Specification: Product Feed for Google Merchant Center

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1. Goal and general requirements

Build an automated XML product feed that passes Google Merchant Center validation with no errors. The feed is used for Shopping and Performance Max campaigns.

Parameter	Requirement
Format	XML (RSS 2.0) with the namespace `xmlns:g="http://base.google.com/ns/1.0"`
Address	Permanent URL, e.g. `https://[domain]/feed/google.xml`. Accessible without login, not blocked in robots.txt, no captcha or anti-bot checks for Googlebot
Encoding	UTF-8; special characters (&, <, >) escaped or wrapped in CDATA
Coverage	All active catalog products. Each variant (size, color) is a separate `<item>`
Language and currency	Texts in the target audience's language, prices in the store's currency (UAH in the examples)
Updates	Automatic, at least once a day. Price and availability in the feed must update together with the website
Exclude	Products without a price, image or working link, and products hidden on the website

2. Required attributes

A product missing any of these attributes will be disapproved.

Attribute	Value	Format and limits
`g:id`	Unique product variant ID (SKU)	Up to 50 characters, never changes. If online and in-store price or availability differ, use separate IDs
`g:title`	Product title	Up to 150 characters (rules in section 5)
`g:description`	Product description	Up to 5,000 characters, no HTML tags or links
`g:link`	Product page URL	https, domain verified in Merchant Center. For a variant, the URL with that variant preselected
`g:image_link`	Main image	https, minimum 500×500 px, recommended 1200×1200 px; JPG, PNG or WebP
`g:availability`	Availability	One of: `in_stock`, `out_of_stock`, `preorder`, `backorder`
`g:price`	Regular price	`1299.00 UAH` — number with a dot, space, currency code
`g:brand`	Manufacturer brand	For own-production goods, the store name
`g:gtin`	EAN-13 / UPC barcode	Required if the product has a manufacturer barcode
`g:mpn`	Manufacturer part number	If there is no GTIN
`g:identifier_exists`	`no`	Only if there is neither GTIN nor MPN (own production, handmade)
`g:condition`	Condition	`new`, `refurbished` or `used`

Shipping (`g:shipping`) may be omitted from the feed if it is configured at the account level in Merchant Center.

3. Apparel, footwear and product variants

These attributes are required for apparel, footwear and accessories. For other categories with variants, send `g:item_group_id` plus the attribute that distinguishes the variants.

Attribute	Value	Format
`g:item_group_id`	Shared parent product ID for all its variants	Identical across all sizes and colors of one model
`g:color`	Variant color	As text: `black`, `black/white` (up to 3 colors)
`g:size`	Variant size	As on the website: `42`, `M`, `XL`
`g:gender`	Gender	`male`, `female` or `unisex`
`g:age_group`	Age group	`adult`, `kids`, `toddler`, `infant` or `newborn`
`g:material`	Material	If applicable: `leather`, `cotton`
`g:size_system`	Size system	If needed: `EU`, `UK`, `US`

Each variant has its own `g:id`, `g:link`, `g:image_link` (photo of that exact color), `g:price` and `g:availability`.

4. Recommended attributes

Optional, but without them ad quality drops and campaign control gets weaker.

Attribute	Value	Format
`g:sale_price`	Sale price	`999.00 UAH`; `g:price` stays the regular price
`g:sale_price_effective_date`	Sale period	ISO 8601: `2026-11-01T00:00+02:00/2026-11-30T23:59+02:00`
`g:additional_image_link`	Additional images	Up to 10, same requirements as the main image
`g:product_type`	Website category	Breadcrumb path: `Footwear > Women > Sneakers`
`g:google_product_category`	Google category	ID or path from Google's taxonomy; assigned automatically if omitted
`g:custom_label_0…4`	Internal labels for campaign segmentation	E.g. margin (`high`/`mid`/`low`), bestseller, season, price band. Values agreed with the ads specialist
`g:cost_of_goods_sold`	Cost of goods	`650.00 UAH`; needed for profit reporting in Google Ads
`g:product_highlight`	Key benefits	Up to 10 items, each up to 150 characters
`g:video_link`	Product video	Video URL; new attribute supported since 2026

5. Rules for titles, descriptions and images

Title (`g:title`)

- Structure: `Brand + product type + model + key attribute (color, size, volume)`. Example: `Nike Air Max 90 women's sneakers white 38`
- Put the most important words in the first 70 characters; the rest is truncated in results
- Not allowed: ALL CAPS, "sale", "discount", "buy", "free shipping", prices, emoji, exclamation marks

Description (`g:description`)

- Only about the product: purpose, material, dimensions, specs
- Not allowed: shipping, payment or store info, links, contacts, promo codes, comparisons with competitors

Images (`g:image_link`, `g:additional_image_link`)

- Minimum 500×500 px; from 31.01.2027 smaller images will not be accepted
- Main image: product on a white or neutral background, filling 75–90% of the frame
- Not allowed on the main image: watermarks, store logos, text, borders, "−20%" badges, "no photo" placeholders
- Image URLs do not change on every feed update, otherwise Google re-crawls the images

6. Website and feed consistency

Google compares the feed with the product page. Mismatches cause disapprovals, and repeated ones lead to account suspension.

- Feed price = product page price seen by a new visitor without login or promo code
- Sale price on the website = `g:sale_price` in the feed, with the same dates
- Feed availability = page availability. An out-of-stock product cannot be added to cart
- The product page has schema.org `Product` markup with `Offer`: `price`, `priceCurrency`, `availability`, `sku`, `gtin` (if any), `brand`, `image`
- Markup values match the feed and the visible page text
- The product page opens without redirect to the homepage, without 404 and without a city or language selector before the product
- Page currency matches the feed currency for visitors from the target country

7. XML example

One product variant with a sale price. All other products follow as identical `<item>` blocks inside `<channel>`.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<rss version="2.0" xmlns:g="http://base.google.com/ns/1.0">
  <channel>
    <title>[STORE]</title>
    <link>https://[domain]</link>
    <description>Google Merchant Center product feed</description>
    <item>
      <g:id>AM90-W-WHT-38</g:id>
      <g:item_group_id>AM90-W</g:item_group_id>
      <g:title>Nike Air Max 90 women's sneakers white 38</g:title>
      <g:description><![CDATA[
        Women's sneakers with a leather and mesh upper. Air cushioning unit in the heel, rubber outsole.
      ]]></g:description>
      <g:link>https://[domain]/product/air-max-90-white?size=38</g:link>
      <g:image_link>https://[domain]/images/am90-white-1.jpg</g:image_link>
      <g:additional_image_link>https://[domain]/images/am90-white-2.jpg</g:additional_image_link>
      <g:availability>in_stock</g:availability>
      <g:price>5499.00 UAH</g:price>
      <g:sale_price>4699.00 UAH</g:sale_price>
      <g:sale_price_effective_date>2026-11-01T00:00+02:00/2026-11-30T23:59+02:00</g:sale_price_effective_date>
      <g:brand>Nike</g:brand>
      <g:gtin>0195866123456</g:gtin>
      <g:condition>new</g:condition>
      <g:color>white</g:color>
      <g:size>38</g:size>
      <g:gender>female</g:gender>
      <g:age_group>adult</g:age_group>
      <g:product_type>Footwear &gt; Women &gt; Sneakers</g:product_type>
      <g:custom_label_0>high_margin</g:custom_label_0>
    </item>
  </channel>
</rss>
```

8. Acceptance checklist

The work is accepted when every item is done.

- ☐ The feed opens at a permanent URL; valid XML with no parsing errors
- ☐ Number of `<item>` equals the number of active product variants on the website
- ☐ All required attributes are filled for 100% of products
- ☐ No duplicate `g:id` values
- ☐ Price and availability of 10 random products match the website and the markup
- ☐ A price or availability change on the website reaches the feed within a day
- ☐ Feed uploaded to Merchant Center: 0 disapprovals caused by the feed
- ☐ Merchant Center warnings reviewed with the ads specialist

Sources

- Google Merchant Center product data specification
- Merchant Center product data specification update 2026
- Separate IDs for online and in-store products (March 2026)