Adjustment Rule
Aggressive	New product launches, market entry	Category avg + 25%	Reduce by 10% weekly as data accumulates
Moderate	Established products, steady growth	Category average	Adjust ±10% based on weekly ROAS
Conservative	Mature products, profit focus	Category avg - 15%	Increase only for keywords with 5x+ ROAS
Defensive	Brand protection, competitor defense	Whatever it takes	Monitor impression share and adjust accordingly

Weekly Bid Optimization Process

1. Export campaign performance data from Ad Center
2. Calculate ROAS for each keyword (Revenue ÷ Ad Spend)
3. Increase bids by 10-15% on keywords with ROAS above target
4. Decrease bids by 10-15% on keywords with ROAS below target
5. Pause keywords with zero conversions after 100+ clicks
6. Review search term report and add negative keywords
7. Check impression share and increase bids if losing competitive positions
8. Document changes for tracking optimization impact

Chapter 9

Budget Planning & Allocation

Your advertising budget should be treated as a strategic investment, not a fixed cost. The right budget allocation can dramatically improve your overall return.

Budget as Percentage of Revenue

Business Stage	Recommended Ad Spend %	Primary Goal
Launch (0-3 months)	15-25% of revenue	Build visibility and sales velocity
Growth (3-12 months)	10-15% of revenue	Scale profitable campaigns
Mature (12+ months)	8-12% of revenue	Maintain position and profitability
Seasonal Peaks	+50-100% of normal	Capture peak demand

Monthly Budget Distribution

Within your monthly budget, allocate spend across campaign types based on your business goals and maturity level. A balanced approach for growth-stage sellers:

- Sponsored Products - Exact Match: 35% (your highest-performing campaigns)
- Sponsored Products - Automatic: 15% (continuous keyword discovery)
- Sponsored Products - Broad/Phrase: 15% (expansion and testing)
- Sponsored Brands: 15% (brand building and awareness)
- Sponsored Videos: 10% (differentiation and engagement)
- Testing/Experimental: 10% (new products, new strategies, seasonal tests)

Chapter 10

Measuring Performance & ROAS

Walmart Connect provides comprehensive performance reporting through the Ad Center dashboard. Understanding which metrics matter and how to interpret them is essential for optimization.

Key Performance Metrics

Metric	What It Measures	Target Range
ROAS	Revenue per dollar of ad spend	4x - 8x (category dependent)
ACoS	Ad spend as % of ad-attributed revenue	8-15%
CTR	Click-through rate	0.3-0.8%
CPC	Average cost per click	Category dependent
Conversion Rate	Purchases per click	5-15%
Impression Share	Your impressions vs. total available	25%+ for target keywords
Total ROAS	Includes organic sales lift from ads	6x - 12x

Attribution and Closed-Loop Measurement

One of Walmart Connect's greatest advantages is its closed-loop measurement capability. Walmart can attribute sales not only to online purchases but also to in-store transactions at all 4,600+ Walmart stores. This means your advertising may be driving significantly more revenue than online-only metrics suggest. When evaluating campaign performance, consider both online and in-store attributed sales.

Chapter 11

Advanced Optimization Techniques

Dayparting Strategy

While Walmart Connect does not yet offer native dayparting controls, you can approximate it by adjusting daily budgets based on when your products convert best. Analyze your hourly sales data and allocate higher daily budgets on high-conversion days.

Portfolio Bidding

Group related campaigns into portfolios and manage budget at the portfolio level. This allows you to shift budget dynamically between campaigns based on real-time performance, ensuring your best campaigns always have sufficient budget.

Search Term Mining

Regularly mine your automatic campaign search term reports for keyword opportunities. Look for search terms with 3+ conversions and a ROAS above your target. These are candidates for migration to manual exact-match campaigns where you can bid more aggressively.

Competitor Conquest Campaigns

Create dedicated campaigns targeting competitor brand keywords. These campaigns typically have lower ROAS than non-branded campaigns but can be highly effective for acquiring new customers who are comparison shopping. Set a separate ROAS target for conquest campaigns.

Third-Party Platform Partners

For advanced optimization at scale, consider using Walmart's official Platform Partners such as Pacvue, Skai, or Flywheel. These platforms offer advanced features like automated bid management, bulk operations, competitive intelligence, and cross-platform campaign management.

Chapter 12

Seasonal Advertising Strategies

Walmart's traffic and conversion patterns shift dramatically with seasons and events. Adapting your advertising strategy to these patterns can significantly amplify your results.

Season/Event	Timeline	Budget Multiplier	Strategy Focus
Back to School	July - September	1.5x - 2x	School supplies, dorm essentials, clothing
Halloween	September - October	1.3x	Costumes, decorations, candy
Holiday Season	November - December	2x - 3x	Gift items, electronics, toys
New Year	January	1.3x	Fitness, organization, health
Spring/Summer	April - June	1.3x	Outdoor, garden, travel
Prime Day Defense	July (varies)	1.5x	Competitive pricing, increased bids

Seasonal Planning Checklist

- 6 weeks before: Review prior year data, adjust inventory forecasts, plan creative
- 4 weeks before: Launch awareness campaigns, increase budget gradually
- 2 weeks before: Full campaign activation, aggressive bidding on seasonal keywords
- During event: Monitor daily, adjust bids based on real-time performance
- After event: Analyze results, document learnings, adjust strategy for next year

Appendix

Campaign Launch Checklist

- Product listings optimized to 90+ LQS before running ads
- Products are in stock and winning the Buy Box
- Keyword research completed with primary/secondary/long-tail lists
- Campaign naming convention established and documented
- Automatic campaign created for keyword discovery
- Manual campaigns set up with exact, phrase, and broad match groups
- Daily budget set based on goals and category benchmarks
- Starting bids configured based on competitive analysis
- Negative keyword list prepared and applied
- Sponsored Brands creative approved (if brand-registered)
- Performance tracking dashboard set up with KPI targets
- Weekly optimization cadence scheduled in calendar
- Search term report review process documented
- Budget escalation rules defined for scaling campaigns
- Seasonal advertising calendar created for the year

About Bluestack Consulting

Bluestack Consulting specializes in Walmart Connect advertising management, helping brands maximize their return on ad spend through data-driven strategy and continuous optimization. Visit bluestack-ws.web.app/resources for more playbooks and guides.