

# The Smart Marketer's Guide to Digital Diwali Campaigns



# Table of contents

---



Intro

What's in it for you?

Step 1. Look at seasonal factors

Step 2. Analyze your niche

Step 3. Understand audience behavior

Step 4. Know your competition

Step 5. Create a foolproof plan

In summary

# Intro

---

Diwali has traditionally been the biggest shopping season for Indian consumers, comparable to holiday shopping period in the run up to Christmas in the West. Retail categories with the biggest spends are gifts, apparel, jewelry, electronic appliances, lights and crackers.

Online and offline retailers offer extended sales and deals well over a month before Diwali. Indian ecommerce retailers sold \$3.3 Billion (₹22,000 Crore) worth of goods (gross merchandise value) during the 30 days before Diwali 2017, which fell on the 19th of October.

During such a crucial sale season, it's essential for ecommerce retailers to step up their analytics and dissect any and all pieces of data if they want a competitive advantage over their rivals.

In the run up to Diwali 2018, we've put together some critical insights gleaned from SEMrush big data that will help digital marketers beat the competition and execute quick and effective seasonal campaigns.



# What's in it for you?

---

This guide will address some critical gaps in data and discuss digital marketing tactics that will help you create an effective online sales push during Diwali.

Specifically,

- What are people searching for during the Diwali holiday season?
- Which products and categories are selling the most?
- Which are the popular keywords and how much does it cost to bid for them?
- What kind of content and ad copy are leading brands creating to influence their audience?
- What tactics are the giant ecommerce retailers using to maximize sales during Diwali?
- How are industry leaders adapting their advertising strategy to changing buyer behavior?
- How can marketers put together a quick campaign to target their ideal audience?

While the execution of your Diwali campaign depends on a lot of factors like your niche, product, audience, competition and budget, we can tell you How to Plan Your Campaign. The planning process involves five significant steps:

- 1 Look at seasonal factors
- 2 Analyze your niche
- 3 Understand audience behavior
- 4 Know your competition
- 5 Create a foolproof plan



We also roped in Rod Richmond, Head of Strategy at Edinburgh-based digital agency Clean Digital, to provide a few expert insights on planning your campaign and walk you through the above steps.

# Step 1

Look at seasonal factors

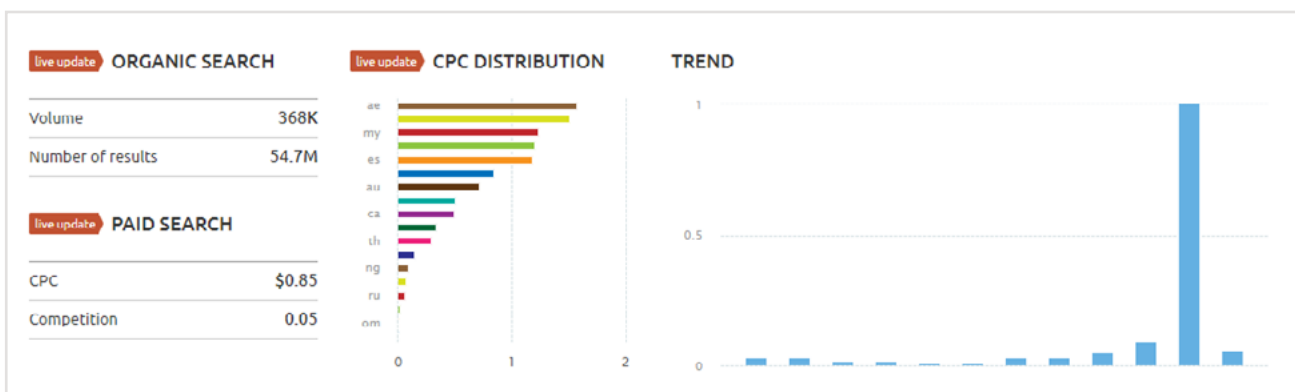
# Look at seasonal factors

Every festival, event or holiday has its own characteristics and quirks. Even if the general idea is well known to you, you need to understand how consumers think about it in context of their purchase needs, and how they are looking at the event this year. For traditional, recurring occasions like Christmas and Diwali, you also need to look at changing tastes and preferences of the consumer with regard to the goods and services they purchase.

It pays to know when the season-specific trends begin. It also helps to find out the primary keywords and phrases that consumers in searches with purchase intent during this time, and how difficult it is to target them.

## What are people searching for?

For the keyword “diwali” on Google India, here’s the data as of September 2018:



You can see that it has a monthly search volume of 3,68,000 and Google returns 54.7 million pages for the keyword. The cost per click works out to ₹61. However, in itself, just the term “Diwali” is not valuable to advertisers for sales, because it doesn’t carry transactional intent.

This is evident from the fact that the level of competition for bidding on it is only 0.05 (the terms that are usually searched with Diwali include images, greetings, wishes, cards, wallpapers, videos, and so on).

Therefore, we have to analyze keywords that signify that the searcher has intent to purchase goods or services.

Let us take the example of the keyword “diwali sale”.

In 2017 Diwali was on October 19.

**Search Volume** (no. of searches for the term in the month) was **2,900**.

The number of pages that showed up in the search results was **25.4 million**.

In 2018 Diwali is on November 7.

**Search Volume** (no. of searches for the term in the month) is already **3,600**.

The number of pages that are showing up in the search results is **47.8 million**.

Here’s some more data for Diwali-related keywords:

Metric	October 2017	September 2018
<b>Diwali gifts</b>		
Search volume	5,400	12,100
No. of results	6.6 million	17.1 million
CPC		₹15.12
<b>Diwali crackers</b>		
Search volume	5,400	9,900
No. of results	1.7 million	3.4 million
CPC		₹9.36
<b>Diwali lights</b>		
Search volume	2,900	6,600
No. of results	14.6 million	55.3 million
CPC		₹2.88

**Rod’s Insight:**

Timing is key. Look back at last year’s search trends. See when the seasonal spikes for your main keywords occurred, and you can start to predict when the peak shopping days will be on the lead up to the main event.

This is especially important for ecommerce sites where the customer will need to know the last dates for delivery if they are ordering gifts (i.e. order before 10pm on Monday for guaranteed delivery for Diwali).

# Step 2

Analyze your niche



# Analyze your niche

---

You need some critical marketplace data before you can start your marketing campaigns. For example, ecommerce retailers need to know the size of their market, the categories that are popular and the demand for each product line.

## Top product categories

In terms of ecommerce purchases, these are the leading categories by sales in India:

- 1 Consumer electronics
- 2 Appliances
- 3 Apparel
- 4 Home and furniture
- 5 Luxury goods
- 6 Health
- 7 FMCG
- 8 Food and grocery

## Which are the most sought after products and categories?

Here are the product lines on which top ecommerce sites are offering maximum discounts (in the range of 40 to 50%) during Diwali sale. It follows that these are the best selling product lines.

- Men's shirts
- Men's t-shirts
- Men's jeans
- Men's shoes
- Men's watches
- Women's tops
- Women's handbags
- Skirts
- Women's shoes
- Mattresses
- Televisions
- Laptops
- Mobiles (Smartphones)
- Pen drives
- Dining sets

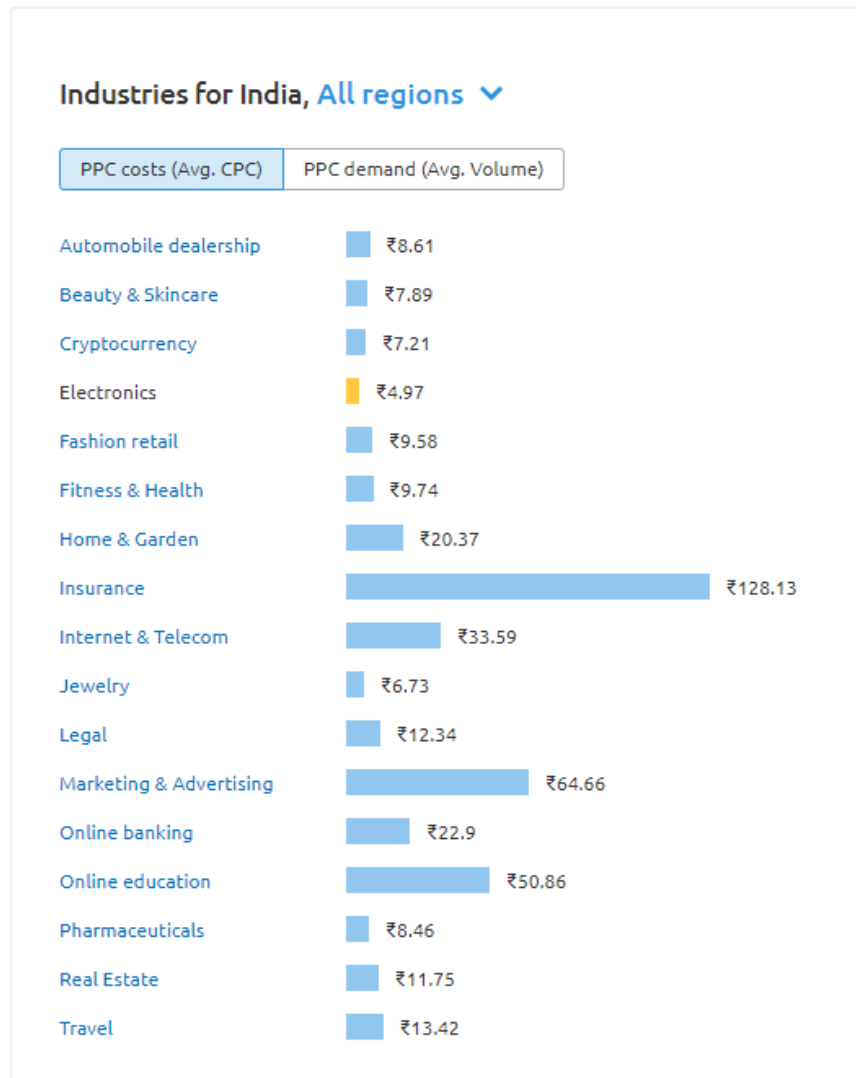
Overall, the heaviest discounts are offered in the following categories, making them the most popular ones.

- 1 Electronics
- 2 Fashion
- 3 Furniture

**Rod's Insight:**

Use remarketing to get sales over the line. You might have a lot of visitors but they might not be making it all the way to check out. Fine tune your remarketing lists and accompanying ad copy so to make sure you capitalize on all this extra traffic.10pm on Monday for guaranteed delivery for Diwali).

Ecommerce retailers can find out the average Cost Per Click (CPC) for Google Ads in different verticals for India, as per data from the [SEMrush Advertising toolkit](#):



# Step 3

Understand audience  
behavior

# Understand audience behavior

---

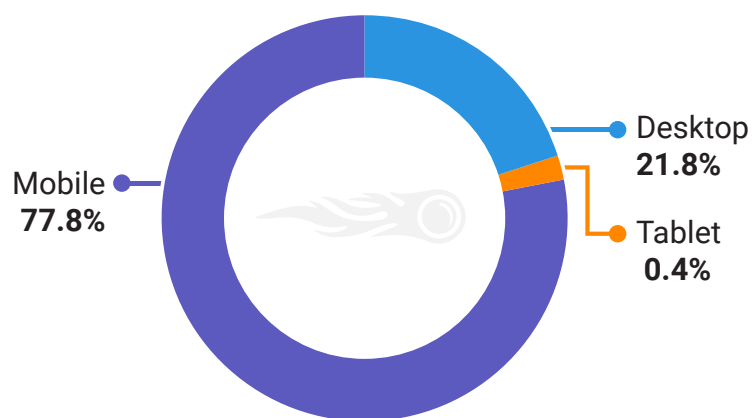
Consumers' browsing and buying patterns are constantly changing. An obvious example is how over the span of very few years, the mobile phone has become the preferred device shoppers use to make purchases online, especially in emerging markets like India.

Understanding how your customers go about their shopping will help you target them better.

## How do people browse and shop?

here are an estimated 500 million internet users in India, and nearly all of them use mobile phones to access the internet at some point or the other.

Nearly four-fifths of all internet browsing takes place through mobile devices:



## Areas of interest

Once you know your target market's browsing habits, you also need to dig into their interests, habits, leanings and preferences. You have the option to scour the web for what people in your industry are viewing and appreciating, rather than just relying on first-party data.

The [SEMrush Topic Research](#) tool can pull up related areas of interest and give you a lot of ideas for content creation in your niche:



**Rod’s Insight:**

It’s a fun time of year. Spirits are high and people are quite rightly celebrating! Use this opportunity to have some fun in your ads, and make them stand out.

Unify your ad messaging so that consumers can see your brand is celebrating just as much as they are!

# Step 4

Know your competition

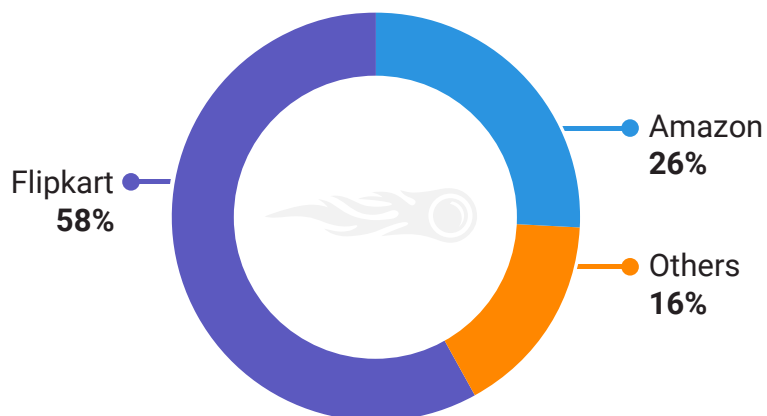
# Know your competition

Standing out from your competition is perhaps the most critical part of your campaign. There is bound to be a lot of branding noise during the festival season and your chances of beating the competition depend on

- What data you have
- How you're using that data to showcase the benefits of your product

## Brand faceoff: amazon vs flipkart (example)

Amazon.in and Flipkart.com are India's two largest ecommerce retailers. Brand recall for Flipkart was more than double that of Amazon just before the 2017 Diwali Sale:



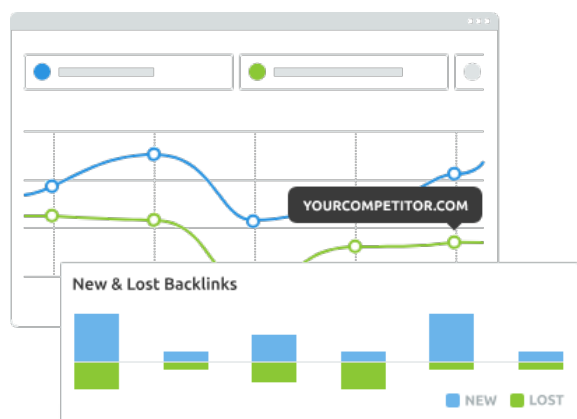
However, as per the latest SEMrush data, Amazon is beating Flipkart on almost all counts when it comes to search visibility and traffic on Google India:

Metric	amazon.in	flipkart.com
Monthly Organic Search Traffic	101 million	54.3 million
No. of Keywords Ranking in Top 100	2.3 million	1.2 million
Estimated Value of Traffic	\$7.1 million	\$3.2 million
No. of Linking Domains	24,400	15,500
Monthly Paid Search Traffic	182 million	32.3 million
No. of Keywords for which Ads are showing	1 million	22,100
Estimated Cost of Traffic	\$25.3 million	\$1.4 million
No. of Display Ads being shown	9,900	7,300

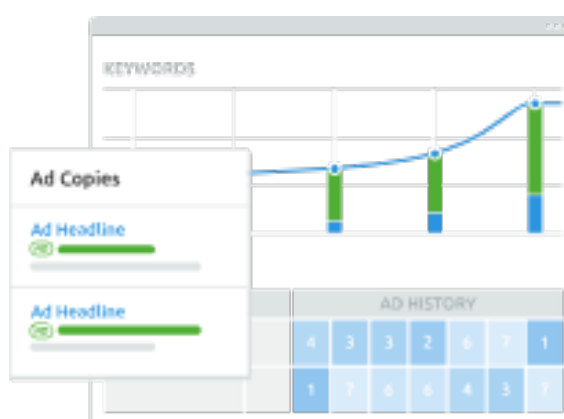
## A ton of data on your competitors

With the SEMrush [competitive intelligence toolkit](#), you can discover the sources of your website traffic and leads, identify your audience’s preferences, learn about your competitors’ marketing strategies, track the performance of your campaigns, monitor the conversations taking place around your brand, and prioritize the most profitable channels for selling online.

### Backlinks

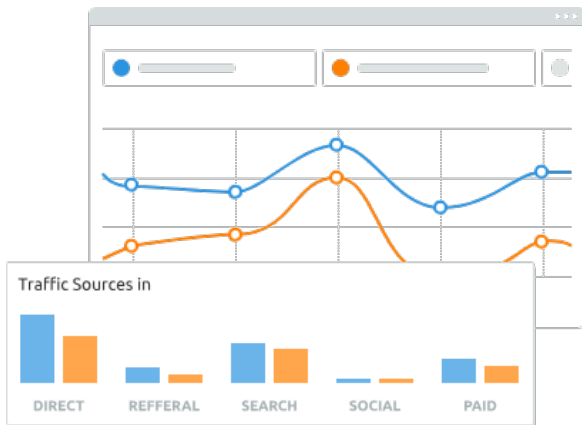


### Ad copies

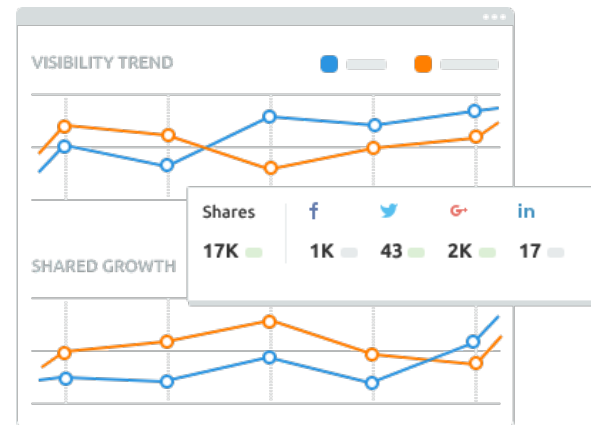




## Traffic



## Post Tracking



# Competitors' Ad copies

Here are some ad copies seen on Google ads for the keyword "diwali sale":

<p><b>Diwali sale at Amazon   Get up to 50% off at Amazon.in</b></p> <p>Ad <a href="http://www.amazon.in/Furniture/F...">www.amazon.in/Furniture/F...</a></p> <p>Shop for Outdoor, Living Room , Study &amp; Dining Room Furniture. Pay on Delivery. 100% Purchase Protection. Free Shipping* Great Value For Money. Easy Returns. Huge Selection. Low Prices.</p>	<p><b>Diwali Sale Online - Upto 60% Off</b></p> <p>Ad <a href="http://www.amazon.in/Furniture/O...">www.amazon.in/Furniture/O...</a></p> <p>Original Products. Pay on Delivery. 100% Purchase Protection. Easy Returns.</p>
<p><b>Diwali Lights - Upto 60% Off On Select Titles</b></p> <p>Ad <a href="http://www.amazon.in/divali+ligh...">www.amazon.in/divali+ligh...</a></p> <p>Explore India's Largest Online Book Store. Low Prices. Free Shipping*. Buy Now!</p>	<p><b>Diwali Sale - End of Season Sale. Buy Now.</b></p> <p>Ad <a href="http://www.dealsells.com/">www.dealsells.com/</a></p> <p>Mobiles, Electronics, Computer, Cloth, Shoes, Food, Household, Beauty &amp; Health.</p>
<p><b>Deepavali Offers For Mobiles - Check Out Relevant Information</b></p> <p>Ad <a href="http://search.1and1.com/Best_ans...">search.1and1.com/Best_ans...</a></p> <p>Go to Search.1and1.com and get information from the entire Web</p>	<p><b>Sale offers online - We have it on Search.1and1.com</b></p> <p>Ad <a href="http://search.1and1.com/Info_for...">search.1and1.com/Info_for...</a></p> <p>See yourself. Sale offers online</p>
<p><b>Online Shopping Store - Great Diwali Sale</b></p> <p>Ad <a href="http://www.flipkart.com/">www.flipkart.com/</a></p> <p>Hurry Up! Diwali Season sales are on. Shop now and avail amazing discounts.</p>	<p><b>Special Offer Of Diwali</b></p> <p>Ad <a href="http://www.info.com/">www.info.com/</a></p> <p>Get Special Offer Of Diwali Info. Your Search &amp; Social Results Now.</p>

# Top search engine rankings

Here are the top 5 organic search results in google.co.in for the keyword “diwali sale”:

- 1 <https://www.snapdeal.com/offers/diwali-offers>  
snapdeal.com
- 2 <https://www.flipkart.com/offers/happy-diwali-sale>  
flipkart.com
- 3 <https://www.shopclues.com/diwali-offers.html>  
shopclues.com
- 4 <https://www.amazon.in/diwali-great-indian-festival/b?ie=UTF8&node=3419926031>  
amazon.in
- 5 <https://www.livemint.com/Companies/tFVEK7cBbRmFSoDpnai3uO/Flipkart-Amazon-may-generate-3-billion-in-Diwali-sales.html>  
livemint.com

## Rod's Insight:

Keep a very close eye on your competition. If you monitor your reports once a week, now is the time to step up the frequency and monitor every day!

You not only need to keep an eye on your competition's promotional ad copy, but also look for new competitors on your main keywords who you perhaps don't see at less busy times of the year.

# Step 5

Create a foolproof plan

# Create a foolproof plan

---

Getting your budgeting and time estimates right is central to effective planning of any ad campaign. This becomes all the more important during high stakes events like Diwali. Market research and competitor data are your best friends here.

## Which companies spend the most on advertising?

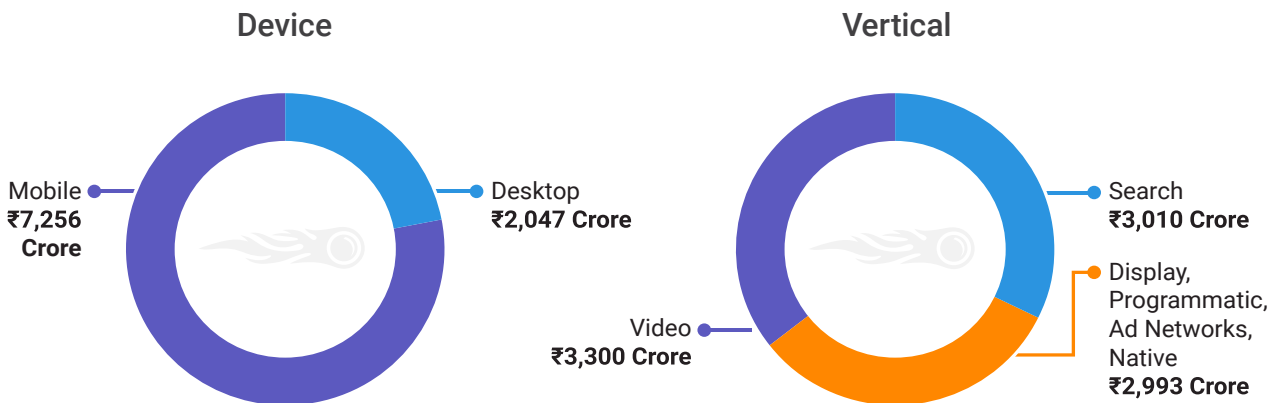
The spending patterns of large companies affects your campaign. You should be aware of the big brands in your niche that will pour all their money into advertising during the holiday season, making your best laid plans go awry.

These are the Indian companies with the highest advertising spend (including online and offline) in 2017. This gives you a better idea of the companies with deep pockets and the biggest spenders in your industry. You can analyze their strategies to figure out how to win in your niche.

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1 Hindustan Unilever | 6 Maruti Suzuki  |
| 2 Amazon             | 7 Godrej         |
| 3 Procter & Gamble   | 8 Samsung        |
| 4 Reckitt Benckiser  | 9 Oppo           |
| 5 Patanjali          | 10 Hero Motocorp |

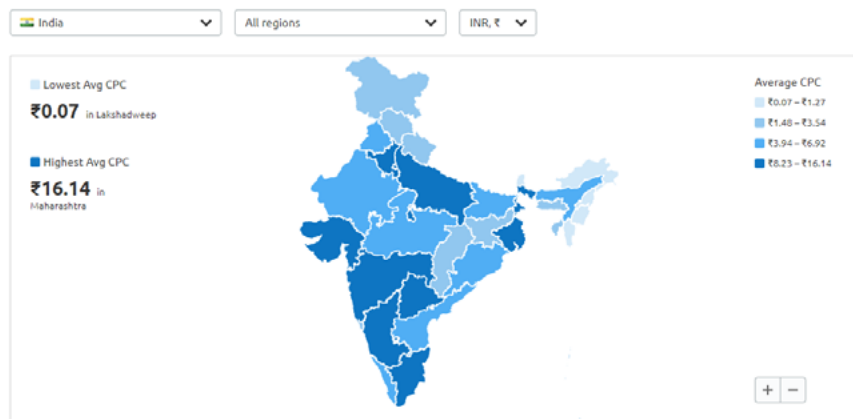
# Overall digital Ad expenditure

Overall, Indian companies spent **₹9,303 Crore** on digital advertising in 2017. Here is the break up, segmented by devices and ad formats:



# Geography-wise cost factors

If you're considering running a PPC campaign on Google Ads, you can get an idea of the average Cost Per Click (CPC) in your region using [SEMrush's CPC Map](#) tool:



### Rod's Insight:

Use ad scheduling, special promotional campaigns, Google Scripts or automated rules here to save you time.

And just as important, make sure that when the holiday has passed, your ads are paused. It can reflect poorly on your brand when consumers see a Diwali ad a few days after the holiday has ended!

# In summary

---

Marketers need two types of data to crack their seasonal and festival campaigns effectively. One is historical data and market data from industry sources and the other is competitive and customer data from first-party business intelligence tools like SEMrush.

With the right combination of big data analysis, advertising, branding and PR on the right channels, you can create effective marketing campaigns that boost brand recall and drive sales from day one.

Happy Diwali!



Sources: 1) Retailers Association of India. 2) Pitch Madison Advertising Report 2018.

The study has been supported by EduPristine (<https://www.edupristine.com/>). EduPristine is a member of Adtalem Global Education (NYSE: ATGE), a global education provider headquartered in the United States. Adtalem is a \$3 billion (INR 20,000 crores) company. EduPristine is one of India's leading training providers in Analytics, Accounting, Finance, Healthcare, and Marketing. Founded in 2008, EduPristine has a strong online platform and network of classrooms across India and caters to self-paced learning and online learning, in addition to classroom learning.



## We love your feedback!

Was this study helpful? Is there something else about high stakes marketing campaigns that you'd like to share or discuss?

Drop us a line at [india-marketing@semrush.com](mailto:india-marketing@semrush.com) or tweet your thoughts to **@SEMrush** with the hashtag **#SEMrushIndia** and join the conversation!