Blue Wheel

ARIAT CASE STUDY

Improving Media Efficiency & Customer Acquisition with Amazon DSP Performance+

Contents

The Ariat case study has five sections, showcasing different aspects of our strategic Amazon DSP Performance+ efforts and accomplishments.

ARIAT

"The New Breed of Boot."

Ariat International, Inc. is a premier manufacturer of innovative performance products, including equestrian footwear, apparel, and belts.

The brand is known for pioneering the integration of advanced athletic shoe technology into both authentic Western and English riding boots, offering a patented technology that delivers superior stability, durability, and comfort. Ariat products are globally available through an extensive network of retail outlets.

Ariat

❝ Bringing our DSP advertising under the Blue Wheel umbrella has allowed us to manage our marketing portfolio holistically, gain insights from our campaigns from both the display and sponsored perspectives, and create efficiencies in the ability to pivot quickly based on trends and optimizations. ❞

EMILY KIDWELL
Director of Retail Ecommerce, Ariat

Blue Wheel

❝ This was a strong example of how a disciplined test-and-learn approach can guide smarter investment decisions. By measuring Amazon Performance+ against a clear control group, we were able to evaluate in-platform efficiency with confidence and determine where scaling made sense for Ariat's Amazon strategy. ❞

WHITNEY WEAVER
Director of Marketplace Advertising, Blue Wheel

The Challenges & Goals

Ariat has a strong partnership with Blue Wheel and a well-established presence on Amazon, with standard DSP line items delivering reliable baseline performance. As the brand continued investing in upper-funnel and acquisition strategies, it sought to determine whether newer automated solutions could improve media efficiency and customer acquisition. A systematic approach was needed to evaluate whether Amazon DSP Performance+ could outperform traditional campaign structures.

Testing the Opportunity

To validate this potential, we implemented a three-month controlled test comparing Amazon DSP Performance+ campaigns to a control group built from the brand's standard product retargeting strategy.

- Control Group: Always-on retargeting served ads to shoppers who viewed a product detail page (PDP) but did not complete a purchase. Fixed bids were used to reach audiences within a defined lookback window.

- Performance+: In contrast, Performance+ dynamically adjusted bids and delivery based on additional shopper behaviors and signals following the PDP visit. Leveraging Amazon's first-party data, it prioritized users most likely to convert.

The goal was to determine whether this dynamic, signal-driven optimization could improve acquisition efficiency, engagement, and return on ad spend compared to traditional retargeting, while maintaining measurement rigor and scalability.

The Campaign Overview

Blue Wheel conducted a controlled three-month test of Amazon DSP Performance+ to assess its effectiveness for Ariat's men's and women's boots and workwear. This approach compared Performance+ multi-product display campaigns against a control group utilizing standard DSP line items.

Both Performance+ and standard DSP campaigns targeted a similar core audience: shoppers who viewed a product detail page but did not purchase. The key distinction was that Performance+ incorporated additional behavioral signals and real-time bidding to adjust bids at the user level based on recency and engagement patterns.

Budgets, creative assets, and flight timing were aligned to maintain consistency across test groups.

While the test ran within live market conditions and was subject to external influences, maintaining comparable audience pools enabled us to evaluate the incremental impact of Performance+ optimization and dynamic bidding.

This structured test-and-learn methodology allowed Ariat to assess Performance+ objectively while minimizing risk and ensuring continuity with ongoing DSP activities.

The Campaign

The Actions

Amazon DSP Performance+ Test

Why Performance+

Performance+ helped us move from manual audience hypothesis testing to algorithmic, conversion-focused optimization using Amazon's first-party signals. With Ariat's large and varying product catalogue, we wanted to understand whether automation-driven predictive modeling could outperform our existing audience-layered structure in efficiency and scale.

Performance+ Campaign Structure

Rather than pre-defining who we assumed might convert and the cost we would be willing to pay for conversion, we allowed Amazon's algorithm to identify high-probability shoppers based on real-time behavioral and retail signals.

Performance+ Test Monitoring

We monitored performance against efficiency benchmarks established from historical DSP campaigns, with particular attention to learning-phase volatility in the first 30 days.

Performance+ Optimization Methods

While bidding and audience expansion were algorithm-driven, strategic levers such as budget scaling, efficiency thresholds, and product prioritization remained actively managed by the Blue Wheel team.

Mid-Flight Insights Influencing Test Management

Aggressive ROAS goals constrained scale; loosening targets unlocked incremental volume without materially sacrificing blended efficiency.

+620%

Increase in CTR

72%

Decrease in eCPC

+134%

Increase in DPV

+60%

Increase in TROAS

+107%

Increase in NTB TROAS

The Results

Despite a higher effective cost per thousand impressions (eCPM), Performance+ outperformed standard DSP line items across all key efficiency and growth metrics. Thanks to Performance+ targeting, the campaign reached a more qualified audience, leading to a greater return on investment.

The click-through rate (CTR) increased by 620%, indicating higher interest and engagement from the target audience. The effective cost per click (eCPC) dropped by 72%, translating into a 134% increase in detail page views (DPV). The target return on advertising spend (TROAS) was 60% higher, with a notable 107% increase in new-to-brand (NTB) TROAS.

Key Performance+ Test Results

- CTR: +620%
- eCPC: −72%
- Detail Page Views: +134%
- TROAS: +60%
- New-to-Brand TROAS: +107%

The Key Takeaways

The Primary Insight

Automation surpassed manual audience segmentation after accumulating sufficient conversion data. The model excelled at identifying incremental converters compared to our predefined audience logic.

What Surprised Us the Most

Minor adjustments to the target Return on Ad Spend (TROAS) had significant effects on scaling, demonstrating how closely the model aligns with goal inputs.

Learnings for Future Tests

Given that the algorithm optimizes delivery, the quality of the creative becomes increasingly important. Future iterations will include structured creative testing.

Performance+ Considerations for Brands

Brands can expect some initial volatility; it is a normal part of the process. It is important to establish clear guardrails, but avoid daily over-adjustment.

The Key
Takeaways

The Conclusion

The Conclusion

For established Amazon advertisers like Ariat, Amazon DSP Performance+ proved to be more than a tactical upgrade. It demonstrated how automation, when applied within a disciplined testing framework, can unlock incremental efficiency and acquisition at scale.

By benchmarking Performance+ against a controlled DSP structure, Ariat gained clarity on where automation meaningfully outperformed manual audience segmentation. Once sufficient conversion data exists, algorithmic optimization powered by Amazon's first-party signals can drive stronger engagement, improved cost efficiency, and higher new-to-brand return.

Importantly, this test reinforced that automation does not replace strategy. Success required clear guardrails, thoughtful budget management, and structured oversight to ensure scale didn't come at the expense of profitability.

For mature brands seeking incremental growth on Amazon, Performance+ represents a scalable path forward, particularly when implemented with rigorous measurement and a test-and-learn mindset.

About Us

Blue Wheel

We're a new breed of eCommerce agency, supporting brands through marketplace management and performance advertising. With over $2B in revenue managed for our clients, we'll help your brand from click to ship, scaling your brand's sales across DTC, Amazon, Walmart, eBay, and retail.

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