

AMAZON & E-COMMERCE

The Amazon PPC Audit Checklist

nine checks, run in 90 minutes

This is the checklist we run on every one of the **52+ accounts we manage**. Nine checks, each with a pass/fail threshold you write down *before* you look at your own data. Not a simplified version. The actual template, column by column.

Every report this needs is free inside Seller Central and the Advertising Console. A spreadsheet is enough. Don't buy software to run a checklist.

Budget 60-90 minutes for a first pass. Checks 1 and 2 take longest, roughly 10 minutes each. Monthly re-runs land closer to 20-30 minutes once you know where to look.

Across the accounts we've audited, wasted spend runs 15-25% of total ad spend. On a \$20,000/month budget that's \$3,000-\$5,000/month going to clicks that never had a real shot at converting.

Set up the sheet first

Six columns, one row per check. No macros, no formulas. The value isn't spreadsheet engineering. It's having the threshold written down before you look at your number, so you can't rationalize a bad one into looking acceptable.

COLUMN	WHAT GOES HERE
Check #	1-9, matching the list below
What to Pull	The exact report name from Seller Central or Advertising Console
Threshold	The specific number that separates pass from fail
Your Number	What you actually found
Status	Pass / Fail / Needs Review
Fix (if Failed)	One line, what action closes the gap

The nine checks

1 Wasted Search Terms

PULL Search Term Report, last 60 days, sorted by spend descending.

FAILS IF Any search term with **15+ clicks and zero orders** left un-negated.

FIX Negative-match every qualifying term at the campaign or ad group level. This single check usually surfaces the largest recoverable dollar amount on the whole list.

YOUR NUMBER

STATUS

FIX OWNER & DATE

Pass / Fail / Review

2 ACOS by Campaign Type

- PULL** Campaign performance report, grouped into three buckets: branded, category/non-branded, competitor.
- FAILS IF** You have a **single blended ACOS** instead of three. Targets: branded **under 10%**, category/non-branded **18-35%**, competitor **30-40%**.
- FIX** Split reporting into the three buckets permanently, not just for this audit. A blended 24% ACOS can hide a branded campaign at 8% propping up a competitor campaign bleeding at 55%.

BRANDED / NON-BRAND / COMPETITOR

STATUS

FIX OWNER & DATE

Pass / Fail / Review

3 Branded vs Non-Branded Spend Ratio

- PULL** Total branded campaign spend divided by total ad spend, last 60 days.
- FAILS IF** Ratio is **above 20%** or **near 0%**. Healthy is **10-15%** of total spend on branded defense.
- FIX** Over 20% means you're overpaying to defend traffic that often converts organically anyway. Near zero means a competitor may be bidding on your brand name uncontested. We've found competitor ads sitting above a brand's own organic listing, on a search for the brand's own name, more than once.

YOUR NUMBER

STATUS

FIX OWNER & DATE

Pass / Fail / Review

4 Placement Bid Mismatches

- PULL** Placement Report, showing Top of Search, Rest of Search, Product Pages.
- FAILS IF** **Zero placement bid adjustments set**, or adjustments that don't match current performance data.
- FIX** Set adjustments from the last 60 days of actual placement performance, then recheck quarterly. Placement performance shifts as competitors change their own bids.

ADJUSTMENTS SET?

STATUS

FIX OWNER & DATE

Pass / Fail / Review

5 Dayparting and Budget Pacing

- PULL** Daily budget vs actual daily spend, last two weeks, by campaign.
- FAILS IF** Any campaign hits its budget cap **before noon on 3+ days**.
- FIX** Raise the budget if the cap is choking strong keywords, or add dayparting to pull bids down during low-converting high-traffic hours (late-night browsing is the usual culprit) and free that budget for hours that actually convert.

CAMPAIGNS CAPPING EARLY

STATUS

FIX OWNER & DATE

Pass / Fail / Review

6 Negative Keyword Coverage

PULL	Cross-reference your active negative keyword list against the Search Term Report from Check 1.
FAILS IF	Recurring non-converting terms keep showing up and aren't on the negative list, or the list hasn't been updated in 30 days .
FIX	Build the review into a weekly habit. Search intent shifts constantly. A negative list from six months ago is already stale.

LAST UPDATED

STATUS

FIX OWNER & DATE

Pass / Fail / Review

7 Campaign Structure by Match Type

PULL	Campaign list, grouped by product.
FAILS IF	A single campaign per product covers auto, broad, and exact match all together.
FIX	Split the campaign by match type and intent, so a converting broad-match term can be promoted into its own exact-match campaign at a higher bid instead of staying buried in a mixed-match campaign at the wrong bid. This is structural, not a bid tweak.

PRODUCTS WITH MIXED-MATCH
CAMPAIGNS

STATUS

FIX OWNER & DATE

Pass / Fail / Review

8 Listing-Level Audit

WHY	PPC efficiency has a ceiling if the listing it's driving traffic to has problems. This is the part most PPC-only audits skip.
-----	---

Title compliance and structure. Keyword stuffing, missing required identifiers (brand, size, quantity), characters that risk suppression.

Prohibited or restricted words. Scan title, bullets, description, *and backend search terms* — Amazon's compliance scanning covers backend too. One flagged word can remove a listing with no warning.

A+ Content presence and freshness. Live on every ASIN receiving meaningful PPC spend, and not stale against current brand guidelines.

Image and buy box status. Main images meet current standards and the buy box is actually won on the ASINs you advertise. Driving paid clicks to a listing that's lost the buy box is spend with no possible return.

FAILS IF	Any prohibited-word flag, missing A+ on an actively-advertised ASIN, or buy box lost on an advertised ASIN.
FIX	Prioritize by spend. Fix the highest-spend ASINs first — that's where broken listings cost the most per day.

ASINS FLAGGED

STATUS

FIX OWNER & DATE

Pass / Fail / Review

9 The Red Flags Scorecard

SCORE	One flag per Fail across checks 1-8. Tally below.
-------	--

Score yourself

Count your Fails from checks 1 through 8. Be honest — the threshold was written down before you looked.

0-2

Reasonable shape

Re-run this monthly. Nothing structural is broken.

3-5

Real, recoverable waste

Most of it closes in an afternoon. Start with Check 1 — it's usually the biggest dollar line.

6+

Needs a structural rebuild

Not a cleanup pass. At this point the time cost of doing it yourself usually exceeds the cost of having it done.

YOUR FLAGS

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Total flags _____

How often to run it

Once is not enough. Search terms drift, competitors shift bids, and an account that was clean six months ago accumulates the same waste patterns again if nobody is watching. This is the exact cadence we run across the 85+ accounts we manage directly.

WEEKLY

Search term report review, negative keyword additions.

MONTHLY

ACOS by campaign type, branded vs non-branded ratio, budget pacing check.

QUARTERLY

Full placement report review, dayparting reassessment, complete run of all nine checks.

What this won't catch

This finds spend-level waste and listing-level compliance risk. It won't tell you whether declining organic rank is quietly forcing your ad spend higher every month, and it won't benchmark you against comparable accounts. **If every check here passes but revenue is still flat, the problem is organic, not ads** — a clean ACOS with rising TACoS means the foundation is eroding underneath ads that look fine on paper.

Score 3 or more flags? *Skip the spreadsheet.*

Our team runs these same nine checks plus organic rank correlation and cross-account benchmarking against 52+ comparable accounts, and hands back a specific findings document within 48 hours.

FREE AMAZON PPC AUDIT

mikebegg.me/amazon-audit

THE OPERATOR'S EDGE, WEEKLY

mikebegg.me/newsletter