



MICROSOFT ADVERTISING INSIGHTS

## Graduation gift trends

March 2022

Microsoft Advertising. Great relationships start here.



# Key takeaways and solutions to maximize your budget



NRF's annual graduation gift survey shows how consumers have been increasing the amount spent on graduation each year.

Use this opportunity to promote and meet consumer demand: [Responsive Search Ads](#) will automatically produce and serve many ad variations to show the most relevant ad to each potential customer.



This year's graduation presents a giant opportunity for photo cards; forecast predicts searches to rise by an average of **204%** and clicks by an average of **258%**.

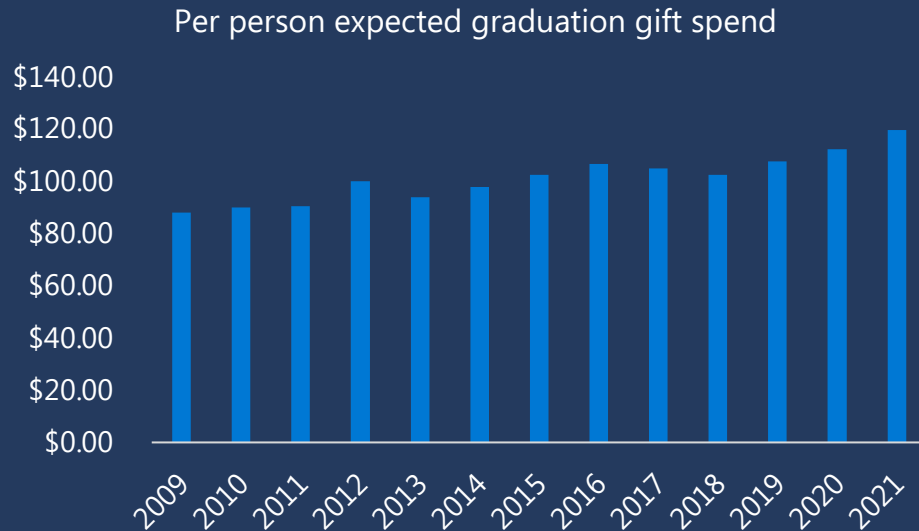
Target key customers with your first-party data by implementing [Customer Match](#) or find curated lists of users found to be in-market for your purchase category with [In-market Audiences](#).



Custom/engraved jewelry trends show an increase in searches and clicks at the end of April. Forecasts predict searches to rise by an average of **48%** and clicks by an average of **103%**.

Use [Shopping Ads](#) to reach consumers searching for custom/engraved jewelry at the end of April. After set up, you can include [Ad Extensions](#) to highlight your offerings even more.

# NRF's annual graduation gift survey shows how consumers have been increasing the amount spend on graduation each year<sup>1</sup>



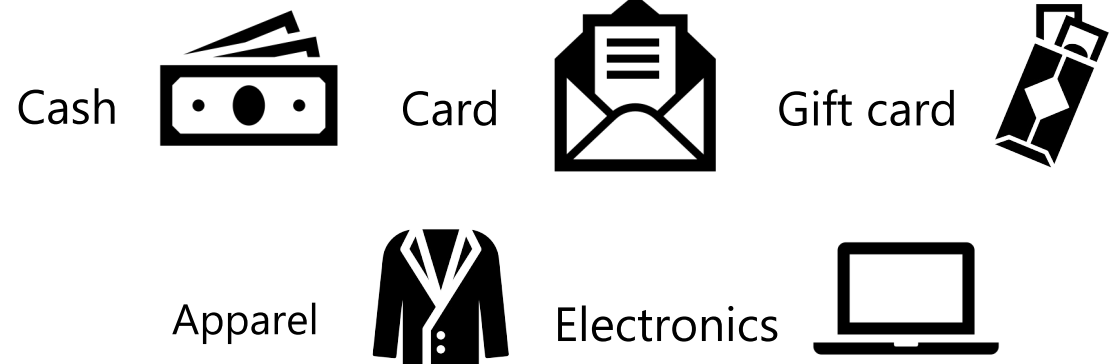
Source: 1. NRF's Annual 2021 Graduation Spending Survey, conducted by Prosper Insights & Analytics. The 2021 survey of 7,971 U.S. adults 18 and older was conducted May 3-11 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.1 percentage points.  
2. Microsoft Internal data from 2/9/21-4/10/21

32%  
Plan on buying gifts for high school and college graduates

\$119.4  
4  
Average expected spending

\$5.9B  
Total expected spending

## Top 5 gifts for graduation

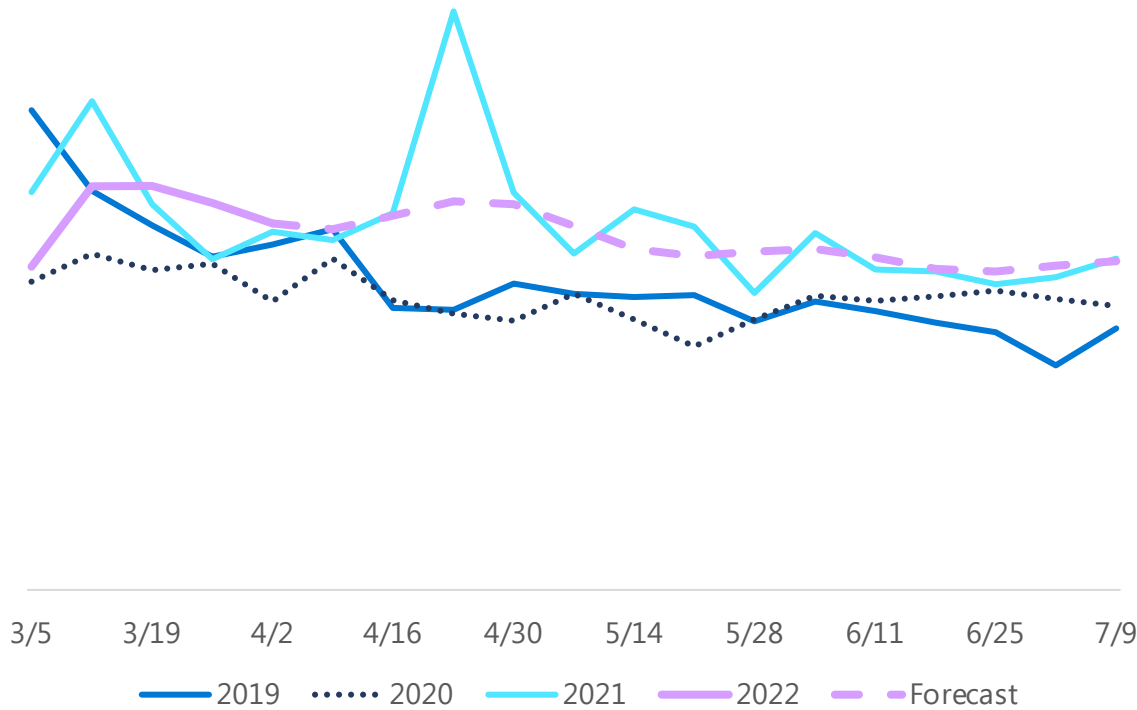


Apparel, cards, and gift cards are among top trending gifts for graduation. Use this opportunity to promote and meet consumer demand: [Responsive Search Ads](#) will automatically produce and serve many ad variations to show the most relevant ad to each potential customer, increasing conversions +7% on average<sup>2</sup>.

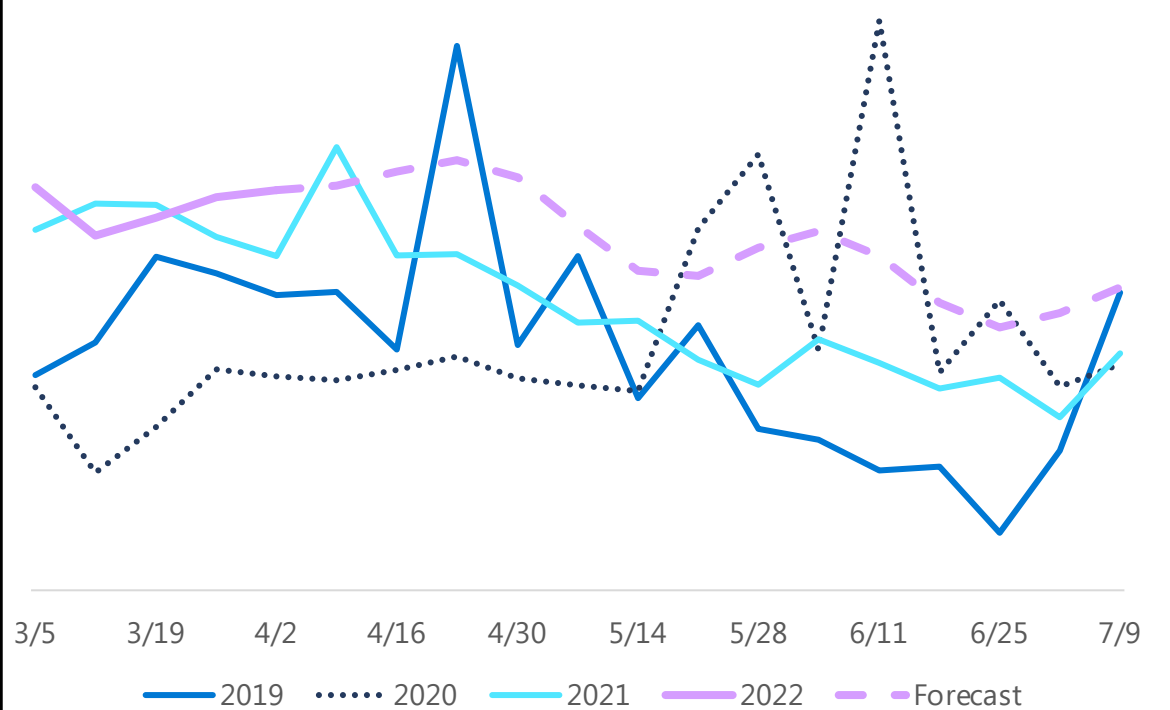
# Graduate and undergraduate programs should ramp in mid to late April

Forecast predicts searches to rise by an average of 30% for graduate and 16% for undergraduate programs

### Graduate programs search trends and forecast



### Undergraduate programs search trends and forecast



**Pro Tip:** Gain New Customers searching for graduate and undergraduate programs, Microsoft Education [In-Market Audiences](#) convert 4.9x when consumers are in the Consideration phase.<sup>1</sup>

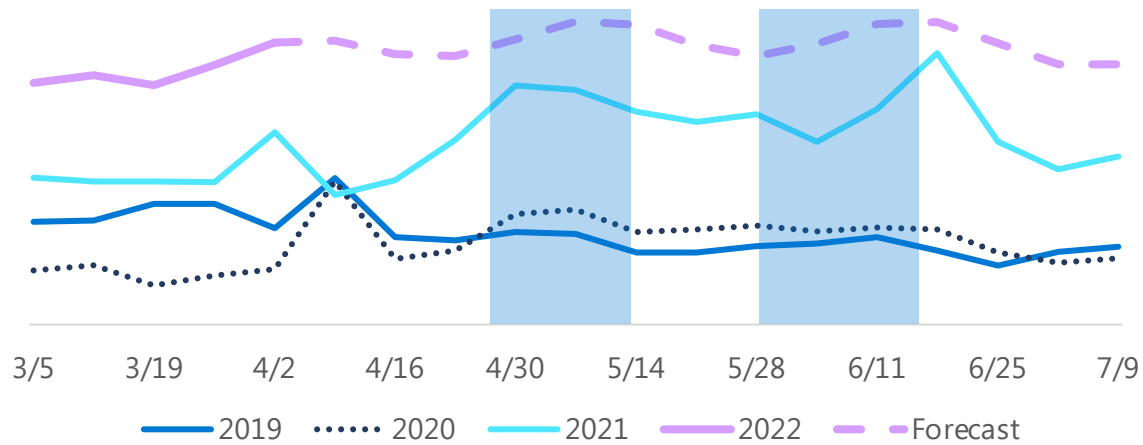
Source: Microsoft Internal Data; Solid light purple shows actual metric. Dash light purple line is the expected forecasted metric. The expected % changes by week are in reference to week 9 of the 2022 calendar year. 1. Microsoft Internal data



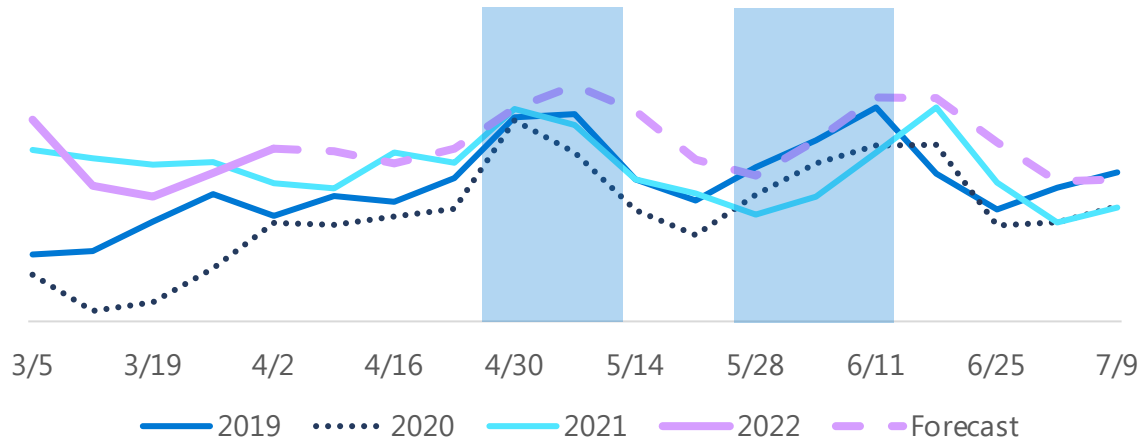
# Gift cards should ramp at the end of April and May

Searches are expected to rise by an average of 50% and clicks by an average of 36%

### Gift cards search trends and forecast



### Gift cards click trends and forecast

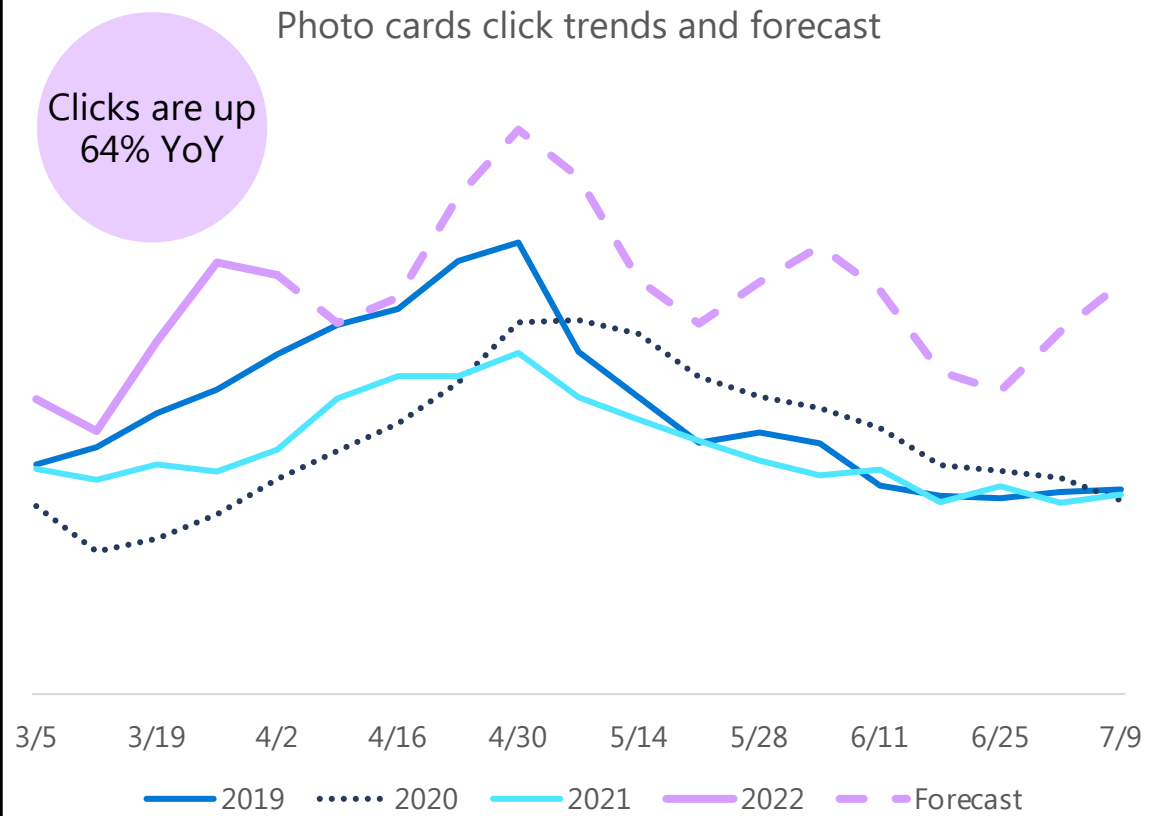
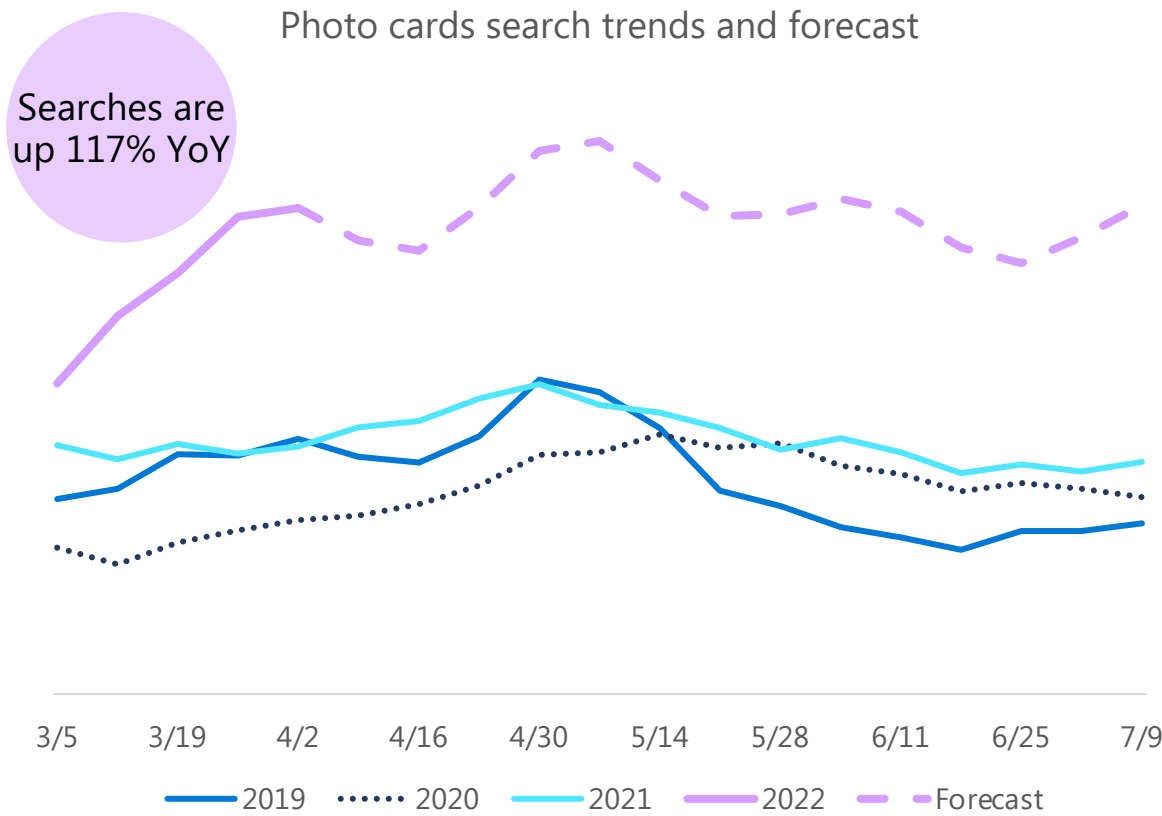


Source: Microsoft Internal Data; Solid light purple shows actual metric. Dash light purple line is the expected forecasted metric. The expected % changes by week are in reference to week 9 of the 2022 calendar year.



# This year's graduation presents a giant opportunity for photo cards

Forecast predicts searches to rise by an average of 204% and clicks by an average of 258%



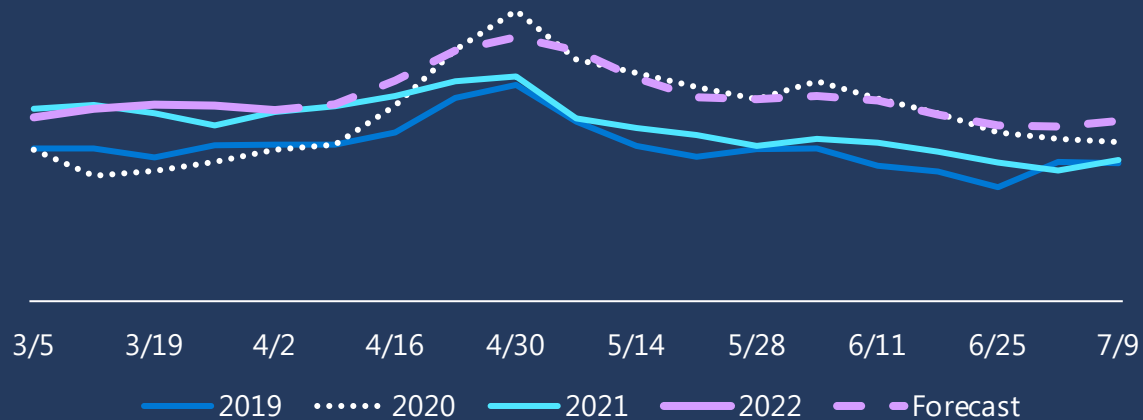
**Pro Tip:** Target key customers with your first-party data by implementing [Customer Match](#) or find curated lists of users found to be in-market for your purchase category with [In-market Audiences](#).

Source: Microsoft Internal Data; Solid light purple shows actual metric. Dash light purple line is the expected forecasted metric. The expected % changes by week are in reference to week 9 of the 2022 calendar year.



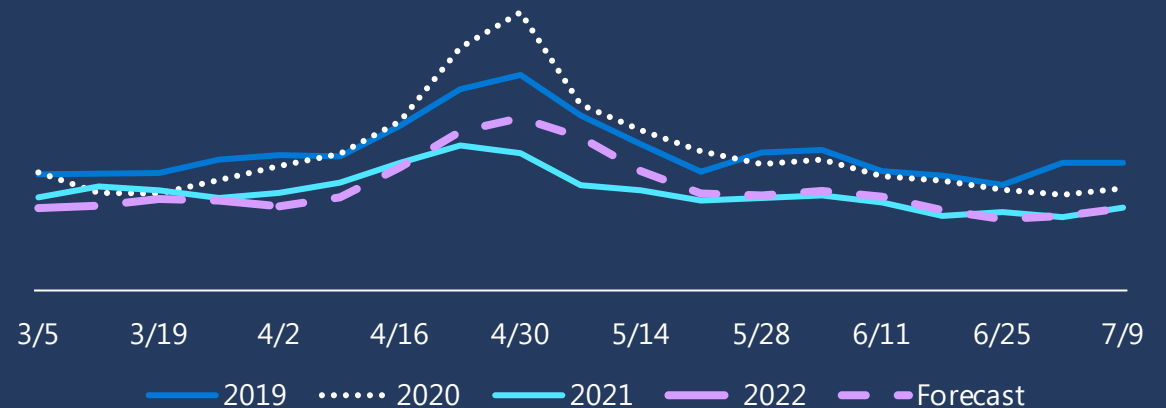
# Maximize budgets for custom/engraved jewelry as online volumes rise

Jewelry engraving search trends and forecast



**Pro Tip:** Reach consumers on their retail journey with [Shopping Ads](#) that drive up to +57% conversions.<sup>1</sup> After set up, you can include [Ad Extensions](#) [such as filter link and multi-image] to highlight your offerings even more.

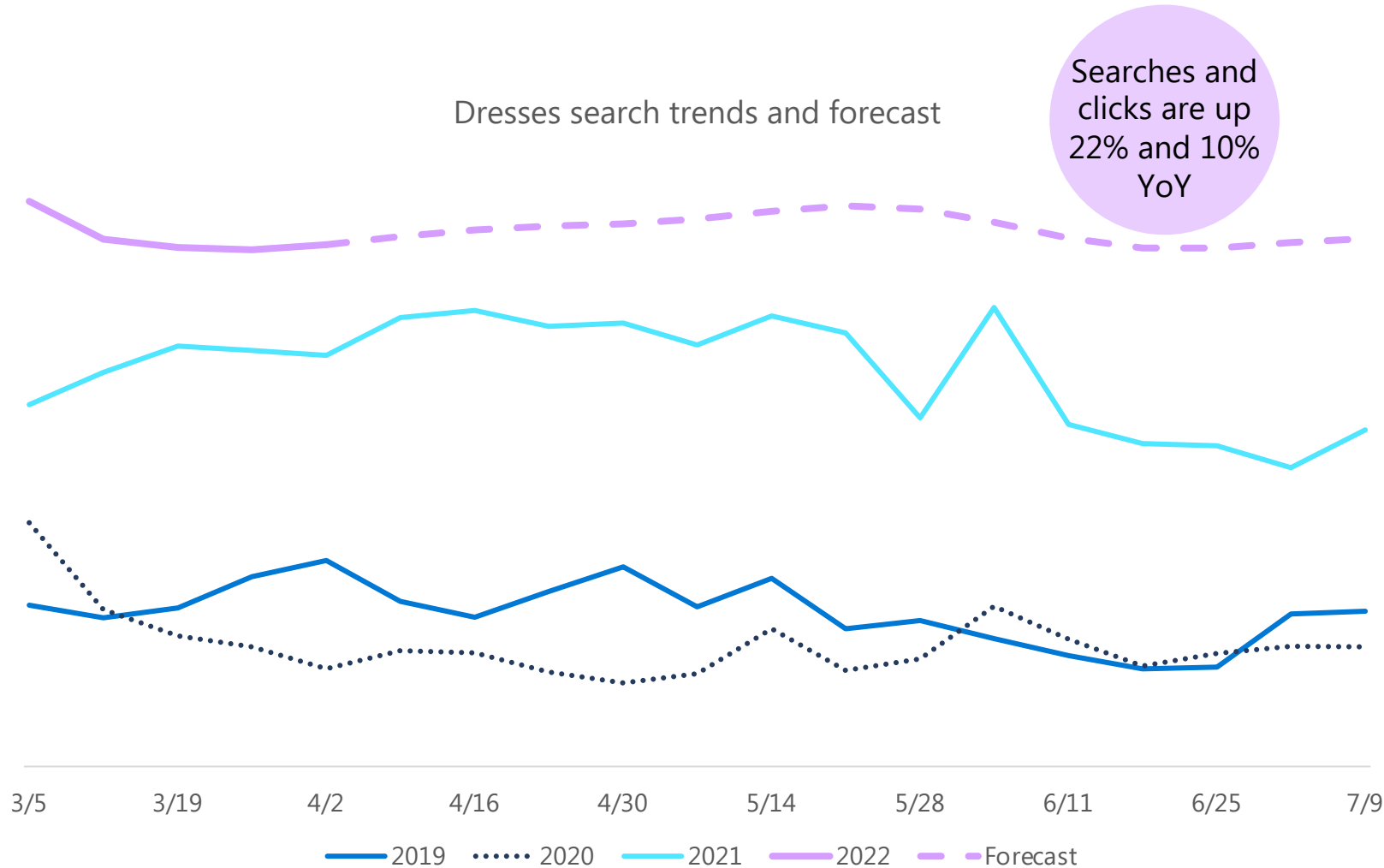
Jewelry engraving click trends and forecast



Trends show an increase in clicks and searches at the end of April and forecasts predict searches to rise by an average of **48%** and by an average of **103%**

# Searches for dresses will be higher compared to previous three years

Searches are expected to rise by an average of 6%



**As graduation season approaches, people start shopping for graduation dresses as soon as possible. To create the best graduation outfits, they want to find the right graduation dress to build their look around.<sup>2</sup>**

Gain New Customers shopping for dresses!  
Microsoft Retail [In-Market Audiences](#) convert **4.7x** when consumers are in the Consideration phase.<sup>1</sup>

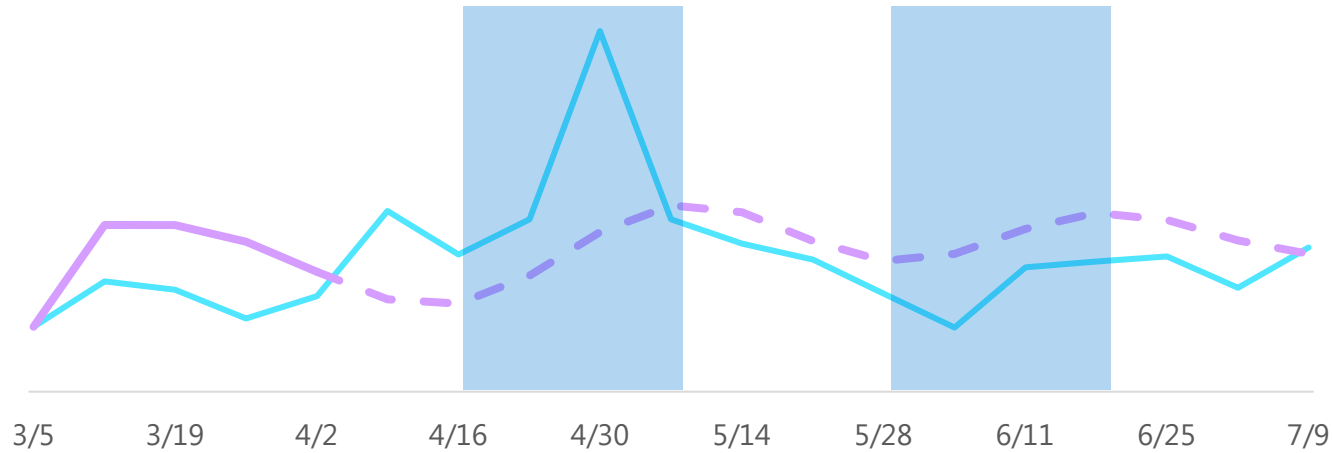
Source: Microsoft Internal Data; Solid light purple shows actual metric. Dash light purple line is the expected forecasted metric. The expected % changes by week are in reference to week 9 of the 2022 calendar year. 1. Microsoft internal data. 2. College Fashion, 30 Incredibly Cute Graduation Dresses for 2022, [collegefashion.net]



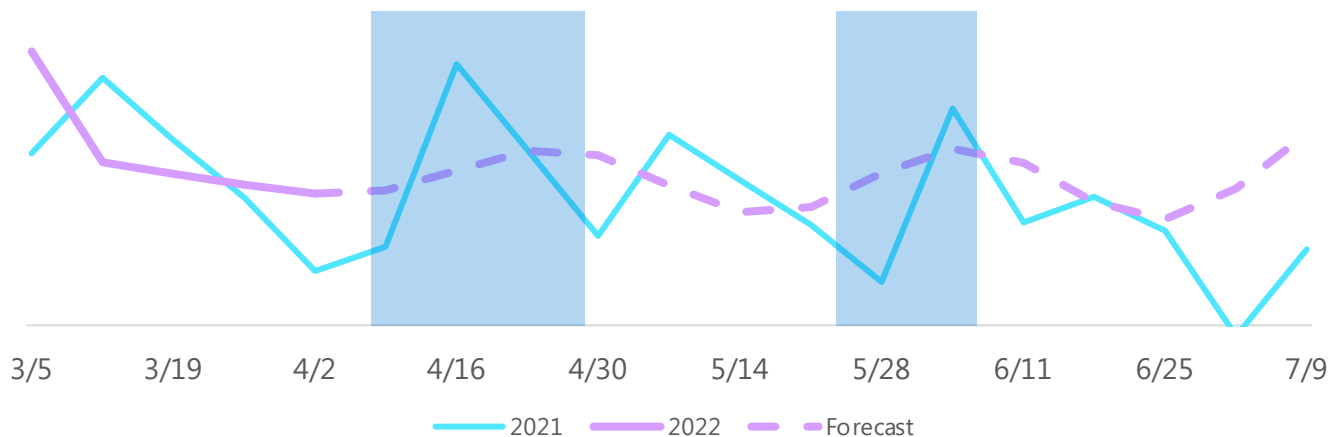


# Grow your audience by providing the right message as volumes rise

Beer search trends and forecast



Snack food search trends and forecast



— 2021 — 2022 - - Forecast

- **Beer** impressions are expected to rise by an average of 14%
- Clicks are expected to rise by an average of 23%
- Click through rate is expected to rise by an average of 20%



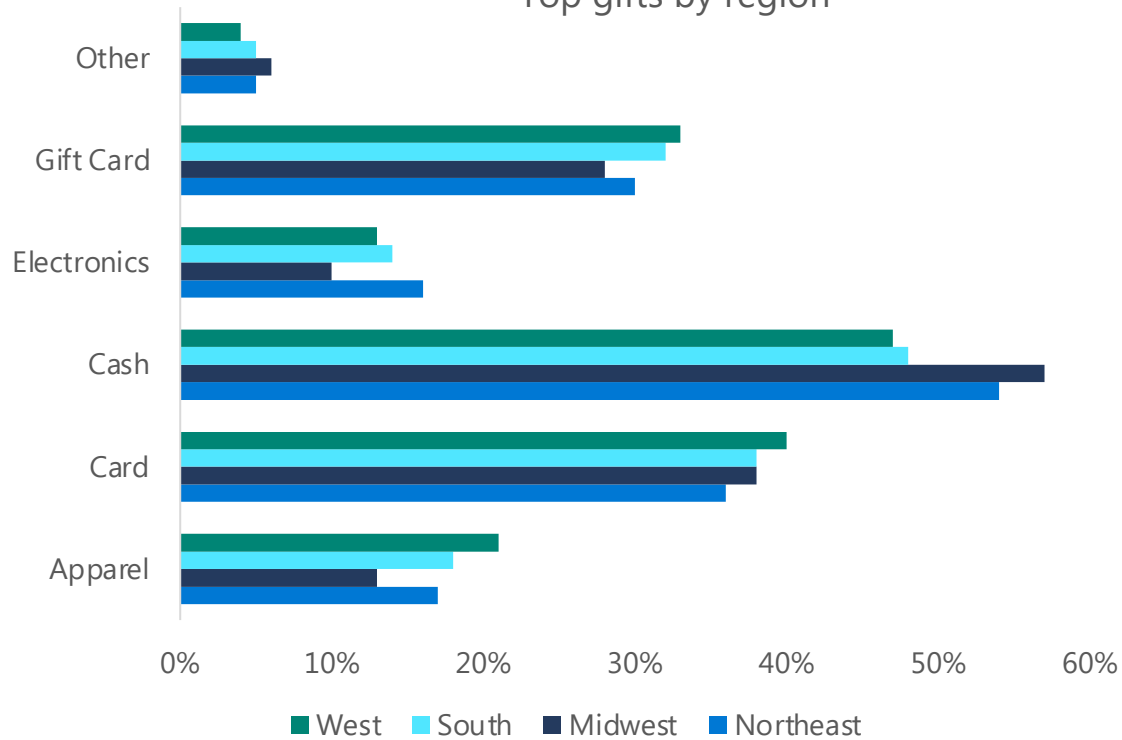
- **Snack food** impressions are expected to rise by an average of 3%
- Clicks are expected to rise by an average of 7%
- Click through rate is expected to rise by an average of 10%

As graduation parties become top of mind for consumers, beer and snack food searches are expected to rise by an average of 28% and 9%. Responsive Search ads adapt your text ads to closely match what someone is searching for, increasing clicks +17% on average.<sup>1</sup>

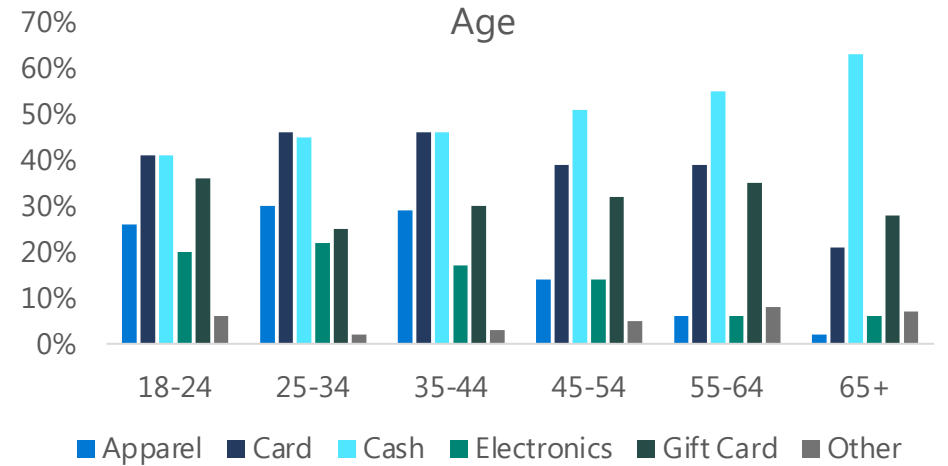
Source: Microsoft Internal Data; Solid light purple shows actual metric. Dash light purple line is the expected forecasted metric. The expected % changes by week are in reference to week 9 of the 2022 calendar year. 1. Microsoft internal data from 2/9/21-4/10/21

# Focus your marketing on the customers most likely to convert

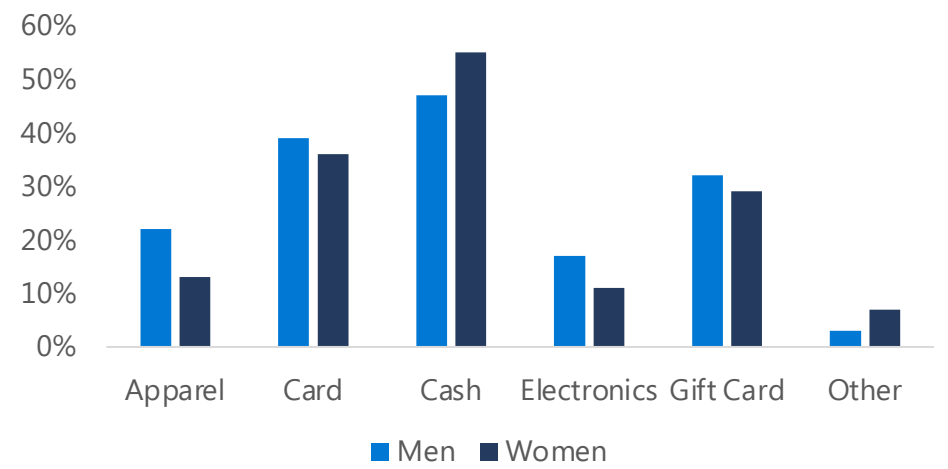
Top gifts by region



Age



Gender



**Pro Tip:** [Multimedia ads](#) use large visual imagery that showcases your brand and products, which in turn will help to capture users' attention and own the SRPV's for your category. Combine with [Location Targeting](#) and showcase your products to nearby shoppers with [Local Inventory Ads](#)

Source: NRF's Annual 2021 Graduation Spending Survey, conducted by Prosper Insights & Analytics. The 2021 survey of 7,971 U.S. adults 18 and older was conducted May 3-11 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.1 percentage points.



# Top searched queries for the past three years

2019



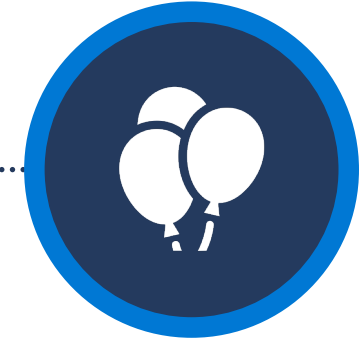
*graduation party  
custom t shirts graduation  
teddy bear graduation  
custom bobblehead  
graduation  
college gifts graduation  
graduation gift  
dresses graduation  
white dresses graduation*

2020



*virtual graduation  
graduation party  
yard signs graduation  
decorate car graduation  
graduation gift  
car decorations graduation  
cap gown graduation  
white dresses graduation  
lawn signs graduation*

2021

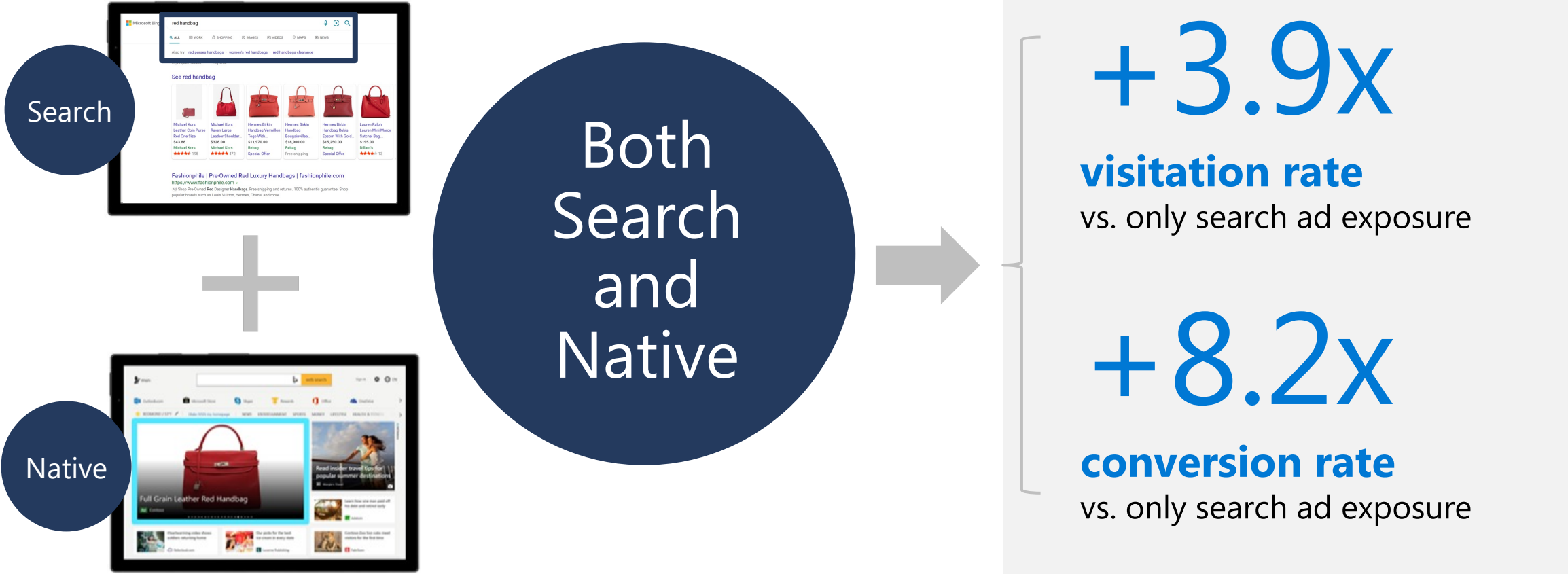


*graduation party  
white dresses graduation  
graduation gift  
yard signs graduation  
virtual graduation  
dresses graduation  
backyard graduation party  
outdoor graduation party  
white dress graduation*

**Pro Tip:** Expose new emerging search trends and themes with [Dynamic Search Ads](#) and [Broad match](#). Try [ad customizers](#) in order to save time and serve more relevant ads.

# Reach users across both search and native platforms this Graduation to attain incremental lifts in **site visitation** and **conversion rate**

## Gifts & Occasions Ad Effectiveness Study Results



Source: Microsoft internal data; results may vary for each advertiser based on campaign settings, targeted audiences, and other factors. Lift metrics represent an average of all advertisers with lift studies done during peak seasonal periods [thru Sept 2021]. These advertisers may be a non-representative sample of all advertisers on the marketplace. Lift measured between exposed users and a control group of eligible unexposed users, with lift represented on a per-user basis. Average user count per advertiser study = 1.8M



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