

ECOMMERCE SEO HANDBOOK

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Implementing the right eCommerce SEO strategies requires more than just dedication and hard work. It also requires you to have a fully extensive and comprehensive understanding of just how SEO and eCommerce are entwined, especially if you are to go it alone. Even if you enlist the help of experts, if you are looking to increase your targeted traffic, our expert guide has it all, from stats and the latest trends in eCommerce to understanding technical SEO and how best to implement link building.

So without further ado, let's jump right into it.

HOW IMPORTANT IS ECOMMERCE WEBSITE SEO?

SEO is hugely important for eCommerce websites and for one very good reason:

**Over 3.5 billion
Google searches
are made every day.**

If this wasn't all, it was also estimated that: In 2018, almost 1.8 billion people worldwide bought goods online, with as many as 71% of shoppers, believing that they can find a better deal online.

1.8 BILLION



Furthermore, **40%** of men aged between **18 and 34** said they would buy everything online. For women, between the same ages, this was around **33%**.

With stats such as this, it brings confidence that the future of eCommerce will be strong. However, this doesn't answer the question of why you need SEO for eCommerce.



DOES SEO REALLY MATTER FOR ECOMMERCE?

Of those people shopping online, **44%** of people started so with a Google search – the front leader of the SERPs.

Therefore, you need to find a way to showcase just what you have to offer. How do you do that?

The answer lies with SEO. You need to climb the ranks of Google and position yourself on page 1 or 2. Gaining a position on these top pages will increase your traffic enormously. Without it, consumers will simply fail to find you, and you will be relying on direct, referrals, social, and paid traffic.



Direct will bring 49.3%

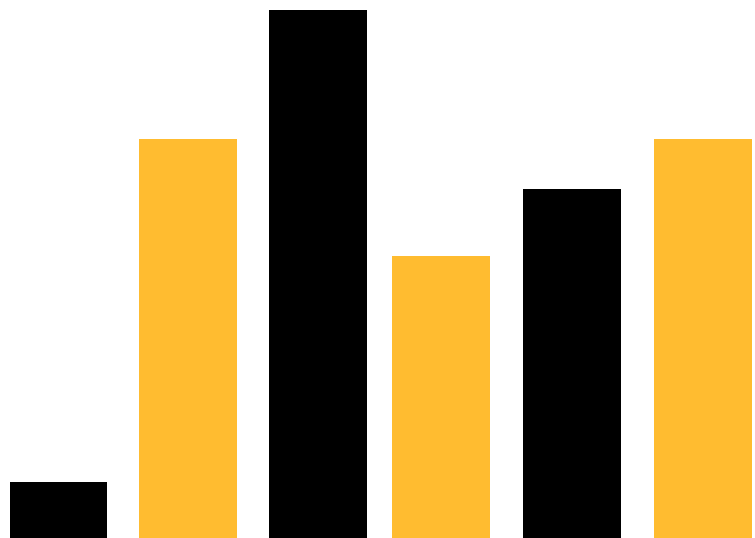
Referrals will bring you around 8% of traffic

Social will bring you around 3.3%

Paid is only 1.9%

Search traffic doesn't bring as much as direct traffic does, at **37.5%**, but it does offer more long term results, especially when combined with other sources of traffic. This is why SEO is important!

So, this brings us nicely onto the next segment of the guide. We have put together the top SEO tips for eCommerce sites in a step by step process.



STEP ONE: KEYWORD RESEARCH

For every SEO campaign, the first step revolves around keyword research. Some experts would even call it the foundation of SEO campaigns. Why? Without keywords, your website has little chance of being found by Google, let alone your consumers.

However, keyword research usually revolves around "information keywords," for example, "how-to" questions that require helpful content, such as "how to start an SEO campaign?" When somebody types this in, they are expecting to find informative guides, rather than a company trying to sell them their services.

Although this might have a place within eCommerce (after all, Google loves high-quality, informative content), there is something more important to focus on, and this is product searches.

CARRYING OUT KEYWORD RESEARCH



First, you need to figure out your goals. Do you want to make more sales, increase traffic, or just build more awareness of your brand? For most eCommerce businesses, the goal will likely be to make more sales.

Then, with product-focused keywords and your goals in mind, you can get started.

HOW TO FIND KEYWORDS

There are multiple ways that you can find keywords, including:

- Amazon Suggests
- Google
- Keyword Tool Dominator
- SEMrush
- Google Keyword Planner



What many of these research methods will do is provide you with an insight into:

A) What is ranking, i.e., what are your consumers searching for?

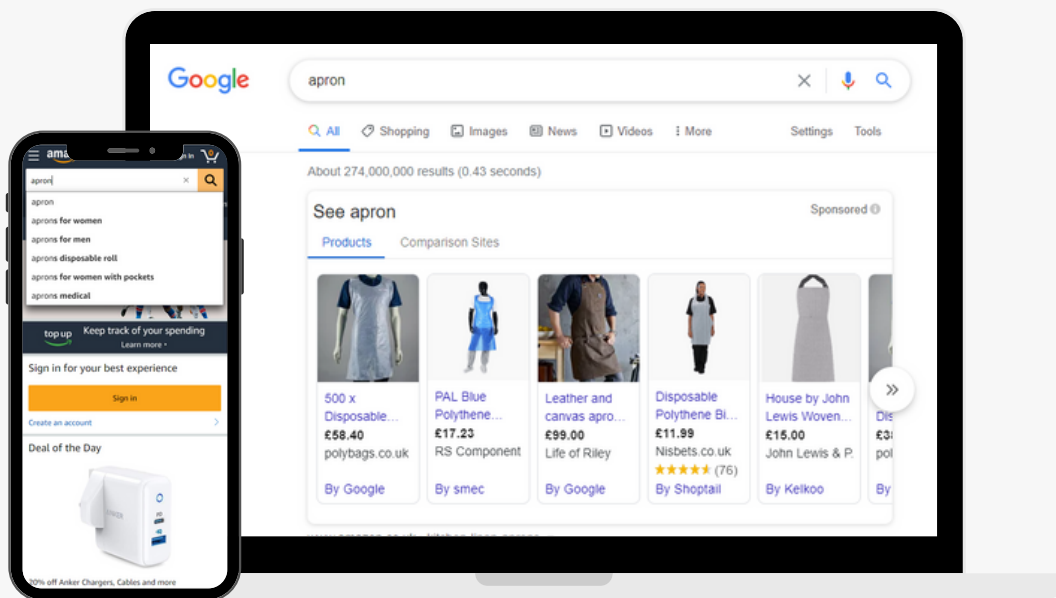
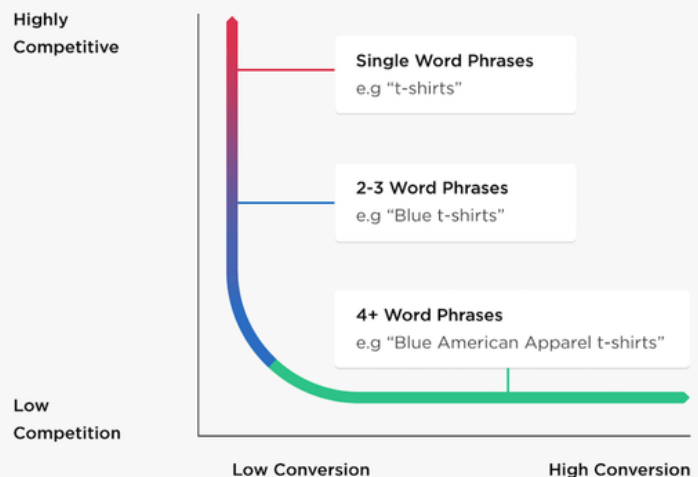
B) What your competitors are ranking for

If you want to start with the biggest competitor of them all, then simply open the Amazon search bar and start typing in a relevant keyword to your business.

Upon typing, Amazon will start to suggest long-tail keywords.

The difference between long-tail keywords and short-tail is whether the phrase uses more than 3 words.

Number of Keywords: Competition vs. Conversion



As an example, a short tail keyword could be **"Apron"**. Someone has simply searched for the product. They haven't specified what type of apron they want, whether they want it from a shop near them, or whether they want it to be unique.

The keyword **"Apron"** brings up over **90,000** results in Amazon, and **327,000,000** results in Google. If you are an eCommerce store trying to sell aprons, you are going to find it very difficult to stand out. This is where long-tail keywords come in handy.

A long-tail keyword could be **"personalised apron with pockets"** or **"green apron with pockets"**, or even **"cute apron for cooking"**.

TOP TIP: THE GREAT THING ABOUT LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS, OR TARGETED KEYWORDS, IS THAT THEY ARE MORE PRECISE AND LESS COMPETITIVE, WHICH MEANS BETTER CHANCES OF RANKING HIGHER.

By finding long-tail keywords that are less competitive, you can optimise your site with them and start to attract those that are perhaps searching on mobile (long-tail keywords are used more with mobile searches) or just interested in finding a specific product that you offer. Focus on what makes you unique, and you can turn your keywords into more targeted versions of broader keywords that you can't currently rank for, for example.

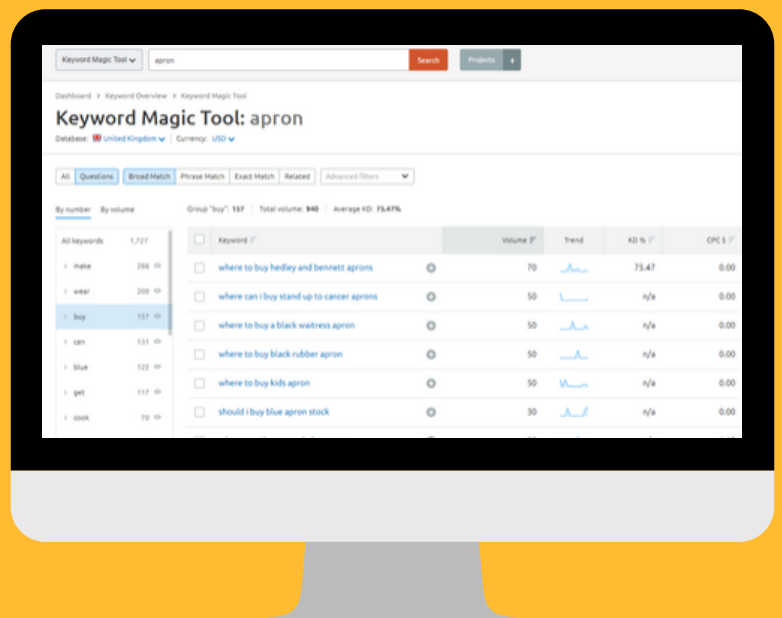
This is a great starting point. You then delve deeper and take a look at their categories. This way, rather than having categories on your website that you think are useful to customers, you can find relevant keywords you should be using instead.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Don't just rely on one source of research, either as we established over **40%** of purchases start with a Google search.

- **SEMrush** is ideal if you want to find keywords that your competitors are ranking for.

Note: It won't generate new keyword ideas. You simply enter your competitor into the search field, click organic research in the sidebar, and it will display all the keywords they are ranking for.



HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR KEYWORDS

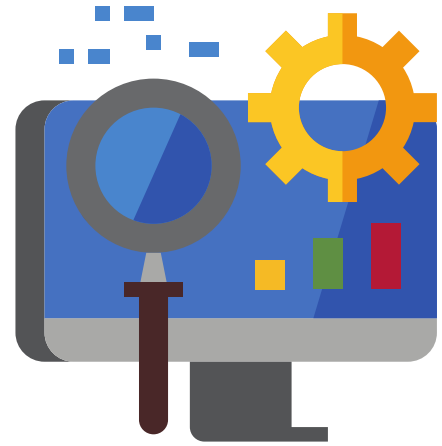
Your keywords need to be completely relevant to what you sell. There is no point ranking for the keyword **"best cooking utensils,"** if you sell high heels. However, you will also need to look at search volume – if no one searches for that term, it doesn't matter how well it converts or how competitive Google's first page is, it isn't worth it. You will come to a natural understanding of what is **"high"** and **"low"** for your industry.

Also, consider that some keywords could be seasonal, a personalised apron with pockets might be popular around Christmas due to more people looking to buy gifts.

STEP TWO: TECHNICAL SEO

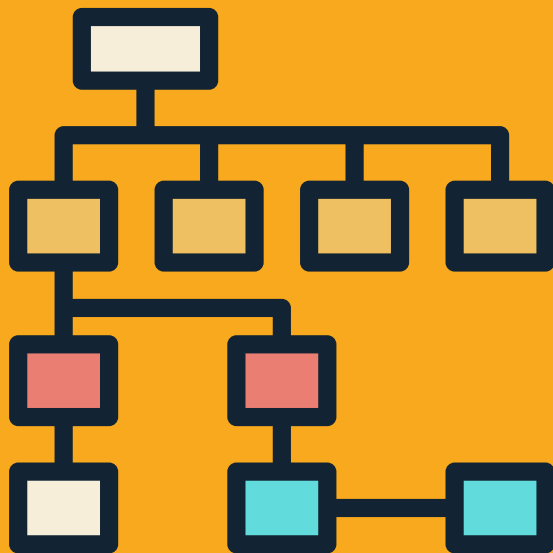
You then need to start running a technical SEO audit. You don't want one problem to be the difference between your ranking below your competitor. Common issues that crop up include:

Broken Links
Site speed **Thin content**
Too many pages **Duplicated content**



Issues such as site speed and broken links are easy to fix by upgrading your host and renaming or moving your URLs, for example; however, the other three are a little bit more complicated but incredibly important.

So how do you solve the other issues? Let's take a look.



STEP THREE: SITE ARCHITECTURE

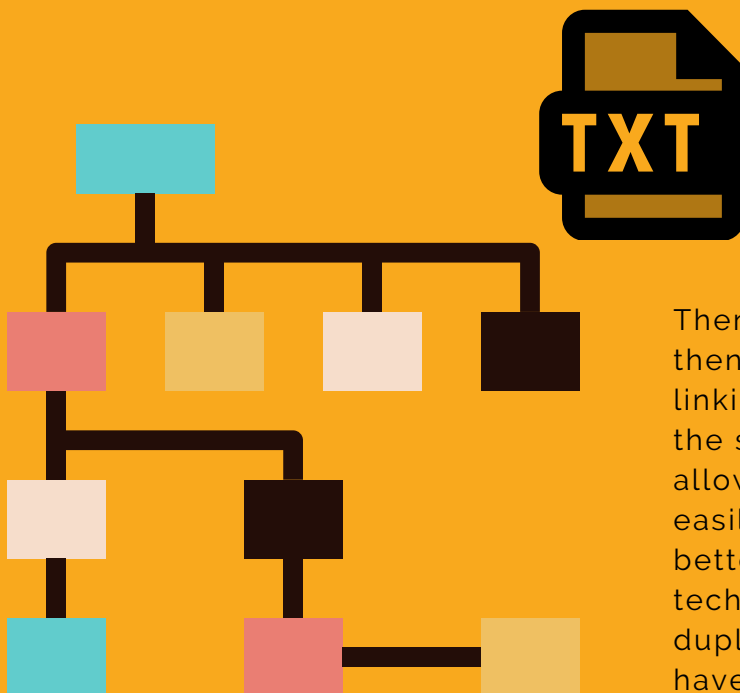
It might seem insignificant, but how your site is organised can greatly affect your ranking position and user experience. Trying to please both is often where people go wrong.

The best approach to this is keeping the structure as simple as possible. When we say simple, what we mean is that every page is only a few clicks away from the homepage. **Why?** Having anything more complicated will confused both Google and your users, leaving the latter frustrated and Google missing essential pages.

In order for Google to rank your page, it needs to be correctly indexed. Google will send their crawl bots to navigate your website, and if they discover a new page, they will index it. However, they will miss your product pages if your website:

- **Is difficult to navigate - if your users get confused about how to get from one place to another, the crawl bots certainly are!**
- **Has content that is classed as too thin**
 - **Has duplicated content**
- **Has too many unnecessary pages**

This isn't to say that you want all of your product and category pages indexed. For example, you might sell the same product in 5 different shades. Technically, they would be competing with each other. Therefore, you don't need to index them all. Add a **"noindex, follow"** and block these pages so that time isn't wasted crawling them.



Then with one **"master page,"** you can then create a spider web of internal linking distribution to other pages on the site. This is going to do two things: allow Google to crawl your site more easily and then rank your website better. Plus, it is going to solve your technical SEO problem of having duplicated content, as long as they have unique URLs.

STEP FOUR: ON PAGE SEO FOR ECOMMERCE

With your site structure improved and your keywords under your belt, now it is time to put them to good use and further improve your site. The key to eCommerce stores being successful is making the most of on page optimisation.

1. URLS

Your product pages URLs are going to be longer – that is a fact. However, long URLs will not only dilute your use of keywords, but it will also confuse Google because they also contain unnecessary wording, such as:

<https://ecommerceexample.com/productID4827361>

Google isn't going to know that **productID4827361** is a page for high heels. Nor are customers likely to trust it. To combat all of this, you need to be using keyword enriched URLs. Googles like to keep things simple – so aim for between **50-60** characters and don't include words like "a" or "the". For example, for a high heels product page, your URL could look a little something like this:

<https://ecommerceexample.com/shoes/highheels>

To further categorise this, you could add a dash so that it becomes:

<https://ecommerceexample.com/shoes/highheels-wedges>

The above URLs are much cleaner to look at, have utilised your keywords, and made it easier for Google. Having short and unique URLs with the use of keywords will also combat the problems of duplicated content and too many pages.

Once you have added the **"noindex"**, now you need to tell Google these are exact copies or slight variations of the same page.

Add a canonical tag to show the difference between the same content. This will also make backlinks more valuable.



2. PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS

You need to write as many product descriptions as possible, and the longer, the better. Google needs to know exactly what your products are to understand you better (this is why keywords are so relevant), and if your content is too thin in their eyes, they don't have a lot to go off of and won't rank you highly. If you need help with these, then turn to SEO content writing experts who will create unique, engaging, and informative product descriptions.

TOP TIP: INCLUDE REVIEWS (THE MORE UNIQUE, THE HIGHER YOU WILL RANK); NOT ONLY DOES THIS SAVE YOUR TIME YOURSELF, BUT PEOPLE TRUST REVIEWS.



3. BETTER CONTENT ON FEWER CATEGORY PAGES

If your website has too many category pages with thin content, this will confuse Google. You need at least **5-10**, if not more, unique products on any category page to justify it being there.

However, getting the right balance is key – so don't make it too lengthy. Google will see a **1000 words** piece as an article, and the page won't rank as well. Consumers are there to purchase a product, after all, but you still need to make sure Google understands what you are offering. This is why keywords matter so much!

MOBILE OPTIMISED SITE

As a major eCommerce trend, by ensuring that your site is mobile optimised, with user experience in mind, such as offering multiple ways to pay, you are going to drive more traffic your way. Optimising your site, however, doesn't mean to say that the entire design will change – instead, it means making a difference to how well it is received by Google.



50% OF PEOPLE

now shop on their phones or with voice commerce, and this is continuing to grow in popularity.

11% OF CUSTOMERS

already use voice assistants to shop, often searching with long-tail keywords.

8 BILLION

In fact, it is predicted that there will be 8 billion devices that have voice assistants by 2023.

STEP FIVE: CONTENT MARKETING

You might sell products, but that doesn't mean to say you can't delve into the world of content! Content marketing can drive a lot of traffic from the search results pages.



WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT SHOULD YOU FOCUS ON?

If you haven't already started to produce content for your site, now is the time! Many customers will also be interested to see how much you know within the industry.



The best way to do this is with a blog. This is where internal linking and utilising your keywords can come in handy. However, content for eCommerce websites comes in various forms, not just blogs; you can also produce:

eBooks Videos

Infographics

Email Marketing Case Studies

What you choose should be based on what your customers and ideal target audience prefer. However, it is handy to know that **62%** of consumers will watch product reviews before purchasing a product. If you want to increase conversion rates, this could be the way forward.

KEY TAKEAWAY: MAKE SURE YOUR CONTENT ISN'T COMPETING FOR THE SAME KEYWORDS YOUR PRODUCT OR CATEGORY PAGES ARE.

For example, if your product page for a green apron is currently ranking for **"green apron with pockets,"** don't try and utilise this within your content. Instead, choose a keyword that you aren't using for your product pages, such as **"cute apron for sale"**.

PRODUCING AMAZING CONTENT

It is no good just producing content, though. You need to bear in mind Google's **EAT** requirements when it comes to SEO content writing. Consider your audience, the tone of voice, optimise it with keywords, and make it unique to you!

STEP SIX: LINK BUILDING

You have products to sell and an optimised website, so now you need to find a way to boost your online presence. What better way to do it than through link building? Link building allows you to reach out to audiences that would be interested in what you have to offer but aren't aware you exist yet.

However, there is no point in building links if they are of poor quality. You need to have clean, high-quality backlinks that you can manage. This means you have to implement link building strategies and focus on the following:



Finding your audience: You need to know who you are targeting and where they can be found. With market research complete, you can work with a blogger outreach team to build a relationship with third party domains that will publish your content.

Utilise keywords: Remember those keywords you found; now is the time to use them again. How you use your keywords as the anchor text (i.e., where you link to your website) is up to you, but you can seek the help of expert advice in this.

As an example: If you are selling aprons, then a relevant keyword that you might have is **"green apron with pockets."** Utilising this within your content means that when somebody searches for this term, your website has a better chance of ranking higher and being seen.

By using **"green apron with pockets"** as the anchor text for your link, the audience can then discover the products you have on offer.

Create high-quality content: With third party sites and your anchor at the ready, now is the time to create compelling and engaging content.

Increasing your targeted traffic to your eCommerce website will be more than possible with SEO, and with the information in this guide, you will be able to get started in no time.

BONUS FEATURE: PRODUCT PAGE OPTIMISATION FOR MAXIMUM CONVERSION RATES

In the main section of the guide, we discussed how and why you should optimise your site. It might be that you are starting to get more customers to your store, due to implementing SEO strategies, which is great. But how do you ensure that your customers are completing their journey?

WHAT WE MEAN IS:

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE *ACTUALLY* BUYING YOUR PRODUCTS?

Don't worry if, currently, it's not that many. With the help of this guide, discarded baskets and bounce rates will be a thing of the past. We are going to take a more in-depth look into just how you can optimise your product pages and convince your potential customers to purchase with you.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PRODUCT PAGE?

There isn't a lot to product pages on the outset. What more do you need on there than your products and their names after all? It is a **product page**. However, there is a lot that you can do that will make the difference between a mediocre and a great product page.

Yes, you need to consider your product, but you also need to think about your brand and design of the website, not to mention great copywriting and user experience. All this combined is what makes a great product page.

STEP ONE: YOU FIRST NEED TO UNDERSTAND YOUR CUSTOMERS

Before you start changing your website, you first need to understand your customers. What will they be looking out for? What do they want from you? How much detail will they be expecting to see on any given product page?

You have to remember that any change has to come back to your audience. After all, they are the ones that you need to keep your business alive.

So spend some time carrying out market research, discovering:

WHO ARE THEY?

WHAT MOTIVATES THEM?

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO THEM?

Without answering any of these questions first, you could end up delivering a website that isn't right.

STEP TWO: IMPROVING THE VISUAL APPEAL

A product page is there to do one thing, and that is to convince your customers to buy your product. There is one very big influence in this: how your website looks. The visual appeal of your website cannot be understated. From the right background to the images you choose, it all makes a difference. If you want to optimise your page to maximise your conversion rates, then you need to make some changes.

HIGH-QUALITY PHOTOGRAPHS

Nobody is going to buy a product based on just a description alone. They want to see exactly what it looks like. You might have the best product in the world, but if no one can see it, chances they aren't going to buy it. Unlike in a brick and mortar store, your customers can't pick this product up, or feel it, or even test it out. This is why high-quality photographs are an absolute must. Your photographs need to sell the product, so they need to be a top priority.

In fact, the statistics speak for themselves about just how important good photography is:

67% OF CUSTOMERS STATE THAT AN IMAGE IS VERY IMPORTANT WHEN LOOKING FOR A PRODUCT.

MORE THAN 50% OF CUSTOMERS BELIEVE A HIGH-QUALITY PHOTO IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN A PRODUCT DESCRIPTION, INCREASING CONVERSION RATES BY 9%.

To ensure optimal chance of a sale, try taking more than one photo of the product with different angles and lighting, in various sizes. If you wanted to take this one step further, you could even film somebody using your product.

In terms of SEO, you can even continue on your goal of increasing traffic by using rich keywords in the **“alt text.”** You might be surprised at the results it will bring.



TOP TIP: TO ENSURE YOU DON'T SLOW UP YOUR WEBSITE, COMPRESS ALL IMAGES.

BACKGROUND

Don't distract your customers with a fancy background and detract from the main focus: your products. Ensure that the background is consistent with your website, but try to keep it neutral to prevent it from clashing with your images.

STEP THREE: EXCEPTIONAL CONTENT - DETAIL IS EVERYTHING

Although images were viewed far more positively than descriptions, this doesn't mean you shouldn't optimise your site with exceptional content. 88% of online shoppers believe that product descriptions are vital.

However, getting the content is hard when you have to appeal to a range of customers with different levels of knowledge. If you aren't skilled in writing, this is where reaching out to experts can often be recommended.

This way, they can:

- Get the right tone of voice that considers your brand – your descriptions won't be bland or boring; they will have pizzazz and energy.
- Provide an ample amount of information that is useful to both them and Google (yes, that's right, you will still be working on your SEO strategy of drawing in traffic by boosting your ranking with this).
- Answer questions – most of your customers are there because they need a product to solve a problem, whether this is a good or bad one, help them, or make them better. Within the written content on your products, this can be achieved. You can show them how your products will help them in a fun, practical, or efficient manner.
- Break down the content into manageable chunks, with the use of headers, which appeal to customers who just want to scan read.



HOW ABOUT REVIEWS?

Engaging written content doesn't just have to come from you; did you know that reviews can help you? A staggering **92%** of consumers now read online reviews, and **40%** of these form an opinion of your product based on just one to three reviews. Why? Because it shows that you are a credible business.

Therefore, getting many positive reviews as possible could be the perfect way to get more conversion rates. The more trust you can build, the more sales you will make.



STEP FOUR: ADD A STRONG CALL TO ACTION

Your goal is to make a sale, and so there is one crucial aspect that you need to increase this chance: a call to action. You need your "Add to Cart/basket" to take centre stage. It can't be surrounded by novelty gimmicks or flashy designs. Instead, it needs to be simple and clear.

A FEW EXTRAS TO LEAVE YOU WITH:

- Mobile shopping could be the future – so make sure your site is optimised for this.
- Remove the out of stock pages – nothing will annoy a customer more than finding the ideal product only to find it is out of stock.
- Never be afraid to try out video – Google and customers love it!



GET IN TOUCH

Our awesome team are here ready to strap a rocket to your digital marketing campaigns, so what are you waiting for? Get in touch to find out more or if you have any questions.

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