



Adthena
competitive intelligence for search

Gearing up for Christmas and Black Friday: Retail Industry Insights for 2016/17

Executive Summary

Using 2015/16 data we set out to identify the top ad copy trends for the outerwear retail market online.

Below we outline our findings in terms of the industry trends and what is working in ad copy messaging.

For **headline ad** copy the themes of **'Brand'**, **'Style'** and **'Audience'** were the industry norm. This highlights the importance of providing relevant ad text related to the actual search terms used by the target audience.

In **description line** copy, **Call to Actions (CTAs)** with **'Shop'**, **'Order'** and **'Discover'** were associated with the most impressions. CTAs were used far more often in description lines than in headlines.

Gender segmentation in search terms coordinated with **gender related ad copy** and **product listing titles** is key in targeting the relevant audience.

For **Black Friday sales**, **"% off"** messaging combined with delivery related incentives such as **"free delivery"** resulted in the best performing ads.

The norm for ads around Christmas time is to **increase sales pressure** and **FOMO** to create a sense of urgency and promote impulse buying.

"Headline 1" has proven to be the most important element of **Expanded Text Ads**. Make sure your "Headline 1" messaging is as relevant as possible for your target audience.

Introduction



Learnings for the upcoming Autumn/Winter 16/17 season

Using 2015/16 data we set out to identify the top search terms, trends, offers, messaging and USPs to take learnings for the upcoming Autumn/Winter 16/17 season.

We analysed data from 90 different advertisers in the online UK retail market. From these advertisers campaigns we identified 23 400 search terms to define the UK outerwear retail market. This equated to 44 200 unique ads and more than 126 million estimated impressions.

Data was exported from the Adthena Fashion Retail Top Ads Report. We then categorized the ads by their message function and segmented the ad copy by specific themes to investigate which of these were most effective. The full list of themes is as follows:

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Introduction



Learnings for the upcoming Autumn/Winter 16/17 season

We interpreted the results for headline text themes and description line themes and compiled the conclusions which follow.

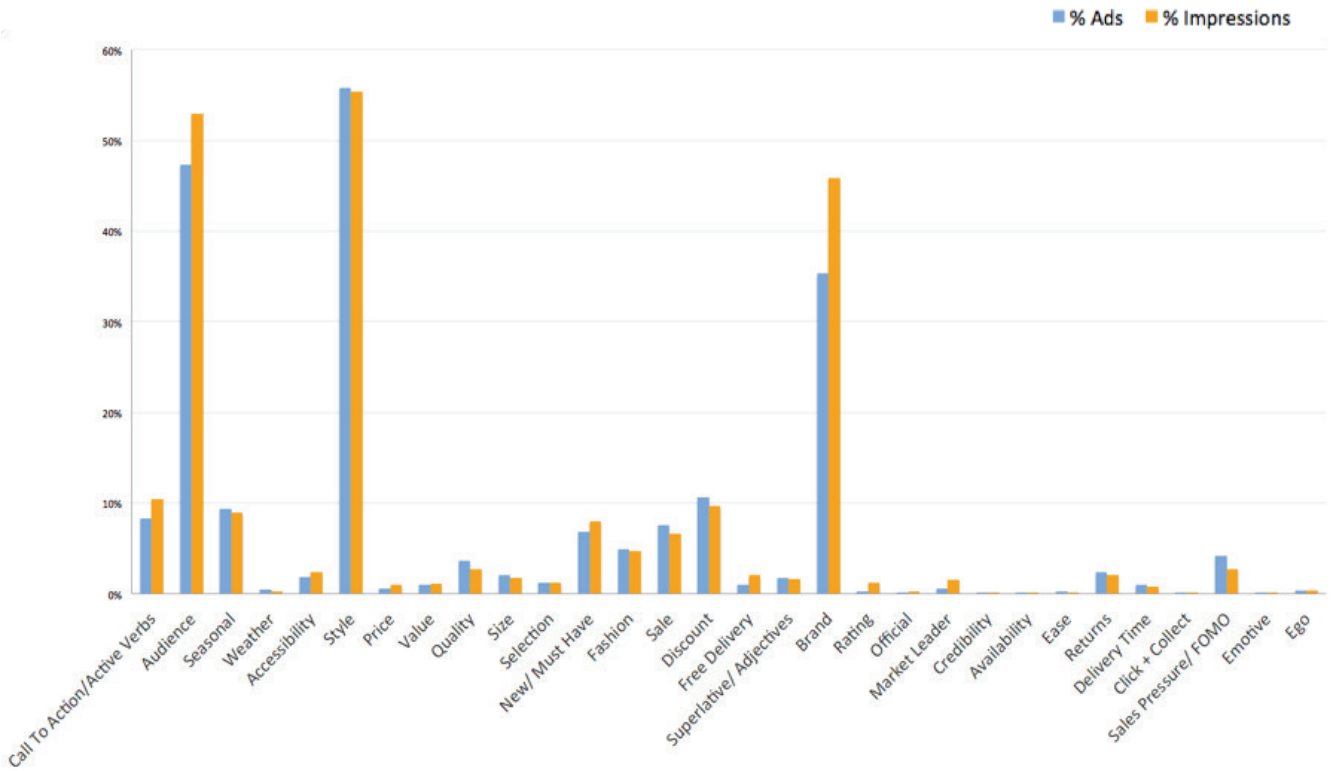
Targeting	Call To Action/Active Verbs	'Buy Now', 'Order Now', 'Discover More'
	Audience	'Women's', 'Men's', 'Ladies', 'Over 50s'
	Seasonal	'A/W', 'Winter', 'Christmas', 'Fall', 'Black Friday'
	Weather	'Rain', 'Weather', 'Warm'
	Accessibility	'Online', 'Mobile', 'App'
Value Proposition/ USP	Style	'Bomber', 'Trench', 'Duffle', 'Fur', 'Mac'
	Price	'From £12', 'Only £30', 'Just £56'
	Value	'Value', 'Cheap', 'Affordable', 'Bargain'
	Quality	'Quality', 'Luxury', 'Luxe', 'Designer'
	Size	'Plus Size', 'XXL', 'Sizes 8-24', 'Curvy'
	Selection	'Huge Selection', 'Wide Range', '100s Styles'
	Must Have	'Must Have', 'Latest', 'Must-Have'
	Fashion	'Fashionable', 'Trendy', 'Stylish', 'Catwalk'
Incentive	Sale	'Sale', 'Clearance', 'Savings', 'Deal', 'Offer'
	Discount	'20% Off', '£50 Off', 'Promo Code', 'Half Price'
	Free Delivery	'Free Delivery', 'Free Shipping', 'Delivered Free'
	Superlative/ Adjectives	'Best', 'Perfect', 'Beautiful', 'Hottest'
Anxiety	Brand	'Topshop', 'Asos', 'House of Fraser'
	Rating	'Rated', 'Reviews', 'Award Winning', 'Recommended'
	Official	'Official Site', 'Official Website'
	Market Leader	'Top Brand', 'No. 1', 'Leading'
	Credibility	'As Seen in', 'As Seen On', 'World Class'
Friction	Availability	'Available Now', 'In Stock',
	Ease	'Easy to Use', 'No Fuss', 'Quick'
	Returns	'Free Returns', 'Easy Returns', 'No Quibble'
	Delivery Time	'Same Day Delivery', 'Next Day', 'Fast Delivery'
Emotive	Click + Collect	'Click and Collect', 'Collect In Store', 'Collect Free'
	Sales Pressure/ FOMO	'Limited Time', 'Ends in 2 Hours', 'Don't Miss Out'
	Emotive	'Happy', 'Feel', 'Confidence', 'Smile'
	Ego	'You', 'Your', 'Yourself'



Industry Ad Copy Norms

Headlines

Below are the results of our ad headline copy analysis showing the percentage of ads containing each theme as well as the percentage of available Impressions associated with Ads containing each theme.



As can be seen in the above graph the most common themes were: style, audience and brand.

The use of styles in headline ad copy highlights the importance of providing relevant ads related to product searches and provides a strong use case for Dynamic Keyword Insertion.

Women's and men's audience targeted ad copy was the most common; showing the significance of matching gender targeted ad copy with gender related search terms.

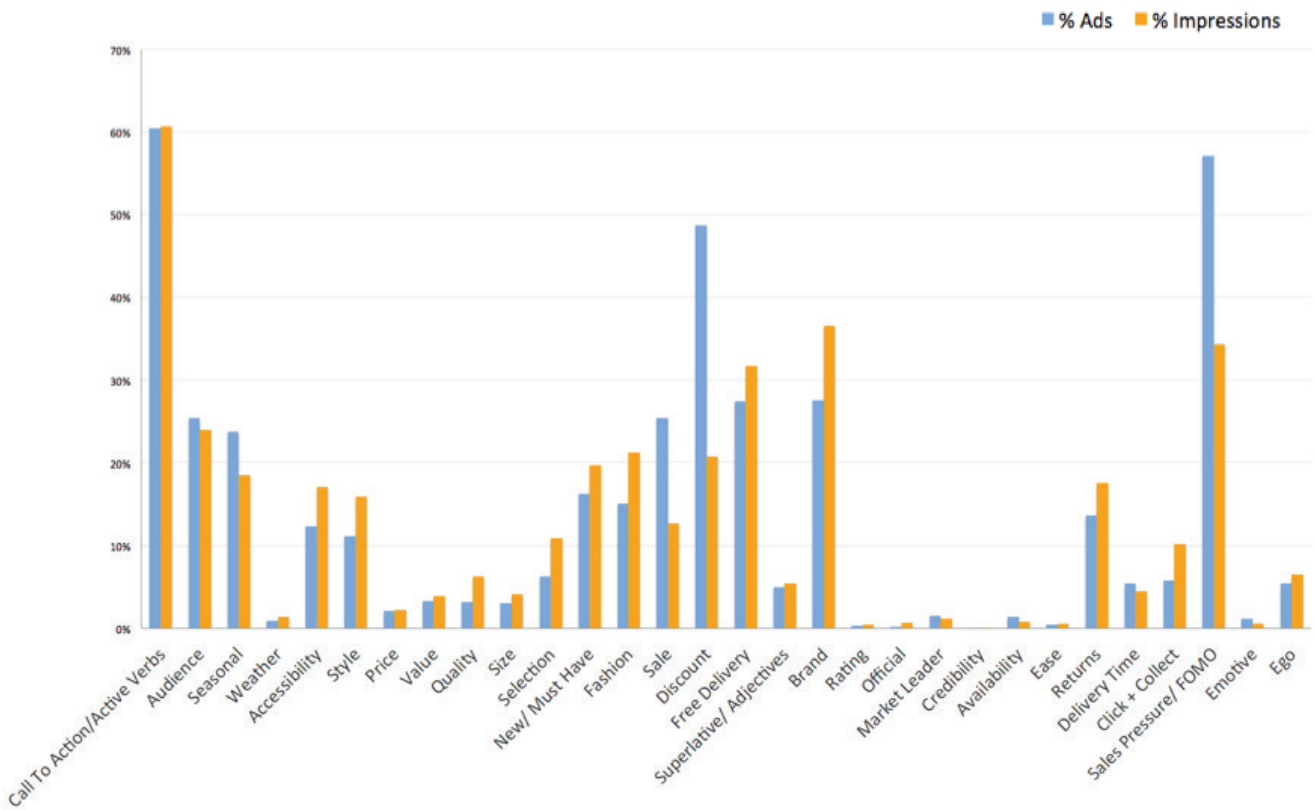
Brand was used in approximately **35% of ad headlines**, and was associated with **45% of impressions** across the industry. **Brand specific headlines resulted in a higher share of impressions** suggesting they are associated with a higher quality score due to higher click-through rates. This makes sense as the use of **brand terms can reduce customer anxiety** if those brands are well known or trusted.



Industry Ad Copy Norms

Descriptions

Below are the results of our ad description copy analysis showing the percentage of ads containing each theme as well as the percentage of available Impressions associated with Ads containing each theme.

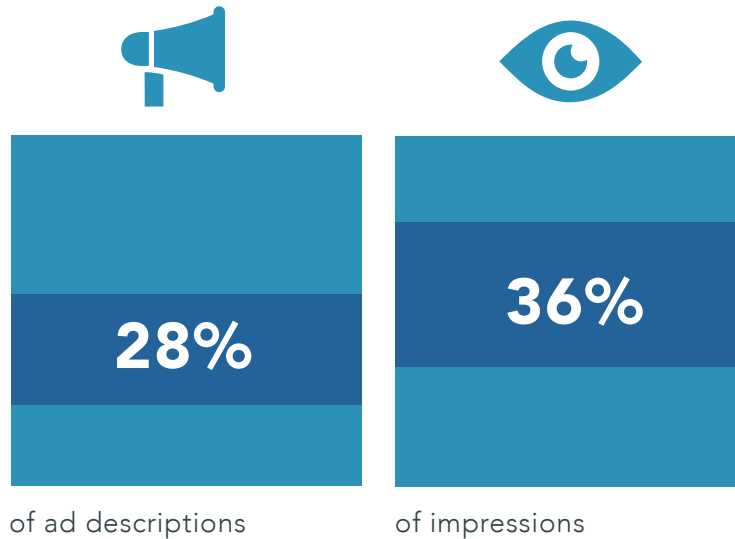


As can be seen in the above graph there is a larger spread of impressions across ads with different themes in their description copy.

"Call to actions" were used in **61% of ad descriptions** and were associated with a similar amount of impressions. **The top 3 call to actions were "Shop", "Order" and "Discover"**.

Industry Ad Copy Norms

“**Brand**” was used in approximately **28% of ad descriptions**, and was associated with **36% of impressions** across the industry suggesting the higher impression driving ads used brand keywords in their ad descriptions. This is similarly found in the headline ad copy analysis.



“...suggesting the higher impression driving ads used brand keywords in their ad descriptions.”

“**FOMO**” or a “**fear of missing out**” was used in more than half of the industry ads. This theme plays on the customers’ emotions to encourage the impulse to purchase. The phrases “**Now**”, “**Today**”, “**Ends in...**” and “**Hurry**” were used most and had the **highest impression share** suggesting retailers are using countdown timers to increase the impact of sales.

Advertisers tended to use description space for delivery related incentive over price related messaging and was associated with higher impression share than ads talking about prices or discounts.

Discount messaging was included in a large portion of ad descriptions but was not associated with an equally high portion of the impressions. This suggests that discount messaging does not affect quality score or CTRs as much as some of the other themes.



Gender Segmentation

"Audience" is a commonly occurring theme in the ad copy. **Women's and men's targeted ad copy** were the most common under this theme, showing the significance of matching gender targeted ad copy with gender related search terms.

"...the significance of matching gender targeted ad copy with gender related search terms".

AdWords' new demographic targeting for search campaigns gives advertisers more control over their targeting than ever before. This makes it possible to reach only the relevant gender audience for your products. However our research has shown that including gender specific copy in your ad text is still best practice in order for ad copy to be as relevant as possible to the search terms



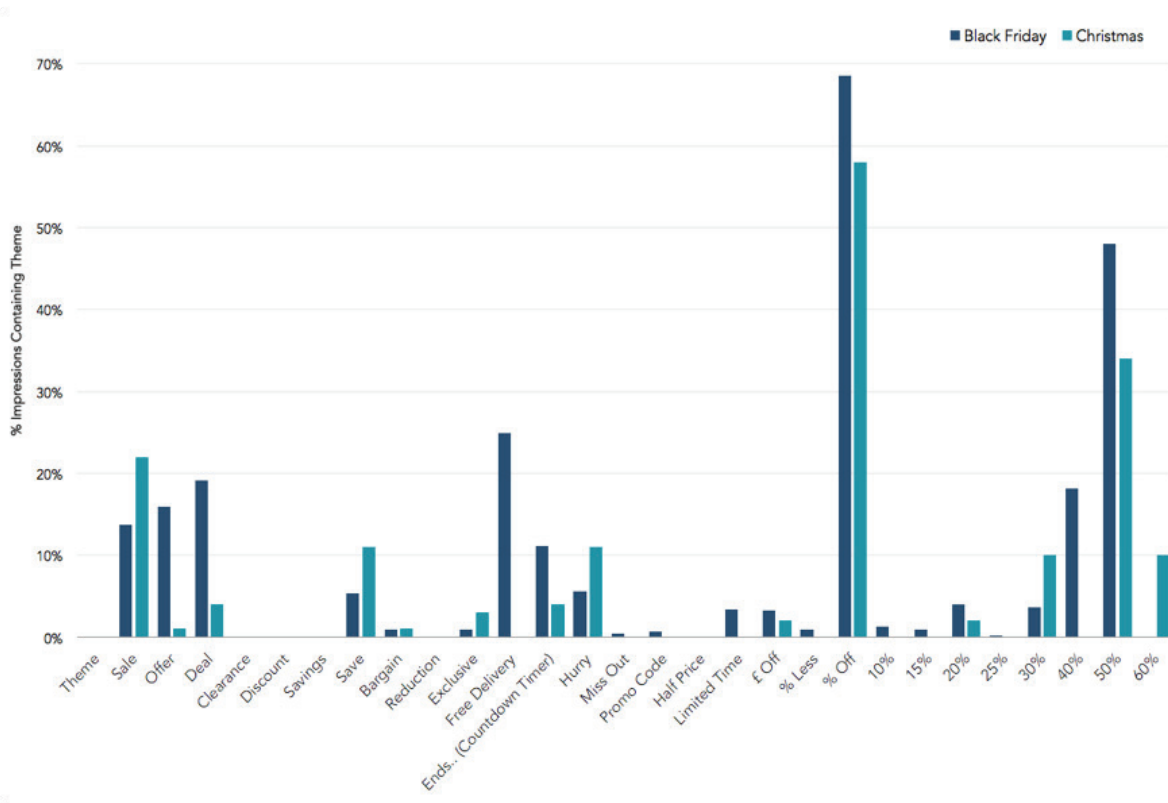
Our top tip for gender segmentation:

Segmenting search terms by gender and coordinating keywords with matching ad copy and product listing titles is key in targeting the relevant audiences.



Top Tips for Christmas and Black Friday

The chart below illustrates how the retail industry targeted Black Friday compared to Christmas sales in 2015 across Outerwear.



In both periods **"% off"** offers were most popular, with a tendency for higher **"% off"** at **Christmas**. **Black Friday ads used "Deal"** messaging and **"Free Delivery"** incentives whilst Christmas ads focussed on **"sales"** along with time pressure **"Hurry"** messaging.



Top Tips for Christmas and Black Friday:



Our top tip for Black Friday:

Use “% off” messaging in the ad headline and use the description line space for delivery related incentives as these messaging themes were associated with higher volumes of impressions.



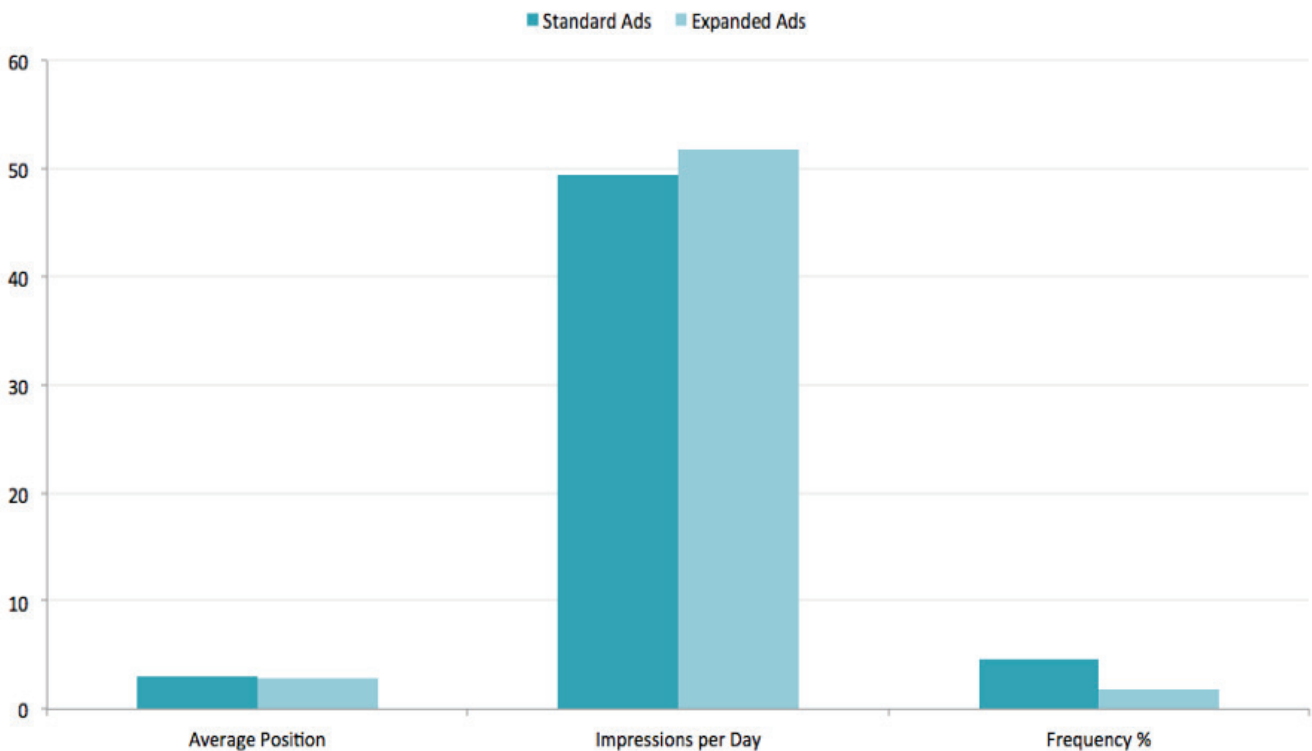
Our top tip for Christmas:

Add FOMO (fear of missing out) messaging to your ad text. Consider using phrases such as “don’t miss out” or “ends in ...” to create a sense of urgency



Expanded Text Ads

Expanded text ads (ETAs) are a hot topic across the online marketing industry at the moment. We reviewed **1300 ads from 31 competitors** using ETAs for outerwear retail related search terms. Below are two graphs illustrating the performance of the ETAs as well as the themes being used in the ad copy.



As can be seen in the above graph, the expanded text ads had a slightly better average position than standard ads suggesting a higher CTR and quality score.

The **"impressions per day"** graph shows that ETAs have gained higher impressions for the amount of time they have been showing.

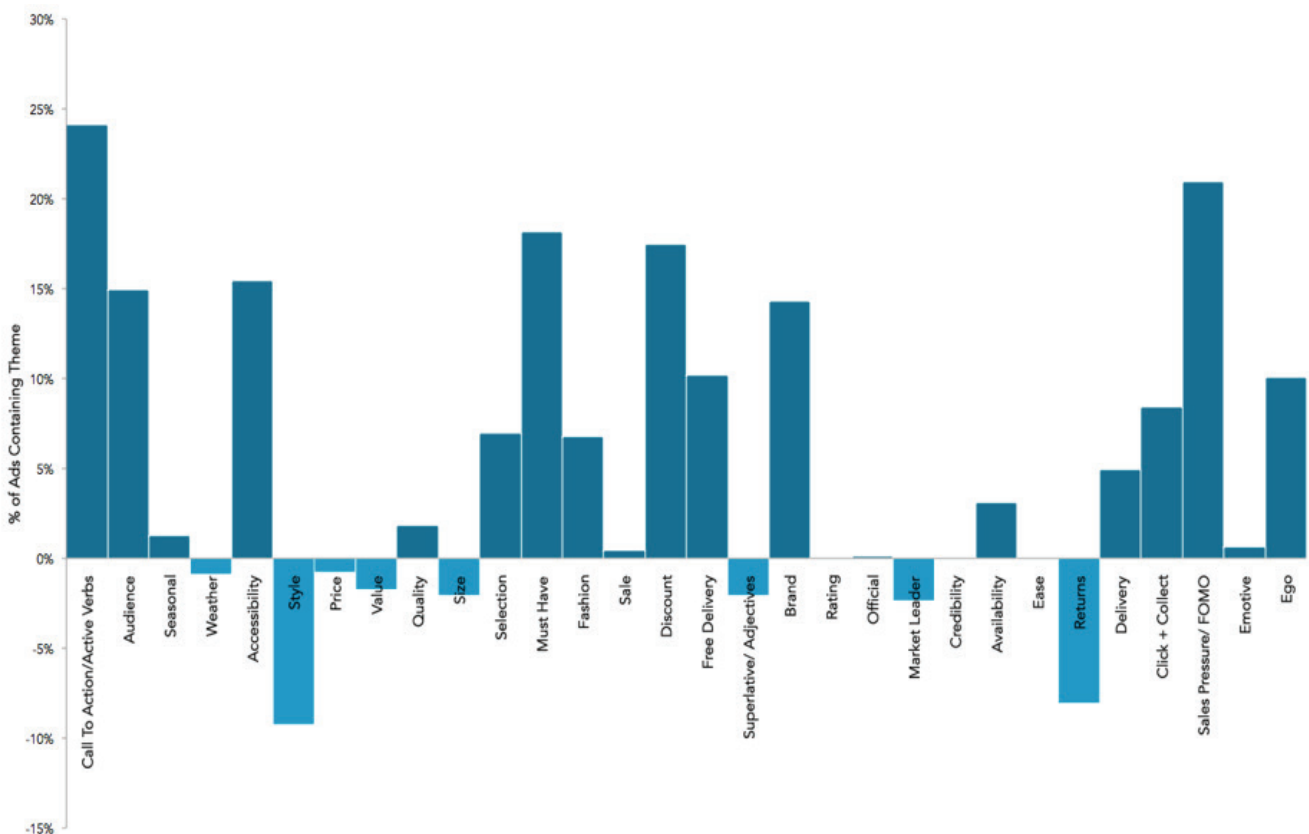
Average frequency was higher for standard ads which may be due to a shorter display length whilst testing new expanded ads.



Expanded Text Ads

The chart below shows the difference in the percentage of expanded text ads containing each theme compared to the old standard ads. It is clear that most themes have appeared more in the ETAs as expected due to the extra space, with **“call to actions”** and **“sales pressure tactics”** increasing the most. However “styles” and “returns” messaging are not appearing as prominently which may be due to certain competitors not yet transferring all of their ad campaigns over yet

“It is clear that most themes have appeared more in the ETAs as expected due to the extra space...”





Expanded Text Ads



Our top tip for ETAs

Your "Headline 1" is the most important element of Expanded Text Ads and it needs to grab the attention of your target audience. Make sure your "Headline 1" messaging is as relevant as possible for your target keywords.

Another reason your "Headline 1" is important is because you can't control how Google will show your second headline. "Headline 2" may appear after a line break or even be truncated on the SERP.

To learn more visit: [Adthena.com/features/](https://adthena.com/features/)