

13-Step Checklist to Successful Ecommerce SEO

➤ Step 1: Conduct Keyword Research

Keyword research is where you identify words and phrases that people use when searching for content that's relevant to your ecommerce store. To find the right keywords to target, you'll need to research the most popular search terms used by people looking for your products.

You can find keywords by using specialized tools and Google's and Amazon's automated suggestions and Google's "people also ask" feature. You can also take a look at your successful competitors to see which terminology they're using for their SEO strategy and emulate them

➤ Step 2: Research Your Competitors

Competitor research involves analyzing your competitors' SEO strategies. You can then identify the tactics that are working, and reverse-engineer them to use for your own store.

The most effective way to do this is keyword analysis, also known as keyword gap analysis. This is where you use a tool to identify the terms that your competitors are ranking highly for.

➤ Step 3: Optimize Your Product Pages

You can improve your homepage and inner pages to help them rank higher in search engines such as Google by using the following:

Product Descriptions

The typical product page contains many elements, but the description tends to be the most text-heavy element. This means it offers the most opportunities to optimize on-page SEO. While these texts should provide relevant information to shoppers, they're also a great place to include keywords – which are incorporated organically.

H1-Tags

It's important to ensure that each product page features a single primary title, marked with an H1 tag. Search engine bots will use heading tags to identify your product page's most important content.

Images

Most product pages will also feature at least one image. For an extra SEO boost, it's important to optimize the alt text and file names associated with each image. Alt text can provide Google with valuable information about an image's content. This increases your chances of ranking product images in Google Image Searches.

➤ Step 4: Optimize Your Snippets

The "snippet" is the text that represents your web page in Google's search results and it includes the following:

Meta Title

The meta title, also known as the title tag, is a key indicator to Google about the page's content. The perfect title is informative and attention-grabbing, encouraging people to click on your link in the search results.

Meta Description

The meta description should be short, succinct, and compelling. There's no need to include keywords here, but the few sentences used for the description should be relevant to the search.

URL Slug

This is another way to feed search engines important contextual information about a page's contents. For ecommerce sites, the auto-generated URL slugs can be complex, particularly when products are nested in multiple sub-categories. It's a good idea to shorten your URLs, to make them as concise as possible.

Structured Data

It's also a good idea to explore the worlds of rich snippets. These snippets are used to present richer search results on a Google results page. They can appear as reviews, star ratings, opening times, recipes, events, etc.

➤ Step 5: Optimize Your Category and Tag Archives

Creating unique SEO descriptions for both your category and tag pages helps Google to understand what each page is all about, so it can rank that page appropriately. You can write a unique SEO title and description for each category or tag.

To make these as SEO-friendly as possible, we recommend including relevant keywords, including long-tail variations.

➤ Step 6: Consider Modifying Your Breadcrumbs

A breadcrumb or breadcrumb trail is a line of text, often located at the top of a page. This indicates the user's location within your store. They are particularly useful for ecommerce stores, where products are often nested inside a hierarchy of categories and sub-categories.

As a navigational tool, breadcrumbs help improve the User Experience (UX) and can also help Google understand and crawl your ecommerce store, which can improve your rankings.

➤ Step 7: Test Your robots.txt File

Your website's **robots.txt** file provides instructions to the crawlers that are responsible for searching the web and recording information about its content. You can use this file to specify which parts of your site these crawlers can access, and which parts they should ignore.

If your **robots.txt** file is configured incorrectly, then it can prevent Google from crawling and indexing specific product pages, or even your entire ecommerce store.

➤ Step 8: Switch to HTTPS

Since you'll likely be handling payments through your ecommerce site, it's crucial to provide a secure connection using Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS).

HTTPS is a protocol that encrypts the data sent between your web server and the customer's browser. Switching to HTTPS can help keep your customers safe and improve your SEO.

➤ Step 9: Test Your Store's Performance

It's a smart idea to test your store on a regular basis. This helps you identify and resolve any issues promptly before they degrade your SEO. It also means you can continuously refine your store's performance – and by extension its rankings.

➤ Step 10: Consider Using a Third-Party SEO Plugin

There are many good SEO plugins for ecommerce stores. They add useful features such as cleaning the XML sitemap, removing irrelevant content, social media integrations, etc, and can improve your ecommerce website's performance and SEO.

➤ Step 11: Create an SEO Content Marketing Strategy

Content marketing is the process of creating various forms of content, including blog posts, videos, and infographics. This content can attract more traffic to your store, and ultimately drive conversions.

The key to a successful content marketing strategy is to provide your readers with valuable information, especially if it helps them resolve a pertinent problem.

You can also use your competitor research to influence your content marketing strategy. For example, if a competitor's post gained an unusually large number of backlinks, then you might create content that covers a similar topic.

➤ Step 12: Secure Valuable Backlinks

Link building plays a vital role in SEO. When an external website links to your ecommerce store, search engines count that as an endorsement of your store's content. Each external link will pass authority, relevancy, and trust to your site. The most valuable external links come from sources that are trusted by Google.

➤ Step 13: Don't Forget About Internal Links

Internal links can have a positive impact on SEO. Session duration and the number of pages visited per session are two of the most important ranking factors and internal links can boost both of these metrics by helping visitors find related content.

Additionally, internal links help to define your site architecture - i.e. the relationship between the pages on your site, and where they fit within the website's overall structure.