

The Ultimate Guide to Ecommerce SEO



Ultimate Guide to Ecommerce SEO

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★★★★★ (1,077) Rating for Boody

Full Length Active Tights | Boody Australia

www.boody.com.au/products/full-length-active-tights

★★★★★ 249 reviews



Women's Tank Top | Boody Australia

www.boody.com.au/products/tank-top

★★★★★ 157 reviews

Why is eCommerce SEO So Important?

[89% of customers begin their buying process with a search engine.](#) Ranking highly in these searches must form a cornerstone of your inbound marketing strategy. While your store should, of course, be optimized for conversion, you need to be driving the traffic to it in the first instance.

Consumers who actively search for a product or service display a very high intent to make a purchase. Having a solid SEO strategy is one of the most effective ways of capturing this enthusiasm and converting it into sales across the line.

At its core, SEO involves the optimization of your store's content to get your pages and products ranking highly on SERPs (search engine results pages), increasing your visibility and attracting intentional, highly motivated shoppers to your product pages.

How can you boost your store and product rankings for search engine visibility?

Traditionally there has been a strong focus on identifying and leveraging descriptive keywords. These are words your customers are commonly using when searching for the kind of products you stock. By making sure that your pages rank highly for these keywords, you should in theory appear closer to the beginning of results returned for that phrase.

But beyond this, there are a variety of tactics that can help make your store more appealing to the search engine crawlers, which we'll explore in this guide.

The Benefits of eCommerce SEO

There are several benefits of SEO for eCommerce businesses. If you're relying on paid traffic and keyword targeted advertisements, bear in mind that [70-80% of people ignore paid search results](#), choosing to only click on organic search results.

SEO drives organic (free) traffic towards your store. So it's worth investing time and resources into making sure your store is built on solid SEO foundations so you can reap the greatest ROI.

But how good does your SEO need to be? It's simple — better than the competition's. To capture the kind of sales that come from general search engine queries, you need to rank higher than the other likely options the customer might choose to buy from.

[81% of people perform some type of online research before making a large purchase](#), so by ensuring that your store is full of rich, relevant and well-structured information, you have the chance to divert inbound interest to competing brands within your market.

Ready for a deep dive into the art of eCommerce SEO? Read on...

Keyword Research for eCommerce SEO

By Air Filho

Digital Marketer Consultant at DigiFlow



· digi^{flow}

While the exact weightings that ranking algorithms assign to different factors are always changing, one thing is certain — keywords matter.

Because of this, it's imperative for any eCommerce brand to have a solid grasp of the keywords that hold the most opportunity within their vertical and product range.

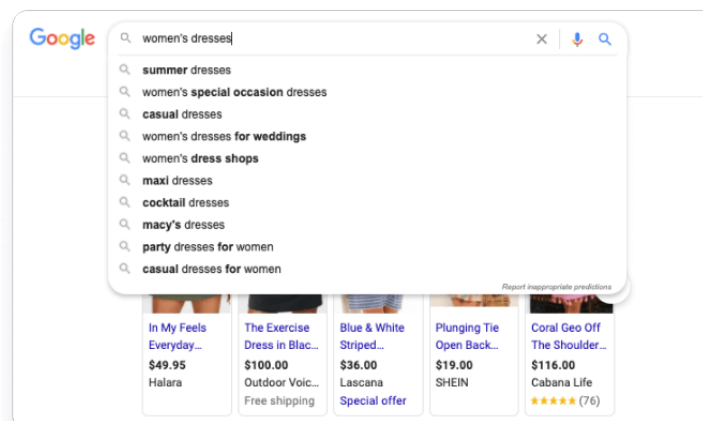
Defining the keywords that you want to optimize your store for will help with other important SEO factors, including your site structure and on-page SEO.

To get started, you'll need to understand exactly [how your target audience searches](#) for the items they're hoping to find. Let's take the example of an online clothing brand that's looking to understand the keywords they should be focusing on to improve their store's SEO.

1. Examine the Search Engines

The first step would be to look at the search engines themselves. Put yourself in the mindset of your typical target audience. What kind of words might you enter if you were looking for the types of products your store sold? In the case of our clothing brand example, let's say it was "midi length black dresses".

As you enter the search terms, pay attention to the autocomplete suggestions that appear. These give great insight into the types of keywords that people are using in combination with the phrases you are inputting.

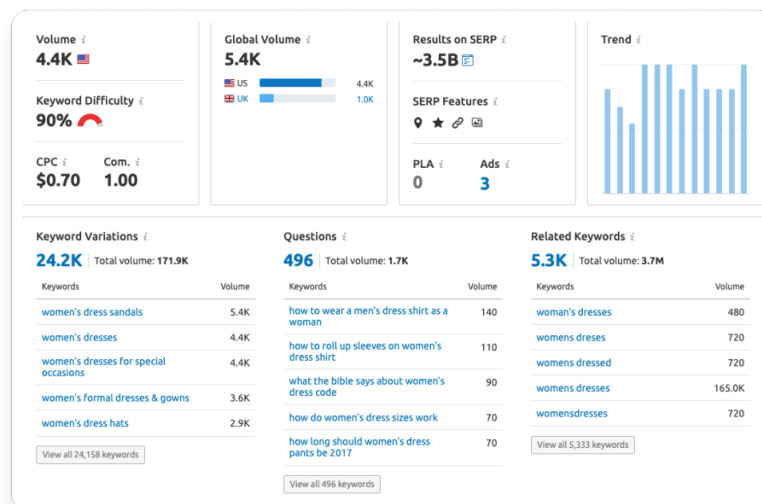


Are people searching for fabric, price or material in relation to the keywords you're typing in? Use this research to start to build out a broad web of keywords that you feel may have potential.

2. Dig Into Search Volume, User Intent & Difficulty

The next step is to learn how many people are searching for the keywords you've identified, and how many other brands are aiming to rank for them too. This is all about finding the sweet spot between a healthy level of interest ([monthly search volume](#), MSV) and the likelihood of actually ranking for the keywords in question ([difficulty](#) — how many others are optimizing for these keywords too).

You'll also want to think carefully about user intent. Search engines want to serve up content that is relevant to the people looking for it. Examine the kind of results that your selected keywords bring up — is there correlation between these pages and the kind of results you're hoping to produce?



There's no point trying to "trick" a search engine into including your content in search results that bear no relevance. If the people conducting those searches aren't actively looking for your products, simply getting a page in front of their eyes is unlikely to lead to conversion.

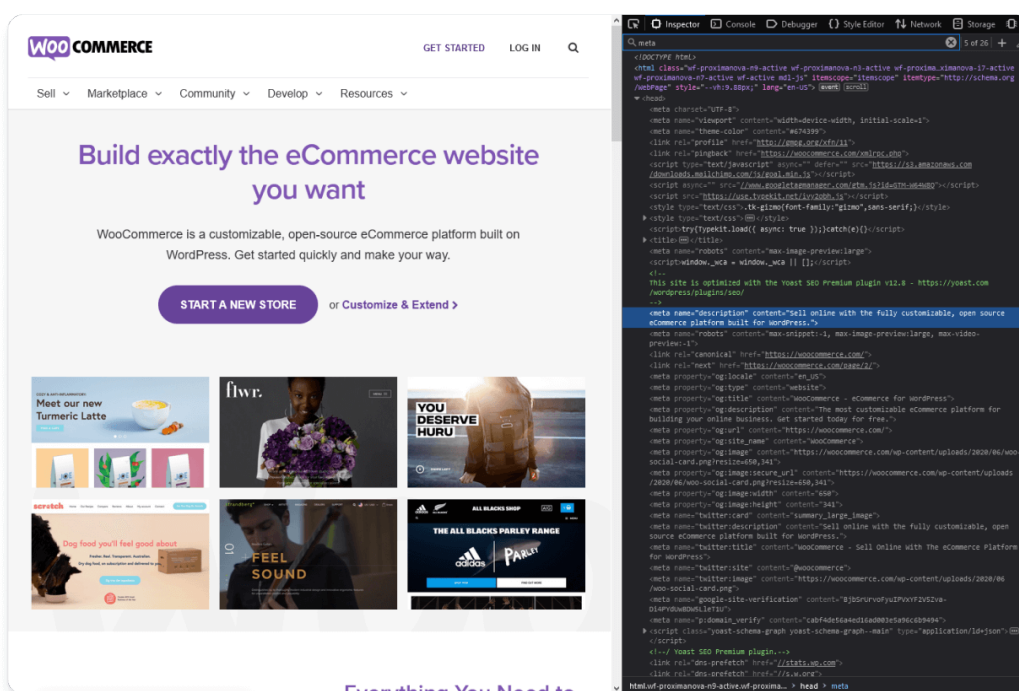
The very popular, high MSV keywords may seem tempting. But they're going to be difficult to gain traction with, especially if your store is younger. Ultimately, you're looking for keyword phrases that have a decent amount of interest, but that aren't yet showing a high level of ranking difficulty.

There are many great tools that can help you to perform this kind of keyword research, from paid options like [Semrush](#) through to a humble color-coded spreadsheet "traffic light system".

3. Check Out the Competition

Once you've selected a few likely keywords, look closely at the first page of results that they bring up. If the quality is generally poor, you can maximize your chances of climbing higher on these pages — simply by producing content of higher quality.

If you're interested to see what keywords your closest competitors might be targeting in their pages, just click onto their store and right-click 'Inspect Element' within your browser to see the metadata they've included. You can quickly locate the metadata by looking at the top of the source code panel inside the **<head>** element, or simply by searching the term "meta" using the "Find on Page" function.



Site Structure for eCommerce SEO

By Benjamin Strusnik

Founder at GoldenWeb



GOLDENWeb

Search engines look for sites that are easy to navigate, offering clear user pathways and obvious categorisation that make discovery simple and effective. Site structure refers to the way you organize, link, and present content on your website to visitors.

[Search engines use the hierarchy of a website's structure](#) to obtain an understanding of the importance of each individual page. The sheer range of products (each commanding its own product page) means that eCommerce stores typically contain many more pages to index than a website with no commerce focus.

The way you lay out and structure your eCommerce site will play a large part in determining how well your SEO performs. Let's take a look at some best practices.

Key Considerations for Site Structure SEO Success

When you're building out the architecture of your eCommerce site, work through the following steps to ensure that you're making the best choices to boost your SEO.

1

Conduct Keyword Research

Data doesn't lie, so by starting out with keyword research, you're setting yourself up for more accuracy and greater success.

When approaching SEO with your own theories, as opposed to conducting dedicated research, you risk bringing assumptions to the table, which can prove to be problematic.

If you start with keywords first, and then use them to organize collections/products, this guarantees a great user experience for your customers when navigating through your website.

Keyword Research

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help

15100%10

2

Consider your customers

Now, get into the headspace of your target audience: how are they likely to want to use and move through your store? Leverage that definitive keyword research to structure, categorize and name sections of your store in familiar terminology that they'll recognize.

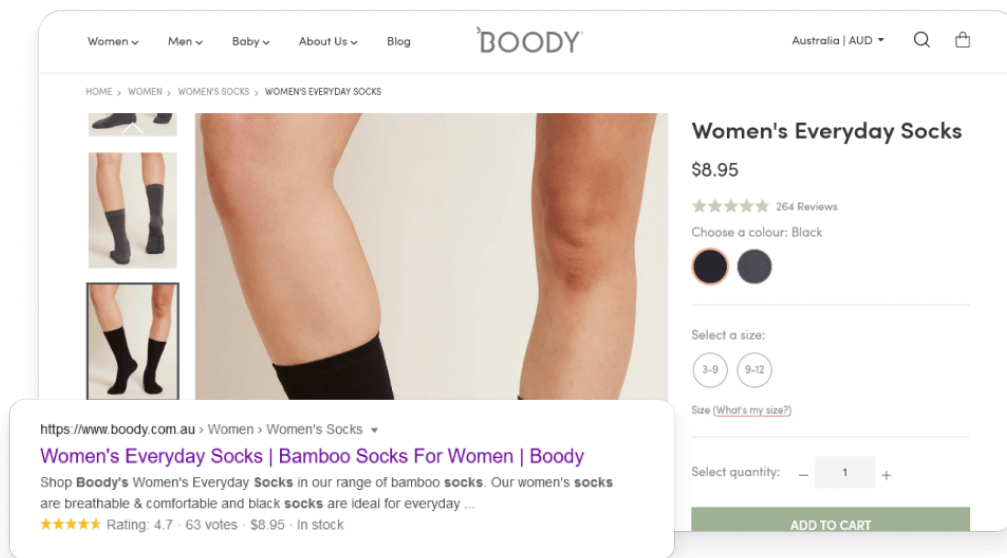
Ask yourself these questions:

- ✓ What search queries are bringing customers to your store?
- ✓ What search queries are your customers entering when they engage with your store's internal search?
- ✓ Which pages on your store are currently attracting the most traffic?
- ✓ Which pages are turning your customers off, and generating the highest exit rates?

3

Carefully select your category page names and URLs

Once you have conducted your keyword research and asked yourself the above questions, apply this knowledge to how you name your category pages and URLs. Across your site, H1 tags, meta titles and URLs should always reflect your target keyword. This will help your audience's navigation, and enable search engines to recognize and index your store's pages in the optimal way for discovery.



4

Ecommerce Architecture: The Three Click Trick

Ideally, you should be structuring your site so that it takes a maximum of three clicks for a user to get from home page to product page and vice versa.

Keeping catalogs carefully and methodically structured so that URLs flow logically from domain to category to sub-category to product is essential for quality navigation. If we again turn to an online clothing retailer as our example, we can consider how they might structure their store:

1

<https://example.com/black-midi-dress>

2

<https://example.com/dresses/midi-dresses/black-midi-dress>

In the first example the URL leaps straight from domain to product. The second example is much more SEO friendly, including a category and subcategory before landing on the product page. If you're a merchant that sells on Shopify, you'll notice it doesn't have an option to create subcategories but can leverage tags to achieve a similar outcome. However, instead of this approach, it's better to create parent/child collections using an app such as [Categories Uncomplicated](#).

5

Keep Consistent Over Time

When creating site structure for an eCommerce store that can expect the regular addition of new product pages, it's important that the protocol for listing, titling and tagging these correctly is clearly communicated and followed at all times.

Grouping your content topically can make it easier for search engines to understand the information you're trying to share with the world.

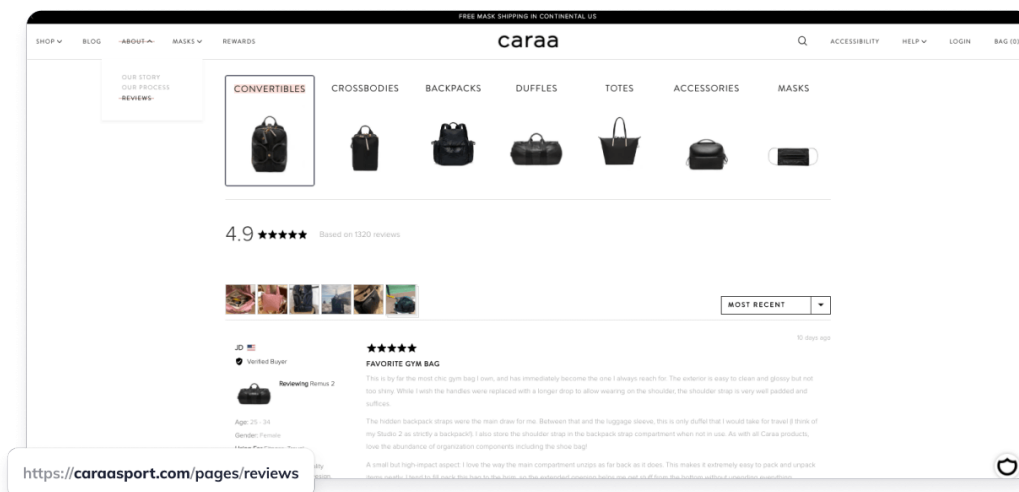
It's especially important to pay attention to the way that pages are nested into categories and subcategories.



Be sure to keep internal linking at the front of your mind as you plan out pages. This is really helpful for product discovery, as you can help your customers explore your store more widely in a relevant and helpful manner. Not only does it assist with dwell time and navigation, it also helps search engines understand the common themes and hierarchy of your content.



Certain page types can also be especially helpful for SEO. For example, including a [reviews page](#) helps to increase the trust factor of your site which is looked on favorably by search engines. It can be helpful to include this link in the navigation bar and footer of all pages.



6

Keep Heading Hierarchy In Mind

Where do keywords come into this? Heading hierarchy. You'll want to make sure that your heading tags (H1, H2 etc) are all leveraging the keywords you've identified as the best fit for your own SEO strategy. This is because search engines will be looking here for the biggest clues to the purpose and relevance of your page.

On-Page SEO for eCommerce

By Chad Faith

Director of Content at SmartSites



smartsites

Search engines look to deliver the most relevant, helpful content to the people performing searches on their platform. [On-page SEO](#) refers to the practices that can be put in place to help individual pages rank more prominently by producing content that is informative, detailed, descriptive and accurate to searches.

Your content should perform a purpose. When a customer lands on a page, they're looking to make a specific action. Typically, this is product discovery (and hopefully purchase).

In this section, we'll take a look at some of the best on-page SEO practices you can implement for your store to increase the effectiveness of your SEO.

Get the checklist that the largest DTC brands use to optimize their SEO

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Ad

www.boody.com.au

★★★★★ (1,077) - Rating for Boody

Full Length Active Tights | Boody Australia

www.boody.com.au/products/full-length-active-tights

★★★★★

Women's Tank Top | Boody Australia

www.boody.com.au/products/tank-top

★★★★★

Making The Best Use Of Keywords For Your Ecommerce Store's On-Page SEO

Keyword placement is a core element of your individual store page's SEO ranking. But this isn't about looking for opportunities to stuff keywords into every available field (which can be flagged as suspicious by search engine crawlers).

In fact, incorporating your keywords just a few times will be enough for Google to acknowledge them and weigh it against your ranking in the SERP. If you're worried that your keywords feel repetitive or spammy, use different variations.

When adding relevant keywords to your store's pages, strategically place them into your:

- ✓ URLs
- ✓ Header Tags
- ✓ Meta Titles
- ✓ Meta Descriptions
- ✓ Product Descriptions
- ✓ Image File Names and Alt Text

Let's explore some of the ways that each of these areas can be best leveraged for your [eCommerce store's SEO](#).

Tips for Better Keyword Use Across Your Whole Ecommerce Store

1

URLs

While [URLs exert only a minor influence over rankings](#), they're designed to provide a more user-friendly "human" browsing experience. So, assuming your keywords are based upon research into the way that people are already searching for your products or content, it still makes sense to include them in URL structure.

```
https://www.example.com/category-keyword/subcategory-keyword/primary-keyword.html
```


2

Header Tags

As well as providing structure to your pages and helping to break up chunks of text, header tags also help Google to understand the purpose and nature of your page. As a result, make sure you're including keywords to correctly and productively encourage the right kind of rankings.

Header tags are also thought to have a good influence over featured snippets (to benefit, optimize your header tag for a long-tail voice search keyword and then follow up with smaller headings to outline list items). Google reads these headers and uses them to create its own [bulleted and numbered lists featured snippet results](#).

`<h1> Heading 1 </h1>`

`<h2> Heading 2 </h2>`

`<h3> Heading 3 </h3>`

`<h4> Heading 4 </h4>`

`<h5> Heading 5 </h5>`

`<h6> Heading 6 </h6>`

3

Meta Descriptions

While meta descriptions are not thought to have a huge impact on SEO, they most definitely impact your CTR. So it makes sense to feature keywords that you know people are searching for. It helps to think of meta descriptions as “ad copy” — it's the small flash of text that may well display next to your search page listing, so leverage it to its greatest effect.

Meta
Description

<https://www.okendo.io> ▼

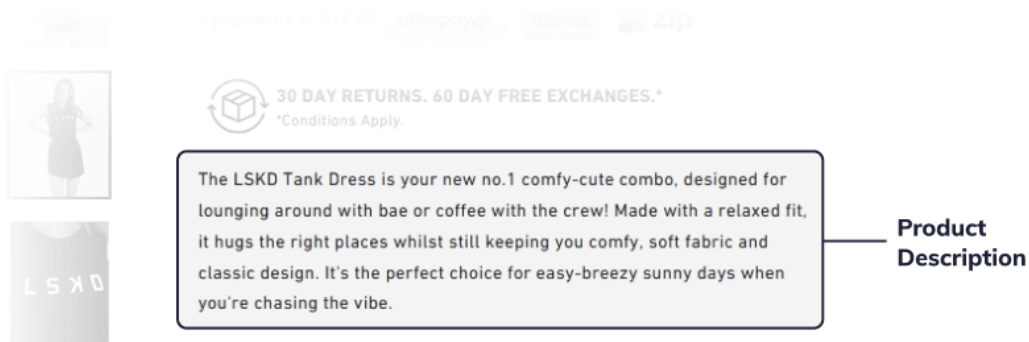
Okendo

3,000+ high-growth Shopify retailers use **Okendo** to build shopper trust and excitement, showcase customer experiences and compel buying action. Start Free ...

4

Product Descriptions

In the example of our clothing retailer, you could add styling advice in the product description, or an example of an event that this dress would be ideal for ("Style this dress with your favorite pair of strappy sandals for instant wedding guest chic this summer!").



5

Image File Names and Alt Text

Images have great potential for SEO optimization. Search engines are looking for useful content and this applies to images just as much as copy. You should aim for clear, well-lit and appealing product photography.

Be sure to use a favored format. PNG and GIF are typically deployed for large areas of solid colors, while JPG works best for photos. Pay attention to compression, as this will help your page load time (another factor that can affect your SEO).

If you're using modeled shots, consider adding product-only views too, and be sure that when you add alt text for your images (an SEO essential) you're describing things such as the view of the garment in the photo (are you displaying the front, side or back of the dress).

```

```



6

Final Tip: Analyze Data to Continually Optimize Content

Your store might also make use of other types of content — blog pages, buying guides, category pages, contact details. Although it's tempting to focus your attention on product pages, make sure you keep content concise, topical, helpful and relevant across all page types.

Technical SEO for eCommerce

By Hazell Rogtao

SEO Manager at Underwaterpistol



When fully optimizing your eCommerce store's SEO, you need to get technical. This means getting right under the hood of your site to make sure that all “behind the scenes” elements are working hard for your rankings.

[Technical SEO](#) allows you to increase the ranking of your site's pages in search engines by improving technical aspects of your website. Overall, the goal is to make your website faster and easier for search engine bots to crawl.

In this section, we'll take a look at some of the technical practices you can implement for your store to increase the effectiveness of your SEO.

1. Enhance Site and URL Structure

Earlier sections of this guide have touched on this in relation to on-page SEO and keyword research — but site and URL structure remain important aspects when it comes to your store's technical SEO.

Key actions:



Make effective use of keywords (see previous sections) when naming your store pages; keep things clear and readable to a human audience
i.e. www.myshop.com/women/jeans

- ✓ Order your page structure to use categories and subcategories in a consistent and intuitive manner **i.e. www.myshop.com/women/jeans/skinny-jeans/**
- ✓ Aim for consistency and ease of navigation at all times - both for your customers, and search engines **i.e. www.myshop.com/men/jeans/skinny-jeans/**
- ✓ Remember the “three click trick” (from home page to product page)

<https://example.com/dresses/midi-dresses/black-midi-dress>

1

<https://example.com/dresses/midi-dresses/>

2

<https://example.com/dresses/>

3

2. Consider Sitemaps

Several types of sitemap exist, and when it comes to eCommerce, each has their pros and cons.

In the most basic terms, HTML site maps tend to prioritize the customers' experience, whereas XML favors search engines.

While XML sitemaps are an invitation for crawlers to explore and index URLs, they're not a guarantee of better ranking. HTML sites are typically more navigable, with better interlinking opportunities — which as we know, brings SEO benefits.

Key actions:

- ✓ Decide if your store needs a sitemap — they're not essential and if you have a well-organized and carefully structured store, crawlers shouldn't have a problem understanding your site. Many eCommerce platforms will automatically generate a sitemap as default.
- ✓ If you have a larger, more complex site with a huge number of pages, look into the creation of an XML sitemap.

- ✓ Only use a canonical version of the URL.
- ✓ Include the link to your sitemap in your robots.txt file.
- ✓ Explore tools that go beyond the site maps auto-generated by platforms such as Shopify – we recommend checking out xml-sitemaps.com
- ✓ Finally, be sure to submit your sitemap to Google, Bing, and other target search engines.

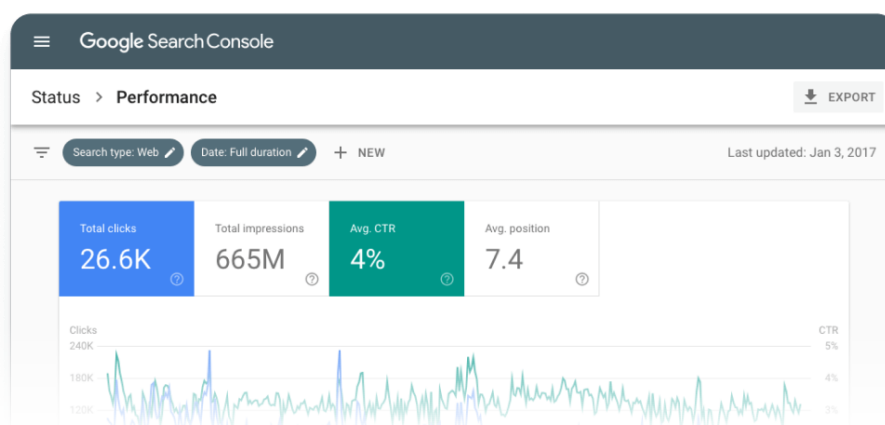
3. Conduct a Log File Analysis

Log file analysis is an investigation of a website's server logs, with the aim of identifying trends by SE bots. As an eCommerce store, this gives you information and insight into every interaction taking place on your store — be that with a human or a search bot!

The big SEO benefit here is getting an overview of how your crawl budget is being used. Your crawl budget relates to the number of pages on your site which Google's crawlers will index on any given day.

Key actions:

- ✓ Examine your log files to show you which pages are getting the most attention from crawlers.
- ✓ Prioritize these pages for further optimization, and apply the same principles to other pages.
- ✓ Identify which pages are being missed out, and take action to remedy this.
- ✓ Want deeper insight into your crawl budget? You'll find reports within the [Google Search Console](https://search.google.com/search-console/).



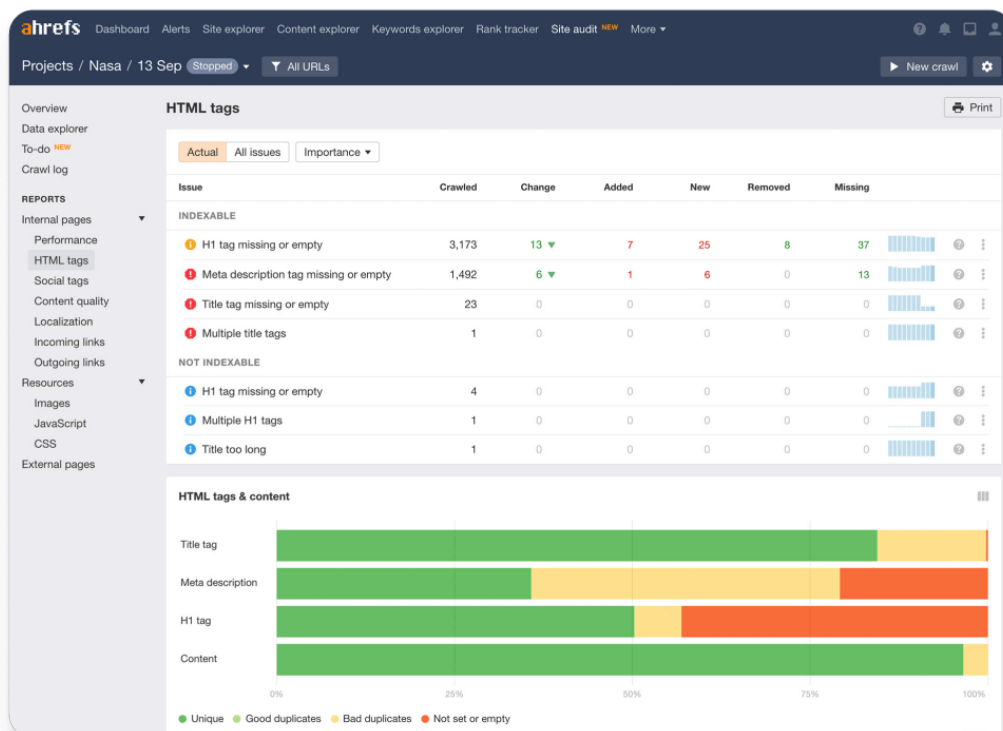
4. Fix Site Errors

A range of online tools such as [Semrush](#) and [Ahrefs](#) can scan your site to discover a variety of HTTP error issues. These might include redirection errors, client errors or server errors.

By weeding these out, you ensure that your site stands the very best chance of being favorably ranked.

Key actions:

- ✓ Select a service to scan your site, and identify any problems in the setup of your pages such as duplicate or missing page titles, a lack of image alt text, header tags, meta descriptions and more.
- ✓ Take remedial action to go through and fix or remove pages as required.
- ✓ Schedule this process to repeat on a regular basis.



5. Hide Webpages from Search Engines

There are several instances where you might not wish your content to be crawled and indexed, e.g. non-public pages (especially ones containing sensitive information).

Google is constantly learning of course — and does a pretty good job of identifying and prioritizing the pages it should be looking at. But for an eCommerce site, it pays to make sure certain pages (such as cart.php and checkout.php) are actively shielded.

Key actions:

- ✓ Examine your sitemap and decide if you need to hide any specific pages or content from search engine crawlers.
- ✓ Use noindex meta tags to instruct search engines to pass by these pages without indexing them.
- ✓ Not only does this help with privacy concerns, it also saves your budget for the pages you'd really like to be crawled.

```
<meta name="robots" content="noindex">
```

6. Optimize Page Speed

Finally, page speed (or page load time) is a technical factor you can't ignore.

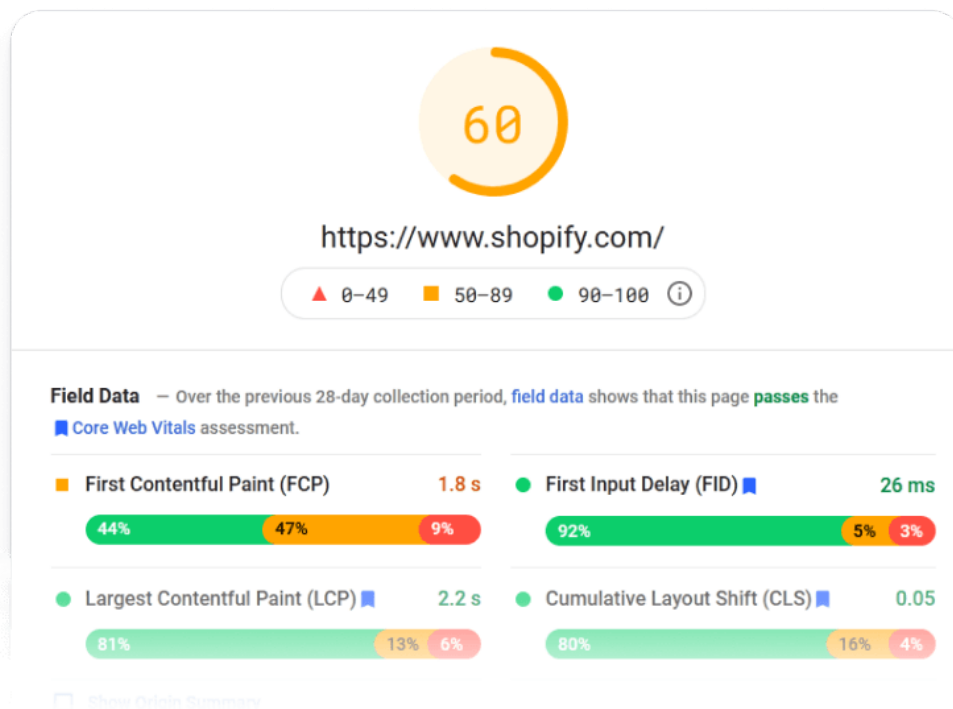
Google has indicated site speed, and as a result, page speed, as one of the signals used by its algorithm to rank pages. But not only will page speed improve your ranking, it's also a vital component of your overall user experience. This in turn has a massive impact on your conversion rate.

Key actions:

- ✓ Use [Google's Page Speed Insights tool](#) to see how you're performing when it comes to speed.
- ✓ Identify what might be holding you back from the lightning-fast loading times that will help boost you up the SERPs.



Be proactive in constantly assessing and improving your page load speeds — this means keeping high standards and best practices in place when it comes to a wide range of factors (especially in the instance of things such as product image optimization, which can have a huge impact on eCommerce stores due to the sheer quantities involved!).



SEO Best Practice for eCommerce: Ratings & Reviews

By Rachel Tyers

VP of Strategic Partnerships at Okendo


 OKENDO

In addition to providing powerfully persuasive social proof that builds buyer confidence and encourages conversion, reviews can also positively influence your SEO.

As [customer reviews](#) are generated by people who have actually purchased your products first hand, in their own words, they'll naturally leverage relevant keywords, optimizing your store's SEO strategy.

Typically, a review left by a customer will be rich in terms of keywords, product titles and appropriate links. Long-tail keywords also appear more frequently in content generated by your users. Even a negative review will carry these benefits — there really is no such thing as a bad review when it comes to the SEO of your eCommerce store!

One really nice aspect of the SEO gained from the inclusion of reviews on your online store is that your customers are doing all the legwork here. And because once you have a reviews program that's automated to continually generate reviews over time, you're able to enjoy the SEO benefits of fresh content being regularly uploaded to your store's product pages.

Google categorically considers reviews as a ranking factor — the content generated by your customers is considered authoritative and unbiased (or at least, more trustworthy than content generated by businesses themselves!). Another important ranking factor for SEO is also click-through-rate (CTR). Reviews can greatly enhance your ability to generate attractive product listings on Google's SERP with eye-catching star ratings and review counts. This makes your product listings more likely to see better rates of traffic flowing to your online store as they encourage shoppers to click through and read the reviews.

[93% of shoppers read product ratings and reviews before making a purchase](#), and shoppers are even willing to spend [31% more with a brand that has excellent reviews](#). So without them, you could be missing out on a large amount of sales.

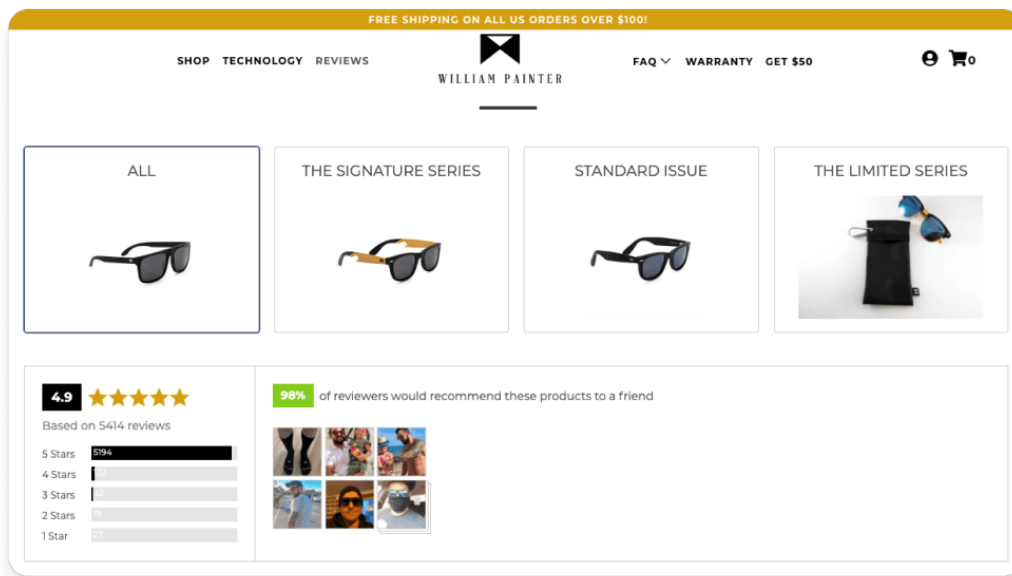
How to Use Reviews for SEO

When it comes to using reviews to boost your SEO rankings, there are of course some best practices that it pays to follow.

1. Create a Dedicated Reviews Page

When conducting product research, ultimately consumers trust their peers more than they trust your marketing department! As a result, people trying to decide on a product to purchase will actively search for reviews. Harness this behavior for your own SEO benefit by creating a [dedicated reviews page](#).

Not only does this increase the chance of your brand ranking above competition for specific, high purchase intent searches. It also simplifies navigation for those who actively search for reviews during their initial search on Google through to their browsing process onsite.

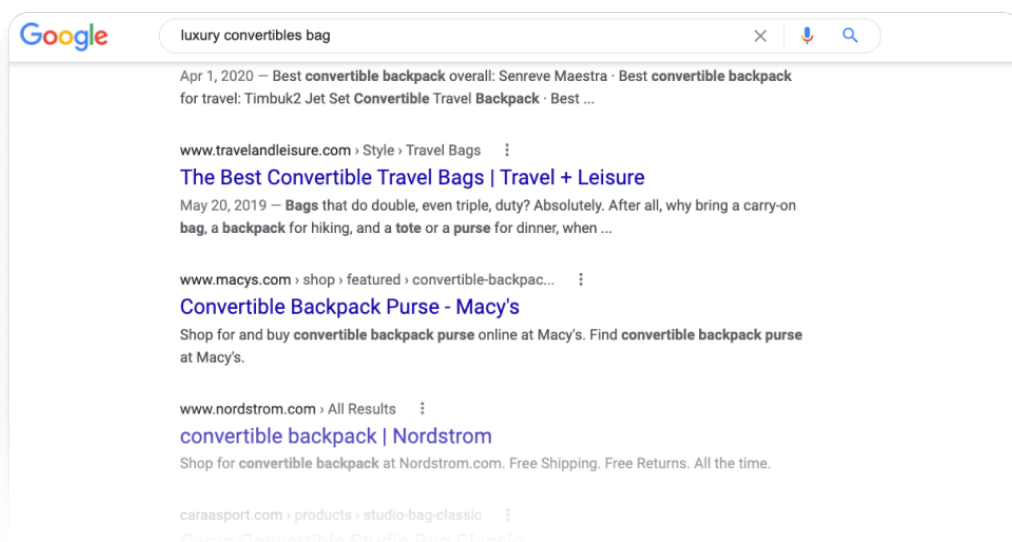


2. Include Rich Snippets

When it comes to enhancing the impression that a listing makes within the search engine results pages, you can expect a higher click-through rate for products that include an element of review information within the presentation.

Given the choice of a listing with and without a [rich snippet](#) which provides shoppers with product review information such as star ratings and review counts, people will always gravitate towards the one with them. It also enables you to start to build trust with shoppers before they've even landed on your store, and improves the chances of them choosing you over a competitor.

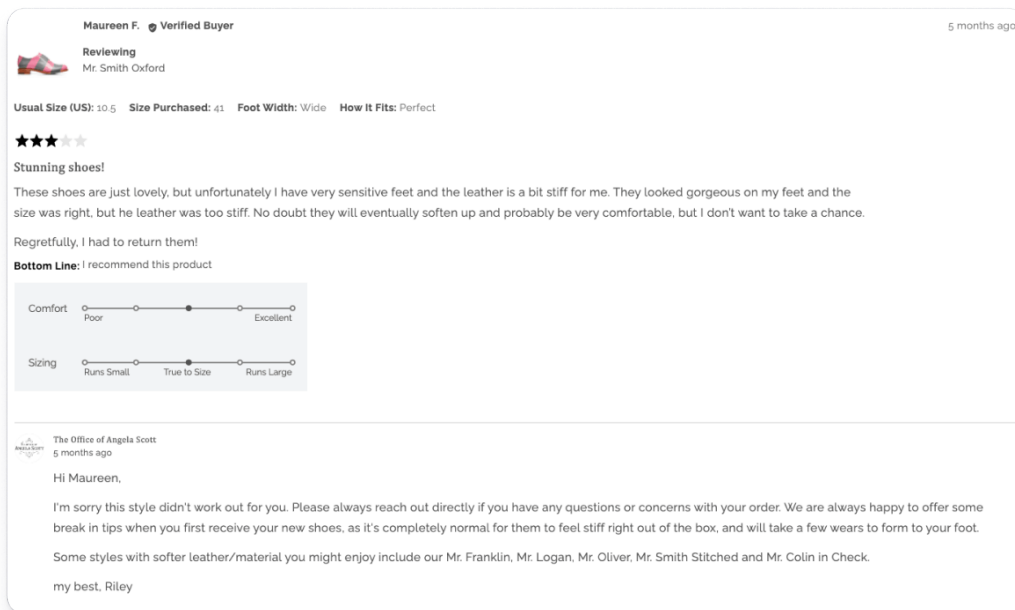
Better click-through rates, as we know, lead to better rankings, so the benefits here are ongoing and self-perpetuating.



3. Respond to Reviews

There are many [benefits to responding to customer reviews](#) — including for your SEO. Search engines love to see pages regularly updated with fresh, relevant content. By making sure you consistently reply to the reviews left by your customers, you double up the benefit here.

Replying to reviews also gives you greater control over the leverage of additional keywords, in particular long-tail keywords, which can otherwise be difficult to include at any kind of scale or frequency across your product pages.



How to Collect Reviews for SEO

With reviews bringing so many SEO benefits, you'll need a strong customer review strategy in place to maximize your number of reviews.

Okendo helps automate the process of collecting reviews through post-purchase email sequences that allow you to send well-crafted and perfectly timed review requests emails to customers. Merchants that are looking to ramp up the quantity as well as quality of their reviews are able to offer rewards to customers in exchange for their review.

As well as enabling you to collect more reviews, Okendo helps you make better use of them in your SEO and SEM strategy by driving fresh, keyword-rich and highly relevant content organically to your store's pages and Google listings alike to boost rankings.

[Okendo](#) allows you to include rich review meta-data on your Google Organic Product Search Results. Okendo offers this integration on all plans, and as a result, their merchants are able to benefit from an increase in visibility, click-through-rates, and ultimately, conversions.

But the opportunities don't end there. With Okendo, you can also integrate reviews with Google Paid Search Ads as Seller Ratings offered on every Okendo plan for an additional charge or with [Google Shopping and Product Listing Ads](#) starting on the Growth Plan.

A great customer example is [The Office Of Angela Scott](#). By leveraging the power of reviews to enhance their listings on Google, the brand saw an 81% increase in conversion rate.

For a deep dive into how Okendo can help enhance your performance on Google Shopping, [read our guide here](#).

Reviews and ratings truly are a crucial element of the buyer journey. Make an impression on shoppers at every point of the Google SERP using reviews to deliver the most impactful and effective product listings that drive sales.

Ready to Rock Your eCommerce SEO Strategy?

The eCommerce industry is going from strength to strength, but it's never been more important to ensure you're keeping pace with the competition. SEO is vital for merchants that want to capitalize on every advantage and reach the customers showing the highest purchase intent and interest.